

KURDISTAN ON FIRE

Scientists Say Kurds Were Poisoned

British scientists said yesterday they believe they have evidence that Kurdish refugees who fled to Turkey were given a toxic chemical called it their country. It is a chemical called it their country. It is a chemical called it their country. It is a chemical called it their country.

THE WORLD'S GREATEST

IRAQI DICTATOR'S LATEST DEED

...to breathe the world's greatest...

...many as half a million...

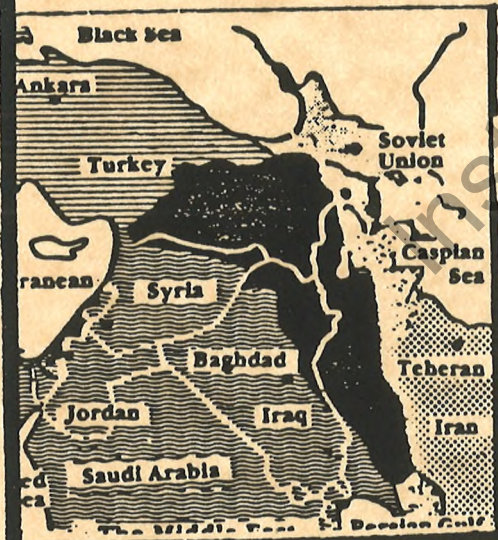
...relayed dictator Saddam...

...many as 700 K...

...the use of superpowers that...

...because the...

...Thursday, September 8, 1988



Kurdistan (area in black) —

The Population of Greater OCCUPIED KURDISTAN is 26,000,000 +

- KURDISTAN/TURKEY 12,000,000 +
- KURDISTAN/IRAN 8,000,000 +
- KURDISTAN/IRAQ 4,000,000 +
- KURDISTAN/SYRIA 1,000,000 +
- KURDISTAN/USSR 1,000,000 +

AREA OF THE OCCUPIED GREATER KURDISTAN: 185,547 square miles, or 475,000 square kilometers

- KURDISTAN/TURKEY (47.4%) area
- KURDISTAN/IRAN (33.7%) area
- KURDISTAN/IRAQ (15.8%) area
- KURDISTAN/SYRIA (3.1%) area

KURDISTAN is nearly the size of FRANCE.

MOUNT ARARAT is located in the section of KURDISTAN occupied by TURKEY.

KURDISTAN is the homeland of the KURDISH people, or KURDS. The KURDS are Aryan stock and descended from the MEDES.



KURDISH RELIEF AID

1989

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* This collection of articles has been compiled by:
* **KURDISH**
* **RELIEF**
* **AID**
* 2439 Birch Street, Suite 7 • Palo Alto, California 94306 • (415) 321-2521
* * * * *

Institut Francais de Paris

Kurdistan on Fire

"Kurdistan on Fire" is part of the history of the tragic events that have taken place in the greater occupied Kurdistan with special emphasis on Iraqi-occupied Kurdistan from 1986-1990 as reported in the western, mainly American, media.

What you see and read here is only the tip of the iceberg. The scope of the Kurdish tragedy and the true extent of the destruction of Iraqi-occupied Kurdistan is impossible to know until after the fall of the present regime when, hopefully, a full inquiry can be made into the untold crimes of the regime of Saddam Hussein against the defenseless Kurdish population. Iran, Turkey, and Syria have not been any more humane than Iraq to their own Kurdish population. The only reason that Iraqi-occupied Kurdistan is in the spotlight is that the Kurds there have been more active in their fight for freedom in the last few decades than their brethren in the other parts of Kurdistan. In Iran, the Shah kept the Kurds under tight control and Khomeini declared a "holy war" against them soon after the establishment of the Islamic Republic. Turkey does not recognize its twelve million Kurds as a separate nationality and considers them "mountain Turks who have forgotten their language" and miraculously learnt another. Turkey's policy of forcible assimilation is notorious. Syria's policy of Arabization of its share of the Kurdish prize is a long-standing one.

Even though the Kurds have been subjected to state terrorism and extreme violations of their basic human rights by the various states that have controlled their destiny ever since the dismemberment of Kurdistan and its annexation by force to Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria at the end of the First World War, they never imagined anything like the reign of terror under Saddam Hussein and his Baath Arab Socialist Party. For the Kurds, life under Saddam has been a hell; there is not a family or an inch of land that his savagery has not touched. The regime of Saddam has committed genocide against a people who have asked for nothing but to live in peace, dignity, and freedom in their own land.

Recently, an American television reporter remarked in disbelief about the "Intifada" in Palestine/Israel that since the beginning of the uprising over two years ago two hundred and fifty homes have been demolished. A Lithuanian woman commented the other day about her country's drive for independence that, "We have been waiting for independence for fifty years!" The Kurds are far from wishing to minimize the suffering of any other nation and the sacrifices they have made for freedom, for we are for the freedom and self-determination of all nations; however, we must also speak the truth and, thus, we would like to say to these two individuals and millions of others: Go and see Iraqi-occupied Kurdistan and find out if there are still any villages standing; study a bit of Kurdish history and find out how long we have been waiting for our freedom and our independence.

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1989

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Page</u>	<u>Date(1989)</u>	<u>Article</u>	<u>Publication</u>
1	January 4	Widespread Torture in Turkey Reported	San Francisco Chronicle
2	January 16	The Search for a Poison Antidote	Time
3	January 18	U.S. Says Iraq Has Biological Weapons Plant	San Francisco Chronicle
4	January 18	U.S. Finds Iraq Has Germ War Plant	Los Angeles Times
5	February 2	Iraq's Abuse of Human Rights	The times
6	February 8	Kurdistan Culture Preserved	The Christian Science Monitor
8	February 8	Mideast Getting Missile Help, U.S. Concludes	San Jose Mercury News
9	February 8	U.S. Challenge in Mideast	San Francisco Chronicle
12	February 8	Iraqi Leader Reportedly Quashes Coup Attempt	San Jose Mercury News
13	March 13	Iraq: An Accusation of Torture	Newsweek
14	March 27	U.S. Export Controls Lax on Poison-Gas Materials	San Francisco Chronicle
15	March/April	Iraq's War on Its Children	Amnesty Action
17	April 4	Iran, Turkey Recall Envoys in Dispute	San Francisco Chronicle
18	April 15	Kurds Seek a Safe Home in a Free Country	The New York Times
19	May 3	U.S. Firms' Sales to Iraq Told	San Francisco Chronicle
20	June	Saddam's secret Weapons	The Middle East
21	June 5	A Reporter at Large: Crossing the Straits	The New Yorker Magazine

<u>Page</u>	<u>Date(1989)</u>	<u>Article</u>	<u>Publication</u>
38	June 7	Iraqis Silence Iranian Rebels As Gesture to Please Teheran	The New York Times
38	June 11	Iraqi Relocations	San Jose Mercury News
39	June 16	Kurdish Solutions	The Times
40	June 24	Wretched Kurds	The Economist
41	June 24	The State That Never Was	The Economist
43	June 25	Refugees Hit by U.K. Scare Tactics	Observer
45	June 26	Britain Slams Door on 'Economic Migrants'	The Independent
47	June 26	Volunteers' Burden Creates bitterness and Exhaustion	The Independent
47	June 26	Hope Ebbs Away in the 'Prison' of Turkish camps	The Independent
48	June 28	'Poison Gas' Deal upsets Bush	The Daily Telegraph
49	June 29	The Plight of a Kurdish Asylum Seeker in Britain	The Independent
50	June	Children of The Middle East- The Innocent Victims of Political Turmoil	The Middle East
56	July 1	Hunger Strikes and Tunnels Plague Turkish Jails	The Guardian
57	July 12	Iraq Uproots Kurds, Razes 700 Villages on Northern Border	San Francisco Chronicle
58	July 13	Uprooted Kurds	San Francisco Chronicle
59	July 26	Cultural Genocide: Kurds Seek Help for Their Battered Homeland	San Mateo Weekly

<u>Page</u>	<u>Date(1989)</u>	<u>Article</u>	<u>Publication</u>
62	July 30	Iraqi Dictator's Latest Deeds	San Francisco Examiner
63	August 15	Gulf Cease-Fire Leaves Rebel Groups of Region in Quandary	The New York Times
64	August 15	Scientists Say Kurds Were Poisoned	San Francisco Chronicle
65	August 18	A Greater Danger Rising	San Francisco Chronicle
66	August 21	Forgotten People- The World and The Kurds	The Nation
67	August 24	Kurds Plan Parliament	San Francisco Chronicle
68	September 20	The Selling of Iraq's President Hussein	San Francisco Chronicle
70	September 28	Urgency on Chemical Weapons	San Francisco Examiner
71	October 15	Paris Talks Seek Attention for Plight of Kurds	The New York Times
72	October 16	Conference Airs Plight of Kurds	Chicago Tribune
72	October 16	Kurds Jeer Iraqi at Rights Conference	San Francisco Chronicle
73	October 20	Torch of Freedom?	New Statesman & Society
76	October 26	Iraq's Criminal Credit Line	The New York Times
77	October 28	Home News	The Guardian
78	November 3	For Turkey and Kurds, Fragile Reconciliation	The New York Times
81	November 10	Turks Dismayed by Onset of Kurdish Lobby in U.S.	Asbarez -English Edition-
82	November 23	Free The Kurds	The New York Times

<u>Page</u>	<u>Date(1989)</u>	<u>Article</u>	<u>Publication</u>
83	December 30	Kurds of Armenia Reclaim Their Former Autonomous Region Azerbaijan	Asbarez -English Edition-
84	Nov/December	Middle Eastern Cultural Genocide: The Kurds	Date Line
85	Number 1	The Divided and Endangered People	Humanitas

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Widespread Torture in Turkey Reported

United Press International

London

Amnesty International said yesterday that it has received almost daily reports of widespread torture in Turkey, where it said authorities regularly force confessions out of men, women and children through beatings, sexual abuse, electric shocks and even crucifixion.

It said Turkey still had an "appalling human rights record" despite public relations campaigns by its embassies around the world to improve its image and despite official Turkish ratification of European and U.N. conventions against torture.

The 73-page report by the London-based organization, which monitors rights violations around the world, was one of the most scathing

documents it has published on a single nation in recent years.

"Amnesty has received reports of torture from Turkey virtually daily during the past two months," it said.

Since the Sept. 12, 1980 military coup, Amnesty said, an estimated 250,000 political prisoners have been detained, and most of them were tortured.

Thousands among them were imprisoned for nonviolent political or religious activities, and more than 60,000 political prisoners were jailed after unfair trials, it said. More than 700 people were sentenced to death, and at least 200 people died from torture while in custody.

"The authorities appear reluctant to take even the most elementary practical steps to eradicate hu-

man rights abuses and have failed to implement the provisions of the international conventions it ratified," the Amnesty report said.

Examples of torture of prisoners, such as the case of Ozgur Cem Tas, a boy of 13, made chilling reading. He was taken to the police headquarters in Diyarbakir, eastern Turkey, on June 30 because his cousins were suspected of supporting Kurdish guerrillas.

"I was taken to the sixth floor of the police headquarters. I was blindfolded and handcuffed. They applied 'falaka' (a Turkish form of beating the bare soles of the feet with a stick) for 25 minutes.

"My hands were untied, and I was suspended from hooks and electric shocks were applied to my penis. I told them I didn't know where my cousins were."

The Search for a Poison Antidote

If good intentions could stop the proliferation of chemical weapons, the scourge would have been cleaned up long ago. Over the past 63 years, 131 nations have signed the 1925 Geneva Protocol, which outlaws the use of poison gases. Yet at least 17 countries are believed to possess chemical weapons. They were most recently used last March, with hellish results, when Iraq unleashed mustard and cyanide gases on its own Kurdish citizens.



Kurdish victims of the Iraqi gas attack on Halabja last March

Like other high-minded declarations that followed the horrors of World War I, the Geneva Protocol has no teeth:

although it forbids the use of poison gases, it bans neither their production nor their stockpiling. The result is that the issue of chemical weapons has returned time and again to the international agenda, stirring debate at the United Nations, at diplomatic conferences and at each of the four superpower summits since 1985.

This week the talk continues in Paris, where representatives from 142 nations have convened. The chances for a breakthrough anytime soon are slim. Only the U.S., the Soviet Union and Iraq have even acknowledged owning chemical arsenals. Yet in recent years, there have been claims that poison gases have been used by Libya against Chad, by Viet Nam against Kampuchean rebels and by Iran and Iraq against each other in their recently concluded war. It was Iraq's slaughter of the Kurds that prompted President Reagan to call for the Paris conference. The initiative was quickly seconded by President François Mitterrand of France, one of the countries that had unwittingly supplied Iraq with equipment that helps in the manufacture of chemical weapons. The results of that exchange, understates a senior French diplomat, "gave one pause."

A declaration of international outrage against chemical weapons and a reaffirmation of the Geneva Protocol may at least slow the trend toward poison gases. "There's a general consensus that use of chemical weapons is wrong," says William Burns, director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. "I think we want to re-establish that." The U.S. hopes that the Paris meeting will pump momentum into the Conference on Disarmament, a 40-nation effort to write a treaty that would ban the gases outright. As an interim step, several participants want to strengthen the U.N. Secretary-General's authority to investigate charges of chemical-weapons use.

Until recently, East-West distrust posed the largest hurdle to an effective ban. But in 1987, two years after Congress voted to end an 18-year moratorium on the American manufacture of chemical weapons, the Soviet Union acceded to U.S. de-

mands for on-site "challenge inspections" to enforce a treaty. Today the larger obstacle is posed by Third World nations that are reluctant to give up what is known as the "poor man's atom bomb." Poison gases, after all, are cheap and easy to manufacture. "All a terrorist needs is a milk bottle of nerve gas," says a British weapons expert, "and that he can get from a quiet lab in a back street of Tripoli." Thus even if a treaty could be hammered out to the satisfaction of Moscow and Washington, says Burns, the U.S. would not sign unless every nation in possession of chemical arsenals agreed to it as well.

But most countries can piously deny their involvement. As last week's verbal cross fire over Libya indicated, it is not easy to distinguish between factories that manufacture fertilizers, pesticides or pharmaceutical products and those that produce chemical weapons. Experts say that with just the turn of some levers or the change of a catalyst, a plant can convert from the production of pest killers to people killers in as little as 24 hours. Small wonder, then, that the U.S. spurned Libya's offer for a one-time inspection of the facility at Rabta.

An effective inspection would require ripping apart a chemical plant to analyze manufactured materials and examine waste products taken from sewers, ventilators and pipes. If chemical weapons were not yet in production (as the U.S. believes to be the case at Rabta), the inspection would turn up no damning residues. Other telltale signs would be the protective equipment used at the plant, including the presence of special ventilation systems and chemical sensors connected to alarms. But that same equipment is employed in pesticide and fertilizer manufacture. Inspectors must also look for military-oriented equipment, such as machinery to produce or fill chemical-weapons shells. The Rabta facility offers one other clue: it is surrounded by surface-to-air missiles that, William Burns dryly notes, must make it the "most heavily defended pharmaceutical plant in the world."

Even if a nation were caught making chemical weapons, who could enforce the rules, short of military action? Would the guilty government dismantle its own facility—particularly if the plant also produced agricultural and pharmaceutical products? Perhaps more to the point, would other nations agree to halt the lucrative export of the component parts? As the Reagan Administration learned in its dealings with Iran, it is hard enough for nations to abide by an arms embargo, let alone enforce one.

—By Jill Smolowe.

Reported by B. William Mader/New York and Jay Peterzell/Washington



Source: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

U.S. Says Iraq Has Biological Weapons Plant

Los Angeles Times

Washington

The Reagan administration has determined that Iraq is completing construction of a plant for production of biological weapons and has quietly expressed its "concern and displeasure" to the Baghdad government, U.S. sources confirmed yesterday.

U.S. officials have long considered Iraq to be one of about 10 nations it suspects of developing biological warfare capabilities, but evi-

dence of the plant's existence was only recently confirmed.

"We are clearly concerned about this development," one administration source said. "We

Scientist's Report in S.F. On Biological Weapons

SEE PAGE A19

strongly condemn the development of biological weapons."

Biological weapons — considered to be more potent than the chemical weapons used by Iraq to kill

Kurdish tribesmen near the Iranian border — are fiving organisms that cause diseases lethal to humans, such as cholera and typhoid fever, or animal diseases, such as anthrax. They can be dispersed into the air or water.

The United States has not publicly lodged an official protest with Iraq, perhaps to avoid embarrassing the strategically located Middle East nation.

It could not be determined immediately where the Iraqi plant is located. However, ABC News reported that it is believed to be in

Salman Pak, a city just south of Baghdad.

Iraqi Ambassador Abdul Amir Anbari denied that such a plant exists and called the disclosures a "deliberate campaign of disinformation."

Iraq responded with similar denials five years ago after the United Nations accused the country of developing chemical weapons. Iraq later used mustard gas and other chemical weapons during its war with Iran and against Kurdish insurgents inside the nation.

Germ weapons are banned under the 1972 Biological Weapons

Convention, which has been signed by 126 nations, including the United States.

The United States stopped producing germ warfare agents in 1969 and has since destroyed its stockpiles.

Washington, however, has frequently cited several Third World nations' research on biological weapons as a reason to continue plans to construct a biological weapons test facility in Utah. The planned facility would use deadly and infectious germ agents in tests of protective gear and decontamination procedures.

U.S. Finds Iraq Has Germ War Plant

By ROBIN WRIGHT and WILLIAM C. REMPEL, *Times Staff Writers*

WASHINGTON—The Reagan Administration has determined that Iraq—which reportedly used chemical weapons with devastating effect in its war against Iran—is now completing construction of a plant to produce even more fearsome biological weapons, U.S. sources confirmed Tuesday.

The Administration has quietly expressed its "concern and displeasure" to the Baghdad government, the sources said.

U.S. officials long have considered Iraq one of about 10 nations it suspects of developing germ warfare capabilities, but evidence of the plant's existence was only recently confirmed.

"We are clearly concerned about this development," one Administration source said. "We strongly condemn the development of biological weapons."

The United States has not publicly lodged an official protest, perhaps to avoid embarrassing the strategically located Middle East nation, whose relations with the United States have improved in the last few years. The United States may also be reluctant to criticize Iraq openly for fear of driving it out of the moderate Arab camp where it has been since 1984.

Although Iraq's ability to manufacture deadly biological toxins is believed to be growing, it still is not as advanced as Israel's and Syria's, a State Department source said.

The disclosure comes only weeks after the Reagan Administration revealed that Libya was constructing a chemical weapons facility, raising fears that such exotic weapons might be used against Israel or by terrorist groups aligned with radical Mideast states. The State Department source said that Libya also is believed to be developing a biological weapons capability.

Biological weapons are living organisms that cause diseases lethal to humans, such as cholera and typhoid fever, or animal diseases, such as anthrax. They can be dispersed into the air or water.

It could not be determined immediately where the Iraqi plant is located. However, ABC News reported that it is believed to be in Salman Pak, a city just south of Baghdad.

The Associated Press also reported Tuesday that Israeli officials and U.S. military experts have

concluded that Iraq is "on the verge" of manufacturing biological weapons.

Iraqi Ambassador Abdul Amir Anbari denied that such a plant exists and called the disclosures a "deliberate campaign of disinformation." Iraq, however, responded with similar denials five years ago after the United Nations accused the country of developing chemical weapons. Iraq later used mustard gas and other chemical weapons during its war with Iran and against Kurdish insurgents inside the nation.

More Potent

Biological weapons are considered more potent than the chemical weapons that Iraq is believed to have used to kill about 5,000 Kurds near the Iranian border. However, U.S. sources said that problems with delivery methods and hazards to friendly forces make biological weapons more difficult to use.

An obstacle to their effective use is that they are "hard to control and hard to deliver," an Administration official said.

"At this stage, Mideast states can handle chemical warfare much more effectively" than biological combat, the source said. He said it is not known whether Iraq has the capability to use biological weapons.

Another Administration source said that it "may be several years" before Iraq has a biological weapons system that is usable in combat.

Iraq's ability to launch modified Soviet-made Scud-B missiles up to

600 miles, proved during its war with Iran, heightens concerns that it might combine biological weapons systems with its improved missile threat.

Germ weapons are banned under the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention, which has been signed by 126 nations. The United States stopped producing germ warfare agents in 1969 and has since destroyed all its stockpiles.

The development of a biological warfare facility in Iraq is particularly alarming to U.S. officials because Iraq has shown its willingness to violate the international agreement banning use of chemical weapons.

The United States has frequently cited several Third World nations' research on biological weapons as a reason to continue plans to construct a \$5.4-million biological weapons test facility at Dugway Proving Grounds in Utah, about 70 miles southwest of Salt Lake City. The facility would use deadly and infectious germ agents in tests of protective gear and decontamination procedures.

U.S. officials have said that 10 nations, several of them in the Middle East, are suspected of efforts to achieve a biological warfare capability. The list of nations is classified, but sources have confirmed that Iraq is on it.

Only isolated incidents of biological warfare have been recorded throughout history. In one case during World War I, however, the Germans infected Romanian cavalry horses with the disease glanders.

KURDS?

most 10 million Kurds to use their own describe themselves an of imprisonment. ally known as 's'. In the 1920s and rebelled against this and the government m with great ferocity, sands from their continued stringent over 9 million people the rise of a Marxist the Kurdish (PKK), which attacks es and those who them, and is onble for the death eople in recent ts an independent e have been brutal ernment security rts that many have been arrested, risoned.

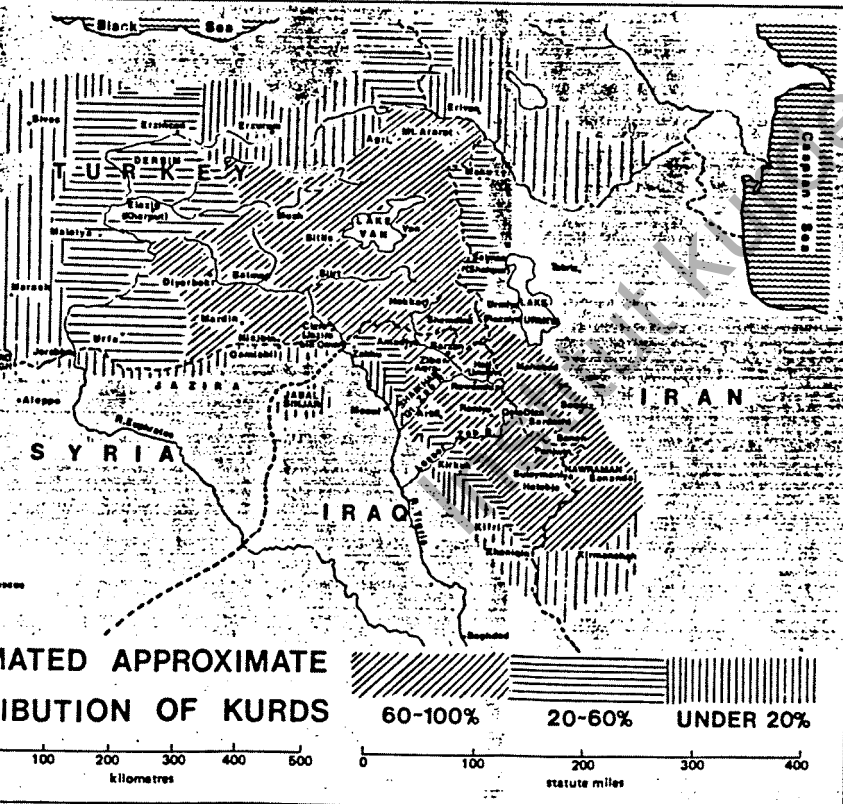
In Iran the Kurds were similarly brought under control in the 1920s. In 1946 the Kurds of Mahabad succeeded in declaring an independent republic, but it only lasted a few months, and the authorities hanged the ringleaders. Tribal chiefs were allowed to register tribal lands as personal possessions and were welcomed into the Iranian ruling elite, in return for making sure their tribes obeyed the government. After the Islamic revolution the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) rebelled after demands for autonomy were refused by Tehran. In Iraq there were numerous revolts against Baghdad, mainly by Mullah Mustafa Barzani, the famous leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iraq (KDP). From 1964 until 1975 Barzani was strong enough to maintain an intermittent state of war and peace negotiations. In 1974 the governing Ba'ath party offered the Kurds autonomy, but the Kurds believed it lacked substance and they reverted to war, strongly supported and encouraged by Iran. But when Iraq offered to yield part



of the vital Shatt-al-Arab waterway to Iran in 1975, the latter withdrew support from Iraq's Kurdish rebels and the revolt collapsed. Iraq destroyed villages in the border area and removed the inhabitants to "model villages" outside its new cordon sanitaire.

THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR 1980-88

Either side of the border Kurds seized the opportunity of the new war to establish independent enclaves. Iraq unsuccessfully supported Iranian Kurds, who were quickly defeated and expelled from Iranian territory in 1983. But in Iraq the two main Kurdish parties, the KDP and the newer Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) established control over an area about half the size of Wales, tying down a quarter of Iraq's army and inhibiting movement on many main roads in north Iraq after dark. In 1987 and early 1988 the KDP and PUK, with Iranian support, began to advance slowly through Iraqi Kurdistan. But Iran was already nearing the end of its ability to continue the war. In particular Iraq's gas attacks on Iranian forces persuaded Iran to accept a ceasefire, which came into force on 20 August 1988. During the next fortnight seasoned Iraqi troops drove KDP and PUK fighters out of almost all Iraqi Kurdistan, using gas, massive bombardment and the threat of shooting all Kurds found in "prohibited areas", i.e. areas it wrested from rebel control. The humanitarian consequence is thousands of Kurd civilians dead from gas attack, bombardment or shootings, and many more either refugees or detainees in prison camps.



Iraq's abuse of human rights

From the Principal of St Anne's College, Oxford, and others

Sir, In your leader (January 30) your comment on the inadequacies of the United Nations Human Rights Commission and its failure to take action on abuses of human rights in Iraq "unpopular" countries. You give East Germany and Romania as two examples amongst several states whose misconduct is not being publicly examined and point out how cases such as these are well documented by Amnesty International and the Minority Rights Group.

Extraordinarily there is your country where there is overwhelming evidence that it has used chemical weapons on its own population, including thousands of women and children, and every 1,000 villages forcibly removed almost 500,000 people from their homes and driven tens of thousands of people to neighbouring states, in Iraq. Yet human rights abuses in Iraq are not included on the agenda for public discussion at the UN Human Rights Commission.

The Commission session comes within a few weeks of the Conference on Banning Chemical Weapons, where 149 states affirmed their abhorrence of the use of such weapons. International declarations are of little value if abuses are not condemned by the UN Human Rights Commission in the strongest possible terms.

The UN Secretary-General in January 1988 himself reported on the use of chemical weapons by Iraq. The UN's Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities failed publicly to condemn Iraq. Within a week the world's press revealed that tens of thousands of Iraqi Kurds in many areas bearing fresh wounds from chemical weapons were arriving in Turkey.

We hope that the United Kingdom's Government, with other governments, will ensure that the Iraqi Government's treatment of its own citizens is discussed publicly in Geneva and that a special rapporteur or mission is appointed to establish all the facts and to inhibit further abuses. Additionally, the UN Secretary-General should be invited to use his good offices to make certain that human rights are being respected in Iraq.

The signatories to this letter have been United Kingdom representatives on either the United Nations Commission on Human Rights or its Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities.

Yours faithfully,

CLAIRE PALLEY

PETER CALVOGROSSI

COLVILLE OF CULROSS

DIANA ELLES

RICHARD HISCOCKS

ANTHONY WILLIAMS

St Anne's College, Oxford

February 1

FRIEND TO THE PEOPLE WHO 'HAVE NO FRIENDS'

Kurdistan Culture Preserved

The Kurdish Library in Brooklyn, N.Y., houses information and rare artifacts

R. NORMAN MATHENY - 5

By Bill Breen

Special to The Christian Science Monitor

NEW YORK

A three-year-old library in Brooklyn seeks to give back to one of the world's oldest, and now disenfranchised, cultures a small portion of its language, literature, and place names — the stuff of which a culture is made.

The Kurdish Library is situated on the parlor floor of a privately owned brownstone in a quiet, tree-lined neighborhood. It is slowly becoming the repository for rare Kurdish books, costumes, and ancient maps, many of which are illegal in the countries that now claim portions of Kurdistan — mountainous, river-hewn land that has all but vanished from most modern maps.

Today the name Kurdistan is given only to a province within the borders of Iran, according to the *Kurdish Times*, a periodical published by the Kurdish Program. The program is a privately supported effort to publicize the plight of the Kurds.

Yet for centuries the Kurds have occupied a vast area stretching from the rolling uplands of southeastern Turkey through the sun-colored mountains of northern Iraq and into western Iran, including small pockets of Syria and the Soviet Union.

"My native tongue is Kurdish, but I never saw a Kurdish book until I came to this country," said Samande Siaband, an Iranian program associate at the Kurdish Library. "We are losing our identity as a people. That is why it is so important to have this library."

The Kurdish Library, according to its director, Vera Beaudin Saeedpour, is the only library in the Western Hemisphere that is devoted to the Kurdish people.



KURDISH COSTUMES: Reza Sadeg (left of center) and Samande Siaband (right) with mannequins in Iraqi dress.

The Kurds were nomadic herdsmen who have a distinctive history, language, and culture. Warred over since the 7th century, Kurdistan's boundaries were abolished in the aftermath of World War I, when it was divided by the newly created nation states of the Middle East.

The Kurds, who number between 15 million and 20 million and are the fourth-most-numerous people of the Middle East, have been rising in uncoordinated revolts since 1925. They have been suppressed by the Iranians, the Turks, and most recently, the Iraqis.

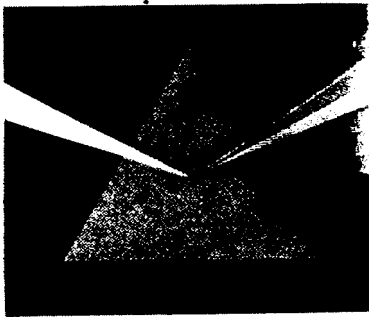
Thousands of Iraqi Kurds lost homes and lands to a government that last year razed hundreds of their villages and forced them into Turkey. Ironically, the Turkish government has imprisoned Kurds for speaking or writing in their own language, Mr. Siaband says. The Iranian government has largely crushed the Kurdish movement for autonomy.

The Kurdish motto, "We have no friends," takes on added poignancy for Kurdish immigrants in the United States, most of whom have settled in New York, New Jersey, Ohio, Michigan, and California. Many Kurds here repress their ethnicity out of fear of government retaliation against family members back home, and fear of being denied permission to return to their native country.

"In a sense, the Kurds here remain prisoners of their country of origin," says Mrs. Saeedpour.

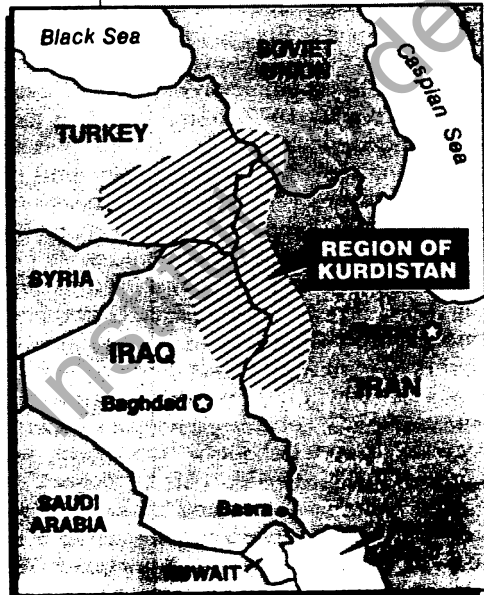
The Kurdish population in New York, which unofficial estimates put at 1,500, is so hidden that on several occasions Saeedpour has answered her doorbell to find a Kurdish book in a brown paper wrapper, and the donor nowhere in sight.

Naurooz Shadman, a Kurdish immigrant living in New Jersey, has been unable to contact his family in Iraq since last summer, when Iraqi forces began a major offensive against Kurdish rebels. At times, Mr. Shadman despairs of ever seeing his family again.



IDEAS

■ **'We are losing our identity as a people. That is why it is so important to have this library.'**
 — *Samande Siaband*



KURDISH HOMELAND: For centuries the Kurds have lived in the plateau and mountain area shaded on map. Since the 1930s, the name Kurdistan has been used for a province in western Iran that is bounded by Iraq and the Iranian provinces of West Azerbaijan, Hamadan, and Kermanshah.

Shadman feels that unless he can one day reunite his new American family with his family in Iraq, Kurdistan will have little meaning for his three young children. For him and many other Kurdish immigrants, Kurdistan is more a state of mind than a homeland.

"If I can expose my children to their people and language, they will have a feeling for their culture that they can pass on to their own children," says Shadman, who emigrated to the US in 1972. "Otherwise, they'll never know who they really are."

Though she is the widow of Hommayoun Saeedpour, a Kurdish scholar who died in 1981, Mrs. Saeedpour traces her interest in the Kurdish cause to the history of her own people. The daughter of an Orthodox Jew, she is keenly aware that people have been persecuted simply because of who they are. She sees a link between the world's silence

at the time of the Holocaust and current indifference to what she calls the persecution of the Kurds.

"For the West to put economic and strategic interests ahead of the defense of the Kurds is to forfeit the whole rationale behind condemning the Holocaust," she says.

In 1981, Mrs. Saeedpour established the Kurdish Program and obtained recognition from

Cultural Survival Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving threatened societies. Five years later she founded the Kurdish Library.

On a recent morning, six stained-glass windows diffused a low-lying sun, backlighting a large silver samovar centered in the small, elegant library. Enlarged color photographs of the craggy, rugged land and children clothed in dazzling fabrics of green and red, purple and orange, decorate the walls. Alongside the prints are maps dating to 1807 that define the former boundaries of Kurdistan.

Glass cases display musical instruments and flat woven Kilim rugs. Mannequins wear skirts made of hand-loomed goat hair from Turkey, and brocade and velvet dresses from Iran and Iraq.

The library contains more than 1,000 works on Kurdish history and culture written in Kurdish, English, French, and German. Many of the books were smuggled out of the Middle East.

Among them is the only alphabet book published in northern Kurdistan — most of the copies were confiscated by Turkish authorities and its author was imprisoned for four months; and "Scharef Naneh," a rare history of the Kurds written by a Kurd.

The library, open by appointment, is used by scholars, journalists, and Kurds who want to keep their culture alive for their immigrant families. Accordingly, the Kurdish Library is initiating an educational program for children so that they "may learn things Kurdish," said Saeedpour, "without a shroud of secrecy and shame."

■ *The Kurdish Library is located at 345 Park Place, Brooklyn, N.Y.*

Mideast getting missile help, U.S. concludes

By Robert Gillette
Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON — The United States has concluded that leading West German and Italian aerospace companies have played a critical role in helping Egypt, Iraq, Libya and Argentina develop medium-range ballistic missiles capable of carrying chemical warheads.

Until recently, arms controllers worried about the proliferation of ballistic missiles mainly as the delivery vehicles for nuclear weapons in regional conflicts. Now, however, intelligence analysts see the potential of medium-range missiles to deliver chemical weapons as a much more immediate and urgent threat.

Ranges exceed 600 miles

With ranges exceeding 600 miles, such missiles easily would span the compact geography of the Middle East, for example, adding a volatile new element of high-technology weaponry to an already volatile region. The same is true of potential conflicts in much of Latin America.

Responding to new perceptions of the threat, some members of Congress are preparing to introduce legislation to impose sanctions on industrial companies aiding the spread of missile technology. At the same time, administration officials, skeptical of the value of sanctions, are taking a new look at the adequacy of a control agreement on missile technology signed in April 1987, by the United States, West Germany, Italy, France, Japan, Canada and Great Britain.

In both Congress and the Bush administration, concern about the spread of ballistic missile technology from European companies to developing countries has been intensified by the international storm over the role of German companies in building a Libyan plant that the United States says will produce chemical weapons.

Libya continues to insist that the complex at Rabta, 40 miles from Tripoli in the Sahara desert, is a pharmaceutical plant, although it is defended by anti-aircraft missiles.

In range and payload, the medium-range missiles spreading to the Third World are similar to those the United States and the Soviet Union agreed to eliminate in 1987.

According to an unclassified 1985 study by the Defense Intelligence Agency, a medium-range missile carrying 1,200 pounds of the viscous nerve agent VX would produce a 50 percent casualty rate in a target area ½ mile wide and 2½ miles long.

Administration officials said that West Germany's largest aerospace company, Messerschmidt-Boelkow-Blohm, has been a major contributor to a joint Egyptian, Iraqi and Argentine missile program since the early 1980s and that SNIA-BPD, a leading subsidiary of the Italian industrial giant Fiat, also has fed essential technology to the program.

Those sources said the Pentagon barred the Italian company from doing business with two U.S. defense companies for six months in 1987 and 1988, in an unpublicized effort to dissuade SNIA-BPD from aiding the three-nation project. But they said the temporary sanction appeared unsuccessful. The suspension was lifted in April 1988, apparently because SNIA-BPD was considered a promising European partner in the space-defense program of the administration of former President Reagan.

No such action has been taken against the West German company, although officials said evidence points to Messerschmidt-Boelkow-Blohm's continued participation in the joint missile project, as well as in a separate Iraqi missile project in the northern city of Mosul, which is also a suspected site of chemical weapons development.

Officials in Washington said that despite repeated entreaties to Bonn and Rome, there are indications that German and Italian assistance is continuing to flow to a joint development of a missile that Argentina calls the Condor-2 and Egypt calls the Badr-2000. Iraq — which earned worldwide condemnation last year for its devastating chemical attacks on Iranian troops

and Kurdish tribe members — is believed to have been a major financial backer of the project.

Given its range and a payload capacity of more than 1,100 pounds, the missile easily would reach Israeli targets from Egypt or Iraq. It also would put the British-held Falkland Islands within range of Argentine launch sites.

Continuing problems with the missile's guidance system are believed to have forced a postponement of its first test last year, but some U.S. analysts expect Argentina to attempt a launch in the next two to three months.

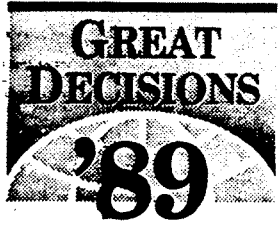
In addition, officials said, there is persuasive evidence that German companies continue to provide technical help to Libya in developing its own medium-range missile. Intelligence also is said to indicate that the Libyan plant at Rabta — built chiefly with German assistance — includes fabrication facilities capable of turning out ballistic missile prototypes.

Condor-2 triggers alarm

"This (President Bush's) government has got to decide what it wants to do about missiles — whether they carry conventional, chemical, biological or nuclear warheads," an administration official said.

German companies, chiefly Messerschmidt-Boelkow-Blohm, began aiding Argentina's development of a small single-stage rocket called the Condor-1 in 1979 under an agreement reportedly approved by then-Chancellor Helmut Schmidt. In the early 1980s, Egypt — with Iraqi backing — is said to have signed a cooperative agreement with Argentina to develop the much larger two-stage Condor-2, triggering alarm among British defense analysts who saw it as a potential threat to the Falklands.

BRIEFING



U.S. Challenge in Mideast

The Persian Gulf is, in many ways, more volatile than it was eight years ago

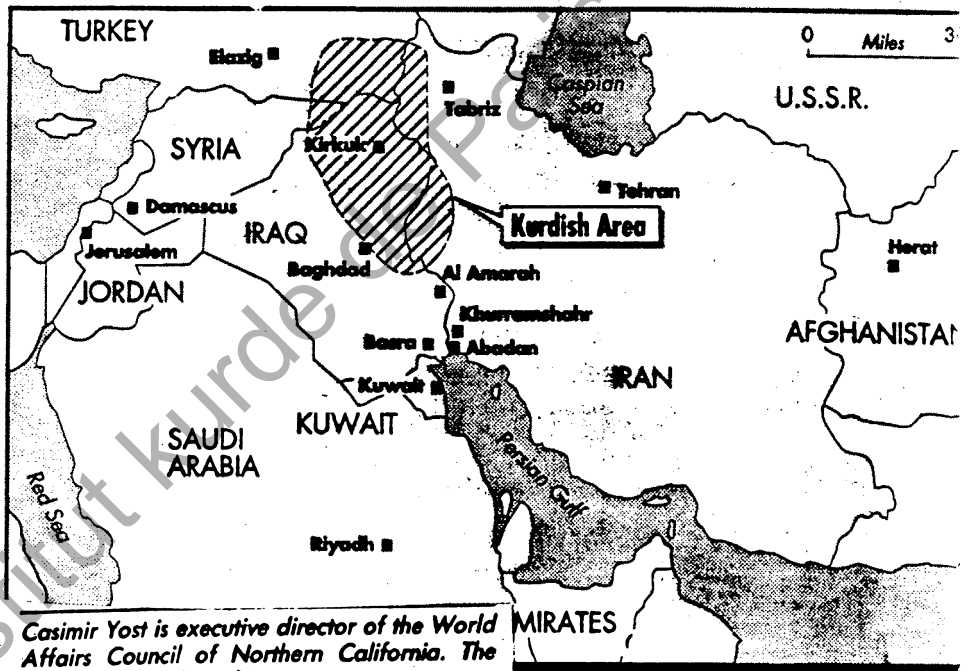
BY CASIMIR A. YOST
Special to The Chronicle

The world is at once more peaceful and more dangerous than eight years ago. Nowhere is this contradiction more evident for President George Bush and his new administration than in the Persian Gulf region.

Eight years ago the Soviets were fully ensconced in Afghanistan and the Iran-Iraq war had just begun. Today, Soviet troops are withdrawing from their Afghan perch overlooking the gulf, and the U.N.-monitored truce between Iraq and Iran continues to hold. Despite a highly destructive war, oil exports from the region were never seriously impeded.

But the region is more dangerous today because a grim legacy of the Iran-Iraq war has been to break the taboo against using chemical weapons and to introduce into Middle East warfare the extensive use of long-range ballistic missiles. One is left with a foreboding thought: While this war was indeed terrible, the next could be far worse and could directly engage close friends of the United States in the Middle East.

Several Middle East countries, including Iran, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Israel and Egypt, have long-range missiles. And several have the capacity to manufacture — in some cases already have — sizable stockpiles of chemical weapons. Reportedly, biological weapons are being introduced into some national inventories in the Middle East.



Casimir Yost is executive director of the World Affairs Council of Northern California. The views expressed are his own

GREAT DECISIONS '89 The U.S. Role in Persian Gulf

This is the second week of the Great Decisions '89 program, which consists of eight weekly meetings in communities throughout America to discuss significant U.S. foreign policy issues.

Subject material related to the weekly Great Decisions topic will run in the Briefing section every Wednesday during the program. The subject for discussion this week is "The Persian Gulf: Reassessing the U.S. Role."

Great Decisions '89 is sponsored locally by the World Affairs Council of Northern California in cooperation with the Foreign Policy Association, a non-government, nonpartisan organization.

Its aim is to stimulate citizen participation in world affairs.

Participants in Great Decisions will record their views in opinion ballots distributed at the weekly meetings. The ballots will be tabulated and circulated to members of Congress and the executive branch.

Discussion groups are still being formed and telephone reservations for the weekly lecture are being accepted. Information on Great Decisions '89 can be obtained from the World Affairs Council, 312 Sutter Street, Suite 200, San Francisco 94108; phone 982-2541.

So ominous is the situation that in a speech last year the then deputy director of the CIA, Robert Gates, said: "The most immediate threat to world peace may well come from the proliferation of chemical and biological warfare capabilities in the Third World."

President Bush, in short, has his work cut out for him in the Persian Gulf region. Some will argue that the president should not venture into the Middle East quagmire. This is bad advice. A sharp deterioration, as between Arabs and Israelis or Arabs and Iranians, could literally occur at any time. The United States has a direct stake in the peaceful resolution of disputes in the region.

Critical Uncertainties

U.S. policy makers face several critical uncertainties in attempting to plot America's future course in the Persian Gulf — for example, what Soviet capabilities and ambitions will be in the region following their withdrawal from Afghanistan. Is Iran so sobered by its eight-year war that it is turning inward? Is there a "new" Iraq prepared to be a responsible member of the regional community of nations? Have any fissures developed in Saudi political stability which could worsen? Finally, what are U.S. interests in the Persian Gulf and how do these relate to our wider interests in the Middle East?

These questions are difficult precisely because the answers are not self-evident. Yet, policy makers will be driven to make assumptions with respect to each, which in turn will drive ultimate policy choices.

THE SOVIETS — Much of America's policy in the Middle East in the post-World War II period has been in reaction to Soviet moves in the region. Both Presidents Carter and Reagan expanded the U.S. role in the area in response to Soviet actions. In the case of Carter, the triggering event was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. In Reagan's case, it was the Soviet offer to protect Kuwaiti tankers.

Now we are left in a quandry. On the one hand, the Soviet Union seems to be reducing its foreign commitments to concentrate on domestic imperatives. On the other, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's durability is in doubt.

Policies could change dramatically in response to changes in Moscow or opportunities in the Middle East. There is no reason to believe that the Soviets' interest in their southern neighbors has dissipated and every reason to believe that more nuanced Soviet diplomacy, unhampered by Afghanistan occupation, could seek fresh openings in the gulf region.

IRAN — We know remarkably little about what is occurring in the councils of government in Iran. We only dimly appreciate what drives Iranian policies. The Iranian

A grim legacy of the Iran-Iraq war has been to break the taboo against using chemical weapons

ceasefire decision was painful and not necessarily permanent. Iranian tracks are evident in the chaos in Lebanon and elsewhere. Yet, Iran is arguably the prize for Soviet and U.S. policy makers. At a minimum, each will undoubtedly seek to insure that the other's influence in Tehran is limited.

The post-Khomeini era could be one of great instability. It is far from clear that any succession leadership in Iran will have the stature and authority to agree to a peace settlement with Iraq.

IRAQ — Necessity drove Iraq and the United States together. For much of the Iran-Iraq war Washington viewed a victory by Iran as the more likely and dangerous possibility. Without explicitly tilting toward Baghdad, the United States took actions that benefited the Iraqi war effort, including promoting — with a notable and well-publicized lapse — an arms embargo of Iran.

The war ground to a halt when Iraq intensified its use of long-range missiles and chemical weapons and mauled Iranian forces in sectoral attacks, capturing huge amounts of equipment and effectively neutralizing Iran's war machine.

The unresolved question facing U.S. policy makers is what regional role Iraq now is prepared to play. Its use of chemical weapons against not only Iran but reportedly against its own Kurdish citizens is worrisome. Despite the support Iraq received during its war with Iran from Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and other moderate Arab states, it remains unclear that it will now concentrate on the massive task of internal reconstruction.

There are those analysts who argue that we will see a more benign Iraq. For others, the evidence is unpersuasive. What is likely is that Iraq will remain antagonistic toward Iran and probably Syria. What is in question will be the warmth of its relations with moderate Arab states.

SAUDI ARABIA — The other significant player in the region is Saudi Arabia. Oil wealth, geography and a relatively homogeneous population give Riyadh its strength. The kingdom reinforced its position with very creative diplomacy during the latter years of the Iran-Iraq war.

Questions persist about the longevity of the Saudi regime. For the moment, the royal family appears secure. In the meantime, Saudi Arabia continues to add to its military capabilities, including, most recently, long-range Chinese ground-to-ground missiles and British Tornado fighter bombers. The Saudis have proved conclusively that they have alternatives to U.S.-supplied weapons.

U.S. INTERESTS — The United States must grapple with a broad range of interconnected issues in the Middle East. It will be extremely difficult to separate limitations on chemical weapons production from an Iran-Iraq peace agreement, U.S. arms sales to moderate Arab states from an Arab-Israeli peace agreement, and effective efforts to combat terrorism from progress on resolving regional disputes throughout the Middle East.

The primary U.S. interest in the Persian Gulf remains secure access for the West to the region's energy sources. In the current glut market, the risks of interruption are minimal, but a projected tightening of markets in the 1990s could reverse this situation.

It remains in the U.S. interest to build positive relations with regional powers and to retain the capability to project our force in the area. Trying to put the chemical weapons genie back in the bottle should be an urgent U.S. priority. Arab efforts to tie chemical weapons restrictions to nuclear weapons limitations will make this effort more difficult.

Economic Needs

The pressing needs of the region are economic: reconstruction in Iran and Iraq, economic relief in Jordan. Unemployed workers throughout the Middle East will fuel instability. U.S. interests will be served if economic issues dominate the agendas of all the countries in the region. Regrettably, it remains unlikely that this will be the case. Political instability may be the norm. An isolated Syria, for example, could be a cause of disruption in the region.

Washington must continue to operate on the assumption that the Soviet Union will retain interest in the gulf. Significant instability in post-Khomeini Iran could provide a temptation for the U.S.S.R. On the other hand, we should seek, and may find, ways in which U.S.-Soviet interest in the Middle East may coincide and cooperation is possible. We should continue to seek an improved dialogue with Iran, recognizing that, for the present, the continuation of the captivity of American hostages in Lebanon makes improved Iran-U.S. ties unlikely.

We need to be alert to the evolution in Iraqi external policy. We have an interest in participating in the reconstruction of the war-ravaged Iraqi economy, but the reported stockpiling of chemical and other weapons in both Iran and Iraq must be viewed as ominous. We need to give every support to the efforts of the United Nations to achieve an Iran-Iraq peace agreement.

Absent an Arab-Israeli peace settlement, the United States cannot expect to play a significant role in the weapons purchases of either Saudi Arabia or Jordan. This is particularly the case with respect to advanced aircraft. This said, we should be prepared to respond to legitimate security needs of the smaller Arab gulf states.

More than ever, a settlement between Israel, her neighbors and the Palestinians would serve U.S. interests and the interests of reduced tension in the Middle East. We should be working vigorously for such a settlement.

The risk the Bush administration faces is that conflict could erupt again in the Middle East, worse than before, and more prejudicial to U.S. interests. We will not have been well served if U.S. policies during the coming months have not prepared us for this eventuality.

Iraqi leader reportedly quashes coup attempt

Los Angeles Times

CAIRO, Egypt — Iraqi President Saddam Hussein recently survived an attempted coup for which a number of senior army officers have been executed, according to diplomats, Iraqi dissidents and intelligence sources.

Details of the attempted coup are sketchy and, in several instances, contradictory. Kurdish rebel spokesmen and other Iraqi dissident sources have said that as many as 200 army officers and civilians from the ruling Arab Baath Socialist Party have been executed over the last two months.

A senior Arab intelligence official who monitors Iraq closely said the coup attempt occurred around the beginning of January and involved officers from military units stationed in northern Iraq.

Three of Iraq's seven army corps are stationed in the north — the 5th Army Corps, which is deployed along the border with Turkey.

Anyone familiar with Iraq knows that if Saddam even suspects someone of dissent, then that dissenter is a goner.

A specialist said. "Everyone has long suspected that there was a lot of dissent within the army but that it was being held in check by the war (with Iran)," one diplomat familiar with Iraq said. "The question always was what would happen after the war."

"Knowing about the discontent, Saddam may have moved against potential rivals and malcontents first," the diplomat added. "Anyone familiar with Iraq knows that

key, the 1st Special Corps, east of Mosul; and the 2nd Corps, around Sulaymaniyah. Both the 1st and the 2nd Corps were involved in Iraq's recent campaign against Kurdish separatists, which achieved international notoriety both for its scorched-earth brutality and reported use of chemical weapons.

Some reports circulating in both diplomatic and intelligence circles have indicated that officers from the elite Republican Guards — which is charged with protecting the president — were also involved in the attempted coup. If true, this would indicate that the attempt may have constituted a more serious threat to Hussein's regime than previous attempts by army units or dissident groups to overthrow or assassinate him.

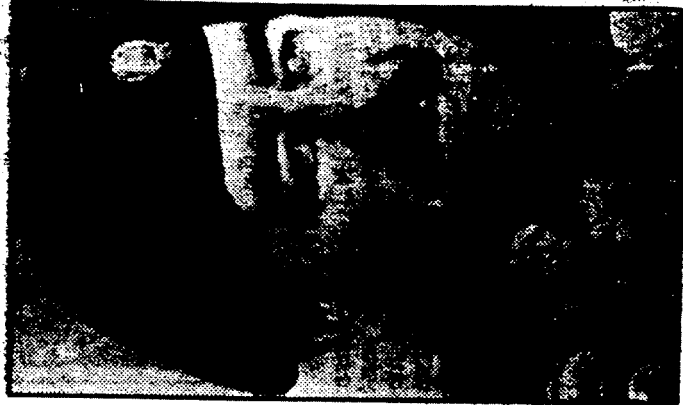
"The Republican Guards are the forces that are supposed to protect Saddam from the rest of the army, so if they were involved, it would be very serious indeed," one Iraqi

ing to preliminary intelligence reports, the number of officers arrested and shot in the aftermath of the attempted coup number "only seven or eight," all generals or colonels.

Army Day, which is celebrated every Jan. 6, was canceled this year without explanation. But apart from that — and the fact that Baghdad is abuzz with rumors of the attempted coup — there have been no outward signs of trouble. "Saddam seems to have contained this. His power is not threatened," the Arab intelligence source said.

The war, which cost Iraq a \$70 billion debt and took the lives of more than 160,000 Iraqis, by official count. While there is enormous relief that it is over, the equally enormous task of reconstruction is already said to have run into snags.

To deal with the war debt, the Baghdad regime is trying to shrug off its socialist constraints through



Saddam Hussein
... Officers executed

the easing of price controls and by moving a number of state-run industries, especially agricultural and service, into the private sector.

Iraq: An Accusation of Torture

When Iraq used poison gas against its own Kurdish civilians last year, much of the world recoiled in disgust. Now the regime of strongman Saddam Hussein is under fire again—this time for alleged brutality to children, including torture. According to a report issued last week by the human-rights monitoring group Amnesty International, Iraqi security services "routinely" target children of political dissidents, Army deserters and Kurds, taking them hostage, torturing them in front of their relatives or killing them. The youngest victim on record: a 5-month-old baby who was kept, deprived of milk and screaming, beside its parents'

cell—to force confessions of political offenses out of them.

"Disappeared" Iraqi children have been killed in mass executions on several occasions, according to the London-based agency, which received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1977. The Iraqis often devise grisly ways to increase the suffering of parents and relatives, the report said: last year, before the bodies of Kurdish children could be released, the families had to pay an "execution tax" to cover the expense of coffins and transportation—and even the bullets the executioners used. Amnesty recounted stories of children kept in bestial conditions and tortured with fingernail ex-

traction, sexual attacks and electric shocks.

Iraq denied all the charges in Amnesty's detailed 70-page report. The group appealed to the U.N. Commission on Human Rights in Geneva to investigate, but the commission may find it politically difficult to take forceful action. Last month it delivered a tepid 400-page report on rights abuse in Cuba; it was written in part by representatives of Cuba's ally Bulgaria. Iraq may prove to have powerful friends, too. Among the countries that have lent support to Hussein's regime in recent years are the Soviet Union, France—and the United States.

U.S. Export Controls Lax on Poison-Gas Materials

New York Times

Washington

Bush administration officials acknowledge that U.S. export controls have many of the same deficiencies that have permitted Western European companies to help Third World countries build poison-gas factories without fear of legal sanctions.

The administration is studying ways to correct the shortcomings, which some officials fear could undermine U.S. attempts to persuade allied nations to help stem the proliferation of chemical weapons with stronger export rules.

This year, after repeated American complaints about the role of West German companies in the chemical weapons programs of Libya and Iraq, the Bonn government proposed tighter export laws.

Swiss officials said this month that they are considering similar changes after the United States complained that a Swiss company provided Egypt with the main elements of a factory that could be used to make poison gas.

American officials say the existing U.S. export regulations do not bar the export of chemicals and

equipment that can be used for poison-gas manufacture to many Third World nations, including some that the United States has identified as having active chemical-weapons programs.

As an example, officials cited a 1985 deal in which an American company, Stauffer Chemicals, provided the design for a plant in Egypt that makes a chemical that can be used to make both nerve gas and nonlethal civilian products.

"If you want to stop this stuff from getting to everyone beyond the industrialized West who has poison gas capability, the law needs to be strengthened," said Paul Freedberg, undersecretary of commerce for export administration.

Freedberg said the Bush administration is reviewing its export regulations and is already planning corrective steps, such as expanding the list of chemicals barred for sale outside the West without a license.

He said the existing rules are sufficient to prevent the export of chemicals needed for poison gas to Iran, Iraq, Syria and Libya.

Although no foreign country or American legislator has assailed the U.S. export regulations on chemicals, a State Department official said. "There is a realization that we have got to get our own house in order, particularly when we are beating on other people for tolerating chemical deals that we don't like."

"I live in fear of the day when the German ambassador may come in here and say that Bonn has found an American company selling chemical weapons materials to the Middle East," he added.

William Webster, the director of the CIA, told Congress last month that American export laws are "probably not" strong enough.

Pesticide Still Missing

Rennes, France

French salvage crews still have found no trace of a pesticide container lost in the English Channel 10 days ago, maritime officials said yesterday.

Reuters

Agence de Paris



The faces of Iraq's vanishing children. Nabi Muhammad Shukur (left), Zikri Nasskhosh (right), both 12, and Hikmat Hassan Mala (below), aged nine, all of whom have "disappeared" during Iraq's war on its children.

IRAQ'S WAR ON ITS CHILDREN

Children and young infants have become routine targets of abuse and torture in Iraqi prisons, say eyewitnesses who have talked to Amnesty International.

A former Iraqi prisoner, who had been detained for five months at al-Karkh Security Directorate between November 1984 and April 1985 recently told Amnesty International in a sworn statement that children have become pawns in the authorities' attempts to extract confessions from their parents.

"Usually they keep [infant] children in a separate cell next to the father or mother's cell and deprive them of milk in order to force the parents to confess," he said. "I saw a five-month-old baby screaming in this state."

The prisoner, whose identity is being kept confidential for his own protection, also said that his own family had been used by prison authorities in order to extract a confession from him.

"My mother [73], three sisters, and three brothers, with five children between five and 13, were arrested and brought in front of me," he explained. "They were subjected to *falaga* [beating on the soles of the feet] and electric shocks."

Iraq's children have been victims of political killings, judicial and extrajudicial state executions, "disappearance," arbitrary arrest, and detention without trial as well as torture and ill-treatment, all in flagrant violation of Iraq's international commitments and its own laws protecting children, Amnesty says in a report released in March.

The organization reported that during a period of just six weeks during 1987 Iraqi authorities repeatedly breached their own laws which stipulate that the death penalty must be commuted to a lesser offense if the offender is a minor under 18.

Among the victims were youthful alleged supporters of the prohibited Kurdistan Democratic Party. Rizgar Abdallah, 16, was one of 14 minors executed at Mosul Training Camp on October 28, 1987. Ismail As'ad, 15, was among nine Kurds executed on November 18 in Fa'ideh Garrison. All the death sentences of minors followed summary trials before military courts.

Amnesty International protested the execution of a 17-year-old boy, Abd al-Rahman Ahmad Haji, at Abu Ghraib Prison near Baghdad in November 1985. The organization was told by Iraqi authorities that the boy had been granted a "fair trial where all judicial and legal measures were respected according to the Iraqi constitution."

But Amnesty International says many executions in Iraq of children take place without even the pretext of a trial.

In early January 1987, 29 children and youths from the province of Sulaimaniya were murdered without trial.

In another case in late 1987, Iraqi officials killed 150 Kurdish prisoners from the province of Sulaimaniya in Abu Ghraib Prison. Among those murdered were eight secondary school students. Dann Haji Sidiq Mar'uf was only 14 at the time. The bodies were then returned to the families who were charged an "execution tax" of 300 Iraqi dinars to cover the cost of bullets, a coffin, and transportation of the corpses.

Children of suspected government opponents have been rounded up and imprisoned on massive scale. In September and October 1985 more than 300 Kurdish children and youths were arbitrarily arrested by security forces in Sulaimaniya.

According to information reaching Amnesty they were held in retaliation for the political

activities of relatives who had either deserted the army or were members of the Pesh Merga armed Kurdish military units. The fate of most of the children, who were apparently seized as hostages, remains unknown, although three were reported to have died following torture and 29 were reportedly executed without trial.

According to the testimony of a former detainee, released from Fudaliyya Security Headquarters in late 1985, some of the roughly 300 children incarcerated in that prison during his period of incarceration were beaten, whipped, sexually abused, and administered electric shock torture.

A former prisoner who was released in September 1988 testified that female prisoners have been hung upside down by the feet during menstruation and prison officials have inserted objects in their vaginas causing the hymen to break.

Common torture methods in Iraq have included burning, gouging out eyes, cutting off noses and ears, breasts and penises, and axing off limbs.

Amnesty International reports that some of these methods have been used against children. Abd al-Rahman had been tortured by having his fingernails pulled out.

Amnesty International has also reported on the mass use of chemical weapons against civilians, including children, by Iraqi forces since April 1987 and on the use of rat poison by Iraqi agents to kill suspected government opponents. Trifa Said Mohammad, 14, suffered acute pain in her legs following the poisoning of a yogurt drink in November 1987, and subsequently became paralyzed. In March 1988 she was flown to the Netherlands for treatment. She may suffer permanent disability. ■

U.N. Rejects Iraq Rapporteur

On March 8 the United Nations Human Rights Commission rejected a proposition by 15 member states calling for a special rapporteur to be appointed to study Iraq's human rights record.

Stating that it was "deeply disturbed by the decision," Amnesty International said the commission's decision seemed "irreconcilable with a genuine commitment to bring a halt to human rights violations in Iraq.

"The Commission has chosen to do nothing about human rights violations in Iraq that cry out for international attention and action," Amnesty International said.

The organization added that the Commission could be seen as sending a signal to the victims of abuse and their families that certain human rights situations might be immune from U.N. concern.

The March 8 vote followed an earlier announcement that the human rights situation in Iraq would not be considered by the Commission under a confidential procedure used to examine consistent patterns of gross violations of human rights. ■

Iran, Turkey Recall Envoys in Dispute

Iran recalled its ambassador to Turkey yesterday in apparent retaliation for a similar decision announced earlier by Turkey.

State-run Tehran television, monitored in Nicosia, quoted an unidentified spokesman at the Iranian Foreign Ministry as saying that the decision to recall Ambassador Manouchehr Mottaki stemmed from the "Turkish government's unprincipled and unfriendly treatment of the Iranian ambassador."

Hours earlier, Nuzhet Kandemir, a Turkish foreign undersecretary, told reporters that Ambassador Omer Akbel will be recalled from Tehran within a week.

Kandemir said Iran had "shown an unaccustomed and bothersome interest" in a recent decision by Turkey's constitutional court to ban Turkish university women from wearing traditional Islamic head scarves on campus.

Amazon basin and demanded prosecution of anyone damaging the environment.

Institut kurde de Paris

The New York Times

Kurds Seek a Safe Home in a Free Country

To the Editor:

Your report that Kurdish refugees from Iraq have spent seven months in tents in Turkey (news story, March 31) is a sad commentary on the world's chronic evasion of responsibility for dealing with the Kurdish problem in the Middle East. Visitors to the refugee camps — foreign doctors looking for symptoms of poison gas, lawmakers seeking proof, journalists looking for a good story — can offer little more than sympathy.

The core of the problem, of which the refugees are the latest manifestation, is how the divided Kurds can survive as Kurds of Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey, countries into which they have been apportioned since the aftermath of World War I. These are countries bent on denying and destroying the ethnic identity of their Kurdish populations.

The solution lies not in settling Iraqi Kurds in Turkey, which denies the ethnic existence of its own 10 million Kurds. Were the Iraqi Kurds to be resettled in Turkey, they would lose their Kurdishness.

Your description of Turkey as "a reluctant host" burdened with refugees for whom no other country will

provide is inconsistent with the facts. For the last seven months since the refugees arrived, Turkey has stymied offers of aid from the International Red Cross and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. A government with no agenda other than providing humanitarian aid would have welcomed the High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Red Cross to lessen the burden on its own social services. Other governments have insisted that such organizations be permitted to administer aid directly: Turkey wants only money. Nor has Turkey allowed these Iraqi Kurds to be certified as refugees so that they can be processed and resettled elsewhere.

Sympathy for the Kurds is not enough. The doctors, lawmakers and journalists can complete their missions and return to safe and comfortable homes in free countries. And if the international community really cared, governments would unite to devise a strategy that gives the Kurds what their visitors take for granted.

VERA BEAUDIN SAEEDPOUR
Director, Kurdish Program
Cultural Survival Inc.
Brooklyn, April 3, 1989

Missile Plant Technology

U.S. Firms' Sales to Iraq Told

Washington Post

Washington

Before export restrictions were imposed in 1987, a number of American companies sold equipment that helped Iraq build a large military-industrial complex capable of developing missiles, U.S. officials disclosed yesterday.

"We're aware of the fact that American technology was sold to the Saad 16 complex," said a U.S. official, who described the facility near Mosul in northern Iraq as "a defense-industrial establishment" involved in engineering and manufacturing missiles, planes and other military items.

U.S. officials said the equipment provided to the Iraqis was "relevant to missile production" and was sold "directly or indirectly" to the Saad 16 complex.

Crackdown Urged

The disclosure came amid a major U.S. diplomatic drive to get Western European nations to crack down on companies that are selling technology and expertise to Third World nations seeking to build missiles or chemical and biological warfare plants.

U.S. officials insisted that no U.S. export laws were violated and refused to identify the firms.

Hewlett-Packard Co., the Palo Alto computer firm, yesterday confirmed Austrian and West German

press reports that it was among the suppliers to the Iraqi complex.

Company spokesman Richard Harmon said by telephone that in 1985-86 Hewlett-Packard delivered "electronic equipment of various types" to the West German company Messerschmitt-Boelkow-Blohm (MBB) under a license authorized by the West German government and the U.S. Department of Commerce.

"The end user on the license was shown as the State Organization for Technical Industries-Saad General Establishment," he said. He added that the Iraqi organization was described as "an institute for higher learning."

3 Other U.S. Firms

The three other American firms cited in the news reports were Wiltron Co. of Morgan Hill, a manufacturer of electronic test and measuring instruments; Tektronix Inc. of Beaverton, Ore., a manufacturer of computer graphics terminals and measuring instruments, and Scientific-Atlanta Inc. of Atlanta, which makes telecommunications and satellite ground station equipment.

Spokesmen for Tektronix and Wiltron said yesterday that they were searching records to see whether they had made any sales to Iraq or Gildemeister, a German-Austrian firm that reportedly was the principal company involved in building the Saad 16 complex.

A person at Scientific-Atlanta

said the offices had closed for the day and no one was available for comment.

The United States imposed a ban in 1980 on the sale by U.S. companies of all military equipment and so-called dual-use items — those with civilian or military application — to Iraq and Iran during the Persian Gulf war.

Whether the American equipment at the Saad 16 complex included "dual-use" items was not immediately clear.

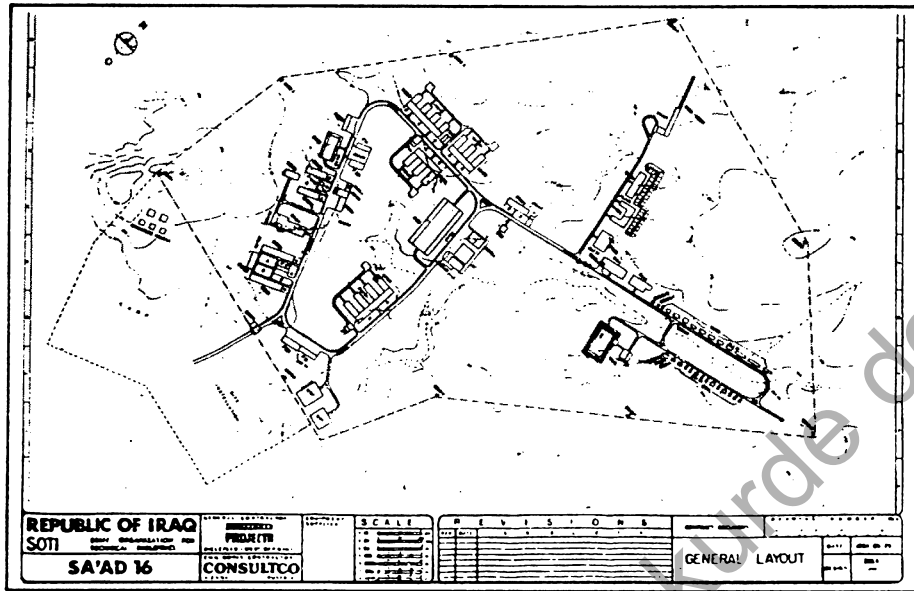
High-Tech Sales

But U.S. officials insisted that it was legal for U.S. companies to obtain export licenses to sell certain high-tech items abroad until April 1987, when restrictions were imposed by the Missile Technology Control Regime signed by the United States, Canada, France, West Germany, Italy, Japan and Britain.

Iraq

Saddam's secret weapons

Under President Saddam Hussein's direction, Iraq is steadily building up its domestic arms manufacturing capability. Following recent reports that it is cooperating with Argentina and Egypt in developing a ballistic missile, **Alan George** writes that West European companies have been involved in establishing rocket and poison gas test and production sites.



Saad 16, where Iraq makes chemical weapons.

With assistance from European companies, Iraq is nearing completion of a secret project, codenamed DOT, to establish a series of rocket and poison gas test and production facilities. The scheme is thought to be linked to the development of the Condor-2 ballistic missile on which Baghdad has been working in collaboration with Argentina and Egypt.

The two-stage, solid fuel missile, to have a range of 1,000km and a payload of 500kg, is the successor to the Condor-1, a weather rocket developed by Argentina in the late 1970s with assistance from West German aerospace company Messerschmidt-Bolkow-Blohm (MBB).

As reported by *The Middle East* in March, a central role in Condor-2's development was played by a group of small Swiss companies, headed by Zug-based Consen, in which former MBB engineers played key roles. In 1984 the Egyptian defence ministry contracted one of these firms, Ifat Corporation, to work on Condor-2.

The Austrian weekly *Profil* recently disclosed that in 1986 an Ifat representative

approached a Vienna engineering consultancy, Consultco, with a proposal for a project in Iraq known as DOT. Working closely on the project with Ifat was another Austrian consultancy, Feneberg GmbH of Graz. Feneberg had been involved with similar schemes in both Egypt and Argentina, and the Ifat representative told Consultco that DOT was similar to projects already under way in those two countries. The Iraqi client for DOT was the State Organisation for Technical Industries (SOTI), which plays a central part in Iraq's military construction programme.

Consultco, together with a German construction company, Zublin, and two other Austrian firms, the local subsidiary of electrical engineers BBC Brown Boveri and air conditioning specialists Bacon, submitted an offer for the work. Their price, however, was too high. Accordingly, said *Profil*, SOTI decided to go ahead with DOT using Iraqi firms and thousands of specially recruited Pakistani workers. Construction supervision, however, was by Feneberg.

DOT has three parts, designated DO1, DO2 and DO3. Located within an existing

military-industrial complex 50km south of Baghdad near Hilla, DO1 is a chemical weapons centre. DO2 is a complex of engineering workshops sited near the city of Fallujah. It is close to a Yugoslavian-built artillery and ammunition factory known as Saad 5. DO3 is a rocket test range, located some 95km south of Baghdad near Karbala. According to *Profil*, Feneberg completed its work in March, suggesting that the three DO projects are virtually complete.

Consultco, the object of the initial approach from Ifat, was already heavily involved in Iraq's military programme, acting as project manager for another scheme, Saad 16, near the northern city of Mosul. Also known as the Research and Development Centre, Saad 16 is a laboratory complex with units for chemical weapons, wind tunnels and rocket motor test ramps. The main contractor is the West German company Gildemeister Projecta while the equipment supply contract is held by the MBB subsidiary Transtechnika.

Media revelations about Saad 16 prompted the West Germany authorities to launch an investigation in late March to establish whether Transtechnika and Gildemeister Projecta violated the country's stringent arms export regulations. The nature and origin of the equipment for the DO facilities remain a mystery, although *Profil* said that it was transferred to Iraq from Egypt. There is no evidence that MBB or its subsidiaries were involved, although the West German firm has had dealings with Cairo in recent years.

Transtechnika, in conjunction with Consen, made three deliveries of laboratory equipment, of which the last was sent in December 1988. Earlier, the Ifat Corporation requested MBB to assist in an Egyptian project, designated RS120, to develop a missile with a range of 120km. Realising that their involvement in RS120 might breach German export regulations, however, MBB agreed to undertake only part of the work, and to leave the balance to the Italian company SNIA, a Fiat subsidiary.

West Germany's Foreign Trade Ministry had approved MBB's arrangement with SNIA, but in December 1987 the German security authorities advised MBB to discontinue the RS120 negotiations. At the same time, MBB's Washington office learned that the company might be blacklisted in the US unless it dropped the project. The consequences for MBB would have been dire, and the company withdrew from RS120 without hesitation. ■

A REPORTER AT LARGE

June 5, 1989

CROSSING THE STRAITS

ISTANBUL is a melancholy city—or so, at least, it seemed to me in the gray and rainy weeks of last November and December. I suspect that, whatever the season, the weight of the centuries imparts a solemnity to it. For most of its history, the city was the jewel of great empires; their relics—an aqueduct built by Rome, Byzantine churches and fortress walls, domed mosques and luxury palaces of the Ottoman sultans—are part of the contemporary landscape. But in winter a fog descends, obscuring these marvels, and from my hotel window above the Bosphorus I rarely saw the water or the distant Asian hills. I ate very well in animated restaurants, I enjoyed the crowds in the ancient bazaars, and I found articulate, intelligent, amiable Turks to talk with. Yet my most vivid memories are of the fumes of the lignite that heats the city, the depressing wrapper of soot on otherwise handsome buildings, taxis gridlocked in relentless downpours, and pedestrians in sombre rain gear shuffling silently along the streets, circumventing puddles, unsmiling.

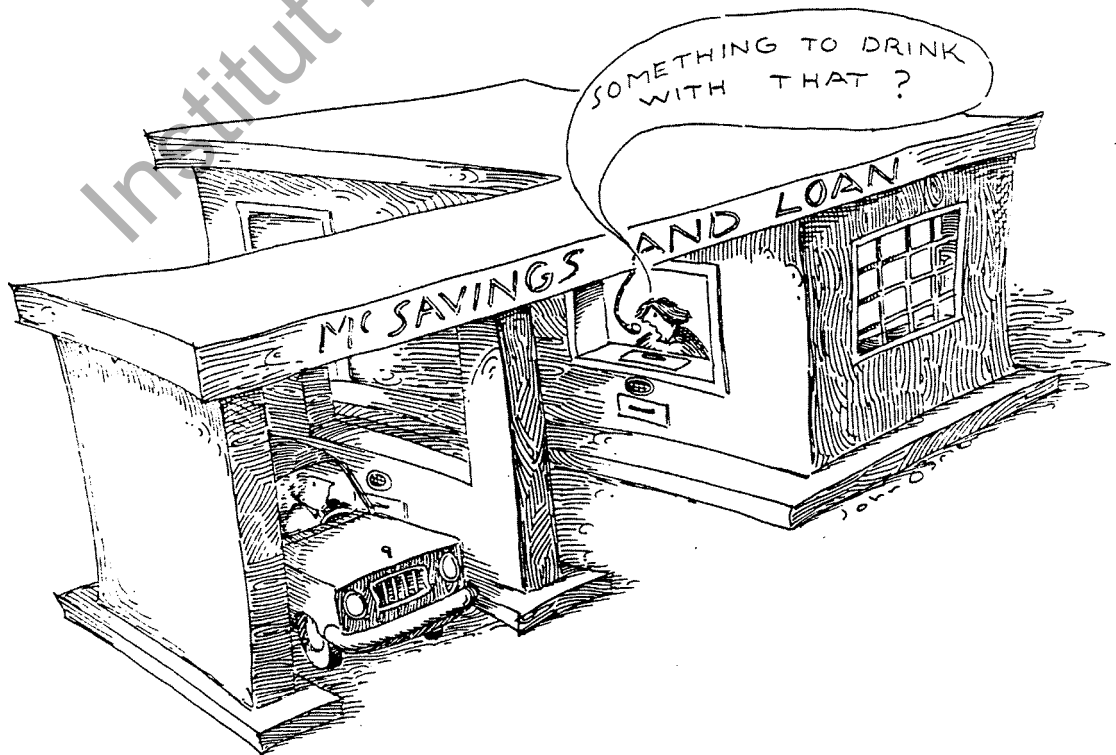
The glamour of empire vanished sixty-five years ago, and today Istanbul is literally a provincial capital in a workaday republic. After two millennia as an international metropolis, it is now a Turkish city, increasingly overpopulated and industrialized. Yet, much as it feeds on nostalgia, it refuses to be interred in the catacombs of history. The decades of inertia during which the republic struggled to create new political institutions are over: the institutions are in place, and the bulldozers are at work. Istanbul seems to be regaining its vigor and working to take its place among the modern cities of the world.

But the task of subduing the past is huge.

With its downtown in Europe and its suburbs in Asia, Istanbul is unique in spanning two continents. Since the founding of the republic, the city's population has soared from seven hundred thousand to more than six million, stretching services beyond their limits. Electricity goes on and off. The pavements, though routinely swept, are rarely repaired. A network of streets designed for pedestrians and pack animals groans beneath the weight of hundreds of thousands of cars, trucks, and buses. The Bosphorus, a mile-wide channel that links the Sea of Marmara with the Black Sea, separates the city's Asian and European sides; they are connected only by a few ferry lines and two suspension bridges, one of which opened just last year. The principal impact of the bridges, however, may have been to promote the long-distance trucking industry; thousands of rigs cross the Bosphorus each day from as far away as England, en route to the Persian Gulf and beyond. The bridges have produced growing suburbs—and an explosion of real-estate values

—along the Asian shore, and commuting across them has become a nightmare of congestion.

Istanbul's European side, moreover, is itself bisected by the waters of the Golden Horn (the Turkish name for it is Haliç, which means "inlet"), a tideless five-mile waterway that has for twenty-five hundred years been a busy port on the maritime route between the Mediterranean and the hinterlands of Eastern Europe and Western Asia. Encircled by hills garnished with domes and minarets, it creates a splendid scene, notwithstanding the congeries of slaughterhouses, factories, and fetid slums that have grown up along its rim in modern times. For several years, the city's government has been sweeping these eyesores away and replacing them with attractive parks. Private preservationist groups have transformed neglected landmarks—palaces, gardens, manor houses, bazaars—into handsome attractions, while the city has pushed ahead with bigger projects: building sewage-treatment plants along the Bosphorus and relocating the smelly tanneries, which date back to the Middle Ages,



outside the city limits. City officials calculate that in the past five years six thousand buildings on the European side have been destroyed, including six hundred and twenty-two factories, employing four hundred thousand people, who have been transferred to jobs elsewhere. Steps have also been taken to relieve the traffic funnelling onto the Atatürk and Galata Bridges, which span the Golden Horn. A boulevard was recently built through an old neighborhood on the north bank, but speeding the traffic on the south bank, where the artifacts of the past are more tightly clustered, has been less successful, and most experts agree that a subway system is the only solution to Istanbul's traffic problems. For now, however, a subway is not in the plan, the popular explanation being that no politician wants to undertake so expensive a project when a successor will ultimately cut the ribbon and receive the applause.

According to the urban historian Doğan Kuban, the citizens of Istanbul, still under the influence of Ottoman doctrine, are only now beginning to show any sense of responsibility for the city. Kuban met with me in a dusty office littered with architectural drawings, off the great hall of Istanbul Technical University, which was built in the last days of the sultanate, in a desperate effort to catch up with the West. In his sixties, Professor Kuban is a student of the social changes that have created contemporary Istanbul. He contends that, thanks to lessons learned from the West, the city's commercial and administrative élite has finally developed a commitment to civic improvement.

"Islamic custom, which we inherited from the Arabs, had it that all land, including the city, belonged to the sultan," he explained. "The idea of citizenship did not exist in Ottoman times, as it did in contemporary Paris or Florence. Under the law, the people were slaves of the sultan, and they thought of themselves as tenants in his city. It was not part of their habit

of thought to organize themselves to achieve common goals—the concept of private organizations is still unfamiliar in Islamic societies. The state was the only legitimate organization, so the administration of the city was left to the sultan, who turned it over to a palace functionary. The city did not have a government of its own until late in the nineteenth century, when the idea of municipality was imported from the West. It had nothing resembling a city plan until the twentieth. All growth was organic. People built houses in relation to a neighbor, and streets emerged around them. Only fires—which were rather frequent, since most houses were built of wood—changed the street patterns."

The sultans, Professor Kuban said, had no sense of obligation to make a better city. Though European autocrats were often as despotic, Europe was softened by liberal ideas that had been circulating since the Renaissance. "There was no Rousseau in Ottoman history," he said. "The people believed in God's will and divine rule. They accepted their fate. They did not seem to be interested in the objective world—an attitude that characterizes Islamic thought even today. For example, whatever we know about how Istanbul looked in the Ottoman era comes from Western writers and artists. Muslims defined things in relation to themselves, to their spiritual needs. The identity of the Turks was linked to the Islamic religion and to the sultan, not so much in his temporal role as in his capacity as the caliph—the ruler of Islam."

THE tremendous effort that the Turks have been expending to make Istanbul into a modern city can be understood only within the framework of an even greater effort to place Turkey on a level with the modern states of Europe. By the end of the eighteenth century, the Ottomans had acknowledged that their well-being lay in emulating European civilization; their republican successors have embraced this principle with added fervor. The No. 1 item on Turkey's political agenda today is its pending application to join the European Community.

The decision to apply for membership in "the rich man's club" was made six years ago, by Prime Minister Turgut Özal, who heads the centrist

Motherland Party, but it is also contained in the program of the two principal opposition parties, on the center-left and the center-right. With few exceptions, it is supported by industrialists and labor unions, farmers, the Islamic clergy, the newspapers, the military hierarchy, and the state bureaucracy. Tentative steps toward union with Europe began after the Second World War, when Turkey effectively turned its back on the Soviet Union and the Arab states, its eastern neighbors. This caused the United States to recognize Turkey as an ally in the Cold War, and, under the Truman Doctrine, Turkey became a major recipient of American military and economic aid. In 1950, Turkey repaid the obligation by sending a brigade of troops to fight next to the Americans in Korea, and shortly afterward it accepted an invitation to become a full member of NATO. As an anti-Communist country that controlled Russia's principal sea route into the Mediterranean, it was of obvious strategic importance. Turkey's six-hundred-thousand-man Army is ill-equipped, but it is NATO's second largest, after the United States', and Turkey keys its foreign policy to its participation in the Western Alliance.

In 1964, the Turks made their first move toward formal association with Europe, signing an agreement with the Common Market which fixed terms for mutual tariff reductions, migration of Turkish labor to Europe, and an eventual customs union. However, relations have since been marred by problems, the most obvious concerning Cyprus, a Mediterranean island forty miles from the Turkish mainland. The island's population is eighty-per-cent Greek and twenty-per-cent Turk—"a lethal cocktail," as one writer described it. In 1878, after three centuries under the Ottomans, Cyprus became British, but in the succeeding decades Greek Cypriots agitated steadily for union with their mother country, and Turkish Cypriots, in response, demanded partition. In 1960, Britain, rejecting both proposals, bestowed independence on Cyprus and made Greece and Turkey co-guarantors of its stability. Predictably, the two countries became increasingly estranged as a result of recurring violence on Cyprus, and in 1974, when a Greek military junta engineered the overthrow of the Cypriot government by pro-Greek ele-

ments, Turkey invaded the island. European governments objected bitterly to the Turkish action, and the United States imposed an arms embargo on Turkey—notwithstanding its NATO membership—which lasted for more than three years. Turkey has consistently pledged to withdraw its forces on the adoption of a constitution protecting the rights of Turkish Cypriots, but fifteen years of on-and-off negotiations between Cypriots have yielded no agreement, and the Turkish Army is still there.

More subtle but perhaps more troublesome is the problem of Turkish migrant workers, some five million of whom have gone to Europe since the nineteen-fifties—many to France, Switzerland, Belgium, and the Scandinavian countries, but the overwhelming majority to West Germany. Although a few of the migrants have been skilled professionals, most have been peasants from Anatolia, Turkey's heartland. With little training and less sophistication, they have generally taken menial jobs, and—to the disappointment of Turkish planners—on returning home have contributed only marginally to Turkey's economic development. Characteristically, they come back grumbling that they were isolated, exploited, and unappreciated—particularly by the Germans—and some complain openly of racism. More than a million Turkish workers, accompanied by two hundred thousand dependents, are in Europe now. For the Europeans, their presence serves as a reminder that Turkey is not only poor but Islamic. The migration has attached to all of Turkey the image of the Anatolian peasantry—an image that does not improve Turkey's

chances for admission to the Community.

Statistically, much distinguishes Turkey from the countries of Western Europe. The most recently available World Bank statistics show Turkey's per-capita gross national product at \$1,110, France's (for example) at \$10,720; Turkey's life expectancy at sixty-five years, France's at seventy-seven; Turkey's infant mortality at seventy-nine per thousand, France's at eight; Turkey's agricultural work force at fifty-eight per cent, France's at nine; Turkey's teen-agers enrolled in secondary school at forty-two per cent, France's at ninety-six. Greece and Portugal, the Community's least affluent members, might provide a more appropriate comparison, but even they rank substantially ahead of Turkey on most of the World Bank's statistical charts.

Perhaps the most important statistic is Turkey's annual population growth: it is two and a half per cent, whereas the populations of the developed countries within the European Community are nearly stable. Turkey's population is now fifty-five million—almost equal to that of France, Italy, Great Britain, or West Germany, all in the range of sixty million. But by the end of the century the Turkish population will be larger than that of any country now in the Community. Turkey maintains that Europe, with its stagnant birth rate, will need Turkish manpower—though to relieve European fears of a Turkish deluge, it promises to defer for some years exercising the right of free movement of workers which Community members now enjoy. While Turkey's large population would inevitably make it one of the more powerful nations of the Community, it would for several decades remain the poorest. That is a paradox with which none of the current members are comfortable.

Turkey's economy, on the other hand, has grown prodigiously over the past ten years, with an average annual increase of about eight per cent—one of the highest growth rates in the world. According to a recent study by the Turkish Chamber of Commerce, seventy-five per cent of Turkey's industry is either ready or nearly ready to compete with Europe's. Turkish manufacturers have prospered in the nineteen-eighties from an unprecedented surge in exports of industrial

goods. Dangerously in debt a decade ago, Turkey has paid off its loans to the point where it has credit readily available. The Turkish boom means that the government has the funds to narrow the disparities between Turkey and Western Europe in the quality of life—and it has been spending heavily to do so.

This enormous growth owes much to the efforts of the Özal government, which has undertaken a major restructuring of the economy. Özal inherited a system of state economic regulation based on high tariffs, price controls, and subsidies, which had combined to create significant debt and little growth. The stagnation imposed huge strains on the society which the republic's parliamentary system was not up to containing, and in 1980 Turkey experienced a military "intervention"—the third, and most severe, since the Second World War. During the three years the Army stayed in power, it issued draconian decrees, among them the exclusion from politics of all sitting parliamentarians and the dissolution of all parties and other political organizations. In 1982, it promulgated a new constitution that gave the government wide powers to clamp down on dissent. But it also established the framework for a program of economic reform, and made Turgut Özal the Deputy Prime Minister in charge of executing it.

An unknown technocrat, Özal had been defeated in 1977 in his only try for electoral office—as a parliamentary candidate of the National Salvation Party, a right-wing party with a strong religious orientation. Had he won, he, too, would have been banned from politics, but instead he was serving as the head of the State Planning Office, where the governing junta found him. Özal was given a mandate to take actions so drastic that no parliament would be likely to approve them. He slashed subsidies, abolished price controls, reduced wages, raised taxes, and aggressively promoted exports. Though interest groups opposed one element or another of his economic package, the program as a whole proved to be popular with the Turks. When, in 1983, the Army decided to surrender power and authorize elections, Özal organized the Motherland Party from an assortment of politicians who had not been banned. He conducted a campaign based on his eco-

conomic program and, with the traditional parties prohibited from running, won a surprising victory over the junta's hand-picked choice. Four years later, the old center-left and center-right parties had been reconstituted—thinly disguised under different names—but he won again, by a comfortable plurality. His tenure has made Turkey an international model for economic liberalization.

My first encounter with Özal was in Istanbul, at a luncheon given by an association of Turkish businessmen for managers of American chambers of commerce in Europe. The Americans had been brought to Istanbul on the theory that they were well placed to influence European governments in favor of Turkish membership in the European Community. They were considered important enough to lunch with the Prime Minister, and I was invited to attend.

Özal is not especially impressive to look at. He is sixty-two years old and about five feet seven, with a full head of gray hair and the girth of a department-store Santa Claus. Though he spent two years as an economist at the World Bank, in Washington, he is not a cosmopolitan sort. He was born and grew up in the city of Malatya, in central Anatolia, and, indeed, resembles the shopkeepers I saw there on a later visit. Curiously, Özal is not well remembered in Malatya. He left to study electrical engineering at Istanbul Technical University, and after graduating he worked his way to power not through local politics but through the state technocracy. Yet he is recognized as a sensitive politician—the first in Turkey to master the art of communicating on television—and he comes

across as self-confident and shrewd. He mingled easily with the Americans during the cocktail hour and then delivered a rather compelling talk in easily understandable English. He spoke of his country's "political stability" and of the infrastructural improvements and economic reforms under his leadership, which, he said, had brought Turkey more than two billion dollars in foreign investment and had given a "modern look" to Turkish cities. "Turkey now has a young economy," he said. "With a population of seventy million by the turn of the century, we will offer a huge market to Europe." Özal vowed that his nation's determination to join Europe was "irreversible," and he predicted that Turkey would "strengthen and bring a new dimension to the European Community."

In his talk Özal passed lightly over the conspicuous soft spot in his economic program: inflation. His haste to modernize the country has brought about huge budgetary deficits, and these have led to an inflation currently running at the alarming rate of seventy-five per cent. Businessmen who borrow money now pay more than a hundred-per-cent interest; as a consequence, growth has begun to slow. The major industrial families, which are concentrated in Istanbul, show some signs of abandoning their support of Özal; he was never a favorite of theirs, in any case. They are heirs of the Ottoman élite, elegantly educated and generally worldly, and they look down on Özal as a bit of a hick. His chief appeal is to the shopkeeper milieu from which he emerged. As long as he produced profits for Istanbul's oligarchs, they tolerated him, but the inflation has them worried.

Thanks to the 1982 Constitution, however, Özal is secure in his power. The Motherland Party, though it won only thirty-six per cent of the vote in 1987, was awarded a large majority of parliamentary seats, under a formula designed to avert the deadlocks of the nineteen-seventies. The Party was badly beaten in country-wide municipal elections last March, and afterward Özal fired several controversial Cabinet members and some of his relatives who were serving in high posts, but he rejected demands that he resign. His chief rivals—Süleyman Demirel, of the True Path Party, on the right, and

Erdal İnönü, of the Social Democratic Party, on the left—criticize him as the product of a military coup, and call upon him to amend the Constitution to apportion parliamentary seats more equitably. But neither of them offers a strong alternative policy, and most Turks seem satisfied with the stability that the Constitution provides. Until the municipal elections, there was speculation that Özal would run next year for President—a more illustrious but less powerful office, filled by vote of parliament. Much of the speculation was based on his health: he had a coronary-bypass operation in 1987, in Houston. But now it is clear that the Motherland Party, which he cobbled together out of disparate elements, will not survive without him, since the electorate seems to be drifting to the more deeply rooted parties led by Demirel and İnönü. Unless the soaring inflation generates protest in the streets, Özal will not face another test until the next parliamentary elections, scheduled for 1992.

The evening after the luncheon, at a reception in a nineteenth-century Italianate mansion that houses the United States Consulate, I had an opportunity to get from a number of the visiting businessmen their assessment of Turkey's prospects for admission to the European Community. Most of them were far less optimistic than the Turks. Turkey's differences with Greece are the most obvious problem. The Cyprus conflict is not settled, and difficulties have emerged concerning the Aegean Sea, where a search for oil is under way on the continental shelf; related disputes have arisen over air space, territorial waters, shoreline defenses, and military exercises. In an attempt to reduce tensions, Özal met last year with the Greek Prime Minister, Andreas Papandreou, at Davos, in Switzerland, and then made an unprecedented official visit to Athens. In the "spirit of Davos," the two sides agreed to undertake "confidence building" measures, but Turkey has excluded discussions on Cyprus, arguing that that dispute must be resolved by the Cypriots, while Greece has rejected talks on any Aegean issues except that of the continental shelf, on the ground that Greek sovereignty precludes consideration of the others. With Greece now distracted by Papandreou's personal and political troubles, the busi-

nessmen said, further rapprochement will not be possible for several years. They also pointed out that in 1992 the Community is scheduled to drop all internal trade barriers and so is in for an extended period of political and economic readjustment. They noted that it had recently admitted Spain and Portugal—both developing nations, with relatively low standards of living—and that years would pass before it would be ready to take on another such member. Some said that the Europeans had serious doubts about the stability of Turkish democracy and about Turkey's commitment to human rights. Finally, they mentioned—under their breath, as if to acknowledge that such talk was not on the public agenda—that the Community was uneasy at the prospect of admitting an Islamic country, and that West Germans, in particular, had some social, if not racial, reservations about dealing with Turks. Europeans will never admit it, they said, but a combination of cultural and religious prejudice might, in the end, be too much for Turkey to overcome.

FROM the time the Ottomans entered history, in the eleventh century, Europe saw them as the successors to the conquerors the Prophet Muhammad had sent out from the Arabian Peninsula four hundred years earlier. The Arabs carried Islam across the north of Africa and penetrated Christendom from the west, occupying Spain for nearly five centuries. They were kept at bay in the East by the Christian empire centered on the city known first as Byzantium and then as Constantinople. In language and culture, the Byzantine Empire was chiefly Greek, though the Armenians in Anatolia were an integral part of it. By the thirteenth century, the Ottoman Turks—Mongolian nomads who had been converted to Islam in the course of

their westward migrations—had seized much of Anatolia and the Balkans from the Byzantines, and in 1453 they captured Constantinople itself, renaming it Istanbul. For the next several centuries, the Ottomans continued to hammer away at Europe, twice reaching the walls of Vienna. Their campaigns imposed on Western consciousness a sense of permanent military and religious conflict. The struggle, first against Arabs and then against Turks, went on for twelve hundred years—until the fall of the Ottomans after the First World War—and it had a lasting impact on the Western mind. The image of the Turk as the unremitting foe of the West and of Christianity retains a vivid reality for Europe, even in our own time.

When the Ottomans conquered Constantinople, they made their capital on the south side of the Golden Horn, as the Byzantine emperors had done. They turned the principal Christian churches of the city—including the monumental Hagia Sophia—into mosques, and proceeded to Islamize the administration. But they left alone the thriving Christian towns on the north side of the Horn, in keeping with their practice of not disturbing Christian or Jewish communities in their domain. The conquering sultan, Mehmed II, admiring the energy and commercial skills of Christians and Jews, invited Greeks and Armenians from the provinces to settle in the city, and at the end of the century offered refuge to the Jews being expelled from Spain and sent ships to collect them. Istanbul was an Islamic city only south of the Golden Horn, and the multinational character of the Ottoman capital also flourished in Ottoman lands until the twentieth century. The north side of the Horn, like other port cities of the eastern Mediterranean, was peopled by Europeans known as Levantines, who were engaged in maritime commerce. Many were Italians, and Italian was the lingua franca, but there were also great numbers of Jews, Greeks, and Armenians among them. The Ottomans, who considered commerce and diplomacy beneath them, let the Levantines control the empire's foreign relations. Galata, as the quarter was known, became a community of merchants, bankers, craftsmen, and shopkeepers. The French established a sumptuous embassy there in the six-

teenth century, and other European powers followed suit. Theatres, restaurants, and fine shops grew up in the quarter, and Western-style schools were founded. The merchant capitalists of Galata made large profits and built grand houses, where their wives conducted elegant salons. Surprisingly little of this culture rubbed off on the Muslims; the Muslim quarter remained profoundly religious and traditional, but Galata was its window on the West. The local Turkish population had far more exposure to Western culture than did the Arabs, the Persians, or any of the other Muslim societies of the region.

It is important to note that, within the Islamic framework, the Ottomans' tolerance of Christians and Jews in the empire was no anomaly. The Koran specifically enjoins Muslim leaders to protect the members of these two faiths, the tenets of which are the foundation of Islamic theology. The Islamic mind accepts the status of Christians and Jews as *dhimmi*s—that is, protected, though subordinate, minorities—in a way that it cannot accept deviants within Islam itself. Indeed, though the banners of the Ottomans were Islamic, the goal of their armies was clearly not conversion, whatever the fears of Europeans; of all the peoples who eventually came under Ottoman rule, only the Albanians were converted to Islam. The empire's standard practice was to give Christians and Jews autonomy over the affairs of their communities. The Ottomans seemed to enjoy conquest for its own sake. Unlike the Romans in Gaul or the British in India, they did not impose their language or their culture on their conquered subjects, and today the traces of their influence over lands they dominated for hundreds of years are very few.

At its peak, in the sixteenth century, the Ottoman Empire extended from the Balkans east to the border of Persia, south through Arabia and the upper Nile, and west along the African shore to the Moroccan border. Historians have attributed the empire's decline to a variety of factors, among them financial mismanagement, monarchical decadence, an overextension of lines of communication and supply, and a shift in international commerce to the New World, which left the eastern Medi-

terrestrial an economic backwater. But virtually all agree that a principal explanation was the technological backwardness—in agriculture, industry, and military weaponry—into which the empire steadily fell. Whether or not this erosion was a by-product of Islam, with its basic antagonism to creative thinking, is a subject of ongoing debate. Most religions—most civilizations, in fact—cultivate feelings of superiority to others, but Islam has often seemed to carry with it a conviction that it already possessed all wisdom worth having and that infidel culture had nothing to teach it.

By the end of the eighteenth century, a succession of military defeats by the European powers forced the sultans to acknowledge that European-style reforms were required. Their goal was a modern army, but they were unwilling to do more than trifle with the structure of the state (including a sultanate of unlimited prerogatives) that would support it. Under the guidance of professional soldiers imported from Europe, they established military and naval colleges, where physics, chemistry, mathematics, and biology were taught along with such subjects as gunnery, fortifications, and navigation. The language of instruction was French, providing the student officers with access to liberal philosophical treatises that had never before penetrated Ottoman circles. In 1826, an army equipped and trained along European lines replaced the sultans' celebrated Janissary corps. Entering its ranks was a new generation of Anatolian Turks educated in Western ideas.

But even a modern army was not enough to protect the empire from the wave of nationalism unleashed by the French Revolution. After Napoleon's campaign on the Nile in 1798, Egypt managed to break free, and soon the European powers sent missionaries, diplomats, tradesmen—even the poet Lord Byron—to stir up nationalist feeling among the Greeks, the Serbs, the Armenians, and various other of the empire's subject peoples. Financed by European treasuries, the Greeks rose up in 1821 and, after nine years of bloody fighting, won their independence. In the meantime, sultanic excesses increased. Sultan Abdul-Medjid, to show how European he was, abandoned the Oriental-style Topkapı Pal-

ace in 1853 and moved across the Golden Horn into Dolma Bahçe, a rococo creation he built at huge expense on the model of Versailles. To finance it, he borrowed heavily from European banks and financiers, a practice continued by his successors, and in 1881 the state was forced to permit its creditors to collect its taxes—an arrangement that deprived the Ottomans of control over the economy. That they lasted into the twentieth century was a stroke of geographic luck. The empire ruled the waterway connecting Russia's Black Sea ports with the Mediterranean, and France and Britain, rivals there themselves, did not want the Russians joining them. Britain and France propped the Ottomans up even as the sultans were increasingly losing touch with the people.

The decline of the sultanate left the Army as the single institution in the Ottoman system to escape decay, and within it there arose a nationalist movement known as the Young Turks. Its leaders were fiery patriots, who had been introduced to Western ideas and practices by instruction in the military schools. In 1908, the Young Turks engineered the overthrow of Sultan Abdul-Hamid and seated a compliant sultan on the throne, creating, in effect, a military oligarchy. Though the dynasty remained, its vision of a multinational commonwealth was abandoned. What the Young Turks substituted was an ideology based on a nationhood of Turks.

But Turkish nationalism only hastened the disintegration of the empire. In 1912, a series of Balkan wars of liberation began, and two years later they flowed directly into the long-expected war between the European powers. The Young Turks brought the country into the conflict on the side of Germany, and in the ensuing maelstrom the empire was swept away. The Turks were driven back into Anatolia, from which they had gone forth on their wave of glory seven centuries before.

EARLY in the First World War, the culminating episode occurred in what has become known in the West as the Armenian massacres. In the late nineteenth century, Armenian nationalists were implicated in a series of anti-Ottoman plots, and in 1894 and 1895 Sultan Abdul-Hamid, to divert attention from his own misrule, incited

Turkish mobs to slaughter Armenians by the tens of thousands. After the war began, many Armenians, seduced by Allied promises of an independent state, volunteered to help the Russians, and they created serious security problems behind the Ottoman lines. In the spring of 1915, Ottoman headquarters ordered the relocation of all Armenians from three eastern border provinces to camps in Syria and Iraq. The Armenians charged deliberate murder in the displacement; the Ottomans maintained that reasonable care was taken. Armenians today claim that more than a million of their people died at Ottoman hands during this period; the Turks say that at most three hundred thousand died and that the mortality rate in the eastern region was high—for Turks and Armenians alike—because of wartime conditions of famine and disease. At the root of the macabre numbers game lies a dispute over how many Armenians lived in Turkey at the time: the Armenians say that there were two and a half million, and the Turks admit to less than half that number. Whatever the truth, the Allies seized upon the issue in their propaganda, and the powerful image of massacres persists to this day.

Well before the war ended, several of the Allied powers had begun laying plans to divide up the Ottoman Empire. France, Britain, Greece, and Italy all laid claims to Turkish territory; in addition, independence was demanded not only by the Armenians but by the Kurds, a Muslim people whose ancestral home is the mountain range that runs from Anatolia through Syria and Iraq to Iran. In June of 1918, the Italians, acting on their own, seized part of southwestern Anatolia. Furious, Britain and America vowed to stop them from expanding further, and encouraged Greece to stage a landing on the Aegean coast, where Greek communities had thrived since ancient times. The Ottoman Army was demoralized and scattered, but remnants organized into guerrilla units to harass the Greeks—Turkey's historic enemy—and the recognition grew that if Turkey was to save itself from dismemberment this local resistance would have to be transformed into a national movement. In May of 1919, a leader appeared, and, in defiance of both the Allies and the Sultan, declared his intention of defeating the Greeks. He was a thirty-eight-year-old Army

officer named Mustafa Kemal, later to be known as Atatürk—Father-Turk.

The son of a minor official in Salonika, Kemal belonged to the generation of Army officers trained in the ways of the West. As a student, he had dabbled in the politics of protest against the sultanate. He was jailed for a time, but he was too independent to become enmeshed in the Young Turk movement, and in 1914 he opposed its decision to join the war. In 1915, he commanded the successful defense of Istanbul against the British forces at Gallipoli, and the following year he won a series of victories on the eastern front against the Russians. Though he was by then the Ottomans' most illustrious general, he had a reputation for fractiousness, which consigned him to relative idleness in the last years of the war. When Turkish irregulars began hitting the Greek beachhead in 1919, the Sultan—uneasy with Turkish nationalism and fearful of displeasing the Allies—made the mistake of ordering Kemal to quell the disobedience. Instead, he moved quickly to organize the dispersed units of the Turkish Army, established a headquarters in the small Anatolian hill town of Ankara, and convened there a body of delegates calling itself the Grand National Assembly. The Sultan, on the orders of the Allies, then imposed a death sentence on Kemal and his followers.

The Ottoman sultanate lost its last chance to redeem itself in August, 1920, when it submitted to Allied peace terms that would not only have ended Turkish sovereignty in the Balkans and the Arab provinces but transferred to France, Italy, and Greece virtually all of Anatolia and Thrace. Armenia was to become an independent republic and Kurdistan an autonomous state. Nothing was left to the Turks but the area of Istanbul. The sultanate thus became the symbol of national disintegration and Kemal and the Turkish Army the upholders of nationhood. Over the next two years, the Army overcame the Greeks on the battlefield, and the Allies were persuaded to give up their claims to Turkish territory. In the fall of 1922, Kemal took possession of Istanbul from Allied occupation forces, but he chose to designate Ankara as the capital of the new republic. A month later, after the Grand National Assembly abolished the sultanate, the last of the dynasty, Sultan Mehmed VI, boarded a

British warship and sailed to Malta, bringing the Ottoman age formally to an end.

The following summer, the Allies signed a new peace treaty with Kemal's government, affirming Turkish sovereignty in Anatolia, and over Thrace as far east as the prewar boundary. Among the treaty's provisions was a Turkish pledge to respect the minority rights of the remaining Christians, both Greek and Armenian. But Kemal made it clear that he had no intention of resurrecting the old Ottoman multinationalism; in Kemalist Turkey, everyone was to be a Turk. As for the Kurds, they were to have no special status at all. In a separate document, Greece and Turkey agreed on an exchange of population, and by 1925 two hundred thousand Christians had left Turkey for Greece and three hundred and fifty thousand Muslims had made the reverse voyage. After a few years, only a handful of Christians were left in the country. The Jews, by contrast, gradually became integrated into Turkish society; Jewish children, for the first time, attended the state's public schools. So warm were Turkey's relations with the Jews that in 1949 it was the only Muslim country to recognize Israel.

But if Kemal was a nationalist his mind ranged far beyond the concerns of territory and population. In a speech delivered in 1923 he warned, "The successes which our Army has gained up to now cannot be regarded as having achieved the real salvation of our country. . . . Let us not be puffed up with military victories. Let us, rather, prepare for new victories in science and economics." Kemal's military education had convinced him that the dismal record of the Turks in the previous century or two was the product not only of the despotism of the Ottomans but also of the deliberate obscurantism of Islam. In politics, religion, law, education, social relations, economics, even in dress, he took it upon himself to

make Turkey into an enlightened European state. He nullified the Islamic Sharia as the law of the land, replacing it with an adaptation of the Swiss civil code. He took the schools away from the *ulema*—the Islamic authority—and placed them in secular hands. He substituted the Roman alphabet for the Arabic in written Turkish, he adopted the Western calendar, and he decreed that Sunday instead of the Muslim Friday should be the weekly day of rest. He established the Republican People's Party as his governing instrument and laid the groundwork for the multiparty political system that evolved in later years. He extended to women the right both to vote and to sit in parliament. Though even he did not have the courage to ban the veil, he consistently attacked it as a barbarous religious relic. He was more daring with the men, prohibiting the fez—a distinctly Muslim headgear, designed to permit the touching of the forehead to the ground in prayer—and calling it "an emblem of ignorance, negligence, fanaticism, and hatred of progress and civilization."

Atatürk did not stop rethinking and reshaping the society until his death, in 1938. Far more radical than the French or Russian Revolutions, the revolution he achieved transformed an entire culture, leaving scarcely a single old tenet in place; it is probably accurate to say that no social metamorphosis in history is so much the product of the vision of one man. He set the nation on a path from which the Turks, with few exceptions, have shown no disposition to turn back.

What the revolution clearly did not do was to change the relationship between the state and the individual. Atatürk's quarrel with the Ottomans was not that their state was oppressive—though it was—but that it had led the Turks into darkness and defeat. In justifying the Ottoman overthrow, he referred occasionally to the sovereignty of the people but more often to the sovereignty of the nation. He vowed his fidelity to "populism," but what he meant by this term was a commitment to secular rather than Islamic goals. Scholars generally agree that had Atatürk shown a fastidious regard for democracy as the term is understood in the West his revolution would have been stillborn. Atatürk's Constitution outlawed all political activity that promoted either a Marxist or an Islamic

state—a ban which is still in effect. He made no apologies for his high-handedness, arguing that during the long centuries of Ottoman despotism the people had lost their ability to determine and act in their own interests. Democracy as he understood it was a means to serve Turkey, and not its own end. In common with the Ottomans, he saw Westernization as a process by which the government might make better use of its machinery to attain the goals of the nation. Whatever theory there was behind Atatürk's revolution, it did not contain—unlike that of the Americans and the French—any notion of curbing the state's powers in the interest of the rights of individuals. A people who for centuries had modelled themselves according to the strictures of Islam raised little protest against modelling themselves according to the demands of an all-powerful state. The notion of individual rights is one that Turks still have trouble grasping.

DURING my stay in Turkey, I took a week or so away from provinces. I spent a few days driving along the Aegean coast, then boarded a plane to Diyarbakir, an ancient walled citadel near the frontier with Syria and Iraq which is today the chief city of the Kurdish region. I rented a car there and drove to Malatya, a commercial and industrial city of two hundred and fifty thousand people. I then turned north over the Pontic Mountains to the Black Sea port of Trabzon, celebrated in history and literature as Trebizond, a Byzantine city of fabulous wealth. Armenians and Greeks once inhabited much of the country I covered and left their churches behind them, but these are now outnumbered by pictures of Atatürk in every public office, by Atatürk statues, Atatürk Boulevards, Atatürk Libraries, and Atatürk-slept-here memorials in almost every city and town. From Trabzon, I followed the Black Sea coast to Samsun, then turned south to Ankara.

A rule of thumb in Turkey has it that the country gets poorer as one travels from west to east. Not only is per-capita income much lower but the birth rate is much higher—these two figures being considered indexes of

Third World status. I found no reason to challenge the rule during my travels, but it did seem to me that a stronger rule could be established on the basis of the contrast between urban and rural life. Malatya, for example, reminded me of provincial cities I had explored when I was a student in Europe shortly after the Second World War. Like them, Malatya looked a bit sad, and many of the houses needed a coat of paint, but the stores were well stocked, the people well clothed, the streets clean. The city seemed to convey the industriousness that made the provincial cities of Europe centers of prosperity twenty years after the war. But the Turkish countryside, west as well as east, appeared to be locked in an earlier age. Most villages had electricity, and here and there I saw a tractor or some other piece of motorized equipment. The general circumstances of life, however, seemed incredibly primitive, and if the condition in which women live is a measure of progress then rural Turkey still has a very long way to go. In the east, many women were veiled; this was not the case along the Aegean coast, but even there almost all women were swathed in scarves, and beneath shapeless dresses and coats they wore the picturesque harem pants, gathered at the ankle. In the country, women clearly did most of the field work—the stoop labor, the chopping and hoeing. They led donkeys laden with bundles of firewood along the roads, and often the women carried firewood themselves, strapped to their backs. They tended fires and did their cooking in front of village houses. They did not drive, though I often saw them huddled in the back of a pickup, being driven somewhere by a husband or a brother. What seemed to me like the salvation of many small towns was the children, whom I would see walking to and from school or playing in the schoolyard, carefully scrubbed, wearing neat black uniforms, and looking extremely bright. Were these veiled women their mothers? What do such children think about the future?

According to Doğan Kuban, it was Atatürk who brought the Anatolians into the national mainstream, and since his time more and more peasants have been moving to the cities. "Here in Istanbul, the population problem is

huge, but it's more than just number of people," he told me. "Until the republic was established, Istanbul was perhaps forty per cent Christian—that is, Western. Now the Christian population of the city is nearly zero, and the people who have replaced them are not yet urbanized. Their ideas of time and social relations are those of rural Turkey. They drive cars, but they treat them like horses. Traffic in Istanbul moves like flocks of sheep. Their relationship with their physical environment is not that of an experienced urban population. I think it will take at least a generation or two for these people to learn what they need to learn. If you understand that Istanbul is a city of Anatolian peasants, you'll understand the obstacles we face in transforming it into a city like Rome or Paris—a real European city. The change will take a very long time."

THE uncomfortable relationship between Turkey and Europe erupted into high drama last November, over a soccer match that took place in Istanbul. Galatasaray, the Turkish underdog, beat a highly rated Swiss team by a score of 5-0, thereby advancing to the quarter-finals of the competition for the European Champions Cup. A few days later, the disciplinary committee of the Union of European Football Associations voided the results, on the ground that Turkish spectators had thrown coins from the stands,

striking an official and a Swiss player. Ever since British fans went out of control at a match in Brussels in 1985, and thirty-nine people were killed, European soccer officials have been imposing severe penalties on teams for the misbehavior of fans, but the feeling was widespread that in this case they had overdone it. President Kenan Evren and Prime Minister Özal both issued solemn protests, and angry Turks demonstrated in front of the Swiss Embassy. Threatening letters were sent to members of the disciplinary committee. Of the reams of newspaper commentary that appeared on the subject, a column by Haluk Şahin in the English-language weekly *Date-line* seemed to capture the essence of the moment:

Obviously, the UEFA Disciplinary Committee touched an open nerve in the Turkish psyche with its ruling. It certainly produced a national reflex. People coming from very different ideological corners jumped up and screamed in unison: "See, didn't I tell you? They don't like us!" For instance, the decision provided the Islamic groups with a golden opportunity. "Just as you cannot make leather from pig hide, you can't make friends with the West," one fundamentalist paper screamed. The message: Why waste your energy and time in vain? Return to the fold of Islam.

This kind of reaction was not confined to the believers, though. Other more secular voices also spoke of a plot hatched in the "Crusaders' spirit." The implication was that Galatasaray had been singled out because it was a Turkish team. Since Turks are overwhelmingly Muslim, and since Europeans are just as overwhelmingly Christian, what can you expect? They will repel the infidel, no matter what.

Others viewed the cancellation as a signal of the European rejection of Turkey's full membership in the European Community. "They don't want us, but can't say so," was the refrain. "So they are humiliating us in other ways."

Fortunately for Turkish self-esteem and international order, Turkey won the appeal, and the victory was restored. The appeals body imposed a small fine on the team and stipulated that the next match for the cup could not be played in Istanbul, but those were penalties the Turks could live with. "Justice has prevailed," the President declared. "I am delighted," said the Prime Minister, who learned of the decision on emerging from a meeting with West German Chancel-

lor Helmut Kohl, in Strasbourg. On the evening following the decision, traffic all over Istanbul was stopped by crowds celebrating in the streets. This time, the demonstrators that gathered in front of the Swiss Embassy joyfully waved Galatasaray's red and yellow colors and uncorked bottles of champagne.

"Europe has always had this prejudice against the Turks," Sevki Adali, the foreign-news editor of the Istanbul daily *Hürriyet*, said to me during a chat in his paper's newsroom. "Portugal was admitted to the European Community, and it's no more developed than we are. Greece is nothing, and yet it was accepted easily. It would not be a problem for the Community to admit Israel. But things are different when it comes to Turkey—or the Arabs, for that matter. Religion has got to be the reason. We're ninety-eight per cent Muslim. We are not like the Iranians—we are Sunnis. We're not strict, but we're Muslims all the same. That's the problem. In my job, I see the European newspapers every day, and I keep reading about the Armenian massacres. In 1915, we were in a war, and the Armenians were supporting the enemy. They wanted to create their own state by taking territory from us. I'm sure awful things happened. Lots of Turks and Armenians killed each other. But it was a very long time ago, and I still see articles about it—more than I see about Israel killing the Palestinians.

"Is this because the Armenians are Christians? The Europeans say that the Germans are civilized and we are not, but a few years ago the Germans killed far more people than we are accused of killing, and Europeans talk about Turkish genocide as if what we did was no different. It would be nice if we could threaten to drop out of NATO, but there's no realistic prospect of that. I sympathize with the problem of the government—it does not want to see us isolated. Turks have nothing in common with the Soviet Union. And we don't want to be identified with the Islamic world—particularly with fundamentalist countries like Saudi Arabia and Iran. The Arabs lived under our domination for five hundred years, and neither Turk nor Arab benefitted from it. Now they think of us as fallen-away Muslims. Our relations are correct, but we don't want closer ties, and neither do they. Where can a modern Muslim

country go? Europe is the only place we can turn."

But just how Muslim is Turkey? Religious political parties are still banned, and although religious newspapers are tolerated, they may not engage in political propaganda. On the other hand, Turks are free to practice Islam, and according to a recent estimate there are sixty-five thousand mosques in the country, one for every eight hundred citizens. Certainly many Turks pray, at least on Fridays, when the mosques, even in the cities, tend to be full. But in the restaurants of Istanbul and Ankara, for example, you do not see much that looks traditionally Islamic: men and women sit together, indulging themselves with food and wine. (Turkey has a million and a half acres planted in vineyards, compared with three million in France.) There is plenty of Paris-style night life in Istanbul, and you can spend a week in Ankara and never see a head scarf, or even "modest dress"—at least in the fashionable downtown section, where the civil servants work and shop. By contrast, the Turkish countryside—barely distinguishable from rural Syria or Egypt—is a land of the veil and the *abaya*.

Perhaps it is more relevant to ask whether the trend in Turkey is in the direction of modern urban values conquering the countryside or traditional Islam taking over the cities. There are signs of both. A struggle is under way between secularists and traditionalists, and in a society changing as fast as this one the outcome is by no means foreordained. Turkey's secularists have come to recognize that stamping out religion is impossible, but they worry that religion has established a beachhead within the state educational system, where courses in Islamic doctrine are now mandatory in the schools. Private Islamic secondary schools, moreover, are turning out as many as fifty thousand graduates a year. The traditionalists, for their part, acknowledge that the citizenry now takes such pleasure in the fruits of the modern world that the prospect of reverting to Koranic rule is slight. So the two sides have, on the whole, become reasonably tolerant of each other; their struggle expresses itself in a jousting for minor, and usually symbolic, rewards.

Prime Minister Özal is generally conceded to be "soft" on religious symbolism. He goes openly to the mosque

and says his prayers—something that few public officials were likely to do until recently. He has been on the hajj to Mecca. He is even said to be a member of a secret religious society called the Nakşibendi—something like an Islamic Masonic order—and though he does not admit membership, he rather conspicuously does not deny it, either. He belonged initially to a pro-Islamic party, and his current party has an important religious wing. Ironically, though women in Turkey (as in most of the Third World) are often more accessible to religion than men are, it is Semra Özal, his wife, who is said to be the real secularist in the family. Turkish gossip has it that she will not allow her brother-in-law Korkut Özal into the house, because she considers his religious beliefs an unhealthy influence. Korkut has become rich in recent years as the head of a Saudi-financed Islamic bank—Islamic banking (banking observant of the Koranic ban on interest) being one of several religious innovations approved by Özal. Though the Prime Minister clearly has no plans to Islamize Turkey, he doubtless regards religious tokenism as good politics—especially among the small-town Anatolians who are his most loyal constituency.

Some of Turkey's religious thinkers are not satisfied with tokenism, of course, but the harsher the proposed reforms, the more marginal the speaker is likely to be. Committed traditionalists consistently call for a greater degree of democracy, by which they mean the right to form Islamic political parties. One such traditionalist is Fehmi Koru, a thirty-eight-year-old columnist for a small Islamic newspaper,

whom I visited in a shabby office in a working-class quarter of Ankara. "We have figures showing that sixty per cent of the Turks practice Islam and the remaining forty per cent identify with it," he said. "I believe that the majority of the people in this country are fed up with anti-Islamic policies and should demand their democratic rights. The politicians still think that anything Ottoman, including Islam, has to be bad. But Turks have an extraordinary past! We once lived at the apex—why not again? Imitating foreign ideas cannot get us back where we were. The present government takes the ideas for its economic system from professors in Chicago, but Islam also offers an economic system. Why not adopt a system that is closer to our roots? Islam was the key to our past, and it is the key to our growth in the future. But more democracy must precede more Islam in our country."

The strongest voice available to Turkey's traditionalists belongs to the political party named Refah. The word, which means "prosperity" or "welfare," is acknowledged to be a cover for its religious ideology. Refah is the heir of the National Salvation Party, to which Prime Minister Özal once belonged. In the parliamentary elections of 1987, it received barely eight per cent of the vote—down from twelve per cent and forty-eight seats that the National Salvation Party won at its peak, in the election of 1973. (Its percentage rose to ten in the recent municipal elections.) I talked to Refah's secretary-general, Oğuzhan Asiltürk, who, as Minister of Interior in the mid-seventies, promoted a major enlargement of the religious-school system. We met in Refah's new headquarters, on the outskirts of the capital—a complex that included its own mosque. Most of the office workers walked around in their stocking feet, Islamic-style. Asiltürk was critical of Özal's failure to extend the religious-school system further and to subsidize the construction of new mosques, most of which are now paid for by grants from the Saudis. He made it clear, however, that neither he nor the Party favored imposition of Islamic religious law. Asiltürk was the only Turk of authority I met who departed from the national consensus on membership in the European Community. "The European Community is a Christian union," he said, "and we are a Muslim

country. They are quite open in telling us that they represent Christianity, and that there is no part for us. It is very difficult for Muslims to be together with Christians. We respect their views, but our way of life is different: our customs are different. We cannot increase our economic and cultural relationships with them, but we cannot be intimately linked, like the states of the United States, and that is their goal. Union with Europe would not give us the freedom we need to develop our economy and our Islamic character. We would live in perpetual crisis."

Last December, Turkey went through one of its periodic upheavals in religion-state relations, over the kind of symbolic issue to which the struggle is often reduced—headscarves on university campuses. During several campus visits, I found many university students dressed in the conventional uniform of bluejeans and sweaters, but for the past few years a small number of women have taken to wearing head scarves to class as a sign of their commitment to Islam. In 1986 the Higher Education Council—which the Army had established after the 1980 takeover, to supervise the universities—banned the scarves, and female students were thereafter sporadically disciplined for violations. A few were dismissed. The dismissals set off a tempest in parliament, and last fall a coalition of conservatives, including the religious wing of Özal's Motherland Party, pushed through a bill that lifted the ban and reinstated the dismissed students. President Evren immediately vetoed it. Evren, a former general, led the Army at the time of the 1980 coup, and he tends to think of himself as Atatürk's heir. "Modesty is an unalienable requisite of the modernizing principles and reforms of the founder of the Republic," he wrote in his veto message. If an unlimited freedom of dress were to be recognized, he went on, professors and students would show up in class wearing "veiled baggy trousers, shorts, fancy evening dresses, knee breeches, long hair, beards." (This was a reference to the short, neatly clipped beards that young Muslim men wear as counterpart to the head scarf.) The Presidential veto was then overridden, at Özal's behest, by an edict of the Higher Education Council. In reversing its 1986 ban, the council said that it would continue to require students to dress in a way that "d

not contradict civilized norms," but added that students would thenceforth be allowed to "cover their head and neck according to their religious beliefs," because it had concluded that a "modern style" head scarf was "civilized."

Ayla, a sweet-faced, brown-eyed girl of eighteen, is one of the students who wear head scarves. She and Nilüfer Ünver, a pretty nineteen-year-old with flowing golden hair, are classmates in the journalism school of the University of Istanbul. Nilüfer is also an interne at the daily newspaper *Güneş*, and she arranged our meeting—a condition of which was that I not use Ayla's last name, for fear of embarrassing her family, who are religious people living in the Anatolian town of Çorum. The three of us met at the newspaper office, and Nilüfer, who speaks excellent English, did the translating. Ayla wore a blue-and-white checked scarf, from beneath which not a hair showed. She was dressed in a long-sleeved sweater and a navy skirt that reached her ankles. She wore no makeup. Though her family was reluctant to expose her to non-Muslims and to the temptations of Istanbul, she said, they finally gave in to her desire for an education and a career. She now shares a rented house in one of Istanbul's strict religious neighborhoods with several other girls, all devout Muslims.

Ayla denied that her head scarf was a political symbol, insisting that she was simply observing a Muslim rule. When I asked her how she planned to pursue a career in journalism in view of her unwillingness to mix with the non-Muslim world, she replied, "I want to work for a Muslim magazine. A newspaper like *Güneş* wouldn't take me in these clothes. But if I give up wearing this scarf I'll be another person. Besides, I don't want a career for myself but only to serve God. I want to be a journalist who transmits God's will." Ayla acknowledged that she was not comfortable with people who do not share her religious commitment—and, indeed, she seemed quite uncomfortable with me. When we finished talking, I reflexively reached out my hand to say thank you and goodbye, and she drew back a half step. After an instant of reflection, she resolved her dilemma by extending her hand and brushing her fingers quickly across mine. Then, with dignity, she made her departure.

Nilüfer remarked that Ayla had been

quite brave and that it had taken hours to persuade her to meet with me. Of her various statements Nilüfer challenged only the assertion that the head scarf was not meant to be a political symbol. "Maybe it isn't for her, but the other girls wear it as a sign of protest," she said. "They say that the government doesn't want us to believe in Islam. The government made a mistake in trying to ban head scarves. All this has made head scarves a very big deal." The gap between religious and secular students at the university was wide, she said, and many religious students were militant proselytizers. Ayla was "the first girl of her sort" that she had ever talked to.

"The difference between us has been a big topic of conversation among my friends and me," Nilüfer continued. "I wear miniskirts. I date boys. I use makeup. I asked Ayla if she envied me because I wear my hair uncovered, and she said that what matters is not what's on the outside but what's on the inside. Sometimes we see girls our age wearing the *abaya*. Even in the summer they wear them—these long things down to their ankles—and sometimes gloves. We don't understand it! These are good times for women in Turkey. We can choose our careers. We can do what we study to do. If a girl knows a foreign language and is a little bit pretty, there are plenty of good jobs. Girls I know have jobs that their boy-friends can't get. It's true that a girl like Ayla can't get a job at a place like *Güneş*. The people who work with her would be too uncomfortable. She'd be as noticeable in the clothes she wears as she would be if she wore no clothes at all. My grandmother, who is sixty-five, gets even more upset than I do at these things. She doesn't want the government to allow any religious dress. She says that Atatürk taught us to go forward, not back to the days of the sultans."

Şirin Tekeli, one of Turkey's first Western-style feminists, would agree

with Nilüfer's grandmother that the treatment of women under the sultans was deplorable, but she would not concur that Atatürk made things all that better. Tekeli is in her fifties; she has a Ph.D. in political science and was a university professor until she resigned in protest against the establishment of state control of the universities after the 1980 coup. Her generation, she told me, was brought up to believe that Atatürk had liberated urban women, and that Turkey's problem was with peasant women, whose liberation would eventually be effected by the development of an industrial economy. Though for a time women in Turkey were prominent in public life—even more, she said, than were women in the United States—their advantages were more apparent than real: "When the women's movement began in the West, we started to look at actual conditions, and we discovered that we were not so equal after all. At the secondary level, school enrollment is higher among boys, and in recent years the proportion of women in the professions has been declining. In 1985, because of the publicity given the United Nations' Decade for Women, the government endorsed a series of feminist resolutions, which gave our movement some legal standing, and the following year we initiated a petition calling for equal treatment under the law. We got four thousand signatures—which for Turkey is pretty good. The government didn't know what to make of us. In 1987, we sponsored a march in Istanbul, and three thousand women took to the streets to protest wife-beating, which is very common here. We estimate that there are now ten thousand women—mostly doctors, lawyers, teachers—working on these issues around the country, in small, informal groups."

Tekeli acknowledged Semra Özal, the Prime Minister's wife, as a factor in the rise of women's consciousness. Mrs. Özal has established herself as a personality independent of her husband, she said, and conveys the image of a forceful, self-reliant Turkish woman. She smokes cigarettes, and sometimes cigars. She makes clear that she shares big decisions with her husband, and the two even hold hands in public. Mrs. Özal has lectured to women in the countryside about their rights, and her physique—which is more than ample, in contrast to th

slim sophisticates in Istanbul—is an important credential among peasant women. But her opposition to any tampering with the dictums of Atatürk, Tekeli feels, leaves Mrs. Özal as a defender of the status quo. With the exception of a liberalization of the divorce code, she said, the Özal government has done very little to narrow the legal advantages enjoyed by men. “Turkey suffers from a deeply rooted patriarchal structure—admittedly at its worst in the countryside, where the family is a totalitarian institution, in which women and children are exploited and abused,” she told me. “Maybe our salvation will come in the eventual end of traditional village society. It is disappearing in Europe, and in time it will disappear here. As our culture becomes more urban and industrial, we will adopt European mores, but the change will not be automatic. I anticipate that the European Community will impose decent standards for women on us. It may be the only prospect for breaking our bonds.”

ON the morning of September 12, 1980, tanks rolled through the streets of Istanbul and Ankara, and within hours the Army took over from the elected government as the ruler of Turkey. The preceding years had witnessed a failure of the Turkish parliamentary system. The various parties had been unable to govern, either alone or in coalition. As economic and social problems worsened, fringe elements of both the nationalist right and the Marxist left had turned increasingly to terror: they acquired regular access to arms, and killing became commonplace. The disorder also stirred up a latent revolutionary disposition among the Kurds, and by the end of the seventies an estimated five thousand people had died, and bombings and assassinations—most of them directed at specific political targets, but many committed at random—were occurring almost daily. In 1979, martial law was declared, but the violence continued. When the coup came, virtually all Turks breathed a sigh of relief.

“What you must understand about contemporary Turkey is that Atatürk was first of all a soldier, and that the Army has always seen itself as the instrument of Westernization and modernization,” a professor of history at the University of the Bosphorus explained to me. He and several of his

colleagues had come together in an effort to instruct me on the significance of the Army in Turkey’s political life. They emphasized the fact that the Army, as the only institution in the country that emerged from the ruins of the Ottoman Empire with an understanding of the West, became the nation’s intelligentsia and its political conscience—a development that contrasts strongly with the Western experience. “The Turkish Army justifies its relative autonomy by asserting its responsibility for the preservation of Atatürk’s work, which it is still not at all sure is secure,” one of the professors told me, pointing out that after each of its three postwar “interventions” the Army had retreated to its barracks, after applying “correctives” to the system. The consensus seemed to be that the Turkish people have more confidence in the Army, as an institution responsible for the nation’s well-being, than they do in the government.

Among the politicians of the pre-1980 period, however, there was bitterness that only after it took power did the Army succeed in controlling terrorism. Indeed, the speed with which the junta restored order suggested either a miracle or preparations for action whose execution had been long delayed. Once in office, the Army was ruthless in going after the perpetrators of the terror, and after calm was reestablished it set out to enact the political and economic reforms it considered necessary to the preservation of the democratic system. If the positive side of the “intervention” was that the Army gave Turgut Özal the authority to modernize the economy, the negative is that it unleashed a downward spiral of contempt for individual rights, from which Turkey has even now barely begun to retreat.

Human rights, to be sure, have never been Turkey’s strong suit; Atatürk scarcely bothered with them in promoting his program of revolutionary change. Under the civilian governments in the decades after the Second World War, the situation seemed to improve, but in 1980, with the society in chaos, few Turks were willing to attach much priority to individual rights. On the contrary, most were more than willing to give the Army a free hand. The junta, by its own count, rounded up 122,609 suspects within its

first seven months, and after the first year it still held thirty thousand in prison. In 1983, when it stepped down, it acknowledged custody of 21,121 political prisoners; many Turks believe a more accurate figure would be between fifty thousand and a hundred thousand. Thousands of the detainees—as part of normal procedure—had been horribly tortured. Hundreds died. Nor did the junta much distinguish those suspected of crimes of violence from those suspected of unpopular political beliefs. Imprisonment and torture were indiscriminate. One human-rights activist told me that the Army’s real mission was to “depoliticize the country by terror.” The Army, he said, “stopped terrorism on the streets and brought it into the police station.”

The case of the Turkish Peace Association, which led to one of the celebrated trials of the period, is illustrative. The Peace Association was founded in 1977 to promote nuclear disarmament and an end to the Cold War. Its membership consisted of some two hundred prominent intellectuals. Not a particularly powerful or effective group, in 1980 it was routinely banned along with all other political organizations. Then, in February of 1982, twenty-eight members of the association’s executive board were suddenly arrested on various charges related to sedition. Later, several dozen more, including the defendants’ lawyers, were charged, and, in the absence of habeas corpus, most remained in prison while their cases were pending. Some were tortured. The trial, which began in 1985, ended two years later with the conviction of twelve, the acquittal of thirty-one, and dropped charges against twenty-eight. By then, some of the innocent had spent more than three years in prison, and the time served by the guilty had exceeded their sentences. All were released, but the prosecution appealed the verdict. The case is still in the courts.

Gencay Şaylan, a former political-science professor at the Middle East Technical University, in Ankara, was one of those acquitted. He spent thirty-eight months in various military and civilian prisons, and though he was not tortured, his memories of the period are grim. He is working now as a journalist. He told me that he would prefer to return to the academic world, but i:

spite of his acquittal he has repeatedly been refused jobs, though there have been openings in his field. "There was no rationale for prosecuting the Peace Association," Şaylan said. "We were a left-wing elite who did nothing but talk. We were sacrificed to a hard-line faction in the military. But this is not an unusual case. After a while, going to prison seems like a natural part of life in Turkey." Şaylan told me that if the government's appeal fails and his acquittal is affirmed he can sue in civil court for some small compensation for his time in prison. But he made it clear that he was skeptical about the prospect of collecting anything.

With an eye to its application for membership in the European Community, Turkey has made some moves in the past few years to improve its human-rights image. In July, 1987, it finally lifted martial law. It has recognized the right of citizens to appeal to the European Human Rights Commission, and it has signed the Council of Europe Convention for the Prevention of Torture—both moves being concessions of form rather than substance. It has from time to time given outside monitoring groups, such as Amnesty International and Helsinki Watch, a certain amount of freedom to inquire into conditions. Still, few detached observers would dispute the conclusion of a report on Turkey which Amnesty International released last January: "In recent years fewer people have been detained on political grounds, and consequently the number of prisoners of conscience has declined and so have the number of allegations of torture and reports of deaths in custody as a result of torture; yet there has been no significant change in the pattern of human-rights violations. Anyone detained on political grounds risks being tortured." Turkey's repressive 1982 Constitution remains unamended, as do repressive provisions of the civil code and various decrees of the junta. Estimates that I heard in Turkey and regard as reliable say that the Özal government currently holds five thousand prisoners whose offenses might reasonably be classified as political. Some thirty-five of them are journalists.

When Fatma Yazici became the "responsible editor" of an investigative weekly called *2000'e Doğru* ("Toward the Year 2000"), she put herself in danger of joining them. The magazine is published in Istanbul; it has a circu-

lation of about twenty thousand. Her title means that it is she who takes legal responsibility for what the magazine publishes, which includes going to jail if necessary. Since its first issue, in January, 1987, the magazine has been repeatedly charged by the government with publishing articles that violate the press laws. Among them were examinations of the conduct of Atatürk, President Evren, Prime Minister Özal, and the Prophet Muhammad. Most, however, were articles that were said to promote autonomy for the Kurds—an illegal objective—and an issue of the magazine was confiscated for containing a pro-Kurdish statement by Atatürk. Of the cases so far tried, two ended in verdicts of not guilty and are being appealed. The others brought guilty verdicts and combined sentences of fourteen years, which have been affirmed on appeal. Yazici was scheduled to give herself up, but this spring she went underground and is believed by many to have fled Turkey.

I met Yazici, a slight thirty-three-year-old woman with sparkling brown eyes, in the magazine's offices, which are in the old newspaper district, on the south bank of the Golden Horn. The room in which we talked smelled of stale cigarette smoke and barely accommodated the three desks that were jammed into it. Yazici told me that though she was a Marxist, the magazine did not reflect her ideas. When I asked her why she had willingly made herself its scapegoat, she answered, "I don't consider myself a scapegoat. I knew the risks. If the magazine is to publish what we think is important, someone has to take the rap." The Turkish press, she said, was not accustomed to fighting for its freedom—the journalists' unions worried chiefly about salaries—but she thought that Turkey's desire to join the European Community would lead ultimately to freer expression. When I asked her how she felt about spending much of her youth in prison, she laughed, and informed me sardonically that the law said that no matter how many sentences were imposed the limit she would have to serve was thirty-six years.

I ran into Yazici by chance about three weeks later, in an Istanbul park, at a demonstration of support for several hundred hunger strikers in Turkish prisons. It was one of those days when the rain refused to let up, and

some three thousand people—from their appearance I took them to be mostly working class—stood in a sea of mud, slipping and sliding whenever they moved their feet. Hundreds of policemen in black rubber raincoats and riot helmets ringed the site. Yazici, sheltering me under her umbrella, introduced me to the rally's organizer. He told me that the event had been approved by the authorities after he submitted several requests. One of every three or four demonstrators, he said, was probably from the secret police, and the number of well-groomed young men wearing similar overcoats seemed to support this contention. Banners bearing slogans—"STOP TORTURE," "END FASCIST EXPLOITATION," "FREEDOM FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS"—rose above the crowd, and crudely printed flyers denouncing inhuman treatment in the prisons were being distributed.

The hub of the demonstration was a flatbed truck, from which successive speakers delivered impassioned harangues. I was most moved by a heavyset elderly woman with weather-beaten skin and bad teeth who shouted out a description of the conditions in which her son lived in prison, but the crowd responded more enthusiastically to a younger woman with long black hair named Deniz Türkali, who is the daughter of Vedap Türkali, a prominent novelist who spent eight years in jail for left-wing writing. She is known as Turkey's Joan Baez, and she sang a series of folk ballads on



political themes, accompanying herself on the guitar. Several television cameras recorded the proceedings, and when I said that I was surprised to see Turkish television covering the event the organizer corrected me; one of the crews was from West Germany, he said, and the others were from the police. The organizer himself made the last speech of the afternoon, urging the crowd to disperse peacefully in order to avoid giving the police a pretext for arrests. Nonetheless, the next morning the newspapers reported that three demonstrators had been arrested on leaving the site. A few days later, I learned from a Turkish journalist that the number was probably closer to a dozen, but the police would not confirm either figure, nor would they disclose any names.

One of the planners of the demon-

stration was Nevzat Helvacı, the president of Turkey's Human Rights Association, and I arranged to meet him later that week in Ankara. A handsome man with white hair overlapping his collar, Helvacı is a lawyer who in 1986 joined with about a hundred other Turks, many of them relatives of political prisoners, to apply for permission to form the organization. Though the hand of the government has become a bit lighter lately, he said, none of them had any illusions about the dangers. The ban on political organizations is legally directed against political partisanship, and since politics are not a concern of the Human Rights Association the founders reasoned that they could find a channel within the letter of the law. Thirty-two branches have been founded, and there are about seven thousand members. Unfortunately, he said, Turkey's middle class has not shown much interest in human-rights issues, and though the bar associations have provided some leadership, the principal activists are those with family members in prison. His modest office, off Atatürk Boulevard in Ankara's center, was crowded during my visit with people seeking help for imprisoned relatives. The association has tried to promote its cause within the apolitical terms of its permit, conducting seminars and panels for the general public and the press, and publishing a monthly bulletin with a circulation of several thousand. The state prosecutor, however, contended that all this constituted politics and was thus illegal, and he filed charges against the members of the executive board which carried from two to four years in prison. The courts acquitted the accused, but various local and state authorities continue to harass the association.

"Our principal campaign so far has been to promote amnesty for all prisoners," Helvacı told me. "We say 'all prisoners' because we believe that after the 1980 coup much testimony was taken under torture. Since it is impossible to establish which testimony was

coerced and which was not, we have concluded that the entire system of justice is suspect. A large proportion of the victims of torture—especially in the rural areas—are Kurds. We have documented the cases of a hundred and seventy-one people who have died under torture since 1980—and those are just the cases we can prove. Today, the violations are largely limited to interrogations carried out by the police in the first days after arrest. Much could be resolved if the government would simply allow lawyers to be present at these interrogations. But it will not, and the torture goes on."

THE government's treatment of Kurds is a particular focus of the struggle for human rights in Turkey today. Their failure to be granted their own state after the First World War has left the Kurds a sullen minority not just in Turkey but in Iraq, Syria, Iran, and the Soviet Union. Though many Kurds fought on Atatürk's side during Turkey's war of independence, it is probable that few Kurds have ever thought of themselves as totally Turk. They rose up against the state three times, and each time the Turkish Army brutally put them down.

Even quite sensible Turks become exasperated when an outsider raises questions about Kurdish rights. They argue, with only slight exaggeration, that Kurds suffer no discrimination when they behave like other citizens. Marriage between Turks and Kurds is common, they say. They point out that Kurds have held some of the highest offices in the land, both civilian and military, and that Turgut Özal himself may be part Kurd. About thirty Kurds currently sit in parliament. Most Kurds, acknowledging universal rejection of their proposals for independence, now content themselves with declaring cultural autonomy to be their goal. But Turkish society will not brook even this limited notion, maintaining that the Kurds, not being a bona-fide minority, can claim no special treatment. In Islamic thought, only Christians and Jews are entitled to minority rights; Kurds are considered an integral part of the Islamic community. If they are referred to separately at all, it is as Mountain Turks. Kurdish is not recognized as an official language, nor can it be taught in the schools. There is disagreement even on

the number of Kurds in Turkey, because the government will not identify them in a census. Experts estimate them at about a fifth of the population.

"When I was a baby, all the lullabies I heard from my mother were in Kurdish," Nürettin Yılmaz, a member of parliament from the Kurdish town of Mardin, told me. "Whenever I cried and needed to be quieted, whenever I was hugged in joy, I heard Kurdish expressions from my mother. When I played or walked about the streets or the bazaar, I spoke Kurdish with my friends. When I went to school, at the age of seven, I did not know a single word of Turkish. I learned Turkish in school. There are millions of people like me in Turkey. The denial of this reality is like trying to brush a coat of paint over the sun."

Yılmaz, a stocky man of fifty-two, is one of the few political figures in Turkey who will openly discuss the Kurdish question. First elected to parliament in 1973, he was among ten thousand Kurds imprisoned after the 1980 coup and tortured at the notorious Diyarbakir prison. He was released after two and a half years and then imprisoned a second-time, for membership in the Peace Association. Barred from running for parliament, he was invited by Özal—who recognized his appeal to Kurdish voters—to become a candidate of the Motherland Party in 1987. He is now a member of the Party's left wing, and he said he would probably be expelled by the powerful conservative faction if it were not for Özal's protection. Turgut and Semra Özal, Yılmaz said, are the only leaders in Turkey who reach out to the Kurds. He added that if the Prime Minister had his way he would surely grant cultural rights to the Kurds—a statement with which no one else I met in Turkey agreed.

"The government should accept the fact that there are Kurds in Turkey," Yılmaz said. "Kurds don't have their own programs on television, so they watch Kurdish broadcasts on Iraqi or Soviet TV—with Iraqi and Soviet ideology. Officially, the government does not even use the name 'Kurd,' but the taboo has been lifted a bit by the press. There is no reason we should not have our autonomy, like the Kurds in Iraq. There is a Kurdish institute in Paris but none in Turkey. We cannot learn our own history, or hear our own

poetry. We cannot listen to Kurdish music, and so we buy contraband cassettes from abroad and play them in our cars. Did you know that such a thing can get you five years in prison? If it were not for my parliamentary immunity, I could be sentenced to five years for what I am telling you today."

In 1984, Marxist-Leninist guerrillas known as the P.K.K.—the initials, in Turkish, stand for Kurdish Workers' Party—began a series of attacks on Turkish military units in Anatolia, claiming Kurdish independence as their objective. They operated from inaccessible points high in the Taurus Mountains, and from across the Syrian, Iraqi, and Iranian borders. They were brutal in dealing with Kurdish villagers who declined to support them, and it is estimated that by 1987 at least three hundred civilians and as many as five hundred soldiers and police had been killed. Although the guerrillas conspicuously failed in their goal of triggering a Kurdish uprising, the Turkish government was seriously shaken. Some years earlier, it had begun constructing a network of dams and power stations known as the Southeast Anatolia Project—GAP, in Turkish—to promote economic development in the region. In response to the attacks, it stepped up work on the project and assigned Kurdish troops to defend the GAP installations. It also built an electrified security fence on the flatlands along the Syrian border. The defense effort was put in the hands of Hayri Kozakçıoğlu, a former prefect of police in Istanbul.

Kozakçıoğlu, a burly man in his late forties, is a major public figure in Turkey these days. He holds the unique rank of "super-governor," with authority over eleven cities and their surroundings. I met with him in his lightly guarded military compound on the outskirts of Diyarbakir. "The aim of the P.K.K. is to establish a Marxist-Leninist regime in Turkey," he told me. "They chose this region because the terrain is full of places to hide. They are taking advantage of a people who speak a different language. Many of the guerrillas are Kurds, but the leaders are not. They communicate in Turkish. They have no interest in Kurdish independence, and it is obvious that the majority of the people called Kurds do not support them. Most of them were trained in Lebanon,

in the Beqaa Valley, and they get the support from Syria and Iran. Some of their arms come from the Soviet bloc. Their special targets are the GAP installations, because they know that after GAP is built the region will be prosperous and their cause will be finished. We knew we could not organize armies against guerrillas—the Americans learned that in Vietnam—so we have formed small anti-terrorist units, with improved communications that enable us to maintain contact throughout the remotest areas. We have a good intelligence network, and some villages have formed voluntary militias to help us. The P.K.K. get too much aid from outside the country for us to suppress them completely, but we have evidence that bit by bit they are losing hope."

When I asked Kozakçıoğlu what his feelings were about allowing cultural autonomy to the Kurds, he raised the pitch of his voice. "The idea that Kurdish culture is suppressed is a tactic of the Communists," he declared, and went on to argue that the Kurds had plenty of opportunity to do their folk singing and dancing, and that the Kurdish language was neither sufficiently standardized nor sufficiently developed to justify its being taught in schools. It would be very much to the advantage of the Kurds, he said, to agree simply to be good citizens of the country. The advice seemed sensible—even well meaning—but I had an experience in a Kurdish village (slightly disguised in the telling) which demonstrated to me how difficult it is to persuade a Kurd that he is a Mountain Turk.

Yedioluk (a fictitious name), a village set on a bleak, stony plateau some miles from Diyarbakir, is the home of several hundred Kurds. An acquaintance in Ankara suggested that I visit them, and provided me with an introduction to the doctor at the village clinic, who he said spoke a little English. The day after my talk with the super-governor, I drove to the village and the doctor met me near a neighborhood gendarmerie—part of the stepped-up security system. He showed me through his primitive clinic and took me on a walk along unpaved streets past rather grim one-story houses of mud and stone. Then he proposed that we have tea in the village teahouse, a few yards away from the gendarmerie. It was a one-room structure with a

floor, in the dark interior of which a handful of men were sitting on low stools, playing a game that looked like mah-jongg. I took a stool against the wall, whereupon the men interrupted their game and gathered around me. Within a few minutes, there were a dozen in a semicircle, one of whom was introduced to me as the muktar, or village head. By then, word had obviously spread around Yedioluk, for within a quarter of an hour the number of men rose to thirty or more. (Not a single woman appeared.) Though my conversation with them was conducted on a rudimentary level, there was certainly communication. I wanted to talk politics; they wanted to talk jobs, since they thought at first that I was some sort of businessman and could provide work. They said that it often required a bribe to get a job, and none of them could afford to pay it. The only work available in the village, they said, was plowing the fields or tending the sheep and goats, and all the other jobs in the region went to Turks.

As we sipped our tea, one man—a fat fellow in his thirties—became conspicuous by shouting over and over, in painfully mastered English, such phrases as “Sir, everybody Turk, no Kurds!” and “Kurds, Turks brothers!” After several repetitions, he belatedly, “You understand?” By then, I was finding him a little annoying, and I said yes, I understood well enough but did not believe him. When the doctor translated my words, the others burst into laughter, and the ice was broken. In the next half hour, the men told me something of their lives: the village is fully electrified, most of the houses have radios, and a few have television. They noted proudly that they do not use birth control—“not Islamic”—and that the norm is for a man to have two or three wives and a dozen babies. (They meant male babies, since in the countryside only boys are counted.) One man complained that a friend’s son had scored very high in his secondary-school examinations and had gone to Ankara for a civil-service post, only to be sent home because he was a Kurd. True or not, the assertion seemed to reflect what the group believed. The statements I most often heard, and which most stuck with me, were “Life is harder for Kurds than for Turks” and “Kurds have no country.”

During the meeting, men continued

to enter the teahouse, and a few got up to leave, among them the muktar. As soon as he had left, the doctor bent toward me and whispered that it was time to go. It was quite possible, he said, that the muktar, being in the pay of the government, had gone to the gendarmerie, and the police might soon appear. Once we were outside, he told me that the man who had so energetically proclaimed his loyalty to Turkey was from Yedioluk’s richest family, with the most fertile lands and the largest herds. As we walked toward my car, we were followed by several teen-agers, obviously aroused by the meeting, who called out “Turkish bad, Kurdish good!” and “Diyarbakir Kurdish, no flag! Mardin Kurdish, no flag!” I realized that my presence in the village might well lead to arrests—even my own—by the Turkish police, so, after bidding the doctor and the boys a brief and unceremonious farewell, I jumped into my car and sped off.

DURING the last week of my stay, I paid a formal call on the Özals, in their residence in Çankaya, a suburb of Ankara made famous by Atatürk, who chose it as his home during the war of independence. A contemporary biographer described Çankaya as “a village on a bare ridge some four miles outside” the city. Today it is an elegant, wooded enclave—the home of ambassadors and high officials, and a few minutes’ drive from the parliament. Özal does most of his work in the Çankaya house, preferring it to his office downtown. It is a low, sprawling, solidly built house, situated on a rise and partly concealed by fir trees. It had once been the Foreign

Minister’s residence, I was told, but Mrs. Özal liked it better than the Prime Minister’s residence and requisitioned it. Critics of the Özals cite this as evidence of a fondness for good living which they say is not in keeping with the austere standards expected of Turkish leaders, but the house seemed to me far from luxurious, and the furnishings rather modest. Mrs. Özal, a round woman with a rosy smile, greeted me in the living room, which was decorated chiefly with family photographs (the Özals have three children and four grandchildren). I spoke with her for a few minutes, and her remarks seemed to me to confirm the feminist critique that she was a booster of the Atatürk myth. “Turkish women are very fortunate,” she said. “Women in Europe had to fight for their rights. In Turkey, Atatürk gave them these rights. The problem we face now is whether women know how to exercise them. In the rural areas, they clearly need more time to come up to contemporary levels. But doesn’t every society have different levels?” She described her work in the countryside, where she promotes the causes of education and health care, and noted with some pride that she had been able to persuade women—and, more important, their husbands and fathers—that Islam permits women to be examined by male doctors. This was among the changes, she said, that had begun to bring down Turkey’s high infant-mortality rate. “We are the world’s most modern Islamic country,” she said. “There is religious education in the public schools, but the idea behind it is to present religious duties as compatible with secular society. My husband is sometimes portrayed as a fundamentalist, but this is not correct. My views are modern and liberal, and if he and I did not share these views I would not be able to do the work I am doing.”

The Prime Minister met me in a large office filled with books and electronic equipment. He had his coat off and his sleeves rolled up, and he invited me to take a chair beside him at a long conference table at which half a dozen aides were seated.

I began by asking him whether he believed that Turkey had changed enough to satisfy the requirements for admission to the European Community.

“The biggest change we’ve made is in economic thinking,” he replied.

"The private sector now exceeds the government in total investment. A decade ago, talk of privatization would have generated a powerful reaction in the press and parliament. The state was seen as a father. Now we can announce that we'll get rid of our refineries—a huge organization—and nothing is said. A decade ago, it was almost impossible for foreign enterprises to be set up here. Foreign meddling in the economy during Ottoman times left us with a bad taste in our mouths. Now a foreign investor must simply comply with the same rules as Turks, and no one complains. Five years ago, we had no credit cards"—he pulled out his wallet with a flourish and let Visa and American Express cards fall to the table—"and now everyone has them. Turkish travellers used to return from abroad with their luggage filled with purchases. Now they can find the same products made here, cheaper. Syrians, Iraqis, and Greeks cross the border every day by the busload to shop in our stores. Turks can take money out of the country, keep foreign-exchange accounts in Turkish banks, write unlimited checks. It's a basic change—not just in our economy but in our way of thinking."

The words gushed out easily and confidently. Özal's aides, who sat listening or taking notes, provided no advice while he spoke. I asked him whether he saw any danger to the regime in Turkey's seventy-five-percent inflation.

"I don't think there's any threat," he said. "In the last twenty years, Turkey has had huge economic problems—foreign debt, perpetual balance-of-payments deficits, stagnant industry. I personally went to the international agencies for help, and they smiled at me as if to say that Turkey was a hopeless case. Well, we've cleaned up most of the economic problems, and inflation is what's left. We've transformed ourselves from an agriculturally based to an industrially based economy in eight years. It took the West fifty to a hundred years to do it, with no one hectoring them about human rights or I.L.O. norms"—a reference to the International Labor Organization. "Turkey, furthermore, is accomplishing all this in line with the current

social standards of the Western world. I was in Pittsburgh in 1950, when it was smoky and dirty, and no one lectured the Americans about the environment. In Germany in 1956, the standard work week was fifty-six hours, and no one worried about labor standards. Korea had no retirement benefits for its workers when it was growing, but we do. We've built an international telephone system that is as good as any in the world, and extended the electricity system so that every village can have color TV. The hard fact is that sacrifice goes along with economic development, and our sacrifice comes in inflation. But the result of what we've done is that democracy is stronger, secularism is stronger, and the threat of military intervention is finished. We still have a much different social structure from Europe. Our society reflects two continents, Europe and Asia, but we've succeeded in creating one nation. You have to appreciate what we've done."

Since Turks regularly complain that Westerners badger them about human rights while remaining indifferent to Turkey's achievements, I had thought that it would be prudent if I left my questions on this subject until last. But Özal himself threaded his remarks with so many allusions to the issue that I felt comfortable asking him outright if he was worried that the human-rights problem would be an obstacle to Turkey's membership in the European Community. He poured out his answer with the same zest and self-assurance he had shown in talking about the economy.

"The whole issue is exaggerated in the West," he said. "You forget that in the years immediately before 1980 Turkey was in anarchy. As many as twenty people a day died in the streets. When the Army intervened, there were many arrests in the effort to stop the killing quickly. There were a hundred times as many people interrogated as in previous periods, and the Army probably inflicted some punishment during these interrogations owing to lack of an experienced staff. Human-rights standards were not maintained. But even in this period the accusations made were not correct. The reason is that many extremists escaped and established themselves in Europe, where

Iraqis Silence Iranian Rebels As Gesture to Please Teheran

By IHSAN A. HIJAZI
Special to The New York Times

BEIRUT, Lebanon, June 6 — In what is seen as a good-will gesture to Teheran after the death of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, Iraq has apparently had Iranian rebels based in Baghdad shut down their propaganda operations.

The move coincides with an editorial in the Iraqi daily Al Thawra, which speaks for the ruling Baath Party, saying that Iraq "once again calls for a comprehensive and just peace on good neighborly relations and nonintervention in each other's internal affairs." The eight-year war between Iran and Iraq, with a toll in the millions, was halted by a cease-fire last summer.

Al Thawra said the Ayatollah Khomeini's death meant "the passing of a vicious despot who spared no effort of fulfilling a dream of building a Persian empire." The Government daily newspaper Al Jumhuriya said the Ayatollah's death has "opened the gates" for peace.

The Iranian rebels known as the People's Holy Warriors, announced in Baghdad on Monday that after the Ayatollah's death they had halted publication of their magazines, shut down their television station called off anti-Khomeini demonstrations in world capitals planned June 20.

Ordered by the Authorities

Arab diplomats said the shutdown was ordered by the Iraqi authorities to encourage leaders in Teheran to respond to Iraqi peace overtures.

The apparent overtures to Iran are being carried out as President Saddam Hussein, Iraq's ruler for 20 years, is restructuring his Government by delegating part of his authority to his aides and carrying out other changes.

On Monday, Mr. Hussein promoted the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Saadoun Hammadi, to the

post of Deputy Prime Minister, making him the third person to hold such a post in the Cabinet. The two others are Taha Yassin Ramadan and Tariq Aziz, the Foreign Minister.

The Kurdish Issue

The issue of rebuilding the country after the war devastation is all the more complicated by political difficulties, including the Kurdish problem.

After poison gas was used by Iraqi forces against a Kurdish town in northern Iraq shortly before the war with Iran ended, even the most loyal of Kurds was alienated. Three Kurdish members of the Government have resigned since then.

The Kurds have been in virtual rebellion against Baghdad since the pro-Western monarchy was overthrown in a bloody coup in 1958. The rebels have always looked to Iran and the United States for help.

Masoud Barzani, leader of the Kurdish Democratic Party and son of the legendary leader, the late Mulla Mustafa Barzani, this week appealed for international intervention to stop enforced relocation of some 300,000 Kurds from northern Iraq.

Mr. Barzani said in a statement circulated to the international press that the entire 10,000 residents of the town of Twasoran was forcibly evacuated, and that Government troops last week entered the town of Qala Diza to begin its forced evacuation.

With support from Iran, Kurdish insurgents managed to seize large areas in northern Iraq in the Persian Gulf war. The Aryan Kurds are seeking independence from Baghdad.

The Kurds are Sunni Moslems, like President Hussein and the majority of Iraqi rulers, but their bid for secession has always been rejected.

8A Sunday, June 11, 1989

San Jose Mercury News

IRAQI RELOCATIONS: Kurdish rebels on Saturday accused Iraq of razing several towns and shipping away 19,000 people in a drive to stamp out the Kurdish identity and carve a security zone along the Iranian border. Diplomats and other sources in Iraq say the government already has moved up to 500,000 Kurds and destroyed about 3,000 villages in a major relocation effort over the past few years. They say it is aimed at cutting off the rebels from sympathizers and breaking up the tight-knit Kurdish clan system. Iraq acknowledges relocating people but denies forcing residents to leave.

KURDISH SOLUTIONS

In its continuing persecution of its Kurdish population, Iraq has turned to a new page in the totalitarian handbook. Last year it tried poisonous gas attacks upon civilian populations; this year it is back to forceable deportation.

In a six-month period between March and September last year, up to 10,000 Kurds are thought to have been killed in gas clouds, more than 4,000 in the city of Halabja alone. Although this clear breach of the 1925 Geneva Protocol drew criticism from Western countries, governments stopped short of further action.

Now new reports have described recent wholesale deportations, the latest beginning in the town of Qala Diza, 10 miles from the north-eastern border with Iran. The Baghdad Government has acknowledged that some people are being moved, but has disputed the motivation or location. The official Baghdad explanation is that they are going to model villages, within their own "autonomous" areas, where they can enjoy the benefits of electricity and modern plumbing.

It may be noted, however, that the original plan to move the inhabitants of Qala Diza in April was temporarily shelved after cries of alarm and protest from round the world. The approach of the Baghdad Arms Fair in late April was thought to have persuaded President Saddam Hussein to stay his hand. Now the scheme would seem to have started up again.

According to conservative estimates, about 500,000 of the 4,000,000 Kurds in Iraq have been forcibly moved in recent years to various camps, including some in the desert near the borders with Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Others have fled to claim refugee status in Iran and Turkey. Altogether more than 4,000 villages are said to have been destroyed or depopulated — and in some cases resettled by Arab families.

The Kurds have been fighting the Iraqi Government for many years as part of a long

vain struggle for independence. During the Gulf War they received help from Iran — hoping to capitalize upon their discontent. This no doubt explains why Saddam Hussein is now seeking a more final solution to his Kurdish problem.

The persistent refusal of the Baghdad Government to open its borders to official investigation invites people to think the worst. Lord Avebury, chairman of the Parliamentary Human Rights Group, was recently offered a visit to Iraq. But the offer has not been renewed since he laid down his own conditions for accepting — including the freedom to travel where he wanted and to speak to whom he pleased through his own interpreters.

The Iraqi Ambassador to London was summoned to the Foreign Office this week and asked for an official explanation. What he came up with were the usual denials — but no offer of independent verification. The camps in which Kurds are said to be living in the south — as well as the homes they have had to abandon in the north — should be open for inspection not only by the press but by the United Nations and the Red Cross.

The Kurdish problem is not confined to Iraq. There are 10 million more in Turkey and a further five million in Iran as well as smaller concentrations in Syria and the Soviet Union. In no country are they treated very well: 1,900 Turkish Kurds are now seeking asylum in this country.

It is not just a widespread problem but an old one. It will not be erased by cruel persecution. Nor will it be solved by Kurdish insurrection. There is a great need for a regional solution, under international auspices, which will give to the Kurdish people a degree of self-determination which is acceptable both to them and to their host governments. As the Gulf War fades and as Turkey seeks to rebuild its future within Europe, this ought to be a good point at which to seek a just solution. Iraq seems to disagree.

Wretched Kurds

No assistance for Iraq until it ends its persecution

THE Kurds, it seems, are destined to be either forgotten or persecuted. Iraq's President Saddam Hussein is their latest tormentor. He has already exacted grim vengeance on Iraq's Kurdish minority for the support it gave Iran during the Gulf war. Kurds were the victims when President Hussein pioneered the use of chemical weapons against civilians; more than 4,000 of them died at Halabja last year in a cloud of poison gas. And on his orders thousands of innocent Kurds have been arrested and executed; in one incident 8,000 men of the Barzani tribe disappeared without trace. But still the Iraqi dictator's thirst for revenge is unquenched.

Some years ago, for "security reasons", Iraq began to clear Kurdish villages along the Iranian and Turkish frontiers to create a *cordon sanitaire*. That policy has since been extended throughout Kurdistan. In a hecatomb outdoing even President Nicolae Ceausescu's planned destruction of Romanian villages, 4,000 traditional Kurdish settlements, many of them with historic mosques and churches, have been razed and their inhabitants deported. The more fortunate have been banished to camps and compounds near the main cities of Kurdistan, the unlucky ones to Iraq's arid southern and western deserts, far from their mountainous homeland.

Now it is the turn of the small and medium-sized towns of Kurdistan to suffer a similar fate. Some have already been demolished. Others are waiting their turn. Faced with so ruinous a fate, some brave Kurds refused to budge. The residents of the town of Qalah Dizeh are reported to have barricaded themselves inside their homes. They did not keep the bulldozers at bay for long.

The conclusion drawn by the Kurds themselves and by international human-rights organisations is that President Hussein is bent on "solving" the Kurdish problem for ever by destroying his country's 4m Kurds as a distinct people. Iraq denies anything so sinister. No Kurds, it says, have been moved out of Kurdistan. Rather they are being resettled from primitive houses made of mud bricks into new settlements with running water, electricity and better access to schools



and clinics. The protestations ring hollow to those who recall Iraq's denials that it used chemical weapons against the Kurds, particularly since it will allow no independent observers free access to Kurdistan.

A way for the West to help

The Kurds are not blameless. Since the 1960s they have been in almost continuous insurrection against governments in Baghdad. During the Gulf war Kurdish leaders took the fateful gamble of allying with an enemy, and lost. But the vengeance Iraq is taking is brutal and disproportionate. And it will not work. Far from pacifying Iraq's Kurds for all time, the policy of deportations and demolitions is merely building resentments that will return to haunt future Iraqi governments. If the Kurds are troublesome, that is because they have been abused and excluded from power. The local autonomy long promised has never been delivered; giving it to them would not be taken as a sign of weakness, and thus as an encouragement to ask for more. The way to stop them threatening Iraq's stability is to treat them humanely and cultivate their loyalty. The same lesson will eventually have to be learnt by the governments of Turkey and Iran, whose repression of their own Kurdish minorities is equally misguided.

The world has never done much for the Kurds. They should perhaps, in some less imperfect international order, have been granted a state of their own: Kurdistan. That is not an option now. But the world can do more than merely tut-tut about chemical warfare and a policy of mass deportation. Because Iraq needs western technical help and credits to rebuild its postwar economy, Kurdish rights can be defended even without a Kurdish state. Western governments and companies have been falling over each other to offer Iraq services and loans. Governments in particular should think again. Iraq should be told that its continued access to western assistance will be contingent on a big improvement in the way it treats its people, starting with the Kurds.

Kurds

The state that never was

Iraq's uprooting of its Kurdish minority is the blackest chapter in a long story of persecution

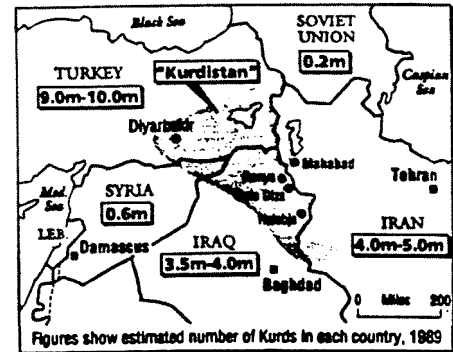
A SEPARATE state for the Kurds is one of history's great might-have-beens. For a moment in 1920, when Turkey's empire in the Middle East was collapsing, it nearly came about. In the Treaty of Sèvres of that year the western powers tried, among other things, to provide separate countries for both the Armenians and the Kurds (see map). But Sèvres was rejected by the Turkish nationalist hero Ataturk. When he went back to war, and did well, it was superseded by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, which offered Turkey better terms. The plan for a Kurdish state vanished.

The Kurds themselves did not. Between 17m and 21m of them continue to live where Kurdish people have lived for centuries: in the regions of the Taurus and Zagros mountains known loosely as "Kurdistan". Most are citizens of Iran (up to 5m), Iraq (up to 4m) or Turkey (up to 10m). Unlike the manufactured nations of the Middle East, Kurds have a language and culture of their own. Independence, though, is now the wild dream of a small minority. Most would now-

adays settle for a modest degree of autonomy and a chance to lead decent lives as the distinctive people they are.

Some hope. After a short delay caused by international protests, the Iraqi government of President Saddam Hussein has begun to uproot some 300,000 Iraqi Kurds from their homes in Kurdistan. Kurdish exiles say that 10,000 Kurds from Twasora, 12,000 from Sangasar and 5,000 from Degala have already been deported and their homes destroyed. The citizens of Ranya have been given notice to leave. Troops and tanks entered Qala Diza on June 1st. Its 100,000 inhabitants were told to prepare one suitcase only before being deported. Many are said to have barricaded themselves inside their homes. By mid-June the town was empty.

Iraq says it wants to provide its Kurds with electricity, water and access to schools and clinics. In fact it is extending a campaign of persecution that started ten years ago with the expulsion of Kurds from a "security zone" along the Iranian frontier. In



the past two years this policy has been extended through much of Kurdistan. Some 4,000 villages are estimated to have been destroyed, up to 1m Kurds have been moved within Kurdistan and another 500,000 have been sent to camps in remote desert regions. In the oil-rich parts of Kurdistan, Kurds are forbidden to build new houses or sell their homes to other Kurds. Only Arabs can buy.

Kurds have never been easy to govern. For centuries their warlike mountain tribes fought off the encroachment of Persian shahs and Turkish sultans. The Kurds in Iran established an independent republic in Mahabad in 1946, but it lasted less than a year. Iraq's Kurds rebelled in 1931-32 and again in 1944-45 against the centralising authority of Baghdad. They supported the overthrow of King Feisal in 1958 but, when they got nothing in return, began a long guerrilla war under their legendary chieftain, Mullah Mustapha Barzani.

In 1974 Iraq responded to the guerrillas by offering autonomy. Although it may have been the best offer any Kurds had ever received, it was not good enough. Many Kurdish areas were left out of the proposed autonomous zone, and its governor and ruling council were to be appointees of the government in Baghdad. Kurdish was named the official language, but schools were required to teach in Arabic. The rebellion flared up again, this time with the help of the Shah of Iran. It ended, with a Kurdish defeat, in 1975, when the Shah withdrew his support in return for a share of sovereignty over the Shatt al-Arab waterway.

The fall of the Shah in 1979, and Iraq's invasion of Iran a year later, were greeted by the Kurds on both sides of the border as a golden opportunity. Iran's Kurds took an active part in the revolution, established control of their part of Kurdistan and asked



Missing the waters of Babylon

Ayatollah Khomeini for recognition. He responded by sending his Revolutionary Guards on a ruthless campaign to regain Kurdistan for Tehran. By 1984 the rebellion was largely over. Iranian Kurds who took refuge in Iraq still mount sporadic raids across the border, but few go along with their leader, Dr Abdulrahman Qassemilou, in believing that after the death of Ayatollah Khomeini Iran's new leaders will be forced to grant the Kurds autonomy.

At first the Kurds of Iraq fared better during the Gulf war. Their two main factions, the KDP and PUK, sank their differences and joined forces to establish control over large swathes of northern Iraq. But they staked everything on an Iranian victory that never came. When Iran accepted a ceasefire in July 1988, Iraq's army was freed to exact revenge. It did so last year, with the help of poison gas. More than 100,000 Iraqi Kurds fled to Turkey and Iran.

Neither place is much of a haven. Officially the 10m or so Kurds who live in Tur-

key are "Mountain Turks" who are forbidden to wear traditional costume in the large towns of Kurdistan. Teaching and writing in Kurdish has been banned since 1924, and the penalties are severe: five-year jail sentences can be imposed on Kurds found in possession of Kurdish language material. "Mountain Turks" are encouraged to migrate to western Turkey.

Many have chosen instead to stay home and go underground. A dozen or so illegal Kurdish organisations in Turkey fight for aims that range from the promotion of Kurdish culture to full independence. For five years gunmen from the Syrian-based Marxist Kurdish Workers party have been fighting the Turkish army in Kurdistan. More than 1,200 people have been killed. The fragile hope for a better future rests mainly on Turkey's need to impress Europe if it is ever to join the European Community. No wonder Barzani called his wretched people "the orphans of the universe".

AT ISTANBUL AND TURN BACK THOSE REACHING BRITAIN

Refugees hit by UK scare tactics

OBSERVER SUNDAY 25 JUNE 1989 7

Special Report by JOHN MERRITT

BRITISH immigration officers based in Turkey have attempted to stop potential refugees from boarding flights to seek asylum in the United Kingdom.

This latest example of Britain's violation of human rights conventions follows revelations that countless Kurdish refugees have been turned back from Heathrow without any examination of their claims. They were not even allowed to leave their planes.

Some had previously suffered imprisonment and torture. Others have been arrested by Turkish authorities on their return — their plight ignored as attention is focused on those lucky enough to be held in British detention centres while their claims are assessed.

The actions of the immigration officers in Turkey has led to a diplomatic row after non-refugee Turkish passengers, intending to travel by British Airways, complained of harassment by the officers at ticket counters in Istanbul airport.

The officers had been looking at passports and tickets and, according to eyewitness statements, telling some travellers that there was no point in their proceeding because they would not be allowed into Britain.

As a result, the British ambassador in Ankara, Sir Timothy Daunt, was summoned to the Turkish foreign ministry which accused the Home Office of attempting to apply its powers in breach of Turkish sovereignty.

The 12 immigration officers arrived in Turkey on 29 May and 14 June. Ten days ago, six of them told about 80 passengers with tickets for a BA flight that they would not be allowed on to the aircraft because they did not have visas. In fact visa requirements were imposed on Turkish visitors to Britain only three days ago.

The Turkish Foreign

Minister, Masut Yilmaz, described the British officials' action as 'a totally unacceptable practice'.

Last week a Home Office spokesman told *The Observer*: 'The immigration officers went to Turkey to staff the visa section and deal with visa applications.'

When challenged about the date of visa introductions, he said: 'They were there in an advisory capacity at the invitation of British Airways.'

The spokesman added that BA was worried about its position under the Carriers' Liability Act which imposes fines on airlines carrying passengers without valid travel documents.

Yesterday, British Airways strongly denied this claim. A BA spokesman said: 'We did not invite them. The Home Office suggested it to us and asked our permission to check passengers' documentation.'

'It caused a lot of problems. They were telling some of them they were wasting their time going to the UK.'

'We agreed to the Home Office request because large numbers of passengers were being turned back at Heathrow. On several occasions they didn't even let them off the planes at London before they sent them back and we were very concerned.'

'We didn't want to take their money to fly them in

only for them to be sent back again.'

The Foreign Office maintained that the immigration officers had 'gone to get a feel for things prior to visas coming in'. A spokesman said: 'It was all a misunderstanding. A left-hand, right-hand situation, which was sorted out incredibly quickly.'

He added that the British ambassador 'was not called in to account, he was called in to explain what had happened'. Asked what had happened, the spokesman said: 'I'm not absolutely sure.'

This pincer action, applied with the return of potential asylum seekers forced to remain on board planes, contravenes the United Nations Convention on Refugees and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and is a breach of domestic immigration laws.

It also gives a lie to repeated Home Office assertions that asylum applications are examined individually and judged by immigration officers before they are refused.

Under rule 75 of the Immigration Act, every claim for asylum 'must be referred by the immigration officer to the Home Office for a decision'. The law states: 'The Home Office will then consider the case in accordance with the 1951 Geneva Convention and Protocol relating

to the Status of Refugees.' These lay down that asylum will not be refused if the only country to which a person can be returned is one to which he is unwilling to go owing to a well-founded fear of persecution.

The Observer has collected detailed accounts of Kurdish refugees, sent back immediately after arrival in Britain, who have managed to return with the knowledge of lawyers and human rights organisations. The Home Office has now been forced to accept that they may have legitimate claims to asylum and has agreed to examine their cases.

The Observer asked the Home Office why these and other refugees had not had their cases considered on their first arrivals in Britain.

The Home Office maintained: 'They did not say they were seeking asylum. They said they had come for work and other economic reasons. Full, meticulous examination is given to all asylum claims.'

The Home Office confirmed that Turkish passport holders had been turned back without being allowed off planes at Heathrow on nine occasions. A spokesman said: 'On every occasion a team, or Chief Immigration Officer, was specially assigned to the task.' Inquiries were conducted 'the same as if they had been seen in the main airport'.

The spokesman said the decision not to allow them off the planes was taken to 'ease congestion and delays at the terminals. It was made by a senior officer in the light of all the circumstances but with Ministers' approval for the overall approach'.

The Home Office now says it 'can't rule out' that some of those turned back were genuine refugees but added: 'Who can explain why they may have misrepresented their own cases the first time?'



Under fire: Kurds fear violence from Turkish police, here turning their guns on protesters.

IMMIGRATION OFFICERS TRY TO STOP KURDS FROM BOARDING PLANES AT ISTANBUL AND TURN BACK THOSE REACHING BRITAIN

47

Observer, June 25, 1989

Heathrow officials send victim home to a beating

EVIDENCE that Britain abuses refugee rights has been given to *The Observer* by a Kurd who was refused any hearing before he was forced back to Turkey.

Hasan is one of many turned back by Heathrow immigration officers who have boarded planes to prevent refugees from disembarking. He returned to Britain last week when the Home Office, under pressure from refugee workers, was forced to allow him the right to appeal for asylum.

As a 10-year-old, Hasan, who is now 20, witnessed a notorious massacre of hundreds of Kurds by right-wing Turkish paramilitaries in the city of Maras, in south-east Turkey. His family survived but their home was burnt down and their possessions destroyed. They spent several years on the move.

In 1986 he was arrested and accused of left-wing subversion. Held in a police cell for a month he was repeatedly assaulted and severely beaten on the soles of his feet as his torturers accused him of supporting Kurdish rights organisations.

After continuing persecution he was again arrested on 23 March, this year, and held for one week. On 26 May right-wing political parties, violently opposed to the Kurds, gained control of his region and fear increased. On May Day, which was marked by scenes of official violence and indiscriminate shootings by the Turkish police, he went into hiding.

He said: 'My sister escaped to England with her husband and child five months ago. They were accepted as refugees and I believed I could defend my rights here.'

His family bribed two officials with more than

£600 (a year's pay for a Turkish worker) to obtain a passport. A friend in the police secured a Turkish Airlines ticket for him and he arrived in London at about noon, 22 May, on board flight TK 979.

Hasan said: 'Immigration officers boarded all Turkish passport holders were told to stay on board. There were about 30 of us Kurds seeking asylum. I said, "I want to claim asylum." They told me to sit down. They took some of us to the luggage hall, in pairs to identify baggage.'

'I thought they would question me and I could show them proof of my arrests and the burning of my home. I said, "I want to claim asylum, I have proof." But they only asked me how much money I had. We said again and again we wanted asylum. I said, "I am a survivor of the Maras massacre, I have documents."

'After 30 minutes they read out our names. Our passports were stamped. They took us to the departure area. They gave us an English document we didn't understand. We started to resist. Some said, "Send us to another country, not Turkey."

'Uniformed Police came. One man tried to run away but they caught him. Resistance was no use. The police took us back on the plane, one by one.'

The flight took off for Istanbul at 2pm. When it landed Hasan was arrested. He said: 'The police accused me of being a traitor. They slapped me and kicked me but nothing more.'

He was released 12 hours later after intervention by his police friend. His family paid bribes to obtain a new passport and with a ticket bought by his sister in England he flew back to Britain from Izmir four days ago.



Natural injustice: Hasan, a Kurdish refugee, was not allowed to put his case to immigration officials. Photograph by Roger Hutchings.

THE INDEPENDENT

MONDAY 26 JUNE 1989

Britain slams door on 'economic migrants'

The second part of an investigation into refugees finds doubts over whether Britain is upholding the principles of asylum

TIMOTHY RENTON, the Minister responsible for asylum, reaffirmed in a speech in January the Government's "unwavering" commitment to the United Nations Convention on Refugees, reminding those present that Britain was among the first signatories, writes Sarah Helm.

He emphasised that the Government continued to weigh every application for asylum against the convention's criteria and to "welcome" the integration of refugees within British society.

In particular, he said "We scrupulously obey the principle that no refugee should be returned to a country in which he has a well-founded fear of persecution."

Two events were to take place only weeks later which would give grounds for questioning this statement. First, evidence emerged that draconian new tactics aimed at deterring refugees may have resulted in people being sent by the UK to persecution.

In May an Immigration Appeals adjudicator ruled that five Tamils had been wrongly refused asylum in the UK and that they had been returned to torture in Sri Lanka.

Last week a Kurd who flew to Britain to seek asylum was returned to Istanbul without being allowed to leave the plane. He was beaten on his return.

Second the treatment of Kurds since their arrival in Britain has raised questions about the "welcome" given to asylum seekers.

More than 3,000 Kurds have had to sleep in churches, church halls and makeshift centres while others have been imprisoned.

No preparations were made despite advance knowledge of their arrival.

Britain's record on asylum has faced mounting criticism from bodies such as Amnesty, the British Refugee Council and the Law Society. The groups say that the UK has one of the toughest records on asylum in Europe, despite the fact that of the 10 main refugee receiving countries in Europe, the UK received the smallest number in proportion to its population.

Britain received applications

from an average of 80 asylum seekers a year for every million inhabitants. France received 437 per million; Sweden received 159, Denmark received 1,456 and West Germany, 1,117.

The UK does, however, have a high population density of about 229 people per square mile — compared with a density in France of 99.1; in Sweden of 18.5; and in Denmark of 119.

West Germany and the Netherlands, however, receive more asylum seekers and have higher population densities than Britain. West Germany, which has 248 people per square mile, received a total of 208,000 asylum seekers between 1964 and 1986, compared with Britain's 13,300.

The figures therefore suggest that Britain has no more reason to fear "floods" of refugees than the rest of Europe — and probably less. Compared with the rest of the world, Europe has received a tiny proportion of refugees — only 10 per cent of asylum seekers ever come to the West.

Nevertheless, the Government appears to have adopted a particularly hard stand.

Before 1985 refugees were not a major political issue for Britain. The UK had usually been ready to take part in resettlement programmes: 20,000 Hungarians were taken in 1956, 2,000 Czechs in 1958, 3,000 Chileans in the 1970s, and 20,000 Vietnamese since 1979.

It was the arrival in 1985 of 1,300 Sri Lankan Tamils that suddenly changed the tone of the asylum debate. Douglas Hurd, the Home Secretary, gave refugee policy a higher priority and ministers started making alarmist speeches about "footloose" and "manifestly bogus" asylum seekers flooding in from the Third World.

The reason for the change of tack was obvious. The Tamils were largely young Asian men — exactly the kind of people the Government wanted to bar from Britain under immigration policy.

Now they were attempting to by-pass immigration rules by coming to Britain as asylum seekers — or so it was implied.

At the same time Britain was

quick to adopt the concept of the "economic migrant" to describe the new-style refugee — thus discrediting their claims to be real victims of persecution.

To prevent an influx of such people several measures were brought into force. Visas were imposed on Sri Lanka and later on India, Pakistan, Ghana, Bangladesh and Nigeria.

Britain also became the first European country to fine airlines £1,000 for every passenger brought in without proper documentation.

Taken together, the refugee groups said, those two measures made it impossible for asylum seekers to even reach Britain to make their claim.

Many would not be able to get documentation in a country where they were persecuted and would not, therefore, be able to fly to Britain.

Britain also began to operate deterrent policies. Asylum seekers were increasingly imprisoned on arrival.

The prison ship the Earl William became a symbol of this policy — floating off the coast of Harwich so that detained asylum seekers could not even set foot on British soil. The use of the ship

sparked widespread controversy which only ended when it sank.

Tougher policies have continued to be introduced, as the recent arrival of the Kurds has illustrated. The Home Office last week admitted that immigration officers had for the first time been authorised to make checks on board arriving planes and to return those deemed to have no claim.

The row over the Kurds will die down as visa restrictions take effect.

But Government policy on asylum will remain in the spotlight. Two major court cases are in the pipeline — one on Tamils and one on Kurds — which will question the way the Government decides whether an asylum seeker has a justifiable fear of persecution. Ministers will face accusations that their criteria are too narrow, particularly as asylum seekers have no right of appeal.

Asylum policy will also be high on the agenda in Europe with the approach of 1992.

Britain and its European partners are attempting to find ways of harmonising refugee policy. It looks certain that representatives from the UK will be arguing on the side of the hawks.



A refugee child at Loyola Hall, north London, which is a temporary home to some of the 3,324 Kurds who, fearing persecution in Turkey, are seeking asylum in Britain Photograph: Glynn Ginf



A Kurdish woman carrying water to her tent at Mus refugee camp, Turkey Photograph: Herbie Knott

Volunteers' burden creates bitterness and exhaustion

By Sarah Helm
Home Affairs Correspondent

A KURDISH man clutching a London street atlas queued for food at a church hall in the east of the city last week, relieved to have been released two days earlier from Harmondsworth Detention Centre, near Heathrow airport.

Speaking through an interpreter, he said he had not ventured on to the streets since his arrival, but was hoping to find his way that afternoon to the emergency benefit office, where he can claim £2 a week.

He was not told by immigration officers at Heathrow why he was detained on arrival and sent to Harmondsworth, where he claimed political asylum.

It may have been because he was travelling on a false passport. Anyone who has been imprisoned in Turkey has difficulty getting a real passport, and this 29-year-old man had spent two years in a Turkish jail because of his association with a revolutionary Kurdish group. The Turks released him and several others after they went on a six-day hunger strike.

The man's wife, who was also travelling on a false passport, was seeking asylum in France. Unable to accompany her on the same flight, he was forced to take the chance to come to England and had no idea when he would be able to join her.

His 28-year-old friend was luckier. He had joined his sister, a Kurdish refugee who has lived in England for five years and is now a student at the London School of Economics. She explained that her whole family had been imprisoned or tortured in Turkey because of their association with the trade union movement.

"My brother was in hospital after he was tortured. They beat him on the feet and used electric shocks on him. Most people are pleased to be here. They are confused, but glad to be free," she said.

There are hundreds of similar stories among the 3,524 Kurds who have come to England to seek asylum from persecution since the beginning of May.

shortly before the visa requirements were imposed.

As the arrivals have increased, some semblance of order has been imposed by the voluntary and church bodies who have taken the Kurds off the streets, feeding them, giving them shelter and persuading local residents to offer them baths and give donations.

Inside the Loyola Hall in Tottenham, north London, the scenes are probably little different to those in refugee camps in many parts of the world. Hundreds of men, women and children

'The authorities must have known this would happen, but they washed their hands and put us in the front line'

mill around. Camp beds and blankets just issued by the Home Office are piled up in the corner. Women pick through old clothes emptied out of plastic bags and Kurdish music blares out of speakers as soup and bread is dished out by volunteers.

Outside the church halls and community centres in the Hackney area of east London, groups of men stand in small groups, endlessly waiting. A few venture further, wandering slowly — aimlessly — among the crowds, looking around like tourists who got off at the wrong stop.

This is Britain's response to the arrival of refugees on its doorstep. Voluntary bodies and church groups wonder what would have happened if they had not been there, prepared to help.

Although the authorities clearly anticipated increased arrivals of Kurds after the imposition of visas was announced, no

preparations were made — it was as if the refugees came out of the blue and nobody wanted to know.

The Kurdish Workers Association, which has helped to co-ordinate the relief work, was telephoned suddenly on 2 May. "Immigration told us there were 24 people at Heathrow. Would we collect them? We borrowed £50 and hired a mini-bus and brought them to our office. They just slept on the floor," Ihsan Khadir, of the KWA, said. "Every day since then, the calls have come and the arrivals have increased."

"We brought them here on the Tube or the buses, marching them up here, managing as best we could," Mr Khadir said. "We have tried to keep track of everyone, letting them know where to go for income support, when to go back for Home Office interviews. It is chaos. But we are pleased at least that most of the Kurds have been released into the community."

The last two flights to arrive from Turkey before visa restrictions were imposed landed at Heathrow on Friday. The numbers are certain to fall off now, giving volunteers a chance to start helping to integrate some of the arrivals. The Inner London Education Authority is hoping to start English lessons soon for the new arrivals and some are being found housing in Hackney, where a number of Kurds live already.

But the experience of the past weeks has left those who were called on to shoulder the burden bitter and exhausted.

The Rev Andrew Windross, who has helped to co-ordinate the churches' aid, says the response was "wholly inappropriate and pathetic."

He said: "The authorities must have known this would happen, but they washed their hands and put the churches and the voluntary bodies in the front line."

"We have had 30 staying in the crypt because there was nowhere else for them to go. There must be better ways of treating people than shoving them down a hole in the ground."

Hope ebbs away in the 'prison' of Turkish camps

From Tim Kelsay
in Mardin, Turkey

THE KURDISH boy who was collecting stones just outside the barbed wire fence had recently lost his father. The small pebbles were from the wall around his tiny "garden", where he was tending two frail weeds behind the mud retaining wall that prevented his uncle's tent being flooded each time it rained.

His father is believed to have died from dysentery, although no one was quite sure, because the three trainee doctors who minister to the 16,000 people in this refugee camp were not certain what had killed him.

The Kurdish boy came to Turkey 10 months ago with his parents and thousands of others after the Iraqi government began dropping chemical weapons on their villages.

He looked up with glazed eyes when I asked him about his life in the camp at Mardin in south-east Turkey, where children played in the open sewers that run between the tents, were prohibited from going to school, and had no cold water to drink in temperatures over 100C.

But before he could answer Arty, a friend of his father, said: "This is a cemetery. We are condemned to this because we are Kurds. We all know that we have no friends. If you were here, you would have no friends. But you are not Kurdish."

Arty was nervous. Like Lella, a grandmother, who cried about the conditions which resulted in her living with 11 other people in the same small tent. "This is more like dying," she said, but added that her real concern was for her family's safety.

Some fear that the Turks do not intend to let them stay indefinitely. There was panic after an outbreak of food poisoning earlier this month, which the Kurds claim was the work of Iraqi agents who had intentionally contaminated the bread supply.

"We are sure the Turks want us to leave and now we fear the Iraqis are trying to kill us. We want to be anywhere but in these 'prison camps'," Lella said.

Nobody feels their life is secure behind the 10ft barbed wire, and the troops who guard the refugees, ostensibly from attacks by Turkish Kurdish separatists. "We do not have petrol between our hands," Arty said to explain the failure of the Kurds against the military might of Iraq. He is a Peshmerga, a freedom fighter, proud member of the struggle for Kurdish autonomy in Iraq.

As hope of a better future ebbs slowly away, Arty is clinging all the more to the ideology of the "revolution" that brought him here. But he admits that the revolution is not as powerful as it was, and that it is, like its protagonists, weakening. He feels nervous and impatient by failure to

make the Turks allow the Kurds to set up their own schools.

Because the refugees are defined as "temporary guests", there are no plans for their permanent accommodation. A Turkish official laughed when I asked him whether they had plans to give the men jobs. "They can hardly lead their lives," he said. "Work is a luxury for them. These are empty people."

They are just as "empty" in two other refugee camps, at Diyarbakir on the banks of the Tigris, and at Mus to the north, which together hold another 20,000 refugees. The men in all the camps spend their days thinking and smoking. At a market in Diyarbakir, some pass the time by selling Iraqi cigarettes and lollipops given to them by sympathetic Turkish Kurdish tradesmen. Few of the refugees have money.

Iraqi Kurds are sympathetic to the plight of the 50,000 ethnic Turks who have been deported from Bulgaria since the end of last month. "We feel for them," an elderly man said. "Like us they left their homes and we hope they



An Iraqi Kurd at the Mus camp

have a good chance in Turkey. But they have their honour. We haven't got it. We are not free."

The Kurdish refugees are despairing at the failure of the Western world to take their cause seriously, to help them in their camps in Turkey; or to bring Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi president, to task for using poison gas against them indiscriminately.

"It is the West who should change the crying on the lips of our children into smiling," Arty said. But most refugees have no optimism. In Mardin about 600 children have been born since the refugees came, and in those 10 months the Kurds say that about the same number have died.

'Poison gas' deal upsets Bush

A PLAN by a West German company to arrange the sale of poison-gas chemicals to Iran has provoked a protest by the United States government.

The Bush administration has asked the Bonn government to halt the deal. The West German Embassy in Washington said yesterday that the government was doing its utmost to clear the matter up.

The discovery comes only six months after the Americans alerted Chancellor Kohl that West German companies were

By Ian Brodie
helping Libya to build a chemical weapons factory.

This time, according to the Americans, an unnamed chemical company in Dusseldorf has been acting as broker for the transfer from India to Iran of several hundreds tons of chemicals used to make mustard gas.

Herr Genscher, West German Foreign Minister, was told about the discovery by Mr Baker, US Secretary of State, during a meeting last week.

Washington's concern was to halt deliveries, the bulk of

which have not yet begun, according to the New York Times, which revealed the deal.

● Daniel Johnson in Bonn writes: The West German Foreign Ministry said yesterday that Kharim Ali Sobhani, an Iranian diplomat whom the American reports name as the key figure in the chemical exports, returned to Teheran some time ago after a request from Bonn.

He is a *persona non grata* in Bonn, as he is in the US after his role in similar trade was discovered by American intelligence.

Institut kurde

LETTERS

The plight of a Kurdish asylum seeker in Britain

Dear Sir,

I write in connection with your articles on the "Plight of the Refugees" (26 June) and the subsequent leader (27 June). I am an Alevite Kurd from Turkey. I was imprisoned in Turkey for two and a half years, from 1981 to 1984, and tortured during that time. My persecution continued, including further detention and torture in 1988. I am currently in the care of Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture.

I fled to the United Kingdom to learn, via statements from UK Government sources, that I am an economic migrant.

My present circumstances are that I live in a room with one other asylum seeker. We share toilet and washing facilities with 10 other people. I receive £29 a week, for which I am grateful but which is not enough for me to eat properly on. I am a skilled worker. In my Kurdish environment, I could lead a comfortable, fulfilled life.

Although regrettable, there is nothing new in this response to asylum seekers. Western governments of the 1930s reacted coldly to the attempts of Jews to find sanctuary from the Nazis.

In the otherwise excellent coverage in your paper, there was one unfortunate piece about asylum seekers in West Germany. It is not simply "liberal asylum policies" that lead to racism. It is in good part the response of Western politicians. Some of the effort

and money spent on developing deterrent strategies could well be utilised by humane and visionary politicians to address the real problems of refugees. In particular, the fact that only low percentages of asylum claimants are found to be "genuine political refugees" is more to do with the hardening of criteria for recognising refugees than the realities of the situation.

Moreover, if Western governments are unable to cope with asylum seekers, they should bring their considerable influence to bear on those countries persecuting minority peoples, such as Turkey and Iraq.

I regret that in order to protect my family, which is still in Turkey, I am compelled to sign this letter with a pseudonym.

Yours faithfully,
HALIL KARTAL
London, N1
28 June

Dear Sir,

The Kurds are a sturdy people who have long suffered injustice in countries where they are a substantial minority of the population. In Iraq the campaign against its Kurdish minority continues unabated.

Last year, at the end of the Iraq-Iran war, the government of Iraq waged war against its own citizens by using chemical weapons against Kurdish villages. Now Iraq has begun a programme of forced deportations; 200,000

Kurds are being removed from their homes to unknown destinations elsewhere in Iraq and thousands of their villages are being systematically wiped out.

Britain's historic ties with this part of the Middle East put it in a special position. We urge Her Majesty's Government to make clear to the Government of Iraq its profound concern about this further gross violation of human rights and breach of Iraq's international obligations. One way of reinforcing a British protest would be to drop any proposals to extend our trade and commercial links with Iraq by raising its export credit rating or by increasing credit limits.

We also call on the Government to raise the issue in the European Community and in other international meetings with a view to securing wide support for the condemnation of such barbarous behaviour and for meaningful action by the international community.

Yours faithfully,
AVEBURY, McNAIR, ENNALS

House of Lords
Sir BERNARD BRAINE MP, GEORGE ROBERTSON MP, TONY LLOYD MP, DAVID STEEL MP, JOHN GILBERT MP, Sir RUSSELL JOHNSTON MP, BRIAN SEDGEMORE MP, PETER TEMPLE-MORRIS MP, AUSTIN MITCHELL MP, NIGEL SPEARING MP, RON LEIGHTON MP, JOHN WHEELER JP MP

House of Commons
London, SW1
26 June

Children

Children of the Middle East – the innocent victims of political turmoil

At the end of the year the General Assembly of the United Nations will adopt the final text of "The Convention on the Rights of the Child". Although the rights of children are automatically included in the 'Declaration of Human Rights' it is an unfortunate fact that in many countries the situation is deteriorating. Children continue to be beaten, tortured, starved, abused, militarised, degraded, dominated, exploited and neglected all across the face of the globe, and the Middle East, to its shame, is no exception, writes **Pat Lancaster**.



Children are the wealth of the world, according to an Arab saying. But while most countries of the region continue to regard them as God's greatest blessing, others are guilty of exploitation, domination and abuse.

In the Islamic world children have long been regarded as God's greatest blessing. True, the birth of a son generally has the edge on the birth of a daughter but the Arab saying *El aouled met donia* – children are the wealth of the world – makes no differentiation between the sexes. Children play a vitally important role in Middle Eastern society where the extended family is still much in evidence. The popular western nuclear family unit, comprising mother, father and one or two children living alone – often separated by hundreds of miles from their nearest kin – continues to be regarded with consternation by closely knit Middle Easterners, whose families tend to be larger and closer, not just during childhood but throughout the term of their lives. While most Arabs agree there are some useful lessons to be learned

from the west, one feature of western life few would wish to imitate would be the attitude towards family life.

In the Middle East family is everything, children are brought up to respect their elders – parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles and continue to do so after they have reached adulthood. In a conversation about the major differences between east and west, Wafa Al Rasheed, a sophisticated and well travelled executive at the Kuwait Stock Exchange highlighted attitude to family as among the most striking differences between the two cultures. Ms Al Rasheed, who studied in Europe observed: "Islam teaches us we must respect our parents and those older than us and we do. I was surprised by the way older people were treated in Europe . . . Our society encourages us to take

responsibility for members of our family, our old and our young." Family life is the root of Moslem society and this, Ms Al Rasheed feels, will not change while the old values and responsibilities which put family first are adhered to. "I love my job but if my job interfered with my family I would have to give it up", she stressed.

The idea of installing elderly or infirm relatives in special homes or hostels is regarded with abhorrence by most Arabs who believe the old should live out their years within the bosom of the family if medically possible. A luxurious home for the elderly opened in Kuwait several years ago but was forced to close its doors because of a lack of clients. Orphans are put into the care of outside authorities only when all attempts to locate blood relatives have failed. Marriages are frequently

arranged between cousins to strengthen family bonds and should the son of an Arab family die, leaving a widow and a young family, a subsequent marriage between the widow and her husband's brother will frequently ensue.

With the family maintaining such an important role in Middle Eastern society it is not surprising children play such an important role. Each new birth is considered a great blessing not only for the parents but for the whole of the extended clan. Such is the joy at the arrival of the first born son, his parents become known by that name. For example, in the case of a first-born son named Omar, his father will henceforth be referred to as Abou (father of) Omar and his mother Um (mother of) Omar. Marriages which fail to produce children frequently end in divorce. How can it be then – given this closeness – that the Middle East is no exception to the global pattern of child abuse, exploitation and domination; that many children of the Middle East region are suffering the same hardship and deprivations as those in the townships of South Africa or the shanty towns of Central and South America?

Over the last few years the international community has been both sickened and saddened by stories of individual child abuse but while the problem of the battered child rightly provokes discussion and outrage, too little attention has been paid to the mass brutalisation of children of entire societies; brutalisation which frequently results in death.

Although it has not been officially identified as such, war is the leading brutaliser of children in the Middle East and in the Third World as a whole. Dr Amal Shamma', a Lebanese doctor who as head of paediatrics at Beirut's Berbir Medical Centre, saw much of the horror perpetrated upon the innocent victims of a country gone mad, believes that as many as 40,000 children could have been killed between 1975 and 1985 in Lebanon. "No single disease can boast the same killing rate over the same period of time", Dr Shamma' notes

The Middle East is a region in political turmoil. Looking at a map of the area few countries can claim to be entirely free of involvement in some conflict or war, be it domestic or external. Even those countries not directly involved in conflict, for example some of the Gulf states, continue to watch their neighbours warily for any sign which could herald an end to the uneasy peace that prevails.

The suffering does not necessarily end with the shelling as Dr Shamma' points out: "Children in the war zone, when they are not targets of shelling suffer other, numerous deprivations, the death of parents and providers, homelessness, malnutrition, insufficient medical care.



MUSSEIN SHEHADER

Going to school in Oman . . . but not all are so lucky.

interrupted formal education and stunted growth – both physical and emotional. In Lebanon – and this is true of many cities – thousands of children have been orphaned, tens of thousands of families are homeless, agricultural land has been devastated, major industrial areas have been destroyed, schools and hospitals have either been damaged or rendered unusable, public services are barely existent, and government strategies affecting health, education, housing and economic growth, have ground to a halt."

Despite its economic problems Egypt is forging ahead with plans to make life better for upcoming generations.



PAL LANCASIER

A report published in "World Health" – a magazine published by the World Health Organisation – reports the findings of three separate studies on the psychological effects of war on Lebanese children. Dr G. Yacoub studied 30 children, their families and paediatricians, and noted evidence of increased fearfulness, insecurity, regression in behaviour, sleep disturbances and nightmares among those living in the war zone. He also noted in some of the subjects a fascination with, and desire for participation in acts of killing.

Dr C. Nasser, in a separate study, noted the children had difficulty in relating to others and suffered from insecurity, lack of self esteem, poor self image, depression, dependency, feelings of guilt, isolation and a rigid super-ego. A third study undertaken by Dr J. Abu Nasr concentrated on 548 children aged between 11 and 14 years of age. Results of the study – to detect the effect of the children's exposure to war on their moral judgement – indicated that 26% changed their judgement from a moral to an immoral one as regards the acceptability of killing, irrespective of age, sex, religion, social class or extent of exposure to war.

A common scene in paediatric wards where casualties are treated, is to see the injured playing with their favourite toys: toy machine guns and toy soldiers. These same children may fantasise that their injuries were inflicted as they "butchered their enemies". Children wander into hospital grounds and help pick up pieces of bodies or carry the dead to the morgue. In their homes, they talk with remarkable

detachment of gory scenes, massive injury and the death of neighbours. The streets are usually the arena for war games of children emulating their heroes, the militiamen of the neighbourhood.

In a country such as Lebanon where between 35% and 51% of the population is aged under 15, at least two-thirds and possibly more than half of the population have never known peace. The children and babies of Lebanon's civil war in 1975 are the gun-toting militiamen of today, and killing has become their way of life. Exactly what sort of future hope can be

held out to a society whose children have endured violence on such a scale is unknown - even to the experts.

In August the Institute of Child Health in London will run a six week course on the Care of Children in War and Disasters. Joint coordinators of the course, Dr Pamela Zimkin, a paediatrician, and Nazneen Kanji, a psychologist and social planner, spoke to *The Middle East* about the course and its aims. Increasing numbers of countries are involved in situations of conflict and faced with the task of providing for large numbers of children

who are separated from their families. The course has been designed for health and childcare personnel concerned with orphaned, abandoned and street children and will concentrate on the best methods of returning some sort of order to their lives. All too little research on the subject has been conducted, but the experts agree there is no simple universal solution that can be applied to all children psychologically damaged by war. There are no hard and fast rules - every case is different to the next, with its own set of particular circumstances. ■

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The origins of Rights of the Child emerge from the chaos and misery created by the first World War, 70 years ago, when thousands of children faced starvation and death. Two energetic and determined sisters, Eglantyne Jebb and Dorothy Buxton embarked on a crusade to bring relief and assistance to the innocent victims of war. In May 1919 the Save the Children Fund was launched at a packed meeting of London's Albert Hall, organised by the two sisters.

Realising that prevention and protection were as important as direct assistance to children, Eglantyne Jebb drew up the Charter of Rights of the Child in 1923. This was adopted by the League of Nations in 1924 and became known as the Declaration of Geneva. In subsequent years the Declaration was revised and expanded until in 1959 the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted the ten principles contained in a new Declaration of the Rights of the Child.

This year - the 30th anniversary of the declaration - marks a further important development in the evolution of children's rights - the prospective adoption by the UN General Assembly of the new Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention will supplement the existing Declaration of Rights of the Child and would be considered more powerful because of the very different nature of a declaration and a convention. A declaration is a manifesto or statement of general principles containing recommendations adhered to by consensus but is not in itself binding. A convention on the other hand is a legal instrument binding upon those states which take the active step of ratifying it and which contains monitoring procedures to assess how effectively a state has complied with its obligations.

The need for the Convention is as pressing now as it was 70 years ago for



After more than 40 years in exile Palestinian women are still forced to dodge the bullets and the bombs.

although there are over 30 international human rights instruments which concern themselves with children, none do not specifically cater for their greater vulnerability. The Convention's aims will be to:

- define the special human rights standard for children
- harmonise the rights that currently exist
- and fill the gaps identified in previous provisions

The Convention will be the first to promote and protect a wide range of international rights for children and will require countries to provide for the welfare of their children and implement policies allowing them to enjoy civil, political,

economic, social and cultural rights. The underlying philosophy of the Convention is that it will operate in the best interests of the child, recognising that parents or guardians have the primary responsibility for the child and that the state is required to assist parents in their responsibilities.

The Convention will be a landmark in the field of children's rights, lying as it does to any child, whether by judicial or administrative procedures who is capable of forming his or her own views, the right to have those views taken into account.

The challenge to the international community will be to ensure the standards set out in the convention are met whenever possible. ■

CHILDREN

In recent years a number of disturbing events have featured prominently in the international media, none of which have done anything to promote the image of the Middle East as a region where children or their welfare are held in high regard. During the Gulf war Iran was accused of sending children into the battlefield. Pictures regularly appeared in the press showing boys of less than ten years of age in military uniform, preparing to enter the war with Iraq. There were numerous reports that the Khomeini government was using these children as human detonators, making them cross dangerous minefields – in order to discover a safe pathway through or die in the attempt.

Iraq prompted international outrage by its use of chemical weapons – a practise outlawed since the First World War – which claimed casualties among the Iranians and later among Iraqi Kurds. Men, women and children were killed and maimed in the attacks but no one exposed to photographs of the gory remains of children and babies massacred in the despicable attacks is likely to forget the gruesome sight in a hurry.

Amnesty International believes there is still much cause for concern for children who have become the innocent victims of a policy of political repression in Iraq. Over the years the organisation has received information of children being arbitrarily arrested without charge or trial, imprisoned as 'hostages' in lieu of relatives sought by the authorities or even 'disappearing' following arrest. Frequently their fate and whereabouts has remained unknown for years. Many are known to have been

In Iran the government was accused of using children as human detonators.



tortured and ill treated at the hands of the security forces and some are reported to have died as a result.

Children have been sentenced to death and have been the victims of deliberate killings by government forces, in some cases on a massive scale, Amnesty says. Whole families, including children and infants, have been killed in large-scale military attacks by Iraqi troops on civilian targets. A report published earlier this year by Amnesty lists the name of 344 children and young people detained by the authorities. The majority have 'disappeared' in detention, at least 31 are reported to have been executed.

In 1986 an Iraqi government report to the United Nations stated: "Iraq regards children as a basic pillar of society and, accordingly, makes a special effort to ensure their welfare since they represent the future prospects of society."

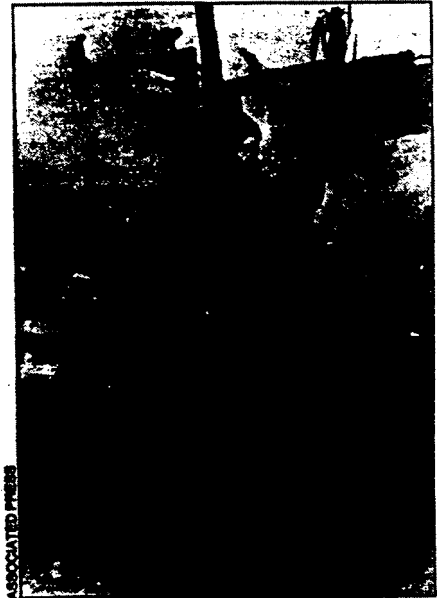
Yet, according to Amnesty, "Brutal treatment of children has become routine practise in the prisons of Iraq. Young people have been tortured, often to force them to reveal information about their relatives. Even infants have been ill-treated to compel members of their families to 'confess' to alleged political offences."

Amnesty International's report on children as the innocent victims of political repression in Iraq makes distressing reading. In addition to an appendix containing 14 pages of close type, detailing the names and ages of 315 Kurdish children who have 'disappeared' from their homes, there are also details of actual arrests of children.

Brothers Mirza and Mardan Rahso were arrested by the Iraqi authorities in July 1985. The authorities did not suspect the brothers of any crime, they were arrested because of their father's suspected membership of the Kurdish resistance group, the Pesh Merga forces. Their whereabouts – four years later – remain unknown. Mardan was nine and Mirza was just six years old at the time of their arrest.

This sort of deliberate, calculated brutality towards children is perhaps the most difficult of all to understand. The economic necessity of being forced to send a child out to work, rather than to school is sad and regrettable, but in some cases the wages of these children are required to supply the most basic requirements of the family. Likewise, the shocking mortality rate in some parts of the region. In South Yemen for example, the fact that an average of 202 babies out of every 1,000 born die before reaching the age of five is tragic, but these children are victims of ignorance rather than deliberate cruelty.

Many countries of the Middle East are putting every possible effort into local child care and development. Over the last 20 years the Gulf states of Saudi Arabia,



An Iraqi aircraft assault scatters women and children on the outskirts of Abadan.

Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman and UAE – have instituted ambitious programmes to ensure their children receive the full benefits of education and health care, and their efforts are paying off. Trained locals are now able to take up jobs previously filled by expatriate employees and there is a real 'feel' – previously absent – that the local populations are now playing a full and important role in running their own countries. The health schemes implemented in the Gulf have increased life expectancy, reduced child mortality and brought the most modern medical techniques to the ordinary man in the street. Less than a decade ago Gulf Arabs requiring specialist medical care were frequently forced to seek it abroad – that is rarely the case today. Operations from heart transplants to test tube baby implants are regularly and successfully undertaken at home, frequently using the surgical skills of an all-Arab team. Egypt – where a baby is born every 20 seconds – is forging ahead with plans to curb population growth and increase the spread of the child immunisation programme, despite its serious economic problems. While the Turkish government is about to launch an ambitious new scheme which will underline the continued priority status of education in the country's future development.

However, it is clear that the country-to-country disparities between children of the region remain vast. While in Saudi Arabia heart transplants are becoming a common occurrence, next door in Yemen, babies are dying from illnesses that could have been controlled, and in some cases eradicated completely, years ago. And with no regional body to oversee

at the rights of the Middle East's minors upheld, there is always the appalling possibility that incidents such as those set out to children by the governments of Iran and Iraq could occur again; incidents which continue to be a smirching stain not only on the individual states involved, but on the integrity of the entire region.

Child refugees

The problem of child refugees in the Middle East is one which has caused much concern among Arab and international aid agencies. A direct result of wars which have beleaguered the area over decades, refugees from the Middle East now make up more than half the total population of all refugees in the world today.

In Pakistan international aid agencies are desperately trying to keep pace with the rising numbers of adult and infant refugee casualties from Afghanistan but with limited funds and too little trained personnel they are fighting a losing battle. British doctor Kate Bull spent some time working with Afghan refugees who have fled to Pakistan. She confirmed that women and children were in the greatest need. Suffering from a range of deprivation-related illnesses, malnutrition, diarrhoea, tuberculosis and a variety of skin diseases the children have the additional burden of psychological scarring to contend with. Dr Bull confirmed the horrific experiences suffered by some of the children. "There are some very frightened and anxious children in the camps, children who have seen their homes bombed and members of their family killed. The psychological effects of the

horror will take their toll." During her stay at a refugee camp in Rashek, Dr Bull helped set up a clinic for under-five-year-olds. The clinic was the base for a newly instituted feeding programme for babies and children. However, because of financial restraints not all children were eligible for acceptance to the programme, rations were restricted to those children who fell well below a pre-determined age-to-weight ratio. This situation caused understandable distress to clinic staff who were forced to turn away needy children because the point of actual malnutrition had not been reached. A situation particularly distressing for medical personnel trained to uphold the ethic of 'prevention is better than cure'. The problem for many of the refugees is that officially they do not exist. Although Afghans continue to stream over the border, there have been no new refugee registrations for well over two years and unless they are registered, they are not entitled to receive food from the official allocation. Many camp inmates try to grow their own food but, since the authorities refuse to register any more refugees, a large proportion remain "terribly hungry", Dr Bull confirmed.

There are an estimated 3.5m Afghan refugees in Pakistan, some 57% of whom are under 15 years of age, indeed 24% of all children currently in the camps were born there. However, the Afghan children are just some of many thousands in the region suffering terrible hardships as a result of political upheaval.

New reports from the United Nations and independent Swedish and Canadian agencies say Israeli soldiers trying to

suppress the *intifada*, or uprising, of Palestinians living under occupation in the West Bank and Gaza, are deliberately targeting children and the young. A survey conducted by the Swedish child welfare organisation *Radda Barnen* said that in the first 12 months of the uprising, which began December 1987, several thousand Palestinian children had required medical treatment. According to the organisation's general secretary, Thomas Hammarberg: "Perhaps the most striking conclusion is that soldiers in their use of gunfire have deliberately aimed at children and young people. The injuries are not the result of mistakes and accidents. Furthermore, as the horrifying effects of the army's methods and gunfire have become clear one is bound to conclude that the continued killings are deliberate".

A report on the *intifada's* impact on children, undertaken by the Near East Cultural and Educational Foundation of Canada notes: "Palestinian children have been shot to death, maimed, paralysed and seriously wounded by live ammunition". Most of the children were shot in the head, chest, stomach or back, indicating deliberate targeting, the report adds. Over an observation period of just five weeks last year, more than 280 children of 16 years or below required medical treatment because of Israel Defence Force violence, 17 of these victims were five years old or younger, while a further 43 were between the ages of five and 10 years old.

Meanwhile, a UN report shows that from 10 December 1987, when the uprising began, to 10 April this year, some 429 Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza died of injuries caused by Israeli action. Of the 65 child deaths, 43 suffered gunshot wounds, three were beaten to death and 19, mostly babies or very young children, died of tear gas inhalation.

Casualty figures show that of a total Gaza Strip population of 650,000, some 6,800 children below the age of 16 sustained injuries requiring treatment by doctors. Of these 752 children sustained gunshot wounds - including 23 under five while 2,400 were badly beaten - among them 170 under-five-year-olds.

However, it is not only at the hands of the Israelis the Palestinians have suffered, even though that particular persecution is well past its 40th year. In recent years a series of tragedies have struck Palestinian refugees living outside their homeland. In Lebanon, where interfactional fighting has reached such a pitch even the Lebanese themselves admit they don't always understand the rules, the Palestinians have endured years of seemingly unendurable events. Few believed the situation for Palestinians in Lebanon could deteriorate from the nadir of September 1982 when

Kurdish victim of the chemical weapon attack on Halabja.



CHILDREN

gunmen entered the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatilla. Age – or lack of it – was no deterrent to the gunmen's barbarism. Children were raped, murdered and mutilated with the same grim efficiency as that applied to pregnant women, the sick and the elderly. Dr Swee Chai Ang, a Singapore-born orthopedic surgeon, working in the camps at the time of the massacre as a volunteer, recalls a walk through the camps two days after the marauding gunmen had left the scene: "I we just followed the stench of decaying corpses, we would usually discover dead bodies. Relatives were not allowed to uncover the mass graves to identify bodies, instead white lime was sprinkled all over the mass graves by the army to dissolve the last traces of human flesh. Sometimes a bracelet, necklace, a dress was the only clue to the identity of a body. Even after the announcement of an official body count of 2,400, more bodies were found, mixed up in the rubble, in empty garages, in abandoned warehouses . . . As I walked through the camp alleys looking at the shattered homes I wanted to cry aloud. How could little children come back to live in the rooms where their relatives were tortured and killed . . . who was going to look after the widows and orphans? Suddenly, someone small threw his arms around me. It was Mahmoud, a little child who had some time earlier broken his wrist . . . Soon I was surrounded by a whole lot of children. Kids without homes, without parents, without futures."

But the situation for the Palestinians in Lebanon did not show much improvement

Gunshot wounds, beatings and tear gas inhalation has been responsible for the deaths of many hundreds of children of the Occupied Territories.



JOHN COPES VAN TASSEL



ASSOCIATED PRESS

There are some very frightened, anxious and hungry Afghan children in the refugee camps of Pakistan but as far as the government authorities are concerned many of them do not exist.

– the camps were besieged, mothers were shot dead breaking the curfew in order to find food and water for their families, while some children – the lucky ones were able to trap cats and rats to supplement their meagre rations.

However, the tragedy is not just a Palestinian one, a Lebanese one, a Kurdish one, an Iraqi or Iranian one, it is one which effects the entire Middle East. There is much rhetoric about the extent of Arab brotherhood and frequent calls for greater



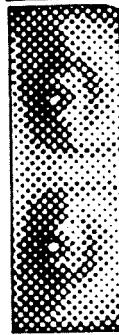
HOSPITAL PHOTOGRAPH

The Gulf states have instituted programmes to ensure children get the best possible start.

unity among people of the Moslem world, but how this can be achieved when each generation is growing further and further apart, is difficult to imagine. In Saudi Arabia we are seeing prospective surgeons and computer analysts raised in a peaceful environment, enjoying all the benefits of good education and health systems, while in Lebanon the same generation of children exists in an arena of bloody and vicious interfactional conflict knowing little of any life other than that involving street militias, bombs and death. There can be little common ground between them.

Only a few Middle East governments are guilty of actual crime against children but there is a real danger all will be tarred with the same brush unless steps are taken to eliminate the cancer which has been allowed to fester and grow in their midst. When Arab representatives meet with others to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child later this year, let us hope they will use the opportunity to discuss the formation of a regional body to ensure the directives are carried out across the length and breadth of the Middle East region. For it is with the children that the real future of the area lies – without them there is no possibility of attaining the long term goals this – and previous – generations, have set. Goals such as political and economic stability, agricultural self sufficiency and regional peace and prosperity. The time has never been more right for concerned governments – and there are many – to take steps to remove the evil stain of child poverty, abuse and repression before the practise and the contamination spread further. ■

Hunger strikes and tunnels plague Turkish jails



Eyewitness

Jane Howard
in Ankara

SIX soldiers with machine guns standing in a wheatfield on the featureless Anatolian plain mark the entrance to one of Turkey's top security prisons, known popularly as a terrorists' jail, housing mainly leftwing activists and Kurds.

None of the reeking squalor and chaos of Midnight Express or Yol, films which shaped a generation's view of Turkey, was to be seen. At Eskisehir special prison, there was barbed wire in plenty, watchtowers at every corner, and security

officers in four different types of uniform, but the impression was clinical.

Two prisoners in dark glasses peered through six-inch high barred windows in a slightly sinister fashion. The authorities were keener on showing us two escape tunnels than individual prisoners. "Hunger strikes and tunnels are the two realities of Turkish jails today," the Justice Minister, Mr Oltan Sunugulu said.

This jail was not really like Midnight Express, it seemed, more like Colditz. In the yard were two foot holes, two foot by one foot six inches hewn out of chalky white rock stretching to the cell blocks more than 30 yards away.

Urine collected in medicine bottles was used to dissolve particularly stubborn boulders which iron bars from the windows could not crack, the local prosecutor said. Lemon and tomato juice were also used.

Inside the cells was further

evidence of ingenuity. Macabre model heads with greyish complexions made out of mashed potato and realistic fur-fabric hair fooled guards into thinking that all inmates were present.

Pink rubber gloves protected hands from telltale callouses. Bellows fashioned from soft leather salvaged from prisoners' bags kept the air circulation going underground.

This type of prison was designed for "anarchists, terrorists and ideological criminals", according to Turkish law, in particular those assessed as "incorrigible". Many of the present 347 inmates at Eskisehir were transferred there after trying to tunnel their way out of notorious Diyarbakir in the south-east.

"Only one thing is important for us and that is freedom," one tunneller, Recep, said, pressing his gaunt face against iron bars at the end of the ward. "This is the only

thing we want and nothing else." He said he had received a death sentence.

The tunnellers were members of Dev Yol (Revolutionary Way) and Kurtuluscular (Liberators), groups associated with political violence surrounding the 1980 military coup. Recep, a student at the time, prevailed about what his crime was. "Political, it was really," he said. "Overthrowing the government."

Thin faces and staring eyes bore witness to several hunger strikes. Another one has just begun in protest at the tightening of rules following the discovery of the tunnels last week.

After a nation-wide wave of hunger strikes last year, the government made concessions on prison regulations, and prisoners are now allowed to wear their own clothes, and more access to books and typewriters (the authorities once claimed the keys could be used as tunnel-

ling tools). "Slowly it is getting better, but it's not enough," Recep said.

Another prisoner, Sinan, from Mardin in the south-east, said he was accused of being a member of the illegal Kurdish separatist group, the PKK (Workers' Party of Kurdistan). He had been in detention for eight years but had not been convicted. Speaking Kurdish in jail was one issue which sparked last year's strikes.

One prisoner not brought out for public viewing was Eskisehir's most famous inhabitant, Mehdi Zana, a former mayor of Diyarbakir, where most of the population are Kurds. Amnesty says he was repeatedly tortured while in the military prison there. Eskisehir was built in 1983 and physical conditions, with a maximum of four to a cell, compare to British jails. The Justice Minister claimed that only hot water was necessary to bring it up to "European standards".

Iraq Uproots Kurds, Razes 700 Villages On Northern Border

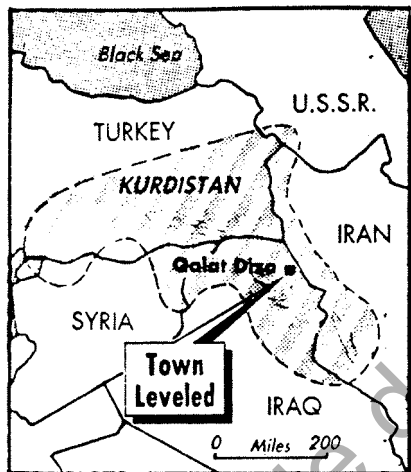
Los Angeles Times

Washington

The government of Iraq's President Saddam Hussein has forcibly moved as many as half a million Kurds and razed an estimated 700 Kurdish towns and villages in a ruthless resettlement program aimed at creating a 14,000-square-mile security zone around Iraq's northern border, U.S. officials said yesterday.

Iraqi troops last month leveled the border town of Qalat Diza and drove at least 50,000 Kurds from the strategically vital region that they had inhabited for centuries. Scores of smaller towns have been bulldozed in recent months and their residents moved to resettlement camps south of the border, administration officials said.

After decades of sporadic warfare with the non-Arab Kurds, the Iraqi government is attempting to finally "neutralize" the rebellious minority and create a depopulated zone around Iraq. State Department officials charged. They theorize that with the long Iran-Iraq war finally over, Hussein hopes to crush the troublesome Kurds so that he can begin to act on larger ambitions in Middle East power politics.



Some Compensation

Iraq says that it relocated the Kurds for their own protection and has given them land and money to compensate them for the loss of their homes and livelihoods.

The Bush administration, concerned about what it calls "mass deportations" and other human rights abuses, repeatedly has protested to the Baghdad regime. But the protests from the United States and other countries have been ignored, U.S. officials said.

Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman Claiborne Pell, D-R.I., attached an amendment to the foreign aid bill now before the committee to impose sanctions on Iraq if it is shown that its treatment of the Kurds constitutes a "gross violation of international standards of human rights."

The resettlement program is part of Hussein's effort to settle Iraq's domestic problem with the Kurds, who have long agitated for

autonomy from the various governments that currently control Kurdistan, their ancient ethnic homeland. The territory straddles Iran, Iraq, Syria, Turkey and a slice of the Soviet Union.

ARMED RESISTANCE

Earlier efforts to repress the Kurds, however, have been met by armed resistance, as Kurdish guerrillas retreated to mountain strongholds and carried out hit-and-run attacks on Iraqi troops. Until the mid-1970s, they were given money and weapons by the United States and Israel, and they were supported by Iran during the eight-year Persian Gulf War, which ended a year ago this month.

But today the Kurds are demoralized and destitute, according to State Department officials. "The back of the Kurdish resistance has been broken," said one U.S. official.

In 1988, Hussein carried out a savage campaign against the Kurds, including chemical weapons attacks on civilians in Halabja that left an estimated 4,000 dead. In September, the United States publicly charged that Iraq had used poison gas against the residents of several other Kurdish border towns in retaliation for Kurdish aid to Iranian forces during the Iran-Iraq War.

More Moves Expected

Hikmet Bamarni, spokesman in the United States for the Kurdistan Democratic Party, said the resettlement program is only temporary and that Hussein planned to move the Kurds again, even further south, to assimilate them with other

Page A17 Col. 4

Iraq Forcibly Moves 500,000 Kurds To Make a Safe Zone

From Page A15

Iraqis and make it more difficult for them to reclaim the ancient lands.

"There has been limited armed resistance, a few ambushes, a hunger strike. There's no way you can fight Saddam (Hussein)" and his million-man army, Bamarni said.

"Saddam is determined to destroy the Kurdish movement and Kurdistan as an independent region. This is a dictatorship. It will tolerate no movement asking for democratic rights," Bamarni added.

The Kurds constitute about 20 percent of Iraq's 16 million people. Hussein's Sunni Moslems, who rule the nation, account for another 20 percent. The majority are Shiite Moslems. Hussein and the Sunnis have long felt squeezed by the Kurds to the north and the Shiites, who live primarily in the south.

Thursday, July 13, 1989

A 26

San Francisco Chronicle

THE VOICE OF THE WEST

RICHARD T. THIÉRIOT
Editor and Publisher

Uprooted Kurds

REPORTS THAT the government of Iraq has forcibly moved half-a-million Kurds and razed hundreds of Kurdish towns in an attempt to protect that country's northern border have aroused concern in the United States and other Western nations. And rightly so.

State Department officials theorize that with the protracted Iran-Iraq war now finally over, Iraq's president, Saddam Hussein, now hopes to crush the troublesome Kurds so that he can promote larger ambitions in Middle East power politics. And his heavy-handed, oppressive methods have apparently left the Kurds demoralized and destitute.

Just last month, according to a dispatch in the Los Angeles Times, Iraqi troops leveled the border town Qalat Diza and drove 50,000 Kurds from a region they had inhabited for hundreds and hundreds of years. Scores of other smaller towns have been bulldozed and their inhabitants moved to refugee camps.

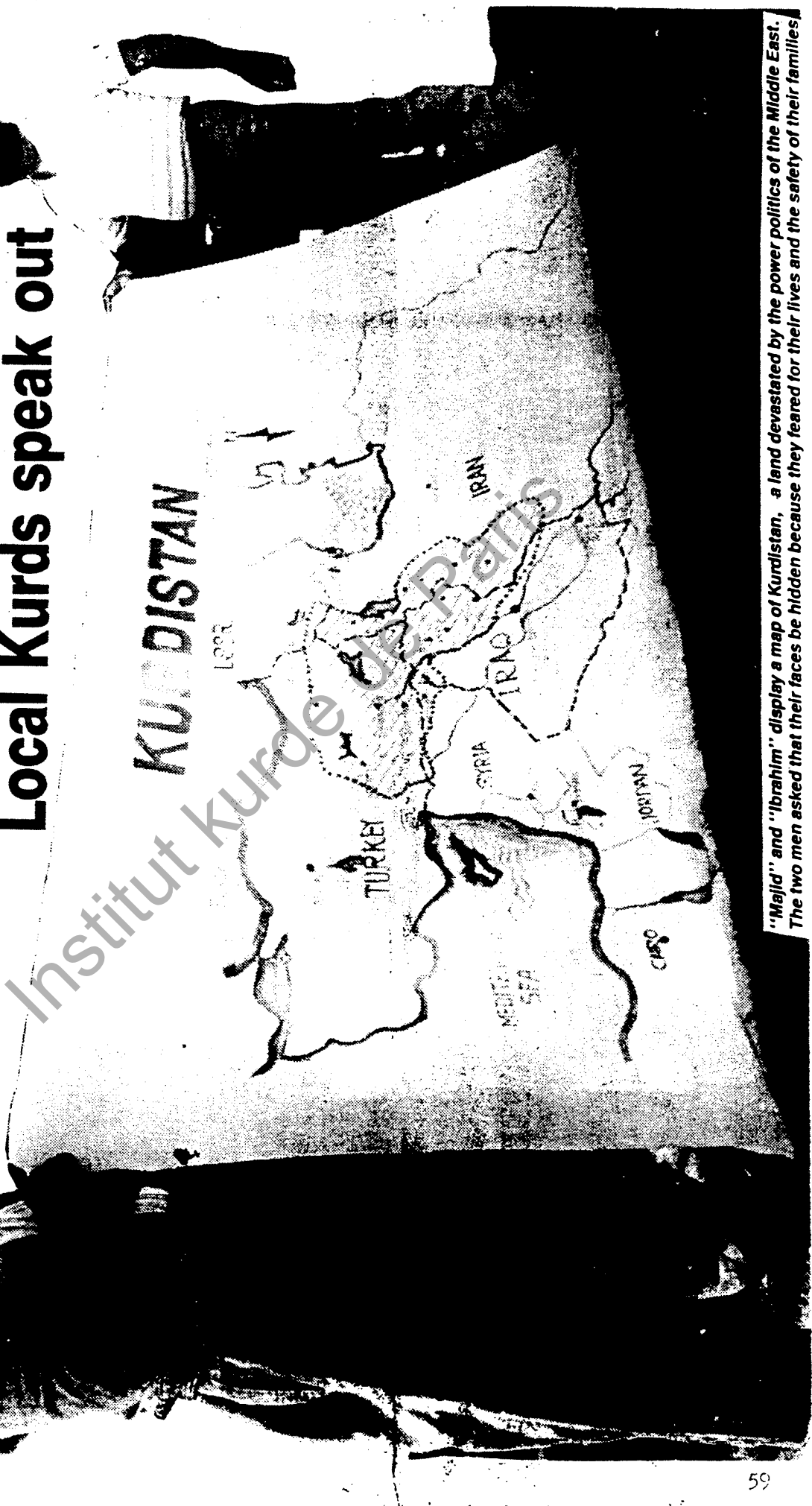
SUCH A SITUATION warrants the anxiety and solicitude of the West, even if protests fall on unheeding ears. Aside from the woeful disregard for human rights involved, there are the makings here for another tinder box.

"When you put people in camps, it is only going to make them angrier," said Hikmet Barmarni, spokesman for the Kurdistan Democratic Party. "... It is going to make them more interested in revolt."

San Mateo Weekly

Cultural genocide: Local Kurds speak out

KURDISTAN



"Majid" and "Ibrahim" display a map of Kurdistan, a land devastated by the power politics of the Middle East. The two men asked that their faces be hidden because they feared for their lives and the safety of their families.

Kurds seek help for their battered homeland

Mark Evans

The time has come, say two local Kurdish men, to make Americans aware of the state of emergency which currently exists in their homeland. The two — currently living in San Mateo — came to the Weekly to explain a variety of atrocities perpetrated on their families and friends back in Kurdistan. Fearing for family members back home, they spoke on the condition of anonymity; their names have been fictionalized.

"If something isn't done soon, if people in America aren't made aware, then 20 million of my people could be exterminated within a decade." The words of Majid, a San Mateo resident who escaped his native land in Iraqi Kurdistan in 1976, seem unreal. They echo of a distant place, if not a distant time, certainly far removed from the peaceful suburban streets of San Mateo.

But it is the urgency in Majid's eyes that bring the words to life. He is speaking from a horrifying experience that, he fears, may only get worse for the millions of people living in his homeland.

Kurdistan, though its history dates back some 4,000 years, is not well-known in America. It is not a country, but a mountainous region lying within parts of four Middle Eastern countries (Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Syria). More familiar to Westerners might be Mount Ararat, which Biblical tradition says was the resting place of Noah's ark after the Flood — and which is Kurdish territory.

According to Majid, the Kurds have long sought to live peaceful lives in their mountain villages, but have been forced into battle with neighboring countries who want control of their territory.

Most historical accounts of the subject describe the Kurds as a proud people who have been continually forced to fight for their very existence. "Centuries of circumstance have compelled the Kurds to always be on their guard, ready to fight at a moment's notice," writes one historian. Another calls the Kurds "the orphans of the world," being exploited and used as political pawns by various regimes, particularly those of the last 50 years.

But the most recent years have been the most brutal to the Kurds. Circumstance had trained the Kurds to be particularly adept at fighting in their mountainous homeland, where conventional forces from attacking nations were at a disadvantage. The advent of technological and chemical warfare has changed all that.

"It is technology that is killing my people," says Majid. He is particularly appalled by the use of chemical weapons — most prominently cyanide and mustard gas — which, Majid says, Iraqi planes have dropped on Kurd villages in recent years.

Indeed, the Iraqi chemical bombing of the Kurdish village of Halabja in March of last year garnered international headlines. Reports of over 5,000 dead, choked by fumes they could neither see nor smell, caused a mild media furor. Descriptions of a modern day Pompeii, with victims frozen in their doorway or at the wheel of a car as they attempted to escape, or another Jonestown, with poisoned bodies littering a pristine village pasture, brought the horror of chemical warfare to the fore.

But, says Majid, even as the headlines of that incident subsided, the extermination continued. According to Majid, thousands of Kurdish villages have been destroyed, their inhabitants murdered or forced into refugee camps which Majid likens to Nazi-style concentration camps.

Ibrahim is from the Turkish part of Kurdistan where — since 1925 — all expressions of Kurdish culture and language have been outlawed. "One word spoken in Kurdish means three years of prison," says Ibrahim, who came to the United States in 1981 as a refugee.

The Turkish government has long denied the existence of any Kurdish culture, describing the Kurds as "mountain Turks" who have forgotten their native tongue and the Turkish Constitution explicitly forbids the use of "prohibited languages," one of which is Kurdish. The ban on Kurdish culture is so pronounced that, according to Amnesty International, a Turkish professor — not himself a Kurd — reportedly spent more than a decade in prison for authoring a study which claimed the Kurds are a separate ethnic group.

"Nothing of our culture is allowed, not our language, our customs our dress," explains Ibrahim, "And the army continues

to harass us." He describes a 1980 incident from his village in which the Turkish army demanded the surrender of all weapons in the village, and prompted compliance through fear. "They took every man — from age 17 to 70 — and hung us upside down and beat us with sticks."

There is an ancient Kurdish proverb which states bluntly, "The Kurds have no friends." It would seem to hold today as well, as the Kurds are attacked by enemies on various fronts, and have received little outside help.

To date, say both Majid and Ibrahim, the action taken by Western countries against countries engaging in human rights violations against the Kurds has been minimal. "The United Nations did nothing after the chemical bombing of Halabja," says Majid. In the United States, Majid claims that chemicals are being made available to Iraq which are then used as weapons.

"Iraq is openly using these horrible weapons," says Majid, "and we must pressure the Congress and American companies to help stop the flow of these weapons to them."

Ibrahim claims that the United States is also in a strong position to help stop human rights violations in Turkey, and says that Congress should make it a priority issue.

The two men say that they have received considerable support from local Congressman Tom Lantos and his wife Annette. In fact, Lantos, as a founder of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, is scheduled this week to open an exhibit in Washington which outlines the past 1,000 years of Kurdish history. He is also helping organize a Congressional staff briefing which will educate politicians on the plight of the Kurds.

"It is the coming human rights issue of our time," says Annette Lantos. "These are people who have been overlooked and trampled for centuries and today must watch as their area is carved up by power politics."

Annette further claims that what is happening to the Kurds is "genocide" and acknowledges that "much of Congress is, even today, ignorant of the Kurdish problem." She claims that letters written to the United Nations and congressmen would help change the current political ambivalence towards the problem.

Both Majid and Ibrahim say that they will return to their native land if they ever can. Both are trying to keep their Kurdish culture alive here, and teach their children about Kurdish history and customs so that they can one day help revive their devastated homeland.

Says Majid, "The United States is a wonderful place and San Mateo is a beautiful place to live, but our hearts are in Kurdistan with our people."



"Majib" dons authentic Kurdish clothes, which are currently banned in Turkey.

San Francisco Examiner

Iraqi dictator's latest deeds

THE WORLD seems intent on keeping its eyes averted from the awful sufferings of the Kurdish minority in Iraq. Now comes word that the government of Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein has ordered as many as half a million Kurds removed from their villages and actually has razed as many as 700 Kurdish towns. This follows upon the use of poison gases on Kurdish communities last year, which spurred the flight of more than 100,000 Kurds into Turkey. In gas attacks on Halabja and other towns, 3,000 to 5,000 civilians were reported killed, early in 1988. Now Saddam Hussein is trying to diffuse and totally suppress this independent-minded minority by the destruction of its towns and massive relocations to other areas.

And where in all of this is the outrage of the world community, and of the United

Nations, which sometimes responds effusively to lesser dealings of death and deprivation? Nowhere to be heard. Saddam Hussein, his war with Iran over, is thought to be nurturing the ambition to become the dominant power in the Persian Gulf area, once he has put down minority problems in his own country. Then the world may wish it had paid more attention to this ruthless fellow beforehand.

Anyway, Sen. Claiborne Pell, D-R.I., chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, is paying attention. He has a measure pending to impose a variety of U.S. sanctions on Iraq if it is shown that that regime's treatment of the Kurds constitutes a "gross violation of international standards of human rights." Let's see an international investigation and some unified action on behalf of these people whose travails defy our imagination, and demand our attention.

Gulf Cease-Fire Leaves Rebel Groups of Region in

Quandary

August 15, 1989

The New York Times

By ALAN COWELL

Special to The New York Times

BAGHDAD, Iraq, Aug. 27 — Across mountains and marshes and plains, the eight-year-old war between Iran and Iraq has spawned another battle of smaller, more shadowy forces whose future now seems clouded by the sudden talk of peace.

As the conventional war has blossomed, so too have the intertwined conflicts fought by a plethora of groups: fractious Kurdish separatists allied with Iran against Iraq, Iraqi-backed Iranian adversaries of Teheran's Islamic revolution and Iranian-supported Iraqi Shiite Moslems pitted against Baghdad.

The United Nations-sponsored peace talks between Iran and Iraq that are under way in Geneva, however, have opened a prospect that those forces will now become bargaining chips in the wider negotiations, diplomats and Iraqi officials said.

In recent weeks, moreover, Iraq appears to have coupled a conventional military drive against Iran with maneuvers in the proxy war designed to strengthen its hand in Geneva, promoting its own surrogates and attacking Teheran's.

In Geneva, Iraqi officials and Western diplomats said, a critical issue will be insuring that neither side interferes in the affairs of the other. Implicitly that means reigning in the surrogates.

The issue is to be negotiated as part of an overall peace package supposed to cement a United Nations-sponsored cease-fire that came into effect seven days ago and is apparently holding.

As the truce approached, Western diplomats said, Iraq followed up a string of battlefield successes with what appears to have been a concerted maneuver in the proxy war.

In June and July, Iraq helped the dissident Iranian movement, the People's Mujahedeen, take some cities from Iran. Baghdad followed up with a major drive against Iranian-backed Kurdish separatists in the north.

The result, according to a senior Iraqi official, was to further reverse the power balance that enabled Iran to exact concessions from Iraq when the two sides made their last major deal in 1975.

At that time, President Saddam Hussein of Iraq traded Baghdad's total control over the Shatt al Arab waterway at the northern tip of the gulf for a withdrawal of Iranian support for a

How does peace affect the surrogates of Iran and Iraq?

Kurdish campaign in the north. The concession, some regional specialists say, still rankles the Iraqi leader as a humiliation to be redressed.

"The Kurds are no longer a bargaining chip and Iraq still has the Mujahedeen, which could be a bargaining chip," said a senior Iraqi official, who declined to be identified.

The new balance, compared to 1975, he said, meant that Iraq no longer felt obliged to "trade off part of the national land."

Such interpretations, Western diplomats said, suggest a hard negotiating stance in Geneva. "The Iraqis will be very precise and very tough," a Western envoy said, "because they think it is the only thing the Iranians understand."

The Iraqi maneuver has left smaller

groups in the border war in ambivalent positions.

In their campaign against the Kurds, said a regional diplomat knowledgeable about the mountainous area in the north, "we got the impression that the Iraqis wanted to finish the whole business."

Thousands of villages have been razed in the region to deny sanctuary to the guerrillas of Jalal Talabani and Massoud Barzani.

Additionally, in late July, a Western military specialist said Iraq dispatched 20,000 elite forces to the north. "The mopping-up intensified," the specialist said.

Position of the Mujahedeen

The position of the Mujahedeen, which opposed the Shah's rule in Iran but was crushed by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini after the Islamic revolution, seems more complex.

In June 1987, the Mujahedeen's leader, Massoud Rajavi, announced the formation of a National Liberation Army of Iran, thought by Western specialists to number no more than 16,000 men and women. The organization's tactic was to use military raids into Iran as a means of fomenting revolt and underpinning a campaign for recognition — in Iran and elsewhere — as the only viable alternative to the clerical Government in Teheran.

After probing raids last year and early this year, the group — armed and sponsored by Iraq — briefly occupied the border town of Mehran in June and, in July, made forays between 50 and 80 miles into Iran, holding the towns of Kerend and Islamabad for several days.

Western diplomats said that, in the July campaign, Iraq had offered the Mujahedeen a final chance to establish "liberated areas" inside Iran.

Accounts of the campaign differ sharply. Alireza Jafarzadeh, the Mujahedeen spokesman here, called it "our largest and most successful operation so far."

But a Western diplomat said, "They just got wiped out."

"The Iranians sent in reinforcement and the Mujahedeen took a beating," another Western military specialist said. "Even by their own count they took 1,000 casualties." The Mujahedeen claimed to have inflicted 40,000 Iranian casualties.

"I don't think we'll see further offensives soon," the Western specialist said.

Tuesday, August 15, 1989

■ MIDDLE EAST

**Scientists Say Kurds
Were Poisoned**

British scientists said yesterday they believe they have evidence that Kurdish refugees who fled from Iraq to Turkey were deliberately poisoned with a toxic nerve agent.

Kurdish rebels say that up to 2,000 Kurds sheltering in remote camps near Turkey's border with Iraq and Iran were affected by the poison last June.

The scientists, who analyzed blood samples and bread smuggled out of Mardin camp, where the outbreak was first reported, told a London news conference they discovered traces of poisoning by organophosphates, highly toxic chemicals.

Rebel leaders said at the time that they believed food distributed to the refugees had been poisoned. Turkey said the outbreak was caused by unhygienic food.

Institut kurde de Paris

San Francisco Examiner

A-30 Friday, August 18, 1989 ★

RANDOLPH A. HEARST
President



WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST
Proprietor — 1887-1951

A greater danger rising

AS THE world begins to breathe easier over relaxation of tensions between the democratic West and the communist East, a new danger is rising fast. It may pose greater possibility of uncontrollable war than the old confrontation of superpowers that now is ebbing. This is because the new threat is being brought upon us by irresponsible powers run by some of the world's hardest dictators.

Another small clue to this threat — of chemical and biological warfare — came this week with the news of Iranian contacts with two Western countries. It seems that representatives of Iran have been trying quietly, in Canada and the Netherlands, to make arrangements for the purchase of special strains of poisonous fungi. They were turned down in both countries, upon the suspicion that this might be connected to Iranian development of biological weapons. Such weapons could kill millions of people over wide areas with deadly viruses and bacteria.

The suspicion in the Netherlands and Canada was based on excellent perceptions, and we must hope the Iranians are having a hard time finding their fungi elsewhere. But there can be no serious doubt that they are proceeding toward production of these weapons, and chemical weapons as well. For their next-door neighbor and enemy, Iraq, is far into this devilish business already. So far, in fact, that it killed or

wounded an estimated 50,000 people with poison gases between 1983 and 1988. These included Iranian soldiers felled by mustard and nerve gases in the Iran-Iraq war, and some 5,000 Kurdish civilians gased in Iraq itself. These are members of a minority whose existence is found inconvenient by the ruthless Iraqi dictator, Saddam Hussein.

That Hussein is developing facilities for production of germ and chemical weapons is beyond question. That he would not be above using such weapons, in violation of international law, is *demonstrably* beyond question. What Iran, with its deadly official fanaticism, might do with these agents of mass homicide is left to anyone's imagination. These nations, along with Syria and Libya, which also are developing chemical weaponry, remain dedicated to the destruction of Israel.

And Iraq, whose atomic bomb development center was destroyed by Israeli bombers in 1981, reportedly is back into that hair-raising work also. It may have atomic bombs in five years if Hussein is allowed to continue with this. Major nations had better pay keen attention and demand cessation of these dangerous enterprises that can destabilize the world and bring incalculable devastation to the Mideast. No remedies should be ruled out in the determination to prevent nuclear and biological capabilities from mounting among irresponsible powers, propelled by furious extremism and dictatorial ambitions.

■ FORGOTTEN PEOPLE

The World and The Kurds

JILL HAMBURG

“We’re living through hard times,” a Kurdish father tells his son in *Yol*, Kurdish-Turkish director Yilmaz Guney’s last film, written in prison in Turkey before his death in exile in 1985: “We can’t even claim our dead.” Indeed—and truer today. Two reports released this year, one by Amnesty International and the other by Physicians for Human Rights, document that the persecution of the Kurdish people of Iran and Iraq by their own governments is steadily worsening in the aftermath of the war.

The war to a certain degree was encouraged by the industrial countries—forty nations supplied arms, ten of those to both sides [see Mansour Farhang, “An Unending War Between Two Despots,” *The Nation*, September 20, 1986]. So the U.N.-negotiated cease-fire that ended the fighting last August was a coup for international diplomacy. But now, while Western industry scrambles for reconstruction contracts and populous peacetime markets, unconscionable human rights violations are being carried out with impunity, especially in Iraq. Amnesty’s report on Iraq, which was accompanied by unprecedented public appeals, exposes politically motivated torture, imprisonment and executions of hundreds of Kurds, mainly children, in an attempt to force confessions from their families.

Amnesty and others have shown that both during and after the war Iraqi President Saddam Hussein redeployed thousands of troops from the front against civilians, in order to eliminate perceived dissidents, including tens of thousands of Kurds, who have suffered systematic attacks by the military, sometimes using poison gas, and forced relocations to government “security villages.” Perhaps as many as two-thirds of Iraq’s 5,000 Kurdish villages have already been wiped off the map.

In the wake of the cease-fire Iran, too, has intensified its aggression, carrying out mass executions of approximately 16,000 political prisoners last year, including at least hundreds and perhaps thousands of Kurds. In July, the leader of the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan and the party’s European representative were assassinated while engaged in peace negotiations in Vienna with the Iranian government (two of Iran’s negotiators were arrested as suspects). All told,

Jill Hamburg is a San Francisco-based freelance writer.

thousands of Kurds have been killed since the revolution in a civil struggle almost totally unpublicized in the West.

The Physicians for Human Rights study, conducted among the 50,000 Kurdish refugees in Turkey, concluded that the Iraqi Army used mustard and nerve gases against civilians immediately following last August's cease-fire. This conclusion was based primarily on evidence obtained from eyewitnesses, in videotaped interviews and questionnaires, which was analyzed by chemical warfare experts. The sustained and "catastrophic" attacks against Kurdish civilians and Pesh Merga (military) areas caused thousands of deaths. The number is impossible to confirm because the areas were sealed off; estimates by Kurdish sources range from 10,000 to as many as 100,000 people. Most vulnerable to the indiscriminate attacks were the young, the old and the sick.

Iraq denied the attacks, then justified them as a response to Kurdish guerrillas. But according to Vera Beaudin Saeedpour, director of the Kurdish Program, based in Brooklyn, New York, the local Kurds are peaceable, and inhabited vulnerable, low-lying terrain of no strategic value. They had the misfortune, however, to live along Iraq's economic lifeline: its oil pipeline, main railroad, highway and primary water source. Journalists have described the area as "an open grave," and the town of Halabja as "a modern Pompeii."

Neither U.N. investigations nor last January's 140-nation conference in Paris on chemical weapons adequately addressed these atrocities. Iraq's prominence as a Third World power has impeded international action, and the Hussein government has paid no political or economic price. The Paris conference, reaching a "full consensus by all nations," did not beef up the 1925 Geneva Protocols on chemical weapons and failed to propose export controls or economic sanctions against known violators — in effect granting global approval to Iraq's use of gas against the Kurds. No nation is "willing to sacrifice bilateral relations with Iraq on behalf of a higher cause," chemical weapons expert and policy analyst W. Seth Carus says. Senator Claiborne Pell's September 1988 bill to impose sanctions on Iraq and prevent the genocide was derailed, according to a Foreign Relations Committee staff member, partly as a result of intense lobbying by Iraq's business friends, agribusiness, the oil industry and the chemical manufacturers.

Labyrinthine alliances also complicate the Kurds' future. Recently they were maintained as proxy soldiers in the Iran-Iraq war, with each side arming the other's Kurds. They have been betrayed over the years by other patrons, from the Shah to the Soviet Union to the Central Intelligence Agency. Scattered among several countries by the colonial powers, the Kurdish people are further fractured by class and tradition, and suppressed by militantly nationalistic governments that covet their mountain homelands' rich resources.

But things could change. Iraq, although second only to Saudi Arabia in OPEC exports, is currently more than \$50 billion in debt; Iran needs outside aid to rebuild its war-ravaged economy. Monitoring by human rights groups and increased publicity about the atrocities keeps the heat on,

and stigmatizes, the perpetrators. The challenge for Washington is to strike at the credit upon which these bankrupt nations desperately depend. Pell will attempt to do this with a second bill.

For their part, the Kurds have united periodically over the decades, most recently in the Iraqi Kurdish Front in 1987. To emerge from the devastation, to claim their dead and begin a new phase of their struggle for justice and autonomy, the Kurds must again meet the challenge of cooperation.

San Francisco Chronicle

Thursday, August 24, 1989

Kurds Plan Parliament

Geneva

Kurds are planning to set up a parliament within the next eight months, a Kurdish representative at the United Nations European headquarters said yesterday.

Reuters

The Selling of Iraq's President Hussein

BY RICHARD Z. CHESNOFF
Special to The Chronicle

Every evening, Iraqi TV screens fill with images of victorious soldiers, graceful palms and bursting fireworks. Then a smiling figure steps into the scene and begins an Arabic chant:

This "nightly Saddam song," as Western diplomats in Baghdad call it, is but one of many carefully crafted symbols of adulation for Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, the tough, merciless ruler who humbled Iran in the Persian Gulf war and now is flexing his political and military muscles all across the Mideast.



arsums

Saddam Hussein

Hussein's ambitions are both specific and wide-ranging. To punish Syria for siding with arch-enemy Iran, he has shipped arms to Lebanon's Christian General Michel Aoun. In a challenge to Saudi Arabia, he made Iraq a founding member of the Arab Council of Cooperation, a mini-Common Market that includes Egypt, Jordan and North Yemen but not Riyadh.

And even while proclaiming support

Richard Z. Chesnoff is a staff writer for U.S. News and World Report, where this article first appeared.

for Palestine Liberation Organization chief Yasser Arafat's new role as a moderate, Hussein continues to play host to a pair of leading Palestinian terrorists, master bomb maker Abu Ibrahim and Abu Abbas, the man responsible for the 1985 Achille Lauro hijacking in which American tourist Leon Klinghoffer was murdered.

Wounds of War

Neither hymns of praise nor regional ambitions will count for much, however, unless Hussein can resolve some staggering domestic troubles. Iraq emerged from the eight-year war with Iran with more territory than it had before and a military machine that many analysts say is the best in the Arab world.

But the conflict cost as many as 100,000 Iraqi lives and left Baghdad with an estimated \$80 billion foreign debt. To attract badly needed Western aid, Hussein now must find some way to project an image of reform and moderation while still keeping political challenges at bay.

Iraq has great economic potential: its 17.6 million people are well educated; there is plenty of fertile farmland; a well developed infrastructure suffered surprisingly little war damage; and only Saudi Arabia has bigger untapped petroleum reserves.

If oil minister Issam Abdul-Rahim al-Chalabi's forecast of "stronger demand for OPEC crude . . . and a higher price for oil" in the 1990s comes true, Iraq could pay present bills and have money left over.

Baghdad hotels are crowded with American, Asian and European businessmen eager to sell everything from complete



BY ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jubilant celebrations over the ceasefire in Iraq's war with Iran are now a thing of the past as Iraqis face the harsh realities of a massive foreign debt

factories to pipelines. But many want to collect old bills before signing new contracts for high-priority projects like rebuilding ports and clearing waterways.

Inefficient Bureaucrats

Some potential lenders also are wary of the Hussein government's past radicalism and its well deserved reputation for bloody repression. Partly to soothe such concerns, Hussein launched an Iraqi version of glasnost last April that included new parliamentary elections and promises of a multiparty political system.

Agriculture is increasingly being privatized, and small industries are being freed

from control by inefficient bureaucrats in the ruling Arab Baath Socialist Party. Abroad, Iraqi diplomats are emphasizing Baghdad's desire to "associate with more moderate Mideast forces."

But the proposed changes could prove to be as empty as others Hussein has promised during his 21 years in power. Though citizens have been urged to complain about government excesses, only lower-level officials have been criticized in the press.

The practical impact of much publicized legislative reforms seems equally limited. The National Assembly is now official-



Iraqi President Saddam Hussein (left) and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak at the Presidential Palace in Cairo last year

The Selling of Iraq's President

From Page 1

ly open to "non-Baathists," but candidates considered "dangerous to Iraq" are not permitted to run for office. The reason, says Nizar Hamdoun, the under-secretary of foreign affairs, is that "things must be done gradually to ensure that the country keeps its balance."

In many ways, Baghdad remains an Arab Albania; one Western diplomat calls the closed, secretive society "Tirana on the Tigris." Foreign publications are banned, unofficial contacts with foreigners are discouraged and permission to travel outside the country hinges on Hussein's personal decision.

Crushing the Kurds

Dissidents continue to be harshly treated. Officials admit use of poison gas against the Kurds in 1987 and 1988, which thousands of civilians, war-ganda mistake, but few trite about it. Though the Kurds in Iraq enjoy more than they do in Iraq, some 200,000 were forced from border villages and moved inland to plan to create a no-fly zone.

Leaders of the opposition fear that the regime will create a look for Saudi officials in the Arab Court, but now will use a traditional role as shepherd.

Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin warns that Iraq is "potentially the most dangerous nation" in the Middle East. "Let's not even talk about Iraqi chemical weapons, nuclear development and missiles," says a senior intelligence officer in Tel Aviv. "They have more tanks than the French and enough troops to maintain security on their 1,000-mile border with Iran and still send 10 divisions across Jordan to attack us."

Iraq's Bulging Arsenal

Despite Baghdad's financial crunch, Hussein is continuing to expand his already bulging arsenal. Negotiations are under way to buy sophisticated fighter bombers, either French-made Mirage 2000s or Soviet Su 24s. Iraq reportedly also wants to acquire French-built Alpha jet trainers. Total cost for both deals would be \$6.5 billion.

Millions of additional dollars

are being spent to develop a domestic weapons industry. Foreigners at a Baghdad arms fair last April were amazed to see Iraqi-built weapons ranging from simple aerial bombs to the largely home-grown Hussein surface-to-surface missile.

"They've married Western and Soviet systems, and no one ever realized either the extent or the quality of what they produce," said Kenneth Timmerman of the Mideast arms newsletter Mednews.

Whatever regionwide ambitions Hussein may have, his prime foreign concern will continue to be Iran. The Gulf war ended with a cease-fire, and no movement toward a peace settlement is in sight.

Soviet antiaircraft batteries are still in place on Baghdad rooftops, and more than a million troops remain on active duty. Though Baghdad is officially reserving judgment on post-Khomeini Iran, many Iraqis believe that renewed fighting is mostly a matter of time. "At the moment, there are no peace lovers that we can see in Tehran," says the Foreign Ministry's Hamdoun.

At home, Hussein trusts only a few blood relatives and long-time friends. Hometown boys from the mud-brick village of Tikrit, where he grew up, dominate the powerful Revolutionary Command Council. But not even blood ties are a guarantee of safety.

Officially, a sudden sand storm is blamed for a mysterious helicopter crash last May that took the life of Defense Minister Adnan Khairallah, who was the president's cousin and brother-in-law as well as his closest adviser. But in Baghdad's flourishing gossip mills, the event soon was woven into a thousand and one tales of family squabbles and infidelities more akin to "Dallas" than to the Arabian Nights.

At the very least, say some Iraqis, the ever suspicious Hussein was worried that the victory over Iran had focused too bright a spotlight on the army and cousin Adnan.

However valid the merits of that claim, Hussein has reinvigorated an already monumental personality cult. Presidential portraits, often several stories tall, stare down from almost every public building and town square in the country.

Near the site of ancient Babylon, which Hussein is rebuilding as a tourist attraction, a billboard features the president's profile alongside a picture of Nebuchadnezzar. According to the Bible, Babylonia's King built an empire, all right, but then went mad and ate grass.

Urgency on chemical weapons

A-26 Thursday, September 28, 1989 ★

President's proposal should be pressed swiftly to address rising threat among smaller powers

RANDOLPH A. HEARST
President

IN RECENT days, this country and the Soviet Union have made historic moves toward accords on arms control in several fields. But President Bush, in his message Monday to the United Nations, concentrated on just one of those fields — chemical weapons.

He chose that focus because this is one area of control, going far beyond superpower dealings, in which the United Nations could be effective. But mainly he pressed the theme because of a swelling danger: The new proliferation of weapons with catastrophic potential is in the Third World, mainly the hard-line Arab states that remain committed to Israel's destruction. The dictatorial regimes of Iraq, Syria and Libya are in the business of developing poison gases. Iraq reportedly has programs also to produce germ warfare weapons, and to gain long-range missile capability. Its leader, Saddam Hussein, dealt with Iraq's Kurdish minority last year by gasing several thousand people to death in small towns.

So, as the superpowers pursue with increasing vigor the goal of removing the nuclear missile threat, in years ahead, we have the prospect of smaller nations adding a whole new threat, of missiles carrying chemical warheads. With nerve gas or bacteriological warheads, some aggressive dictator might be able to exert intimidation almost worldwide. A small use of gas could spark a regional war of devastating magnitude (the Mideast offering the prime possibility of this). Even the superpowers will feel a bit of fear for their own safety if the spread of the chemical alternative — "the poor man's atomic bomb" — continues.

President Bush had the worst scenarios in mind, no doubt, when he told the General Assembly. "Let us act together, beginning today, to rid the Earth of this scourge." He wants a worldwide ban on chemical weapons, enforceable by inspections, which should be a primary U.N. objective. But as starters, he offered steps by which the United States and the Soviet

Union could set an example to propel the world in that direction. This country, Bush said, will destroy 80 percent of its chemical arsenal if the Soviet Union will shrink its larger stocks also, to equalize them with ours. And he wants elimination of *all* stocks within a decade.

But any ban must be worldwide if it is to be of any real use. This is why Bush was quick to reject the Soviets' theatrical counter-proposal to eliminate *all* such weapons right away, rather than 80 percent. The president noted the obvious — that the superpowers must retain some chemical weapons as leverage, to induce other nations to join in a global ban. The dramatic first cutbacks would be part of the inducement to all nations, but still, he said correctly, "We need a certain sense of deterrence, and we need to have some leverage."

Anyway, the superpowers seem in harmony as to the goal, even if one-upmanship is played on occasion in the game of public relations. We shall see a U.S.-Soviet cutback treaty, quite likely. But the fact is that chemical weapons are not a major factor in the military balance between the two big powers; both have far larger cards of destruction to play should they ever entangle, which seems less likely all the time. The purpose here really is not to protect the superpowers, but to keep vast new sweeps of the Earth from being imperiled by something *almost* as horrifying as nuclear weapons.

And the immediate need is to spur the 40-nation U.N. Disarmament Conference in Geneva into action. It has been stalled for years, trying to craft a worldwide ban on the manufacture and possession of chemical weapons. A proposed treaty has been expected to emerge in perhaps two years. The new Washington-Moscow initiative should speed this up. Let us see the great powers apply pressures that will produce a prohibition treaty with enforcement provisions so strong that no nation can afford non-compliance.

Paris Talks Seek Attention for Plight of Kurds

By STEVEN GREENHOUSE

Special to The New York Times

PARIS, Oct. 14 — Kendal Nezan, a soft-spoken refugee from Turkey and chairman of the Kurdish Institute, is dismayed that the world's millions of Kurds and their 1,000-year-old culture have become orphans of history.

Not only have the Kurds been denied their own homeland, but Iraq is systematically destroying Kurdish villages, Turkey prohibits Kurds from speaking their native language and Iran is waging a 10-year-old war against its Kurds.

Mr. Nezan complains that the Western democracies seem to have forgotten about the Kurds' plight ever since about 400,000 of them fled Iraq in 1987 after Baghdad dropped poison gas on several Kurdish villages. Kurdish leaders say thousands of Kurds died.

"Everyone seems to pay much more attention to a tiny Lebanese family group that kidnap a few Americans than they do to the world's 25 million Kurds," said Mr. Nezan, a physicist who fled Turkey in 1971.

To "break the wall of silence" on the plight of his people, Mr. Nezan's Paris-based institute has organized the first international conference on the Kurds' human rights situation and cultural identity. Kurds are assembling in Paris from 23 countries, and Senator Claiborne Pell, Democrat of Rhode Island, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, is scheduled to speak on Sunday. The conference is also being sponsored by a French human rights group founded by Danielle Mitterrand, wife of the French President.

When the conference opened today, Yelena G. Bonner, wife of Andrei D. Sakharov, the Soviet human rights campaigner, read a letter from him in which he urged the United Nations to demand that nations with large Kurdish populations establish autonomous regions for Kurds. Dr. Sakharov was scheduled to attend the conference, but

his wife said he was too weak.

Mr. Nezan wants the West to put pressure on Iraq, Iran and Turkey to stop denying the Kurds their rights. About half the world's Kurds live in Turkey, one third in Iran and one fifth in Iraq, and there is also a significant Kurdish population in Syria and the Soviet Union.

"The Kurds are pariahs of the international community," Mr. Nezan said. "No government wants to speak up on our behalf because they do not want to disturb certain military, political, strategic interests."

Peter W. Galbraith, a Senate Foreign Relations Committee staff member who spoke at the conference, said, "Too many governments are too concerned about alienating the oil-rich or politically powerful nations where the Kurdish people reside."

He said that after Iraq used poison gas, the Senate backed strong sanctions against Iraq, but that they were blocked by the Reagan Administration.

After World War I, Kurdistan was to become a nation under the 1920 Treaty of Sevres. But the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne superseded that and distributed Kurdistan among several nations.

The Kurdish Institute, a group of writers, artists, historians and other intellectuals, is trying to keep the Kurds' culture from being snuffed out. Turkey has banned Kurdish songs, books on Kurdish history and Kurdish grammars. Iraq, trying to force assimilation, has leveled more than 3,000 Kurdish villages, according to the institute.

"We have a very ancient culture," Mr. Nezan said. "We don't want our generation to be the last link in the chain."

October 16, 1989

Conference airs plight of Kurds

PARIS (AP)—An Iraqi politician Sunday was hounded from the podium by cries of "war criminal" at the first international conference in nearly 70 years on the Kurdish people, whose ancient Middle East homeland straddles four countries.

The two-day conference focused attention on human rights abuses suffered by the Kurds, an ethnic minority of about 20 million people spread across Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria.

Held under the auspices of France-Liberty, a human rights foundation set up by Danielle Mitterrand, wife of the French prime minister, the conference drew 300 participants from 36 countries, including U.S. Sen. Claiborne Pell (D., R.I.), chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

"Innocent women and children have suffered and been tortured," Soviet dissident Yelena Bonner said Saturday in remarks at the start of the conference. But, she added, "if

we conducted a poll in Moscow, only one in 100 people would know of the problems of the people in Kurdistan."

Conference organizers hoped the meeting would raise international awareness.

They passed resolutions asking for a fact-finding mission to be sent from the West to examine human rights abuses in Kurdish areas. They also called on the United Nations General Assembly to hold a special session to examine the Kurdish question.

Among the worst abuses noted by conference participants was last year's chemical weapons offensive launched by Iraq against Kurdish strongholds in the northern part of the country. Thousands of people died, including many women and children, and up to 100,000 others fled to Iran and Turkey, according to the U.S. State Department.

Kurdish leaders accuse Iraqi President Saddam Hussein of genocide,

and many of those at the conference threatened to walk out when Bahaddin Ahmet, president of the Kurdish parliament of Iraq, tried to take the podium.

Kurds in Iraq accused members of the Kurdish parliament, set up by the Iraqi government in 1974, of being collaborators.

Descended from the ancient Medes who occupied the area that is now Iran, most Kurds are Sunni Moslems who speak their own language. The 200,000 square miles they occupy and call Kurdistan has, over the centuries, been ruled by Arabs, Mongols, and Turks of the Ottoman Empire.

When the Ottoman Empire was defeated at the end of World War I, the Allied powers dismembered it and granted the Kurds autonomy under the 1920 Treaty of Sevres. But that portion of the treaty was never carried out, and Kurdish nationalist aspirations were subjugated by colonial interests.

San Francisco Chronicle

Monday, October 16, 1989

Kurds Jeer Iraqi At Rights Conference

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Kurdish leaders accuse Iraqi President Saddam Hussein of genocide, and many of those at the conference threatened to walk out when Bahaddin Ahmet, president of the Kurdish Parliament of Iraq, tried to take the podium.

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"A war criminal is speaking here!" cried Jalal Talabani, leader of the resistance group, People's United Kurdistan Party of Iraq.

Talabani seized the podium and the Iraqi delegation withdrew.

Torch of freedom?

October 20, 19

New Statesman & Societ

Two human torches last week made a bitter contrast to the Tories' new emblem. Jeremy Seabrook reports on the Kurdish refugees who are denied freedom in Britain



uch was made at the Conservative Party conference of their symbol—the torch of freedom. A pity no one pointed up the bitter contrast with the human torches which Siho and Dogan Arslan made of themselves and worth a few days earlier, when they denied the freedom to stay in Britain. Dealings with its Kurds—about 19 per cent of the population—have been little more than those of Iraq, whose policy has been described as “ethnocide”. The consequence of that unhappy event was the flight from detention of other Kurds,

some of whom had been held in Britain since early summer. These young men, dazed and frightened by their reception here, gather at Loyola Hall, a temporary community centre in Haringey, where they can buy a cheap meal and glasses of sweet tea, and share with others stories of harassment and humiliation, and the mystery of why Britain should call them “economic migrants”. This is clearly a category of convenience, designed to diminish the sufferings of those whose flight is politically embarrassing (the Vietnamese in Hong Kong), or those fleeing the oppression of regimes of whose ideology the British government ap-

proves (Turgut Ozal's in Turkey).

Most who came here in May and June this year, before visa restrictions were hastily imposed, are Alevis, a dissident Shia minority among the Kurds, and as such, doubly discriminated against by the Sunni majority in Turkey. The stories they tell of torture, imprisonment and ill-treatment leave no doubt in the mind of Fiona Ripley, solicitor acting for Dogan Arslan and 200 other Kurds, that their fears of persecution are well-founded, which is the UN criterion for recognition of refugee status.

Many asylum-seekers come from Marsh, about 100 kilometres from the Syrian border.

the Kurds are a minority. In March 1989, Siho Kengar, said to be the instigator of the massacre of hundreds of Alevis in 1978 by the Grey Wolves, was elected to the local council. This provoked fears of more systematic attacks, and gave impetus to the current wave of migration. Since the 1980 coup, the fierce fighting battles have abated; but in their place, a resurgence of Sunni fundamentalism is a renewed threat to the Alevis.

Turkey denies the existence of the Kurds," says Shemuz Merge, a journalist who writes for a Kurdish newspaper published in Sweden, and is working with Rights and Justice in London. They call us 'Dagli Turkler', mountain Turks. The state forbids our language and culture. We have tried assimilation, deportation, and repatriation. A million Kurds were displaced between 1925 and 1938. There are now about 100,000 Kurds in West Germany." Large areas of the Kurdish homeland are now designated as national parks for afforestation or irrigation projects, with a large-scale "resettlement" of the people. At an international conference on the Kurdish people in London last weekend, Lord Avebury pointed out that under the Treaty of Sevres in 1920, an independent Kurdish state was foreshadowed by the Allied powers, a pledge that was never fulfilled.

The arrival of 3,700 Alevis in London has led to a boom for landlords in Haringey, Islington and Islington. Space has been found in dated Victorian houses, sometimes with two or four people to a room; sagging bay windows, crumbling mouldings, overgrown gardens and rubbish spilling from open black bags. The average "rent" is £55 a week. Asylum-seekers receive about 10 per cent less in benefit than other people. Many get no more than £25 a week. Their rooms are like another cell on the journey to asylum (or deportation): a low-ceilinged room without a shade, a single mattress and a coarse blanket for cover; airless rooms that are a place of sleep and exile, crumpled clothing, a broken-down fireplace, no heating; a packet of rice on the mantelpiece, some dried beans or pasta, a loaf, a tub of yoghurt.

The walls are blank, apart from pitiful pin-ups (usually quite modest) and family photographs. They read ailed airmail letters from those they love, and tell them not to return home, because the village have been looking for them, or tell of yet another round-up in the village, the young men taken away with thorn-bushes or sandbags, the houses set on fire.

The Kurds remain dignified and stoical in the face of this continuing ordeal. Many are unmarried. A 35-year-old man, 35, says: "How can we lead a normal life when the conditions of a normal life have never existed for us." None would endure the squalor and misery of the present experience if there was any choice. The endless waiting is relieved only by visits to immigration authorities, a complex system of PAQ (political asylum questionnaire), legal representations, the appeal process, the verdict of asylum status, except to leave to remain, or the peremptory threat of deportation. Many have been deeply shocked by what has happened to them here: uncomprehending officials, hostile Turkish interpreters say, "Such things couldn't happen in Turkey." Too much of it has been akin to the

circumstances from which they were seeking refuge.

Siho Oruk is 17. Born in Marash, he has a brother and two sisters in Switzerland. He was thrown out of school because he fought back when provoked by Sunni classmates. He says many Alevis drop out after primary school, because they know what to expect if they try to study. "They made me fast at Ramadan, and pray, but Alevis don't believe in fasting or prayer. The women aren't veiled. They think we are the lowest of the low." Siho lives in Clapton, sharing a room with two others. They pay £50 a week, as do the other nine occupants.

Ozcan Akbal supports the aims of the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party), which seeks complete independence from Turkey. The PKK is

of those who have known the horror of the "Palestinian hanging", of being suspended by the shoulders from the ceiling, with hands tied behind the back; the falaka—beating on the soles of the feet—is so widespread as to be almost routine. Ozcan Akbal was arrested in 1980, after the coup, for selling socialist newspapers. He was then 15. After two weeks of torture, he was thrown from the second-floor window of the police station, and remained in a coma for six days. Others tell of wives or sisters raped in their presence, electric-shock torture and sexual abuse.

The Medical Foundation was set up four years ago in order to offer psychiatric and emotional help to victims of torture. Helen Bamber says they have seen 400 or so of the most

New Statesman & Society, October 20, 1989



Russell Boyce

the most militant of the many factional Kurdish groups, whose guerrillas have killed some 1,000 people since 1984, including some of the 400,000 troops deployed in Kurdish areas. Kayar Seven comes from the province of Tunceli, which has been described as "Turkey's largest prison". In 1938, when the Kurdish guerrilla war was crushed, his grandfather was hanged, together with other male members of the family and 50 men from the village; the women and children were deported to Trakya in the west. The family is now scattered between America, Germany and Britain.

The stories of torture have the authentic ring

of recent refugees to have arrived here from Turkey. "The great majority have a history of physical torture and ill-treatment which has left long-term psychological scars. As Hans Mayer, survivor of Auschwitz, said, 'Once you have been tortured, you remain tortured for the rest of your life.' Time doesn't heal, but compounds the psychological damage."

Dogan Arslan remains seriously ill in hospital. Fiona Ripley is unable to tell him that his request for asylum has been granted; no decision has yet been made. She says many who have spent months in detention feel that this deprivation of their liberty has earned them the right of asylum

No-one would endure the misery if they had a choice. The endless waiting is relieved only by visits to the immigration authorities, arbitrary judgments, hostile officials



at a Hall, in north London, Kurdish men buy a cheap meal, share stories of pain and humiliation, and ask why Britain calls them "economic migrants"

...Pirout of Charter 87 notes that... have found space for Kurdish... in Britain's allegedly overflowing... in Manchester, Gloucester, Exeter. This... is "detention without trial". Charter... the British Refugee Council, have been... a right of appeal against the Home... decisions. "At present, there is only an... procedural matters. They say it is

administratively inconvenient. What they mean is they fear to have the courts examine decisions that are arbitrary and perverse."

Ten days after the death of Siho Iyigüven, the next deportation occurred. When Halil Guzel was told he was being sent back to Turkey, he had to spend the night in handcuffs attached to his belt. Deprived even of the liberty to damage himself, he was detained by the police as soon as he arrived in Istanbul.

Mary Dines of Rights and Justice believes the Turkish government wants to "settle" the issue of the Kurds before the EC application comes up for consideration. "There has been too little

reporting on what is going on in Turkey. Whatever concern our government has for the south-eastern flank of NATO, to connive at the elimination of the Kurdish people is hardly a sound basis for the defence of freedom."

Hamza B. Oc's brother recently attempted suicide; he cut his wrists and neck, and is now in Pentonville prison hospital. All those close to the Kurdish asylum-seekers tell of their depression. "They speak of knives and razors of fire." It has been the fate of the Kurds in Turkey to be driven from their homeland. In Britain, they're being driven out of their minds, and then called "economic migrants".

Iraq's Criminal Credit Line

By David A. Korn

WASHINGTON
 Recently, lobbyists for Iraq, a government responsible for grave crimes against its own people, went into action on Capitol Hill. The U.S.-Iraq Business Forum, a group that promotes trade between the U.S. and Iraq, galvanized its members to deluge Congressional offices with calls and cables against a measure sponsored by Sen. Daniel Inouye of Hawaii. The measure would prohibit the Export-Import Bank from making

David A. Korn is a consultant to Middle East Watch on Iraq, a human rights organization.

loans to countries that promote terrorism or grossly violate human rights.

The Export-Import Bank, a U.S. Government institution set up to promote the export of American goods, has extended some \$250 million in loans to Iraq since 1987. The bank's program was launched under considerable pressure from the Reagan Administration, despite the fact that Iraq has maintained a brutal, pervasive police state since 1968.

Iraq's shocking violations of human rights were in the news about a year ago when then-Secretary of State George Shultz publicly rebuked the Iraqi government for using poison gas against its Kurdish citizens.

But chemical weapons are only part of the problem. Almost every year for the past 20 there have been

Tie loans to human rights.

reports of hundreds of killings by the Iraqi secret police: In 1986 and 1987, some 300 Kurdish children reportedly were tortured, killed or disappeared after being arrested. Political prisoners are believed to number in the tens of thousands and torture is routine. Even abroad, Iraqis who have opposed or fled government persecution have been killed or wounded by Iraqi agents.

Before and during the war with Iran, Iraq deported tens of thousands of its Shi'ite citizens, stripping them of their citizenship and property. Since 1987, it has expelled hundreds of thousands of its Kurdish citizens from their mountain homes and forcibly relocated them in the lowlands of Iraqi Kurdistan and, according to reports, to camps in the desert near the Saudi and Jordanian borders.

The U.S. is well aware of Iraq's abuses, but largely has chosen to ignore them. Iraq's enormous oil reserves, its putative role as a bulwark against Iranian extremism and its shift since the early 1980's toward the West and the moderate Arab states, explain — but do not justify — this policy.

With the exception of condemning Iraq's use of chemical weapons, the U.S. has said nothing publicly about other human rights violations and has apparently done very little in its private diplomatic discourse with Iraq.

Neither the Bush nor the Reagan Administration has ever spoken out against the forcible relocation of the Iraqi Kurds — though similar measures against smaller numbers of people in Ethiopia and Nicaragua have brought stiff U.S. condemnation.

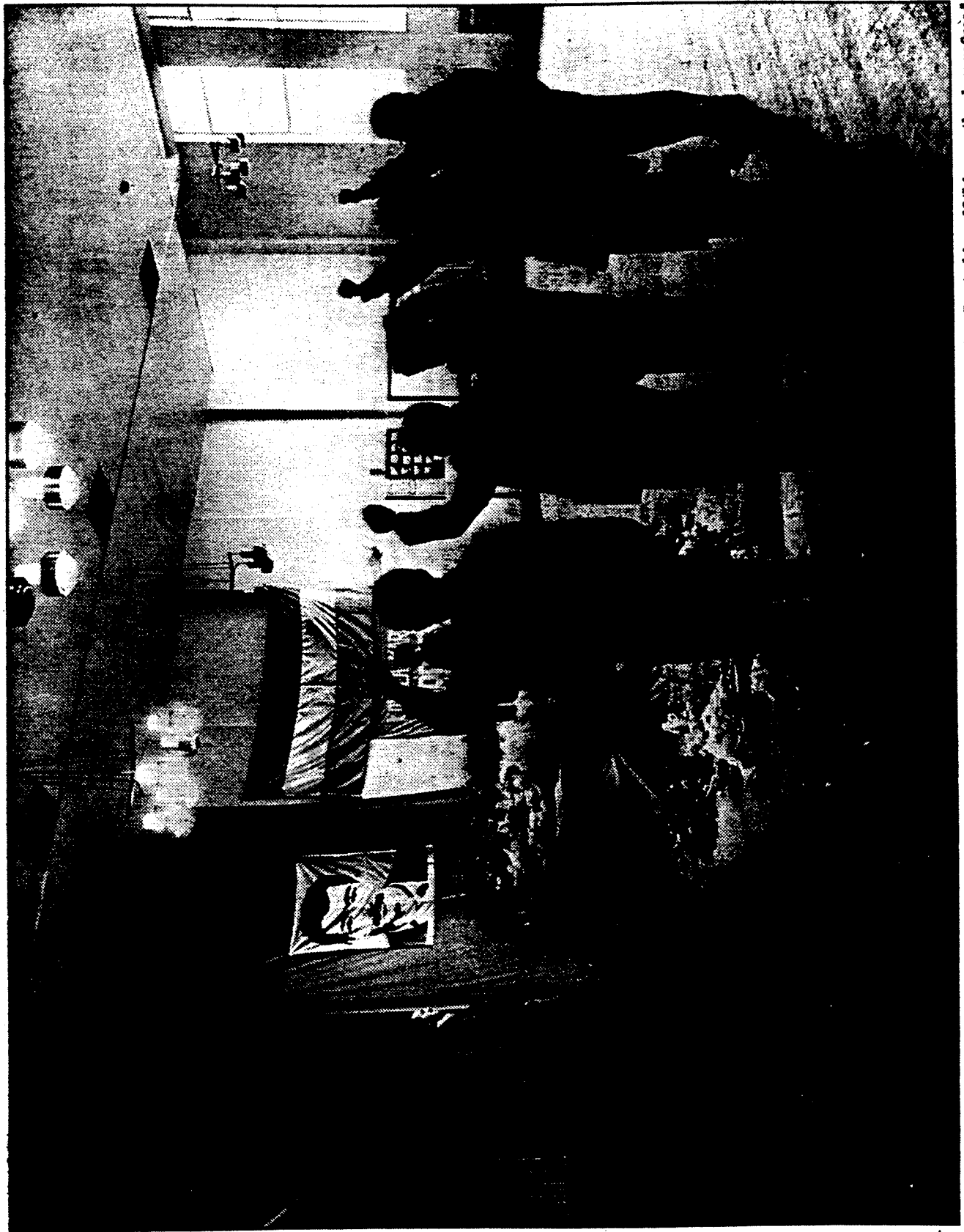
Even on the matter of Iraq's use of poison gas against the Kurds, the Reagan Administration opposed Congressional sanctions and took no measures to make Iraq pay for its abuses. Nor did the U.S. pursue the issue in the chemical weapons conference held in Paris in January of this year and — unlike its European allies — it has made no real effort to call Iraq to account in the United Nations' Human Rights Commission.

Iraq's human rights abuses are not the only reason for supporting the Senate's proposed measure. There are valid banking grounds. Owing to its large debt, amassed during its war with Iran and estimated at some \$50 billion to \$70 billion, Iraq has a very shaky credit rating. It is in arrears or in default on its payments to France, Germany, Italy and Japan, and has been behind in some of its payments to the Export-Import Bank as well. U.S. exporters criticize the bank for not expanding credits, but are reluctant themselves to take the risk of loaning to Iraq.

The Inouye measure, although later modified to permit a Presidential override of the ban on Export-Import Bank credits, should be supported. It would put Congress on record as having taken at least a symbolic step in condemning Iraq's consistent and gross human rights violations.

And it would put the Government of Iraq on notice that there could be more to come if serious changes are not made in their human rights practices. □

HOME NEWS 5



Farewell to a refugee . . . The flower-strewn coffin of Siho Iyiguven, aged 26, a Turkish Kurd who died after setting fire to himself this month when refused entry into Britain, lies in a community hall in Tottenham, north London. Today it will be carried at the head of a protest march
PHOTOGRAPH: RUPERT CONANT

For Turkey and Kurds, Fragile Reconciliation

By CLYDE HABERMAN

Special to The New York Times

ANKARA, Turkey — A recent trip to Paris has made a haze of Ismail Hakkı Onal's political future.

His troubles underline the fragile relationship that endures between Turkey and its Kurds even as the country has begun to change longstanding attitudes, acknowledging for the first time in decades that there is a distinct Kurdish identity and allowing the Kurdish language to be spoken more freely.

Mr. Onal is one of seven Kurdish members of Turkey's Parliament, all from the leading opposition party, who attended a mid-October conference in Paris on the centuries-old plight of Kurds in the Middle East.

None of the lawmakers said a word at the conference. But the mere fact that they went there violated orders from leaders of their Social Democratic Populist Party, who favor expanded rights for Turkey's sizable Kurdish minority but who are as skittish as most Turks whenever international attention is turned to this delicate topic.

Threat of Party Expulsion

"We are Turks," Mr. Onal said. "We are also Kurds, however, and we don't

Longstanding
official hostilities
are beginning to
change.

want to be second-class citizens any longer."

But now he and his six colleagues are threatened with possible expulsion from the party. At the least, they are likely to be censured.

The Paris conference, sponsored by a French human-rights group, focused fresh attention on abuses suffered by the Kurds, an ethnic group of about 20 million people who have their own culture but who are divided by widely differing ideologies and clan loyalties. Kurdistan, as their region is often called, cuts a swath across segments of Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Syria and the Soviet Union.

Under the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres, there was supposed to be a separate Kurdish homeland, but that proved unacceptable to the modern Turkish republic then being built on the ashes of the Ottoman Empire. Kurdistan never existed as a true state, and it vanished as even a concept under the 1923

Treaty of Lausanne, which spread the Kurds among several nations.

These days, calls for Kurdish independence are extremely rare. Instead, Kurds in their various countries pursue their own agendas, typically with demands for modest degrees of autonomy that do not disturb existing national boundaries.

Perhaps the greatest attention over the last year has been paid to the roughly 3.5 million Iraqi Kurds. They have been attacked by Government forces, driven from their homes and forced into new settlements in a relentless campaign that according to the Paris-based Kurdish Institute, has led to the destruction of more than 3,000 villages. Many of these new towns are outside Iraqi Kurdistan.

In Baghdad, officials insist that their purpose is to move a poor population into better housing, where they will have easier access to water, electricity and schools. But the goal also seems to be to create a Kurd-free buffer zone in a battle-scarred northeastern corner of the country, wedged among Turkey, Iran and Syria.

Many Western diplomats are also convinced that Iraq has decided to exact vengeance on autonomy-seeking Kurdish guerrillas, who had sided with Iran during the long Iran-Iraq war, just as Iranian Kurds had battled in behalf of Iraq. Both Kurdish groups are now paying dearly for what turned out to be poor gambles.

Poison Gas Use Reported

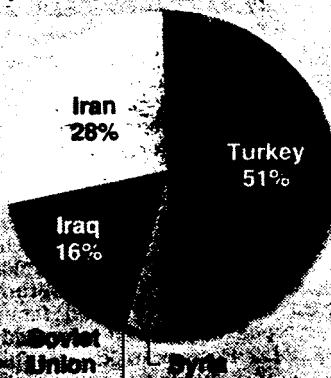
In the late summer of 1988, freed suddenly by a cease-fire from having to fight Iranians, Iraqi troops stormed through Kurdish areas spreading poison gas, according to survivors, whose accusations have gained broad credibility in the West. Tens of thousands of villagers fled across the mountains into Turkey, where the Government was not happy to see them but nonetheless gave them shelter. About 35,000 Iraqi Kurds still live in tent cities and barracks-like apartment complexes in southeastern Turkey, their days defined by overcrowding and debilitating boredom.

For all its hostility toward Kurdish insurgents, Iraq has long acknowledged that Kurds have a separate identity and their own language, albeit with many dialects and scripts. Baghdad has also been willing to grant the Kurdish northeast a measure of autonomy, even if not nearly as much as demanded by rival guerrilla bands led by Massoud Barzani and Jalil Talabani.

It is in Turkey — the country with the largest Kurdish population, estimated at 8 million to 10 million — that many Kurds feel they have been most sup-

Seeking Autonomy

Region populated by the 20 million Kurds in the Middle East, called Kurdistan, and the Kurds' breakdown by country.



Source: The Kurdish Program

The New York Times/Nov. 3, 1989

pressed over the years.

For more than six decades, Turkey has not accepted Kurds as a legitimate minority; they are officially called "mountain Turks."

Signs in public buildings in the dominantly Kurdish southeast warn that only Turkish may be spoken there. Kurdish grammars are banned in schools. Under laws adopted during the early 1980's, while the country was under military rule, speaking Kurdish

on the street has invited stiff fines, prison terms and occasionally beatings. Entertainers have been banned for singing Kurdish songs.

Nevertheless, the situation is changing.

Increasingly, Kurds find they may speak their language on the street with impunity. Newspapers routinely use the word "Kurd" in headlines, something unthinkable not long ago. In Parliament, a growing number of mem-



Agence France-Press

The relationship between Turkey and its Kurdish population remains a fragile one even as attitudes begin to change. A group of Kurds arrived in Clermont-Ferrand, France, in August as political refugees.

bers declare their Kurdishness openly. In fact, it has become somewhat chic for Turkish politicians to acknowledge having Kurdish ancestors. Even the newly elected President, former Prime Minister Turgut Ozal, has done so.

Now, the Government is reported to be considering legal changes that would codify the more relaxed attitudes toward Kurds that have become apparent in the last few years.

In addition, Ankara has poured millions of dollars into Kurdish provinces, where the average annual income of \$650 is about half the national average. Just about every village in the southeast, where horse-drawn carts and donkeys are still important means of transportation, has electricity and telephone service that did not exist several years ago.

Still, Turkey is consumed by its "Turkishness" and a fervent commitment to its territorial integrity. Also, Turkish commentators and foreign diplomats say, official tolerance for greater Kurdish liberty will be limited by security concerns presented by the Government's five-year-old war against separatist guerrillas.

The Kurdish Workers' Party — known universally here by its initials in Turkish, P.K.K. — wants to create a Marxist Kurdish state in eastern Turkey, and its insurgency has led to the killing of at least 1,700 soldiers, policemen, guerrillas and innocent villagers since 1984. In recent months the death toll has climbed at a stepped-up pace of about 70 a month, although senior army officers say that is mainly the result of a more aggressive pursuit of the mountain-based rebels by special military teams.

Reported Training in Lebanon

Government officials, who insist that they are slowly winning the struggle, put the number of armed guerrillas at no more than 400, with many of them supposedly recruited in Syria and not in Kurdish zones in Turkey. Their main training camp, officials say, has been moved in the last year or so to the Bekaa, Lebanon's eastern valley.

But Western diplomats in Ankara maintain that the number of guerrillas could be as high as 2,000. They also argue that the Government may be underestimating the P.K.K.'s support among ordinary Kurds, who resent the acts of brutality occasionally visited upon them by Turkish soldiers as much as they do guerrilla attacks on their villages.

Even so, Turkish officials, opposition leaders and foreign analysts alike all agree that the guerrillas, with their Marxist ideology, have made little headway in a Kurdish population made up overwhelmingly of Sunni Muslims. Independence from Turkey is the goal of a tiny minority, they say, and what Kurds essentially want is more prosperity and some "cultural autonomy."

"Kurds don't want to establish a separate state," Mr. Onal said after his return from Paris. "We just want our culture — to speak our language, to listen to our music. We're afraid that if the Government doesn't approach this problem intelligently, then illegal groups like the P.K.K. can become a source of power."

TURKEY IN THE NEWS

Turks Dismayed by Onset of Kurdish Lobby in U.S.

WASHINGTON, Oct. 30 — To Turkey's dismay, an organized pro-Kurdish lobby emerged for the first time this week in the U.S. Congress promising to take the Kurdish question to international platforms.

Ten U.S. congressmen and Danielle Mitterrand, wife of French President François Mitterrand, took part in a meeting in the Congress Tuesday organized by the human rights caucus and co-chaired by Democratic congressmen Tom Lantos from California and Republican John Porter, from Illinois.

Although there have been individual

York-based organization The Kurdish Program of Cultural Survival, as one of the personalities involved in the sessions who has a reputation of indulging in activities aimed against the territorial integrity of Turkey.

However, the spokesman said that no connection should be drawn between the measures Turkey has initiated to block the so-called Armenian bill in the U.S. Congress and the emergence of a pro-Kurdish lobby.

Judging from the statements delivered at the meeting in Washington, D.C., Ankara's worries were not altogether unjustified.

Danielle Mitterrand, who has been irritating Ankara lately because of her activities on behalf of the Kurdish people, said that establishment of an independent Kurdish state in the Middle East is the choice of the Kurds themselves.

There was ample reference during the meeting to the Kurds in Turkey. Mitterrand mentioned her visit to the camps of Iraqi Kurdish refugees in southeastern Anatolia earlier this year.

"I have seen Iraqi Kurds in the camps in Turkey, and I have seen that they are not able to live in dignity and respect for the fundamental rights of man," said Mitterrand.

Another point in Mitterrand's address which was highly sensitive for Ankara was her reference to the Treaty of Sevres at the end of World War I which envisaged the partition of Turkey between the Western powers.

"You may remember that following a proposal by Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States, in 1920, the

Treaty of Sevres envisaged giving the Kurds the right to set up their own national state. However, the Treaty of Lausanne in 1922 decided otherwise, and the territory occupied by the indigenous Kurds was divided up among four states: Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and Syria," said Mitterrand.

The Treaty of Lausanne is considered in Turkey a diplomatic victory for the young Turkish Republic, through which Turkey won international recognition.

"Since that time the Kurds have had to wage a constant struggle within each of these states for their life, the existence of their people, in order to preserve all that gives them their originality. The attacks against their culture and the collective memory of their people has at times been of unbelievable cruelty," she said.

Mitterrand said the Turkish Government expended efforts to dissuade her from travelling to southeastern Turkey, but she did not heed the warnings.

She expressed her criticism of the treatment Turkey has given to the Iraqi Kurdish refugees.

Democratic Senator Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts, also spoke out at the meeting, expressing his determination to come to the aid of the Kurdish people.

"For too long, congress has ignored this tragedy. Today's briefing is an important first step in raising the consciousness of congress and the American people about the crisis of the Kurds," said Kennedy. □

ESSAY

William Safire

Free The Kurds

AT A TIME when we feel special compassion for the homeless, let us consider a whole people without a home — the 17 million Kurdish people, a nation without a country.

Nowhere in the world can you find a distinct ethnic group, its language and culture over 1,000 years old, so systematically persecuted by Persian, Arab and Turkish regimes.

To be a Kurd today is to be the object of genocide. A world delirious with the outbreak of freedom in Eastern Europe is oblivious to the obliteration of a valiant people in the Middle East.

Iran sent a team of assassins to Vienna to wipe out the three Kurdish leaders in Europe who dared to organize a protest conference. Turkey, our NATO ally, stamps out Kurdish culture among what it calls "mountain Turks" and does little for starving refugees from Iraq.

The dictator of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, is the most zealous of all in punishing villagers who dared to live in oil-rich areas. He bulldozed their houses, literally wiped their cities off the map, deported thousands to deserts in the south of his country and declared the cleared areas "free-fire zones" where any Kurd is a target.

Only the Kurds, lest we forget, were the victims in our time of a massive poison-gas assault on civilians. Uncounted thousands of men, women and children fell in the Iraqi dictator's mustard-gas massacre in Halabja.

How has the United States Government responded to this continual rape of human rights? Our Export-Import Bank has provided a \$200 million line of credit to Iraq; our Department of

Agriculture has provided \$1 billion in commodity credits to Saddam's cash-short regime; our State Department, eager to woo Iraq, turns a blind eye to the suffering of the people being told to assimilate or die.

The United Nations bureaucracy, well aware of the atrocities, refuses even to investigate or to put the Kurdish question on the international agenda. Kurdistan, you see, is not a member; it is only an area whose people have been promised autonomy since Woodrow Wilson issued the Fourteen Points.

A few voices have spoken out. In Paris, Mme. Danielle Mitterrand lent her prestige last month to a meeting called to protest the inhumane international silence. In Washington, Senator Daniel Inouye won an amendment last week to Ex-Im Bank regulations stopping loans to terrorist nations unless the President specifically requests a waiver "in the national interest" — which Mr. Bush would then have to justify publicly.

But where are all the people who believe so fervently in the right of self-determination? The ignored Kurds would leap at the chance for autonomy and cultural identity long spurned as insufficient by heavily publicized Palestinian spokesmen. The free elections now being offered Palestinians are beyond the wildest dreams of oppressed Kurds.

Can you imagine the international uproar — the demands for U.N. expulsion — if Israel were accused of inflicting 1 percent of the atrocities on Arabs that Iraq has demonstrably inflicted on Kurds?

Such selective outrage on our part is hypocrisy: Palestinians and Kurds alike are entitled to self-rule and respect for their culture on the way to settlement of sovereignty issues. A little principled consistency is called for.

Here is what Mr. Bush should do now:

1. Say a word in behalf of the Kurdish people's right to live in their villages and speak their own language, even if this assertion of our moral values upsets some of their oppressors in Baghdad, Ankara, Teheran and Damascus.

2. Direct our U.N. delegate to sponsor and campaign for a Human Rights Commission investigation of population relocation crimes. This may expose the weakness of the U.N. in the face of Arab and Persian intransigence, but might just shame the membership into action.

3. Suspend all Department of Agriculture Commodity Credit guarantees to Iraq, and not on human rights grounds alone: something fishy may be going on with U.S. credit guarantees to Iraq at the Atlanta, Ga., branch of the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro. Incredibly, despite a worldwide investigation under way, the U.S.D.A. only last week issued \$500 million in new export credits to Iraq.

4. Designate 5 percent of our refugee slots to Kurds, who — better than most Polish or Hungarian dissidents, or Soviet Jews — can now claim "a well-founded fear of persecution." This would bring 6,000 Kurds to America, enough to stage a protest on TV.

On the day Americans give thanks for our freedom, the least we can do is to give hope to the homeless nation. □

Where are
the self-
determinists
when we
need them?

REPORT FROM **ARMENIA**

Kurds of Armenia Reclaim Their Former Autonomous Region in Azerbaijan

YEREVAN, Dec. 21—A group of Kurdish intellectuals who live in Armenia have appealed to the meeting in Moscow of the Congress of People's Deputies to reinstate the former Kurdish autonomous district of Latchin, and have outlined Azerbaijan's consistent policy of persecution against its Kurdish minority in that region, ArmenPress reported.

In a telegram dated Dec. 21, a copy of which was made available to *Asbarez* by the Armenian news agency, the Kurds demand the restoration of Latchin so that the exiled Kurdish population could return to its lands.

"From the early days of the 1920s, Armenia served as the homeground of the national and cultural survival and development of the Kurdish minority in the Soviet Union, and it is thanks to the support of the Armenian nation that Kurds were able to achieve progress and to prosper," the telegram notes. "However, Kurds in Azerbaijan have been subjected to exile and forcefully assimilated, in addition to having their autonomous region taken from them."

The message points out that according to the official 1926 census, there were three times more Kurds in Azerbaijan than in Armenia. The 1979 census shows, however, that the Kurdish

population in Armenia has quadrupled. At the same time, contrary to reality, Azerbaijan asserts that there are no Kurds in the republic.

The telegram carried the signatures of Miro Mstoyan, member of the Armenian Communist Party Central Committee; Afo Titele, editor of the Kurdish newspaper *Riya Taza*, Prof. Shakro Mhoye, director of the Kurdish Studies department of the Armenian Academy of Sciences; People's Hero of the USSR Samand Siabandov; scientist Jndi Hajie; writer Nado Makhmudov; mathematician Khudo Georgiye; Ashir Sharafe, docent of the Armenian Polytechnical Institute; Chachane Karlene, president of the Kurdish Writers Union of Armenia; historian Jalil Jalile, and other writers and scientists.

The former Kurdish autonomous district of Latchin lies between the Armenian republic and the Artsakh mountainous region. Armenian circles believe that if Latchin is returned to the Kurds and Kurdish exiles return to their homes in the region, the geographical links between Armenia and Artsakh will be greatly facilitated. □

MIDDLE EASTERN CULTURAL GENOCIDE: THE KURDS

Zagros Madjd-Sadjadi

Would you enjoy living in a society which forbids speaking your native language, practicing your native customs and destroying your cultural heritage? Could you stand having your friends and relatives imprisoned, tortured, or even executed for doing any of these things, which we take for granted as basic human rights?

Would you tolerate having your ethnic identity renamed, and being forced to assimilate into a culture which came into your region after your people had long been established?

No, I am not referring to the plight of aboriginals in Canada or to the Francophones in Canada or Anglophones in Quebec. I am referring to a group of people in the Middle East which is the largest ethnic group in the world without its own homeland: the 30 million Kurds.

It is quite possible that you have never heard of the Kurdish people. They are not active as terrorists, and they do not live in great numbers in the West. Instead, almost all of the world's Kurds live in the countries of Iran, Iraq and Turkey.

The Kurds have been called "the orphans of the Universe". When one considers the large-scale cultural genocide which Middle Eastern countries, especially Iraq and Turkey, have embarked on in the name of national security, the term seems an entirely apt description.

For the past sixty years, the Turkish government has attempted to eradicate the Kurds, who form one-quarter of the population of Turkey. The Turks, in their quest for cultural homogeneity, have, at various times, outlawed the Kurdish language and jailed anyone who identified himself as being a Kurd.

The Turks are not attempting to kill the Kurds in the same sense as Hitler attempted to commit genocide against the Jews, however. Instead, Turkey does not mind allowing its restricted Kurdish citizens to live, provided they adhere to the standard Turkish line that they are: Mountain Turks. But to do so would require the Kurds to give up everything which makes them a

distinct society within Turkey. They could no longer practice their customs or their language. They would cease to exist as a people.

However, it should be noted that Turkey's policy is, by and large moderate when compared to what is currently being done in Iraq. The world was shocked and outraged, but did nothing when the Kurdish village of Halabja was decimated by the dropping of poison gas and the resultant deaths of at least four, and as many as twenty, thousand people. The bodies littered the streets as people died within seconds of the attack.

The rain of death did not end at Halabja, however. As many as 77 other villages have felt the terror of chemical bombing, according to Stephen Levitt, a foreign correspondent who was quoted in the *Toronto Star* of July 16, 1989. Furthermore, up to a million Kurds have been displaced by Iraqi attacks, which have destroyed up to 4,000 villages in an attempt to depopulate the area.

It may be that Western governments tolerate Iraqi and Turkish anti-Kurdish actions because of the strategic importance of these two countries, and the need to gain allies in the Arab world. Yet when evil is done against an innocent people, all governments throughout the world, as well as the U.N., have a moral obligation to attempt to right it, instead of acting as though it is not occurring.

The Kurds should be recognized by the world community and the world press. It is unfair that a group which does not commit terrorist actions, even against a repressive state, are granted less coverage than a terrorist organization.

In 1920, the Kurdish population in Turkey lost its chance for cultural autonomy with the rise of Kemal Ataturk, thus forestalling Western efforts under the Treaty of Sèvres to create a Kurdish state.

How long must the Kurdish people wait before opportunity once again knocks at their door? When will the world realize that ignoring a problem doesn't make it go away?

The text of the joint Stockholm PLO-American delegation statement, presented by Swedish Foreign Minister Sten Andersson, 7 December 1988:

"The Palestinian National Council met in Algiers from November 12 to 15, 1988, and announced the declaration of independence which proclaimed the state of Palestine and issued a political statement.

"The following explanation was given by the representatives of the PLO of certain important points in the Palestinian declaration of independence and the political statement adopted by the PNC in Algiers.

"Affirming the principle incorporated in those UN resolutions which call for a two-state solution of Israel and Palestine, the PNC:

"1. Agreed to enter into peace negotiations at an international conference under the auspices of the UN with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council

and the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, on equal footing with the other parties to the conflict; such an international conference is to be held on the basis of the UN Resolutions 242 and 338 and the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, without external interference, as provided in the UN Charter, including the right to

PLO STATEMENT

an independent state, which conference should resolve the Palestinian problem in all its aspects;

2. "Established the independent state of Palestine and accepted the existence of Israel as a state in the region;

3. "Declared its rejection and condemnation of terrorism in all its forms, including state terrorism;

4. "Called for a solution to the Palestinian refugee problem in accordance with international law and practices and relevant UN resolutions (including the right of return or compensation)."

Focus on the Kurds: A Divided and Endangered People

by Fiona Adamson

"A world delirious with the outbreak of freedom in Eastern Europe," writes William Safire in the *New York Times*, "is oblivious to the obliteration of a valiant people in the Middle East." Indeed, despite enduring chemical bombings, forced migrations, the elimination of thousands of villages, numerous executions and imprisonments and consistent violations of the basic right to free expression, a great number of people, not only in the United States but also around the world, are not even aware of the Kurds' existence.

Who are the Kurds?

The Kurds are the fourth most numerous people in the Middle East, with a 1980 estimate putting their number at about 16 million, following only the Arabs, Persians, and Turks in size of population. They do not have a nation of their own, but rather are divided mainly between Turkey (50%), Iran (23%) and Iraq (19%), with sizable populations also inhabiting Syria, the U.S.S.R. and Lebanon. They are mostly Sunni Moslem (80%) and have a culture and language which, although characterized by internal variations, are distinct from those of any other neighboring ethnic group. The vast majority of Kurds live in the mountainous region which straddles Turkey, Iran and Iraq and they are traditionally known to be a mountain people. However, today a number of circumstances threaten the identity, and even the very existence of these people.

Background

The geographical region which the Kurds call Kurdistan has never attained the status of a nation-state by modern definition. Historically a conglomeration of principalities and tribal confederacies, Kurdistan was divided from the sixteenth to the early twentieth century between the Ottoman Turkish and Persian empires. The Kurdish tribes and principalities were fairly autonomous until the nineteenth century. At this time Ottoman central rule was extended to the Kurdish provinces, replacing the autonomous status of the Kurdish regions. It was during this period of the development of nation-states and centralized governments that the seeds of Kurdish nationalism were sown. Following World War I and the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, the Kurds

came closer than ever before to a state of their own. The Treaty of Sevres, signed on August 20, 1920 provided for independent Armenian and Kurdish states to be constituted from former Ottoman provinces. The Ottoman government however, was soon deposed by general Mustafa Kemal, the founder of the modern Turkish Republic, and the Treaty of Sevres was never ratified.

As a fellow Muslim, and as an opponent of the Sevres Treaty which was perceived by many as a European conspiracy to further dismember and weaken Muslim lands and peoples,



Mustafa Kemal had the support of many Kurds. At the time of the founding of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk made official statements recognizing the national and social rights of the Kurds. It soon became clear, however, that the new Republic of Turkey was to be a specifically Turkish and secular state. The Kurds soon lost the special status they had had as fellow Muslims at the time of the inception of the Turkish Republic. And, on the same day as the abolition of the Caliphate (the institution of Islamic religious leadership enjoyed by the Ottoman rulers) in 1924 almost all vehicles with which to express a separate Kurdish identity were effectively banned. This included the banning of Kurdish schools, associations, publications, religious fraternities and teaching associations and finally the Kurdish language itself. With the 1923

Treaty of Lusanne, the European powers recognized the new Turkish government within its present boundaries, and any hope of establishing an independent Kurdish state anticipated by the Treaty of Sevres came to an end.

The Kurds Today ... in Turkey

It is estimated that there are approximately 11 million Kurds in Turkey, or about one fifth of the total population of the country. Most of this number lives in the eastern portion of Turkey, close to the Iranian and Iraqi borders, areas which are among the poorest regions in Turkey. Until very recently, however, Turkish newspapers were pulled from circulation just for mentioning the existence of Kurds in Turkey. In 1981, a former member of the Turkish parliament, Serrefettin Elci, was sentenced to more than two years of hard labor for saying on the floor of the parliament, "I am a Kurd. There are Kurds in Turkey." Even today, the Kurdish language, Kurdish names and Kurdish music are legally banned in the country.

The situation in Turkey is complicated by the existence of a Kurdish guerilla organization, the Kurdish Worker's Party (PKK), which calls for a separate Marxist Kurdish state. The organization has been responsible for numerous terrorist attacks in Eastern Turkey, both on government military units and Kurdish civilians. Kurdish villagers therefore find themselves caught between two sides. PKK members attack villages to secure supplies and sometimes even kill villagers whom they feel are hindering their cause. Meanwhile, government forces crack down on all Kurds and indiscriminately accuse villagers of assisting the rebel organization. As one Kurd told a Helsinki Watch mission to Turkey, "The government thinks everyone is a terrorist... people in the villages don't support the terrorists, but if the terrorists come with guns, they are forced to give them food. Then the government goes after the villagers." In an attempt to protect villages in the southeast from attacks by armed guerillas, Turkey created a system of "village guards," members of villages who were given weapons and wide authority to use them in a variety of situations. This adds an additional element to the problem, as there is little control over the activities of these guards. The report of the Helsinki Watch mission to Turkey cited incidents of abuses of village guard authority which include the use of weapons in long-standing blood feuds, and in the exercising of

show how Roach had been under the influence of his older partner in the crime, and that he had the mental capacity of a 12-year-old. Despite numerous appeals for clemency, the state of South Carolina executed Roach in 1986.

According to the rationale of the International Covenant, children and adolescents are more likely than adults to act on impulse without thought to punishment or retribution. Not having yet reached full maturity, they are inclined to be more susceptible to the influence of someone older. Furthermore, the Covenant holds that the possibility of rehabilitation is far greater for juveniles than adults, yet executing a minor, as practiced in the United States, would disallow this option. Although a minor should certainly be punished for a capital crime, is it fair to give him the ultimate punishment without any chance of rehabilitation when he is only in his teens?

Not only was James Terry Roach a minor at the time he committed the crime, he was also found to be mentally-impaired. It is assumed by the medical profession that a mentally-impaired person is incapable of comprehending the nature of the punishment or why it is being imposed, and therefore is not deterred by the threat of a death penalty. Yet at least six people who were mentally-impaired have been executed since 1984.

Torture and the Death Penalty

In 1983 the electrocution of John Louis Evans in the state of Alabama lasted almost ten minutes despite the fact he was given 3 jolts of electricity. "When the first jolt...hit his body, Evans tensed and the strap on his left leg burst off. When he was hit with the second jolt he did not move, but a pool of smoke and a burst of flames came from his left temple and more smoke came from his left calf. Doctors said he was still not dead." In another case, an execution lasted 17 minutes after the equipment failed in the first few attempts. Although death is supposed to be instantaneous after the first jolt, enough evidence gathered by scientists and doctors reveals that electrocution results in death only after unimaginable pain and suffering. When this method of punishment was introduced in the late 1880s, it was considered a more "humane" method of execution than hanging, yet in actuality electrocution has become more a form of torture than a "humane" punishment.

Other methods of execution in the United States have not proved to be better. When a person is being gassed,

he turns purple, his eyes start to bulge, and he literally chokes to death because of lack of air. Even lethal injection, the latest in execution methods, doesn't guarantee a painless easy way to die. A U.S. Court of Appeals stated: "Even a slight error in dosage or administration can leave a prisoner conscious but paralyzed while dying, a sentient witness of his or her own asphyxiation." James Autry, who was executed in the state of Texas, remained conscious for the first 10 minutes of his lethal injection, and complained of extreme pain.

Economic Costs of the Death Penalty

Some taxpayers often complain that their dollars go to support criminals in the nation's prisons, and the death penalty is thought as a solution to this prob-



Two Death Row inmates in Texas play checkers.

lem. However, what these taxpayers don't realize is that executing a person in the United States is a far higher cost than imprisoning a person for the rest of his life. In Florida, for example, taxpayers will contribute approximately \$3,178,000 per convicted death row inmate, yet with that money, the same inmate could spend 240 years in prison.

Because of these expenses, there have been cries for appellate reform to reduce the costs of the death penalty process. Yet the U.S. Supreme Court has recognized the uniqueness of the death penalty punishment and thus has established an elaborate safeguard system to prevent an innocent person from being executed or suffer other injustices. Such a system includes a two-phased judgment and sentencing trial, an automatic review by the State Supreme Court, habeas corpus petitions and hearings at the State and Federal levels - all of which cost the taxpayer money. "The only way to make the death penalty a 'better buy'

than imprisonment" says Hugo Bedau "is to weaken due process and appellate review, which are the defendant's (and society's) only protections against the grossest miscarriages of justice."

The Death Penalty as Retribution to Families

Often a person who speaks out against the death penalty is asked what his reaction would be if a member of his own family were murdered. Although no one knows for certain how one would react in such a situation, it is indeed true that many families of victims have spoken out against capital punishment. Coretta Scott King, the widow of Martin Luther King, Jr. said: "As one whose husband and mother-in-law have both died the victims of murder assassination, I stand unequivocally opposed to the death penalty...An evil deed is not redeemed by an evil deed of retaliation."

"An Evil Deed..."

If the state were able to rectify its present problems concerning death penalty sentencing (for example, if the death penalty was not applied in a racist manner, or if death could be made completely painless), it would still retain the position of being a sanctioned killer. Reverend Joe Ingle, director of the Southern Coalition on Jails and Prisons states that "The death penalty is a confession of failure. When you say as a society that you have to kill people, then that means you have no other way to deal with them...But it is also a lie, because there are other ways of dealing with murder. I mean, look at all the European nations. Somehow they manage to deal with people who commit murder without executing them and it certainly hasn't sent them back into the twelfth century."

Since the U.S. Supreme Court allowed state executions to resume in 1976, the number of people on death row has risen dramatically. In the state of California, where the last execution took place in 1967, approximately 273 men and women sit on death row in San Quentin prison. The Attorney General confidently predicts that an execution will occur this Spring. Even in opinion polls across the country, more people are in favor of the death penalty than at any other time in the past twenty years. Because of this recent increase in favor of the death penalty, an enormous amount of work needs to be done to sway public opinion and convince state and federal officials to speak out and work against the death penalty in the United States.

personal control over the rest of the members of the villages.

Like many other complicated human rights issues, no one side holds a monopoly on violence. In this situation, one is confronted on one hand with a state which denies the very existence of the culture of 20% of its inhabitants, which fails to discriminate between members of terrorist organizations and innocent civilians in its war on the PKK, and which routinely uses torture during its police interrogations of suspected members of Kurdish political groups. This same state, Turkey, which condemned so strongly the recent serious violations of human rights against ethnic Turks in Bulgaria, including the denial of freedom of religious expression and forced name changes from Turkish to Bulgarian, also denies minorities within its borders the right to express themselves and to take Kurdish names. On the other side is an extremist organization, the PKK, which uses violence as a solution to violence, and which does not hesitate to kill fellow Kurds in pursuit of its own ideological goals. An additional product of these two sides of violence are the local guards and strongmen who, supported by the government, often terrorize the local population for personal gain. Caught between these three forces are the majority of the Kurdish people - village inhabitants, peasants, women and children - who continue to live in a state of almost constant fear and repression.

... in Iraq

From the long list of recent human rights abuses against the Kurdish people, the abuses which the government of Iraq has perpetrated against its own people are considered by many to be the most atrocious. The situation in Iraq is no less complicated than that which exists in Turkey.

The Kurds in Iraq make up some 23% of the population. Unlike the situation in Turkey, the government of Iraq recognizes the existence of Kurds and even enacted substantial legislation during the mid 1970s which would ensure a certain degree of autonomy for the Kurdish regions of the country. These included the enstatement of Kurdish, alongside Arabic, as the official language of the region, as well as the chief language of instruction in the schools. Kurds have also often held important positions in the government and, more recently, the government courted Kurdish organizations, such as the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) in efforts to win support for its position in the Iran-

Iraq war. This was in response to the great number of Iraqi Kurds who supported the Iranian side in the war. (A great number of Iranian Kurds supported the Iraqi side in the war, thus resulting in a situation in which Kurds killed each other, as each side tried to rebel against its current government.)

But, ironically, this government which has given more recognition to the Kurds than any of its neighboring countries, is also responsible for one of the most cruel and inhumane acts of the past decade - the bombing of its own people with chemical weapons and the forced evacuation of hundreds of Kurdish villages. The most serious incidents took place in 1988, just following a cease-fire in the Iran-Iraq war. From March to August

WHAT YOU CAN DO

*Be informed. The plight of the Kurdish people receives little attention in the media. One excellent source of information on the Kurds is *The Kurdish Program*, 345 Park Place, Brooklyn, New York, 11238. Resources available to the public include an extensive library of Kurdish culture and history, regular publications on the Kurds, and speakers.*

Draw attention to the issue. Write to U. N. Secretary General Perez de Cuellar, The United Nations, United Nations Plaza, New York, New York, 10017, asking that the Kurdish problem be put on the U. N. agenda. Write to local representatives urging them to support Congressional Resolution 100, introduced in April of 1989 and still waiting on Executive Comment, which condemns the government of Iraq for its human rights violations against the Kurdish people.

the government of Iraq dropped chemical weapons on a series of villages in Iraqi Kurdistan. Some Kurdish fighters had established camps outside villages in this area but, instead of falling on these camps, the bombs fell on innocent villagers, killing thousands. Those who did survive were forced to leave their villages, often so quickly that they were not even able to bury their own dead. Many of those who were forced to flee made their way across the border into Turkey, which, as one headline describes the situation, is like fleeing the lion for the fox. Altogether more than 4,000 villages are said to have been destroyed or depopulated and conservative estimates put the number of Kurds who have been forced to relocate at 500,000. As the Iraqi government has persistently refused to open its borders to official investigation,

it is from Turkey, where thousands of refugees live in makeshift camps, that the international community has received much of its information about the seriousness of the attacks. A report of a Medical Mission to Turkish Kurdistan made by Physicians for Human Rights described accounts by recent arrivals to the camps of large-scale destruction caused by the chemical bombs. One eight-year-old girl from northern Iraq described the instantaneous death of her parents and brother: "I saw my parents fall down with my brother after the attack . . . I saw their skin turn dark and blood coming out of their mouths and from their noses." The young girl herself had damage to her eyes, nose and skin which lasted for several weeks. Despite this serious breach of international law, Iraq has suffered little in its relations with the rest of the international community.

... in Iran

Iran, too, has had its share of human rights violations against the Kurds. Like the Iraqi government, the government of Iran has had its troubles with the loyalties of the Kurdish population and has played off one faction against another throughout the conflict with Iraq. As part of the war against Iraq, the Iranian government also engaged in a war against its own Kurds. It is estimated by a Minority Rights Group report that by early 1984 over 27,000 Kurds had died at the hands of the Iranian army, of whom only 2,500 were fighters. Thousands were detained, tortured and executed. Another source tells of the mass execution of civilians, many of whom were young girls who, prior to their execution, had their bodies drained of blood to be sent to a dispensary for a blood bank to benefit the wounded. As one outside observer remarked, "There is no doubt that for a majority of the people executed, they are killed for one crime: being Kurdish in the Islamic Republic of Iran."

The situation in Iran has more recently intensified. Since the beginning of 1988 the government has carried out mass executions of approximately 16,000 political prisoners, including at least hundreds, and possibly thousands, of Kurds. Another serious incident was the 1988 assassination of the leader of the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan which took place in Vienna while he was involved in peace negotiations with the Iranian government. Two of Iran's negotiators detained by Austria as suspects, but they were subsequently released and returned to Iran under laws of diplomatic immunity.

Vietnamese Boat People's Forced Repatriation

by Ed Lazar

More than 40,000 Vietnamese boat people, who are in Hong Kong after fleeing Vietnam, are in risk of forced repatriation to Vietnam. On December 12, the British government forcibly returned 51 boat people, all women and children, to Vietnam. The Thatcher government, with the agreement of the Hong Kong authorities, stated that this was the start of a long-term program of forced repatriation.

Humanitas had already protested this

program in correspondence with London and Hong Kong, and, in response to the shocking action of December 12, Humanitas, with the Indochina Human Rights Group and members of an ad-hoc committee on Hong Kong, initiated the following open letter to Prime Minister Thatcher. The letter, signed by Joan Baez and Ginetta Sagan, was co-signed by over 30 leaders of Vietnamese and refugee groups in the United States, including Shepard Lowman, President of Refugees International and Bui Diem, President of the National Congress of

Vietnamese in America. In addition to sending copies of the letter to United Kingdom and Hong Kong authorities and the media, a copy of the letter is being printed as a quarter-page paid advertisement in Hong Kong's largest English daily, the South China Morning Post. If you support this letter, please immediately send a letter of concern to Prime Minister Thatcher (10 Downing Street, London, U.K.) and Sir David Wilson, Governor of Hong Kong (Government House, Hong Kong), and please send a copy of your letter to Humanitas.

Open Letter to Prime Minister Thatcher

Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher
10 Downing Street
London, United Kingdom

Sent: December 21, 1989

Dear Mrs. Thatcher:

We are writing in regard to last week's forcible repatriation of 51 Vietnamese boat people from Hong Kong to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV). This repatriation signifies a landmark violation of fundamental human rights standards accepted by civilized nations. The clandestine operation, executed under cloak of darkness by security forces in full riot gear, ended when the Vietnamese, flown to Hanoi, were delivered to SRV officials.

British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd is quoted as saying that no force was used in the repatriation. When armed guards are used to move unarmed defenseless women and children, against their will, into a plane, and to return them to a land which they had just risked their lives to escape, this is as clear a use of force as can be imagined. This reprehensible action by the British and Hong Kong governments cannot be condoned and stands condemned under established human rights standards. These standards (including Article 33 of the U.N. Convention on Refugees and Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) prohibit the return of refugees or asylum seekers to the country from which they are fleeing when they would be subject to substantial risk of human rights violations.

When deported to Vietnam, these boat people face a substantial risk of human rights violations and a lack of guaranteed safety and dignity. Although the Hong Kong government reported that Hanoi had agreed to accept the involuntary returnees without punishment or persecution, no group has appeared available to monitor their fate or hold the SRV officials to their word. Moreover, the SRV has refused to repeal portions of its Criminal Code which penalizes those caught fleeing the country with terms of imprisonment ranging up to two years for illegal emigration (Article 89) and up to twelve years for "fleeing with the intent to oppose the people's government" (Article 85). There is no clear assurance that the boat people

forcibly returned will not be subject to these and other forms of reprisal.

A Hong Kong screening process which labels some boat people as "economic migrants" as distinct from "political refugees," and makes such people subject to involuntary repatriation, makes no sense in terms of the past record of Vietnam. Amnesty International has reported that "some (Hong Kong) immigration officials appeared to have so little knowledge of the political and human rights situation in Vietnam that they could not make a reliable assessment of the risks individuals might face if returned." Almost all Vietnamese boat people have had their refugee status rejected, even some who have claimed persecution based on harsh re-education, forced labor and severe discrimination. Given Vietnam's continuing record of human rights violations it makes more sense to consider any Vietnamese emigre, by definition, a political refugee.

It is ironic that at a time when democratic nations are applauding and opening their arms to East European refugees, your government is refusing to give asylum to Vietnamese boat people seeking to live in a democratic society. We protest the involuntary repatriation of Vietnamese refugees from Hong Kong, and urge you to grant asylum to all the Vietnamese refugees who remain in Hong Kong. We recognize the problems faced by the Hong Kong government in regard to a continued flow of Vietnamese boat people. This is a problem the world community must face up to, in association with the governments of Hong Kong and the United Kingdom. An acceptable solution has not been found yet and must be found — but until a solution is found which honors the human rights of the refugees they must not have these rights denied — there must be no more forced repatriations.

Joan Baez, President
Humanitas International Human Rights Committee

Ginetta Sagan, Executive Director
Aurora Foundation

