



THE KURDS

AN HISTORICAL AND
POLITICAL STUDY

HASSAN ARFA



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General Arfa has had long and first-hand experience of the Kurdish problem both as a soldier and as a diplomat. He fought the Kurds for many years in the frontier districts of Iran, but kept friendly relations with most of the Kurdish chiefs, his former adversaries. He was Chief of Staff of the Iranian Army from 1944-46 and Ambassador to Turkey from 1958-61. He has written an historical and political study of the Kurds in Turkey, Iran, and Iraq up to the present time, and considers in detail the many revolts carried out by the Kurds against the Governments of these three countries for patriotic, religious or other lesser reasons. His study reveals many little known facts about the vicissitudes of this warlike mountain race.

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M. REMZI BUCAK



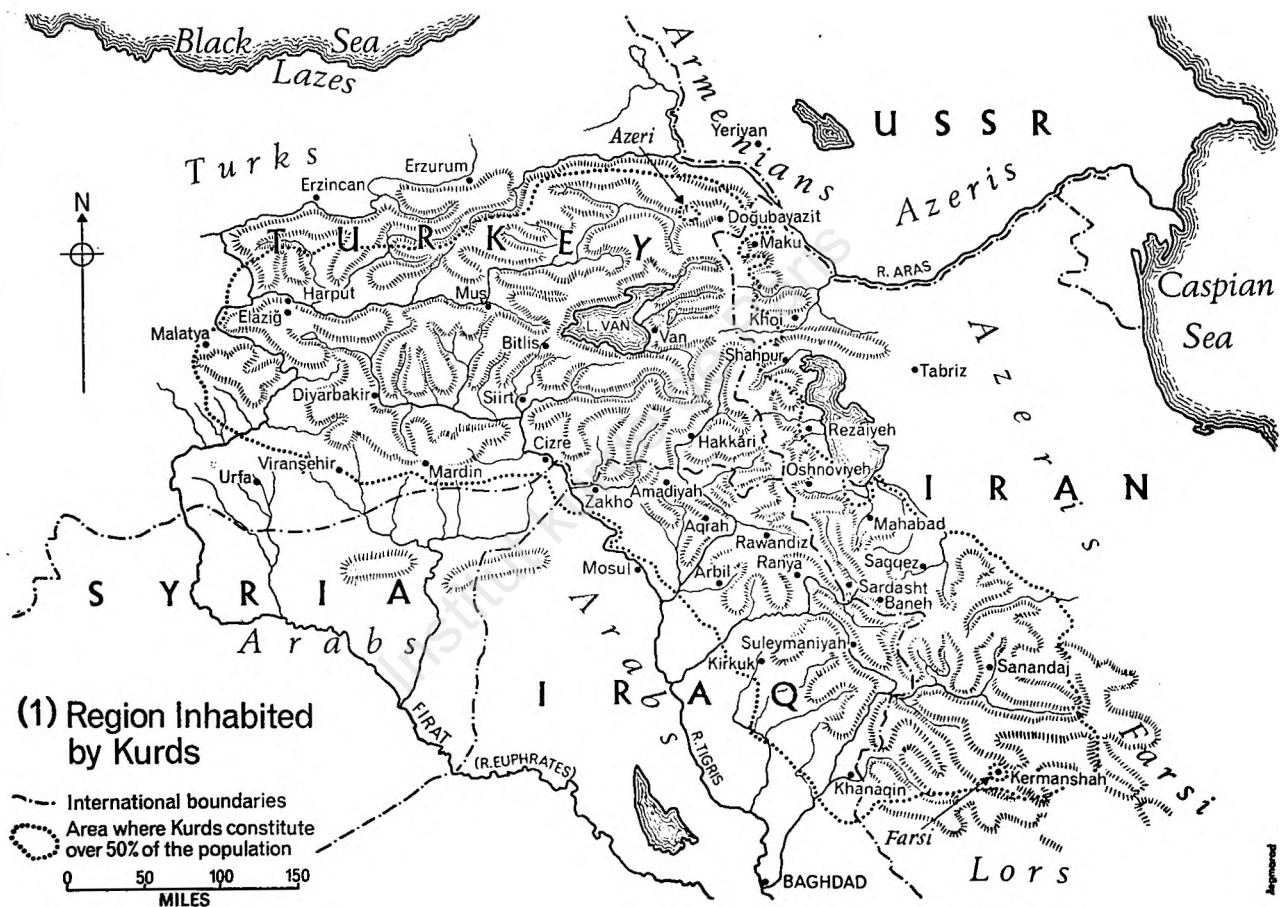
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Turks

Erzurum

Azeri

Yeriyans

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Armenians

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Maku

R. ARAS

Caspian Sea

Tabriz

Rezaiyeh

IRAN

Oshnoviyeh

Mahabad

Saqez

Sardasht

Baneh

Sanandaj

Farsi

Kermanshah

Farsi

Lors

BAGHDAD

IRAQ

Suleymaniyah

Kirkuk

Arbil

Ranya

Rawandiz

Aqrah

Amadiyah

Zakho

Mosul

Mardin

Viranşehir

Urfa

DIYARBAKIR

Siirt

Cizre

Hakkari

Rezaiyeh

Shahpur

Van

L. VAN

Bitlis

Mus

Harpüt

Elaziğ

Malatya

SYRIA

Arabs

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The Kurds

An historical and political study

HASSAN ARFA

Chief of Staff of the Iranian Army 1944-46
Ambassador to Turkey 1958-61

Institut kurde de Paris

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Preface

THE reader will wonder how it is possible for an Iranian officer, who for years fought against the Kurds in the frontier districts, to write an objective and impartial account of their history, position and aspirations, and not introduce a bias in favour of his own country which includes a Kurdish minority about one million strong.

The author acknowledges that his task is delicate. He has avoided any consideration of what might be called political and moral justice, or the proposing of solutions desirable either from his or his country's point of view, and has restricted himself to an account of known and undeniable historical facts. He hopes that this study will provide useful information to those who are interested in the Kurdish question (or rather let us say questions) by showing the background of present-day events and so making them more understandable to the general public.

Having lived and travelled much among the different Kurdish tribes, the author has had the opportunity of becoming closely acquainted with their way of life and has conceived a sympathy for these warlike mountaineers, freedom-loving, restless and often chivalrous, with whom he has had to deal both through negotiations and through exchange of fire.

I am deeply grateful to the tireless help of a dear friend, Mrs. Nargesse McKellip, who graciously typed the whole manuscript and gave me very practical advice.

I also have much profited by information given to me by my Kurdish friends, in particular Mr. Abd-el-Qader Saberi, whose thorough knowledge of past and present events in the Kurdish regions has been invaluable for bringing this book up to date.

Teheran
August 1965

Hassan Arfa

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NOTE ON THE SPELLING OF PROPER NAMES

In any book dealing with Iran, Arab Iraq and Turkey the question of spelling transliterated personal and place names bristles with difficulties. I trust that I may count on the indulgence of my readers for any inconsistencies, whether deliberate (as in the case of the spellings of Kordestan for the province so named in Iran and Kurdistan for the region inhabited by the Kurds) or unintended which he may notice.

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I

A short history of the Kurds

I. THE PEOPLE AND THE REGION WHERE THEY ARE FOUND. THEIR LANGUAGES

FIRST of all, it must be understood which people are to be considered as Kurds. As a result of a mixing of races due to many invasions, it is difficult to define to which race the individuals in different communities in the Middle East belong. In the case of the Kurds, the first criterion must be the use of one of the two chief Kurdish dialects, Zaza in the north and Kermanji in the centre and the south, to which Gurani, spoken in Kermanshah, can be added. But secondly, and perhaps chiefly, there is the feeling of the people that they are Kurds. The Kurdish groups scattered in eastern Iran, east Azerbaijan and even in south-eastern Iran, and the people of Garrus, in spite of their common ancestry have abandoned the Kurdish language and habits of life, and lost all affinity with the bulk of Kurds living around the frontiers of Turkey, Iran and Iraq. Thus they cannot be considered as forming part of the Kurdish people of today.

There are several theories about their original home, but many ethnologists agree that they are the mixture of the Median branch of the Aryans (the Iranians being the Persian branch) with indigenous populations, to which the Guti belonged. These people have been influenced in their turn by later invaders, including Armenians, Semites (Arabs and Assyrians), Turks, Turkomans, and Persian Iranians, but have absorbed them, although their physical characteristics vary according to the degree and kind of the admixture.

The region where the Kurds thus defined form the majority of the population is chiefly mountainous. It is limited to the east by the eastern slopes of the Zagros mountains up to Lake

Rezaiyeh, with an Azeri enclave around the town of Rezaiyeh, and extends to the south-east up to a line running half-way between Sanandaj and Hamadan, and Kermanshah and Hamadan. To the south the region extends to a rough line which takes in Kermanshah and Kirkuk and just excludes Mosul, and then takes in Mardin, Viranşehir and Urfa. This line then turns north towards Malatya after which it follows the Euphrates (Firat) as far as Kemaliyeh. From there the region is bounded on the north by the high chain of Merçan Dağ and Harhal Dağ which extends to south of Erzincan and Erzurum as far as Mount Ararat (Ağrı Dağ), forming a natural and linguistic frontier between the Turks to the north and the Kurds to the south. (See frontispiece map.) Many Kurds live outside these limits, especially to the west of them, but even here they are in a minority among Turks.

Although the region is mountainous there are valleys, some of them quite wide, and there is undulating country to the south. But even the valleys are surrounded by high rocky mountains and end in narrow gorges, so that approach to them is difficult in summer and often impossible in winter when the entire country is deeply covered with snow. There are flatlands on the slopes and sometimes on the top of these mountains, and these are covered with grass after the snow has melted, but they are often bordered by chasms and precipices and only accessible by narrow tracks. In summer the lower slopes are dry and bare, and the flocks which form the chief means of livelihood of the population must go high up the slopes to find fodder, obliging their owners to lead a nomadic life, climbing up the mountains in summer and coming down into the valleys and plains in winter.¹

The Aryans (Medes as well as Persians) came from the north, that is from the Caucasus and from beyond the Caspian Sea, during a period of at least one thousand years, from the second to the first millennium B.C., probably in small parties. They established themselves among the indigenous population and, although in a minority, conquered them and subjected them to their superior culture, thus forming the governing class of chiefs and warriors. It appears that their progress towards the west was brought to a halt by the advance in the opposite direction of a people coming from Asia Minor towards the Caucasus who

¹ Capt. Shaikh A. Waheed, *The Kurds and their Country*, Lahore, 1955.

were probably the Iberians. These Iberians finally occupied the region to the south of the Caucasian chain of mountains and formed the states of Colchida to the west and Iberia to the east, and are known as Georgians. According to some theories, the Armenians also came from the west and occupied the land of Urartu where they mingled with the autochthonous population and afterwards with the Kurds.

Being much more accessible, the regions to the east of the north-south Zagros chain, which form today the northern part of Iran, were afterwards overrun by many invasions from the north, the east and the south-west. These invasions passed also through the region occupied by the people who were afterwards known as Kurds, but on account of the difficult mountainous terrain, they followed chiefly the more accessible routes, like that passing through Maku-Eleşkirt (Alashkirt)-Erzurum, where they were faced by fewer natural obstacles and could more easily overcome the opposition of the warlike mountaineers.

In a Sumerian inscription dated 2000 B.C.,¹ a country known as Kardaka is mentioned, and afterwards the Assyrian King Tiglath Pileser appears to have fought a tribe known as Kur-ti-e. In 400-401 B.C. Xenophon speaks of the Kardukai, a mountain folk who harassed his march towards the sea.

According to the Arab historians and geographers, Balahuri, Tabari and Ibn-el-Athir, the tribes who were afterwards known as the Kurds, occupied chiefly the country to the east of the river Buhtan (Bohtan), and the north bank of the Tigris to the north of Cizre (Jazirah-ibn-Omar).

This region was most of the time included in the Achemenian Empire, but was sometimes partly claimed by the kings of Armenia, who were themselves vassals to the kings of Persia. Its inhabitants, however, were never subjected effectively, but formed sometimes separate principalities under tribal chiefs and sometimes temporary confederations when a strong leader appeared.

After the Arab historians and geographers, many European orientalisists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries sought to discover the origins of the Kurds through anthropological and archaeological studies.

The Kurdish dialects were also carefully studied, but in spite

¹ *Islam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 6, Istanbul, 1955, pp. 1089-91.

of the fact that these dialects are closely related to modern Persian, and have doubtless the same origin as the Pahlavi language of Sassanian Iran, the diversity of physical types of the Kurds in the extensive region which they inhabit tends to show that they are racially related to many other former occupiers of this region and that they had been mixed with other populations even before reaching their present habitat, during their migration from the east. Lately, several theories have been advanced by Middle-Eastern authorities, in an attempt to prove that the Kurds belong to such or such a racial group, but these theories are chiefly based on politics, and have little value from an ethnographical point of view.

As the chief of the present Kurdish rebel organization in Iraq, Molla Mostafa, has stated,¹ the Kurds are those who feel that they are Kurds, exactly as the French, or Germans, or Iranians are those who feel themselves to belong to those nationalities. Apart from the feeling that they are Kurds the chief common bond is the Kurdish language. This language comprises three distinct dialects, Zaza in the north (in Turkey and Iranian Azerbaijan), Kermanji in the centre (in the Hakkâri province of Turkey, Kordestan province of Iran and in northern Iraq) and Gurani in the south-east (the Kermanshah province of Iran). The central dialect is the more important as it is spoken by more than 50 per cent of the Kurds in the three countries (Turkey, Iran and Iraq) and is the literary and semi-official language, being taught in the schools in northern Iraq since the time of the British occupation and mandate. Zaza and Gurani are only spoken dialects, the latter being very close to the Lori dialect of the Persian language, and consequently to modern Persian. The Kermanji dialect is fairly rich, and books of prose and poetry are published in this dialect in the Arabic alphabet, as well as textbooks for the schools in northern Iraq. The administrative and technical words are practically all borrowed from Persian and Arabic. It can be said that Zaza is understood by the Kermanji-speaking Kurds, Kermanji by the Gurani, Gurani by the Lori, and Lori by the modern Persians. Most of the words have Persian roots and Gurani is spoken more or less according to Persian grammar.² There are very few Turkish words in the Kurdish dialects, the Zaza dialect spoken in the

¹ 'Le Kurdistan Irakien à dos de mulet', *Le Monde*, 4 Avril, 1963.

² *Souremenniy Iran*, Akademya Nauk, SSSR, Moscow, 1957.

Dersim area (Tunceli, Harput, Elazığ) being the most influenced by Turkish.

Except for some 50,000 Yazidi or Peacock God worshippers (improperly known to foreigners as devil-worshippers), all the Kurds are Moslem. Two-thirds of those resident in present-day Turkey are Sunnis of the Shafe'i sect, as well as those living in the western part of Iranian Azerbaijan, in the Iranian province of Kordestan and in northern Iraq. In the Kermanshah region of Iran most of the Kurds are Shia, with stray minorities of Sunni and Ali-Ilahis, an extremist Shia sect who consider Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Mohammad and fourth Khalif, as the emanation of God, like Christ. There are also some Ali-Ilahis in Iraq.

There is a strong anti-Shia feeling among the Sunni Kurds of western Azerbaijan, coupled with racial animosity against the Shia Turki-speaking Azeris, but Sunni and Shia Kurds have no special hostility against each other, nor against the Persian (Farsi) speaking Iranians. The relations between the Kurds and the Christians were worse in the north, where the Armenians used to live, than in the south, where the Kurds and Nestorian Assyrians have sometimes lived as good neighbours.

2. THE KURDS BEFORE ISLAM

According to some sources (Noldeke, 1879), Kurdish settlements existed in central and southern Iran (Fars) during the period of the Sassanian Dynasty (A.D. 224-651), and as a result of the important movements of population due to the Iranian conquests, moved to the north-west, into the land of the Kurdu, mixed with them and adopted their name. These people, who were known before as Cyrtii, took part in the continuous wars between the Parthians and Sassanians on the one hand and the Romans and Byzantines on the other, fighting alternately with the Persians and the Romans, and sometimes with both sides at the same time, some tribes supporting the Persians and others the Romans. Besides this, they willingly enlisted as mercenaries in the Roman armies, and took part in operations in the Balkans, Africa and Asia Minor as part of the Roman legions (Titus Livius, Polybius).¹

In the fourth century, they were known to the Armenians as Kerchekh, this being the name of the region extending from the

¹ *Islam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 6, pp. 1089-91.

Salmas plain north-west of the Rezaiyeh Lake to near Çolamerik.

According to the region and the local dialects, the old Korduene or Kerducci took the names of Kordukh or Kordikh, which applied to the settlements and also their inhabitants, Kordikh being derived from Tmorikh and afterwards from Kordrikh. The name Kurd dates from the Arab invasion of their country, the plural being, according to the rules of Arab grammar, Akrad (like Turk—Atrak, Arab—Arâb, etc.), but today, for some reason, the Kurds take exception to this form of plural for their name, preferring the Persian form of Kurdan (pronounced in Persian Kordan). Most of the tribes of that time ignored the name 'Kurd' given to them by the Arabs and Iranians, and called themselves by their tribal or clan name, derived either from a prominent chief of clan, or from the name of the particular region or valley where they were living, or from the mountain chain along which they were nomadizing. According to the *Sharafnameh*, the early Kurdish tribes—notably the Bajnavi and Buhti—considered their first dwelling place to have been the Bajan and Buhtan areas, south of Lake Van. Many legends are told about the ascendancy of the Kurds, but their enumeration and details have little bearing on the subsequent narrative and will not be mentioned here.

On the eve of the Moslem conquest, the land inhabited by the tribes who were afterwards to be known as Kurds, was a bone of contention between the Sassanian (Persian) and the Byzantine Empires, and the Kingdom of Armenia, whose kings were related to the Persians and nominally ruled over parts of this region, sometimes acknowledging the suzerainty of the Sassanian kings and sometimes that of the eastern Roman Empire. Although the Armenians and Assyrians were converted to Christianity at an early date, the Kurds, more closely related to the Persians, were mostly Zoroastrians, but many tribes inwardly retained their old creed, while paying lip service to the Persian-imported Zoroastrianism.

3. THE KURDS UP TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Already at the beginning of the Arab drive to the north, the armies of the Khalif Omar-ibn-el-Khattab (634-644) had occupied Arbil, Mosul and Nusaybin (Nisibin), at the foot of the mountains which protect the Kurdish regions from the south.

A Short History

During the Khalifate of his successor, Osman-ibn-Affan (644-656), all the rest of that region up to the Caucasus mountains was conquered by the Moslem armies. The Kurds quickly submitted to them and accepted Islam, as the Arabs did not interfere with their way of life and passed through their country without trying to establish colonies in the high valleys surrounded by lofty chains of mountains.

During the Omayyad Khalifate, the land of the Kurds remained under Arab domination, and the districts of Dersim (Tunceli) and the western part of Malatya, also inhabited by the Kurds, was added to their northern dominions. At the same time, the local chiefs of tribes and petty Kurdish rulers continued to have an independent life and willingly participated in the campaigns of the Arabs for the extension of the realm of Islam.

When the Abbasid Khalifs came to power with the aid of the Shias, who were more prominent in their eastern dominions, they were more interested in the expansion of their power towards the east. After the time of Harun-er-Rashid, the Khalifate, which had become the prey of internal strife through the rivalry of his sons, Amin and Ma'mun, was weakened, especially in its less easily accessible mountainous regions.

In the tenth century (959), Hasanwayh b. Hosayn Barzikani, who was the chief of a Kurdish tribe, established himself as the ruler of all Eastern Kurdistan, occupying Dinawar and even Nahavand and Hamadan in the Jibal province. His successors were his son Nasir-ed-Din, Badr b. Hasanwayh (979-1014) and great-grandson Zahir b. Hilal b. Badr (1014-1015). They acknowledged the Abbasid Khalifate and also nominally accepted the suzerainty of the Buwayhid (Daylamid) dynasty, whose rulers nevertheless did not interfere directly with them until Shams-ed-Dowleh drove Zahir from power and annexed his dominion.¹

The Buwayhids (932-1055) came originally from the province of Gilan, and were Iranians and Shias; they conquered the greater part of Iran and also Iraq and the region of the Kurds, and the three sons of Buwayh, Mu'izz-ed-Dowleh Ahmad, Imad-ed-Dowleh Ali and Rukn-ed-Dowleh Hasan, divided this realm between them, Rukn-ed-Dowleh occupying the north-western region, including the Kurdish districts. Mu'izz-ed-Dowleh entered Baghdad and, although a Shia, acknowledged

¹ Stanley Lane-Poole, *The Mohammadan Dynasties*, Paris, 1925.

the Abbasid Khalif's religious authority, at the same time reducing him to the role of a puppet. This situation lasted until the Seljuk Tughril (Toğril) Beg entered Baghdad in 1055, freeing the Khalif Qaim from his subservience to the Buwayhid Khusru Firuz, only to take his place as the protector of the Khalifate.

In 990, at the death of the Kurd Bad, governor on behalf of the Abbasid Khalif Et-Tai, his nephew, Abu Ali Marwan, took over the rule of an extensive region, comprising Diyar Bakr, Amid, Meyafarekin and Nusaybin, which had been taken over from the Buwayhids after the death of Azud-ed-Dowleh (983), although the Marwanids always acknowledged the nominal suzerainty of that dynasty. In spite of that, after Abu Ali's death, his brother and successor, Muwahhid-ed-Dowleh, transferred his allegiance from the Abbasid Khalifate to the Fatimid Khalifate of Egypt, and received as a reward from the Khalif Hakim Abu Ali Mansur the government of Halep (Aleppo), from which the Hamdanid Arab dynasty had been expelled.

The Marwanids, as well as the Hasanwayhs, although Kurds by race, were considered Arab, being officially invested by the Khalifs, and having adopted Arabic as the official language of their States.

Although the region knew a period of relative prosperity during the fifty years' reign of Abu Nasr Ahmad (1011-1061), it had been twice attacked by the Turkoman Oghuz tribes, who, preceding the onslaught of the Seljuks, had crossed the whole of Iran to raid the Arab and eastern Byzantium frontier districts. In 1071, Abu Nasr's son, Nasr, acknowledged the suzerainty of the Seljuk Alp Arslan. In 1085, Nasr's son Mansur had to yield his kingdom to Alp Arslan's son Malik Shah, whose general, Ibn Jabir, occupied Diyar Bakr and Jazirah-ibn-Oniar, where Mansur died in 1096.

About that time the western part of the Kurdish lands was claimed and often occupied by the Byzantines, at the same time as being frequently overrun by the Seljuks and other Turkomans. Some of the tribes even threw in their lot with the Byzantines, as they had been completely abandoned by the Khalifate, whose authority did not extend farther than a few miles from Baghdad.

Although under the dominion of the Seljuk Turks (there was no difference between the Turks and the Turkomans then,

Turkoman merely signifying 'very Turk'), these Turks never cared to settle in the Kurdish mountains. After Turkicizing Azerbaijan, they simply passed through the Kurdish lands, following the easier routes, and penetrated into the rich plains of Asia Minor, driving straight towards the Aegean Sea and the warm shores of the Mediterranean. Here they settled, mixing with the local populations of Cappadocians, Phrygians, Lydians, Mysians, Carians and Pamphylians, and Turkicizing them completely in less than two hundred years. This reluctance of the Turkomans to infiltrate into inhospitable mountains, inhabited by fierce Kurdish tribes, explains the fact that between the two Turkish-speaking regions of Azerbaijan and Anatolia, there remains an extensive area where the Kurds have preserved their language, customs and, up to now, their independent way of life. They have always been free without knowing political independence, and so, remaining ignorant of the rules and details of administrative and political responsibility, they acquired a reputation for lawlessness.

Although both the Marwanids and the Hasanwayhs were purely Kurdish dynasties and ruled over a great part of the Kurdish inhabited region, the present-day Kurds seldom mention them, and are chiefly proud of the exploits of their kinsman Salah-ed-Din (Saladin), son of Ayyub, though the latter did not stress his Kurdish connexion any more than the others. In spite of the fact that the dominions he conquered and ruled were far more extensive than those of the Hasanwayhs or the Marwanids, he never controlled the major part of the Kurdish lands which remained to the end outside his dominions.

Salah-ed-Din was born at Tikrit on the Tigris, north of Samarra, in 1137. He began his service under Zangi, Atabeg (i.e. general and successor) of the Seljuks of Syria, whom he had superseded in Halep. Zangi was then waging war on the Crusaders in Palestine and on the Syrian coast as well as in Antakiyah (Antioch). His son, Nur-ed-Din, sent Salah-ed-Din with his uncle Shirkuh to Egypt, to help his ally the Governor of Egypt, Shahwar, to regain his position, from which he had been expelled by a rival. Egypt was then under the Fatimid Khalif Abu Mohammad Abdollah, and Shirkuh and Salah-ed-Din had to conciliate him. The Crusaders understood that a union between Egypt and the Eastern Arab States would result in catastrophe for them, and attacked the Syrian army. Shirkuh

was appointed Governor of Egypt but died two months later, while Salah-ed-Din defeated the Crusaders and, after the death of the Fatimid Khalif in 1171, proclaimed Egypt reunited to the Abbasid Khalifate.

After the death of his suzerain, Nur-ed-Din, Salah-ed-Din conquered Syria, first in the name of Nur-ed-Din's heir Es-Salih, and afterwards for himself, his rule extending over Egypt, Syria, El-Jazirah and the Hejaz. Having taken Jerusalem from the Crusaders, he fought against Richard Cœur-de-Lion and finally forced the Christians to abandon nearly all Palestine, except for a few fortified ports on the sea-shore.

Salah-ed-Din died in Damascus in 1193, and after him his empire was divided among his sons, Afzal at Damascus, Aziz in Cairo, and Zahir at Halep. They were superseded by local chiefs, only Halep remaining until 1260 under the Ayyubids.

The high virtues and warlike qualities of Salah-ed-Din made him a legendary hero of the Moslem world, and the Kurds are justly proud of the fact that he belonged to their race.

After the extinction of the line of the Imperial Seljuks, who had ruled over a land roughly corresponding to the Persian Empire of the Parthians and the Sassanians, and had included all the territories inhabited by Kurds, several branches of that dynasty still continued to rule in Kerman, Anatolia, Syria and Iraq. The Iraqi branch, which started with Malik Shah's grandson Mahmud, controlled also part of the Kurdish district (1117-1194), but both under Salah-ed-Din and after the Kurdish lands were divided between the Atabegs (Seljuks' officers) who had been governors of these districts under the Seljuks and had supplanted them after the extinction of their different branches.

All these Atabegs were Turks and, although quite independent, they accepted the nominal suzerainty of the Abbasid Khalifs of Baghdad. The Atabeg dynasties ruling in that region were as follows:

The Begtigins (1144-1232), around Arbil (Arbela), the first ruler being Zayn-ed-Din Ali Kuchuk b. Begtigin.

The Ortukids (1101-1312), the first ruler being Ortuk. Their dominions included Diyar Bakr, and at one time also Halep and Mardin.

The Shahs of Armenia (1100-1207), founded by Sukman Kutbi.

During the time of the rule of all these Amirs, who were Arabicized through constant contact with the neighbouring

Arab states of Syria, Palestine, El-Jazirah, Iraq and the Khalifate, the Kurds never tried to unite and organize a state of their own. The Kurdish languages remained as dialects spoken by the local people, the official, court and literary languages being chiefly Arabic and Persian. Turkish also gradually gained the rank of a literary language, with the admixture of many Persian and Arabic words and even grammatical forms. During this period, as the different rulers fought among themselves or formed alliances, the chiefs of the Kurdish clans, recognizing their suzerainty, followed their suzerain's example, and allied themselves with one petty ruler against another, often fighting each other with the help of their paramount chief.

The invasion of Iran and part of the Middle East by the Mongol armies under Jebe and Subotai (who had followed the last Sultan of Kharezm, Jalal-ed-Din Manguberti, expelled by Chengiz Khan from Transoxiana before ruling for a time in western Iran) wrought havoc among the Atabegs and petty chiefs of Iran and Syria.¹ The Mongols conquered Qazvin and Hamadan and occupied Tabriz, but did not venture at that time into the Kurdish mountains, although these were nominally included in the Mongol Empire (1213). Sultan Jalal-ed-Din had in the meantime been killed by a Kurdish tribesman looking for plunder.² It was only after the death of Chengiz Khan, under the reign of his grandson Mangu (Mongka), that this Great Khan ordered his younger brother, Hulagu, to establish effective Mongolian rule in Iran and all the other Middle-Eastern countries. Hulagu traversed the whole Iranian plateau, destroyed the Isma'ilian strongholds in the Alborz mountains, including Alamut, seized and killed their chief, Rukn-ed-Din Kurtchak. He then passed through Hamadan and Kermanshah and arrived in Baghdad where he killed the 37th Abbasid Khalif, Mosta'sim Billah, thus putting an end to that dynasty (1258). This time the Kurdish highlands were not spared. In 1259 two of the three Mongol armies moving towards Syria from Azerbaijan where Hulagu had established his headquarters in Tabriz and Maragheh, traversed the mountainous part of the Kurdish homeland, passed to the east of Lake Van, and occupied Nusaybin and the whole of the Jazirah. The Kurds did not resist and no major massacre was recorded, except at Meya-

¹ R. Grousset, *L'Empire des Steppes*, Paris, 1952.

² Percy Sykes, *A History of Persia*, Vol. II, London, 1921, p. 90.

farekin, near Diyar Bakr, where Kurdish (Ayyubi) Amir el-Kamil Mohammad resisted and was obliged to capitulate after a short siege. He was massacred with the greater part of the town's population.

In 1262 the successors of the last Atabeg of Mosul, Badr-ed-Din Lu'lu, who had submitted to the Mongols, sided with their enemies the Mamluks and were defeated by Hulagu, who looted that town and effectively annexed their principality to the Ilkhan (Mongol) dominion. Asia Minor, including its eastern provinces inhabited by the Kurds, was then under the Seljuks of Rum, who ruled there from 1077 to 1300, and although they recognized the suzerainty of the Mongol Ilkhans, were in fact independent and even indulged in civil war. One part of the Seljuk Sultanate sided with Kay Kawus II and the other with Kilij Arslan IV, but the Kurds failed to take advantage of this dissension by trying to become independent. They were satisfied to share the vicissitudes of their overlords. In 1297, they besieged Arbil, where the Nestorian Christians were in occupation of the citadel, and in 1310 helped the Mongol army to attack that plain whose inhabitants, mostly Christians, were massacred. The Kurds, devout Moslems since the Arab conquest, were in sympathy with the Ilkhans since Ghazan Mahmud, who had been converted to Islam, had succeeded Baydu in 1295.

During the second quarter of the fourteenth century, the Ilkhan Mongolian dynasty was weakened by internal strife and fell under the influence of two powerful Mongol chiefs, Hasan Buzurg Jalayr and Hasan Kuchuk Amir Chopani. The Ilkhan dynasty ended in 1349, and after Hasan Amir Chopani's brother Ashraf, who had established a kingdom in Azerbaijan, had been killed by the Kipchak Mongol Khan of Russia, Jani Beg, during a lightning raid by that Khan on Tabriz, the Jalayr Shaikh Oways, son and successor of Hasan Buzurg, conquered the province and extended his rule over Iraq, Azerbaijan, Jazirah and the Kurdish country. He was succeeded by his son Hosayn, and after Hosayn's death in 1382, the Jalayr kingdom was divided between his two brothers, Sultan Ahmad and Bayazid (for one year), the latter receiving the Kurdish country.¹

¹ Already before the extinction of the rule of the Ilkhan Mongols, the Mamluks of Egypt, who were in the possession of Malatya and part of the Kurd country, tried to extend their influence on the petty Kurdish chiefs who were sometimes subject to the Jalayrs and sometimes to the Turkoman Kara-

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During this time, a Turkoman tribe known as the Kara-Kuyunlu (Black Sheep) founded a dynasty in Kurdistan, to the south of Lake Van, and finally occupied Tabriz and even Baghdad. Another Turkoman tribe, called the Ak-Kuyunlu (White Sheep), partly supplanted them and conquered all western Iran, Iraq, the Jazirah and Kurdistan. It is to be noted that since the time of the Seljuk invasions in 1055 and 1071 all these countries had been governed by Turanian rulers (Turks, Turkomans and Turkicized Mongolians), who enforced their rule with the help of Turkish warriors, the great majority of the population being Persians, Arabs, Kurds and Armenians. Up to 1258, the Turks were supposed to rule on behalf of the Abbasid Khalifs and became first Persianized and then to some extent Arabicized, but after the Mongol conquest and the end of the Khalifate, the official language became Chagatay (Oriental Turkish). The Mongols had been Turkicized at an early date, for not more than one-tenth of their armies had ever been composed of Mongols. The rest were Turks (Kipchaks, Turkomans, Uigurs) already converted to Islam and to Iranian culture.

The Ak-Kuyunlu dynasty attained its apogee with Uzun Hasan (1466-1478) who married the daughter of the last Byzantine Emperor of Trebizond, Despina. Martha (Halima), Despina's daughter, married Shaikh Haidar Safi, and was the mother of Shah Isma'il who founded the Safavi dynasty of Iran.

At the end of the fourteenth century, another Turanian conqueror had appeared from the east. Having overrun Iran, Amir Timur (Tamerlane) penetrated into Iraq and, pushing towards the north, took Mosul in 1394. From there he marched on Diyar Bakr and Mardin, devastating the Kurdish country. The fact that the Kurds suffered less than the inhabitants of the plains of Iran and Iraq was due to the fact that at this period they were mostly nomads, living more in the high valleys than in the towns which were chiefly populated by Armenians and Nestorians (Assyrians). They thus had no organized armies which could be pursued, surrounded and defeated, but fought—when they chose to fight—a guerrilla warfare, disappearing in the inaccessible heights and deep gorges and using tracks known only to themselves.

Kuyunlu and Ak-Kuyunlu. This policy lasted until the Ottoman (Osmanli) Sultan conquered Malatya and the Egyptian possessions in Asia Minor at the end of the fifteenth century.

The Kurds

In 1402, Timur invaded central Anatolia, and after inflicting a crushing defeat on Sultan Yildirim Bayazid I, the fourth Osmanli Sultan, at Ankara, he restored to independence seven of the nine Turkish Amirates which had been annexed by Bayazid and which enjoyed again for a certain time an independent status. Shortly after that, Timur returned to Ma-wara-en-Nahr and died in 1405 at Otrar, whilst on a march towards China.¹ His successors reigned in Turkestan and eastern Iran, and were finally extinguished by the Mongol Shaybanids who came from Siberia, and by Shah Isma'il Safavi from Iran. The nephew of the last Timurid Sultan, Mohammad Zahir-ed-Din Babar, was expelled from Turkestan, but founded a Sultanate in Kabul, and later conquered India and established there the Timurid dynasty known both to the Indians and to the Europeans as the Moghols, although they were in fact Turks and great enemies of the real Moghols—as the Arabs, Persians and Turks spell the word Mongol.

The region known already as Kurdistan, parts of it being sometimes called Jazirah and Ardalan, reverted to the rule of the Jalayrs, Kara-Kuyunlu and Ak-Kuyunlu, who were continually disputing among themselves. These dynasties considered themselves Iranian, since they ruled in Iran and were not race-conscious. The Kurds they ruled over also considered themselves to be members of the great Iranian nation, although that nation had no real political unity at that time, being divided into different small kingdoms. The rise of the Safavi dynasty in Iran put an end to that division, for Shah Isma'il liquidated the other dynasties in turn.

As we have seen, the Kurds up to this time had considered themselves as Iranians, sharing the fate which befell the other inhabitants of what had been the Persian Empire, and keeping the historical and cultural traditions of Iran. The advent of the Safavi dynasty brought about among the Kurds a clash of loyalties, which resulted in the gradual estrangement of the northern Kurds from the Iranian community.

For personal and political reasons, Shah Isma'il, who belonged to a family of Shia Imams, descended from Abu-el-Qasem Hamza, a son of Musa-el-Kazim, the seventh Imam and chief of a religious order founded by Shaikh Safi at the beginning of the

¹ 'Tamerlane or Timur the great Amir', from *Ahmad Arabshah*, translated by I. H. Sanders, London, 1936.

fourteenth century, enforced the Shia form of Islam on the Iranian nation, accentuating the differences between that sect and the Sunnis.¹ In this way, the Kurds were estranged from Iran, and felt more sympathy for the Sunni Turks than for their fellow Iranians of the Shia sect.

After defeating the Ak-Kuyunlu Turkomans, who contested with the Ottomans the possession of the Amirate of Karaman (Lycaonia), and pushing them towards the Kurdish mountains, Fatih Sultan Mohammad II, the conqueror of Constantinople, followed by his son Bayazid II, came into contact with the lands which shortly afterwards became the reconstituted Empire of Iran under the Safavi Shahs. Shah Isma'il tried to establish good relations with the Ottomans by sending an embassy to Bayazid announcing his accession to power, but the Ottoman Sultan treated him with contempt and the seeds of the centuries-long hostility between the two Moslem empires were sown.

Occupied in Europe, Bayazid did not show himself active in Armenia and Kurdistan where the Ak-Kuyunlu dynasty was finally destroyed by the Safavi.² His son, Yavuz Sultan Selim I (the Grim), decided to extend the frontiers of his empire not only in Europe but also in the east and south. After an epistolary exchange of amenities with Shah Isma'il, Selim marched towards the east, and, after dispersing the Kurdish contingents of the local chieftains, came close to the Iranian army and utterly defeated it in the Çaldiran plain south-west of Maku. Shah Isma'il had inadvertently brought it there instead of occupying the strong position on the Khamzian pass to the north of Khoi, where he could have met the Turks in much more favourable conditions.³

After this battle, the political condition in Kurdistan underwent a complete change. Most of the Kurdish chiefs, cajoled by Sultan Selim, passed to the side of their fellow Sunni Turks. Malik Shah, Amir of Hisn Kayfa, reoccupied Siirt which had been taken from his father by the Iranians. Ahmad Bey of Meyafarekin, Mohammad Bey of Sasun, Qasem Bey of Agil and Jamshid Bey of Palu joined the Turks as did the governors of

¹ L. Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, Cambridge, 1958, app. 1.

² J. M. Jouannin, *Turquie* (L'Univers, Histoire et description de tous les peuples), Paris, 1840.

³ M. Moukbil Bey, *La Campagne de Perse 1514*, Paris, 1928.

Mosul, Jazirah and Arbil.¹ All together twenty-five chiefs sided with the Turks and all the region between the northern Zagros and Diyar Bakr and Mosul was temporarily lost by Iran. During the sixteenth and early years of the seventeenth centuries, the fortunes of war fluctuated continuously. The Iranians under Shah Tahmasp I (1524–1576) and afterwards Shah Abbas I reconquered parts of Kurdistan up to Mosul and Diyar Bakr, but lost them again until after the campaign of Sultan Murad IV (1623–1640) and Shah Safi (1629–1642) when the Treaty of Erzurum was signed in 1639 and the frontier between the two states established more or less as it is today. The Kurds were more often siding with the Sunni Turks than with the Shia Iranians, except in the southern part of Kurdistan, where they were changing sides as the fortune of war favoured Turkey or Iran.

The constant wooing by the Turks and Iranians and their invitations to take an active part in the continuous wars between the Safavi and the Ottomans made the Kurds realize their own political importance, and so their behaviour towards their Turkish and Iranian overlords assumed the pattern which it has kept until today. When the Turkish or the Iranian Governments tried to impose upon them taxes or military service to which they were unwilling to submit, or encroached on what they considered to be their rights, they revolted. If their revolt was successful, they tried to make the best bargain from their momentary success; if not, they crossed the unguarded border into a neighbouring state and took shelter with the Kurdish tribes living in that country, remaining there until more auspicious times.

A detailed account of the life and history of the Kurds until the end of the sixteenth century has been given in the *Sharafnameh*, written in Persian in 1596 by Sharaf-ed-Din, Khan of Bitlis.²

The Kurdish lands were divided into principalities, their population consisting of detribalized Kurdish and Christian townspeople, and Kurdish tribes and smaller divisions corresponding to clans, besides Armenian and Assyrian peasants in the country. The tribal chiefs, called in Turkey Derebeys and

¹ *Islam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 6, Istanbul, 1955, p. 1101.

² *Sharafnameh ou Fastes de la Nation Kurde*, translated by F. Charmoy, St. Petersburg, 1868–1875.

in Iran Khavanin (plural of Khan), owned villages, pastures and agricultural estates, while the peasants working on them had the position of share-cropping serfs. The more important chiefs of tribal confederations had under them smaller chieftains as vassals, the political organization of the tribes having thus a feudal character. With the strengthening of the State's central power, both in Turkey and in Iran, the principalities disappeared one after the other, but the tribes remained, their chiefs often being appointed governors of the districts where their tribe was dwelling, by the central government, which found it easier to deal with the tribes through their hereditary chiefs.

According to the *Sharafnameh*, the Kurdish principalities were as follows.¹

A. Between Jazirah and Dersim: (1) The Amirs of Jazirah considered themselves descended from the Omayyad Khalifs and from Khalid Valid. (It was then the fashion, in all Moslem countries, to boast of an Arab ancestry, this being still the case until some fifty years ago, as also in Iran and Afghanistan.) Their district was known as Buhtan Vilayet. (2) The districts of Hizan Isbayerd and Muks, the rulers of which had come from Hinis, extending to the west of Buhtan. (3) Shirvan to the north of Buhtan, near Siirt. The ancestors of the Shiravi Maliks served under the Ayyubi and were Kurds. (4) The Ruzagi Kurdish family had wrested Bitlis and Sasun from the Georgian King David (?984-1001). Then two brothers from Ahlat, claiming descent from the Sassanian dynasty of Iran, became respectively Amirs of Sasun and of Bitlis. Eighteen Amirs of this dynasty reigned in these districts with short interruptions during the time of the Seljuks, the Ak-Kuyunlu and Shah Isma'il. When Sultan Suleyman I wanted to annex these districts to the Malatya province, Shams-ed-Din Bitlisi of that dynasty fled to Iran and remained until his death at the court of Shah Tahmasp I. (Another royal refugee at this court then was Emperor Humayun of India, expelled from there in 1539 by Sher Shah.) Shams-ed-Din Bitlisi's son, Sharaf-ed-Din, who lived in Iran, was the author of the famous *Sharafnameh* which is here freely quoted. (5) The chiefs of Sasun (Hazo, now Kozluk) were descended from Izz-ed-Din, and ruled over the tribes of Shiravi, Babusi, Susani and Tamuki. They were later joined by the

¹ *Islam Ensiklopedisi*, Vol. 6, p. 1102.

Ruzagi. (6) The Suvaydi chiefs claimed descent from the Barmecide (Barmaki) Iranian vazirs of Harun-er-Rashid. (7) The Pazuki, divided into the Khalid Beglu and Chakar Beglu clans, were dependent on the Amir of Bitlis. During Shah Tahmasp's reign they were subject to Iran. (8) The Chiefs of the Mirdasi claimed descent from the Abbasid Khalifs, as also did the (9) Chiefs of the Chemishgazak.

B. Between Jazirah and Kilis: (10) Hasankayf (Hisn Kayfa). The Amirs of this district were Kurds, claiming descent from the Ayyubi. When the Ak-Kuyunlu Turkomans occupied their country, the Amir Malik Khalid fled to Hama, but managed to return to Hisn Kayfa and hold it until the Ottomans occupied it completely. (11) Suleymani. The Chiefs of this district, said to be descended from the Omayyads (Marwanids) occupied the region of Khukh and pushed as far as the Tigris. (12) The chiefs of Zraki or Azraki had come from Syria, being Alavi (Nosairi) Arabs, a sect akin to the Isma'ili and Ali-Illahi, and intermingled with the Ak-Kuyunlu and other Turkomans. (13) The chiefs of Kilis, whose forebears had served under the Ayyubis when dwelling in the neighbourhood of Antakiyah (Antioch).

C. Between Jazirah and Khoi: (14) The first Amir of Hakkari mentioned in the *Sharafnameh* was Izz-ed-Din Shir (the Lion) who defended himself against Amir Timur in the fortress of Van (1387). (15) The region of Mahmudi, to the north of Hakkâri, on the upper reaches of the rivers flowing into the Van and Erjek lakes, was ruled first by Yazidi and afterwards by Marwani or Abbasi Arab chiefs who came there at the time of the Kara-Kuyunlu (1378-1469). (16) The Dumbeli tribe came originally from Buhtan, then settled to the north-west of Khoi around Zurava (Zurabad), in Azerbaijan. They annexed part of Shamdinan (Şemdinli) and were given the district of Khoi by Shah Tahmasp and that of Bajgere (west of Rezaiyeh) by Sultan Suleyman. This shows how the Kurdish chiefs managed to get on with both the Turks and the Iranians. They finally also added Çaldiran and Saray to their possessions. (17) The chiefs of Barandost (west of Rezaiyeh) were Guran Kurds, descended from the Hasanwayhs (959-1015), one branch ruling in Somai and the other in Tergever and Qal'eh Daud. (18) The Ustini came from Shamdinan, and afterwards settled in the Sutuni district of Herki (south-west of Rezaiyeh). (19) Zarza. (20) Tarza.

D. To the south of Hakkâri: (21) Amadiyah had been built on the site of an old fort during the reign of the Atabeg Imad-ed-Din Zangi (1127-1146), founder of the Zangi dynasty of Mosul (1127-1262).¹ (22) Tasini, an important Yazidi tribe near Arbil. (23) In the district of Sohran, an Arab from Baghdad, who had taken refuge there with his son, became Amir of Balakan and took possession of the Avan fort, east of Rawandiz. (24) Baban. Many clans and succeeding families of chiefs were known under this name. They used to dwell to the south of the Lesser Zab, but in 1784 they established themselves in Suleymaniyah. (25) The Mokri were a tribe settled to the south of the Rezaiyeh Lake, which had formerly been connected with the Baban. (26) Baneh. The Amirs of the Baneh tribes, having accepted Islam of their free will, took the name of Ikhtiyar-ed-Din. (27) Ardalan. This region has been renamed Kordestan and is an Iranian province entirely inhabited by Kurds. The chief city is Sinna or Sinneh, now Sanandaj. It was ruled until the nineteenth century by the hereditary princes of Ardalan, as governors of the Shahs of Iran. Many tribes and clans have occupied this region since the earliest times, most of them remaining in the same districts. (28) The Galbaghi were under Turkish Ustajlu chiefs, and were part of the twelve tribes who supported the Safavi Iranian dynasty. (29) Kalhor. (Since Reza Shah known as Bavandpur.) The chiefs of this tribe, the Qobadian, claim descent from Gudarz, son of Giv, one of the characters of the epic of *Shahnameh* by Ferdowsi. They sometimes included also the Guran tribe and dwell between Kerman-shah and Khanaqin.

E. Iranian Kurds: They are not mentioned in detail in the *Sharafnameh*, and will be dealt with in detail in a later chapter of this book.

Having repulsed the Turkomans from Khorasan and dealt a severe blow to the Turanian raiders who were periodically devastating that province, Shah Abbas I transferred to Khorasan several tribes from Ardalan and settled them in the mountainous regions bordering the central Asian deserts. They are now known as the Shadlu tribe in the Bojnurd and Shirvan districts, the Zafaranlu and Bicheranlu near Kuchan, and the Keyvanlu between Kuchan and Mashad. They have lost all contact with the Kurds of Western Iran, have become Shia,

¹ Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*, pp. 162-3.

adopted the dress and way of life of the other inhabitants of Khorasan (Turkomans, Turks, and Tajiks, or Persians) and speak a dialect which is a mixture of Persian, Turkish and Chagatay (East Turkish, spoken by Uzbeks and Turkomans).

The Kurds have always been keenly religious, but being individualistic, like all Iranians, they have a tendency towards speculation and, although the majority of them belong to the Shafe'i sect of Sunni Islam, they often indulge in founding religious sects and orders of Dervishes, the latest of these being the Barzani sect organized by Molla Mostafa's father.

In this way, a Kurd called Malik Ahmad Pasha, who had been appointed Governor of Diyar Bakr by Sultan Murad IV in 1638, and after being sent to Van, had taken possession of that district, had proclaimed a Kurdish Shaikh, Mohammad, as Mahdi (the twelfth Imam of the Shias, who is supposed not to have died in 882 but to have disappeared and be due to reappear in order to save Islam), and enticed the population to gather around him. The movement was crushed by the Pasha of Mosul and the pseudo-Mahdi was caught but afterwards released by the Sultan.¹

In 1719 the Kurds besieged Hamadan, but in 1722 the Kurdish chief Fandun (probably Faridun), coming to the help of Shah Tahmasp II, attacked the invading Afghans in Isfahan, but was repulsed and afterwards joined the Turks.

In 1726, the second Afghan usurper, Ashraf, succeeded in defeating in Endijan the Turkish army under the Ayyubi Kurd, Hasan Pashazadeh Ahmad Pasha, which, profiting from the state of anarchy caused by the Afghans, had invaded Iran. This victory was due to the defection of a Kurdish contingent which had been lured to the Afghan side by promises.² In 1728 the Turkish army started a new offensive, and as Ashraf was at the same time threatened by an attack from Shah Tahmasp II on Isfahan, he was forced to conclude a peace treaty with the Ottomans, abandoning to them the provinces of Azerbaijan, Kordestan, Hamadan, Kermanshah and Lorestan. Nader Shah, who had expelled the Afghans and restored the Iranian state, did not allow the Turks to enjoy their conquest for long. He pushed the Ottomans out of the conquered provinces and nearly seized Baghdad. After protracted hostilities in which some of

¹ *Islam Ensiklopedisi*, Vol. 6, p. 1104.

² *Ibid.*, p. 1104.

the Kurds sided with the Turks and others with the Iranians, a peace treaty was signed and the 1639 frontiers restored.

After the death of Nader Shah and of his nephews who succeeded him, the Zand dynasty, which was partly Kurdish, ruled over a great part of Iran for forty-four years.

At the end of the eighteenth century the Ottoman Empire was weakened as a result of its war with Russia, which cost it the loss of Crimea, Yedisan (south-western Ukraine between the Dniepr and the Bug), Podolia and the region in north-west Caucasus between the Don and the Kuban, as well as the Kabarda district. Iran, on the other hand, had just emerged from a period of complete anarchy after the death of Nader Shah. Aqa Mohammad Shah Qajar, after defeating all his internal enemies, had reasserted the Central Government's hold on the outlying provinces. This state of affairs resulted in a renewed interest of Iran in the Kurdish provinces of eastern Turkey, where several local Kurdish chiefs had become dissatisfied with Turkish rule and sought help and protection from the Iranians. Aqa Mohammad Shah had been murdered by his servants at Shusha, in the Caucasus, during his advance against the Georgians, who had sought Russian protection (1797). In spite of the endeavour to seize power by Sadeq Khan Shaqaqi, a Persianized Kurdish chief of inner Azerbaijan, Aqa Mohammad Shah's nephew, Baba Khan, hurrying from Shiraz to Teheran, proclaimed himself Shah under the name of Fath Ali Shah with the support of the armed forces and of his Qajar tribe. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, both Turkey and Iran became involved in protracted wars with Russia—Turkey from 1805 to 1812, and Iran from 1804 to 1813. Nevertheless, this fact did not bring them to compose their differences and to ally themselves against their common foe, and hostilities were sporadically conducted in the Kurdish region.

4. UP TO THE TREATY OF SÈVRES (1920)—OBEYDOLLAH (1880). THE FIRST WORLD WAR (1914-1918). THE ATTITUDE OF THE GREAT POWERS

In 1808 the Shahr-i-Zor district of Kurdistan was under a Governor called Abd-er-Rahman Pasha, who was dependent on the Governor of Baghdad. Being oppressed by the latter, Abd-er-Rahman Pasha took refuge with Fath Ali Shah. Through the

influence of the Shah, the Porte reinstated him in his governorship, and the Shah's eldest son, Mohammad Ali Mirza was appointed Governor-General of Iranian Kordestan, including the Ardalan and Kermanshah provinces, and the district of Suleymaniyah, which was in dispute with the Porte.

As the Pasha of Baghdad was still hostile to Abd-er-Rahman, this Pasha again took refuge in Iran. When Suleyman Pasha, the Baghdad Pasha's son-in-law advanced with thirty thousand men against Abd-er-Rahman, who had received an Iranian military force as support, the Turks were defeated and the Iranians occupied all the region up to the neighbourhood of Mosul. Suleyman Pasha was taken prisoner and sent to Teheran in chains and, on his release, Fath Ali Shah appointed Abd-er-Rahman as Governor of Shahr-i-Zor on his behalf.

In 1821, as a result of trouble among the Haidaranlu and Sipkan frontier tribes, the Iranian army, chiefly composed of Kurdish and Azeri irregulars, invaded Turkey, and, having defeated the Turks in Kurdistan as well as in the Bayazid region to the north of Maku at Toprakkale, it pushed as far as Bitlis and Van, and on the Kermanshah-Baghdad road to Shahravan, beyond Khanaqin.¹ In 1823 a peace treaty was signed at Erzurum and the 1639 frontier restored, except in the Zohab region, which the Iranians were unwilling to evacuate in order to keep control on the Valadbegi, Babajani, and Qobadi tribes which used to wander on both sides of the frontier as far west as the Diyala river, the ownership of the Suleymaniyah district being also left in doubt. Finally, in 1842 in order to prevent a new war, the British and Russians offered their mediation and, after protracted negotiations, a new treaty was signed at Erzurum in 1847, by which the Zohab region was divided among the contending parties and Iran abandoned its claim to Suleymaniyah.

The policy of reforms initiated by Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839), which aimed at a stricter control of the outlying provinces and in consequence the curtailment of the tribal chiefs' and local Amirs' authority, caused a feeling of discontent among the Kurdish princes. After the defeat of the Turkish armies at Homs and Halep (Aleppo) by the Egyptians in 1832, the Kurdish Amirs revolted one after the other. Badr Khan, Sa'id Bey, Isma'il Bey and Mohammad Pasha of Rawandiz succes-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1105.

sively occupied Arbil, Altun Köprü, Kōi Sanjak and Ranya, and afterwards Aqrah, Zibar and Amadiyah were also overrun. The Vali of Sivas, Rashid Pasha, who was energetic and loyal to the Sultan, managed until his death in 1836 to circumscribe the Kurdish rebellions, thanks to the fact that there was no co-operation between the Kurdish chiefs, each of whom was fighting on his own account, the idea of the independence of a Kurdish nation being still alien to them. In September 1835, Mohammad Pasha Rawandizi was defeated by Rashid Pasha and sent to Istanbul with fifty hostages from among the families of the important tribes which had participated in the revolt.¹ Badr Khan, the prince of Buhtan, set up a confederacy of tribes and for a time controlled an area comprising the districts of Diyar Bakr, Siverek, Viranşehir, Siirt, Suleymaniyah and even Sauj Bulaq (Mahabad) in Iran. Lacking the support of other Kurdish chiefs, Badr Khan was also defeated by the Ottoman army under the command of Osman Pasha, which had in the meantime recovered from its defeat at the hands of Ibrahim Pasha's Egyptian army and been reorganized.² The same fate befell Nurollah Bey of Hakkari who indulged for years in pillaging and murdering the Nestorian (Christian) Assyrians, some ten thousand of whom are reported to have been killed. Both Badr Khan and Nurollah were exiled, but the nephew of Badr Khan started a revolt in the Buhtan district in 1829, which was crushed after prolonged operations.

During the Russo-Turkish wars of 1829 and 1853-55, the Russians tried to bring the Kurds to their side, promising them a kind of autonomy and organizing a Kurdish regiment under Russian officers. In 1877 when the Turkish armies were fighting the Russians around Erzurum and Van, the sons of Badr Khan revolted in the Hakkari, Buhtan and Badinan districts and were only defeated after the end of the Russo-Turkish war. Up to this time, as has been said, the Kurdish chiefs revolted against the Osmanli State in order to get further autonomy and more power for themselves in their particular districts, not dreaming of the formation of a completely independent Kurdistan to include all the Kurds of the Ottoman Empire and of Iran. It seems that such ideas were inculcated in them by the

¹ Jouannin, *op. cit.*, p. 428.

² Col. W. G. Elphinstone, 'Kurds and the Kurdish Question', *Royal Central Asian Journal*, Vol. XXXV, January 1948, part I, p. 42.

The Kurds

Russians during the 1876-78 war against Turkey, and it was in 1880 that a Kurdish Shaikh called Obeydollah thought of bringing into existence a Kurdish autonomous state under the suzerainty of the Sultan, and invaded Iran for this purpose. The Turkish Government first patronized him, thinking to profit by this Russian-inspired idea to add western Azerbaijan and the Iranian Kurdistan province to their dominions.

Shaikh Obeydollah, son of Shaikh Taher, came from the Oramar district in Turkish Kurdistan, where he had many followers. Having gathered several thousand warriors from various Kurdish frontier tribes, he entered into the Sauj Bulaq district from the south and, after the Kurdish tribes of Mamash, Mangur, Zarza, Gowrik, Baneh, and a few others had joined him, he occupied the town of Sauj Bulaq (now Mahabad). After that he proceeded towards Miandoab, which he also occupied, killing there some three thousand Shia Iranians. He was now joined by the Herki and Begzadeh tribes of Mergever, Tergever and Somai Barandost, and besieged Urmia (Rezaiyeh) which was defended by three battalions of Iranian soldiers (Sarbaz), hardly a formidable force. He advanced upon Maragheh with the purpose of attacking Tabriz, but was met by a force of nearly twenty thousand men of the Iranian forces of Azerbaijan and Khamseh. Faced with the prospect of severe fighting, the chiefs of tribes who had joined him solely in the hope of plunder dispersed together with their tribes, and Obeydollah had to retreat towards Turkey with his Oramar and other Turkish tribes. As a result of strong remonstrances from the Iranian Government, the Ottoman Government had him arrested and sent to Istanbul. After a subsequent escape he was re-arrested and sent to Mecca, where he died in 1882.¹

In 1891 Sultan Abd-el-Hamid II (1876-1909) decided to organize irregular cavalry units in the Kurdish-inhabited regions, formed in squadrons, regiments and divisions, more or less on the pattern of the Russian Cossacks. In this way he wanted to bring the turbulent and restless Kurdish tribes under some sort of control and channel their warlike activities into more law-abiding ways, besides creating a special moral link between the Kurds and himself. The commanding officers were appointed from among the petty chieftains, the commanders

¹ G. N. Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, Vol. I, London, 1892, pp. 553-4.

of the divisions and regiments being the more important chiefs of tribes. These officers did not wear any uniforms outside ceremonial duties, and received army pay corresponding to their ranks, which of course could be withheld in cases of unlawful activity. The divisions and regiments had regular army chiefs of staff and brigade majors, who were the real commanders and tried, without great success, to inculcate some kind of discipline in the unruly tribes. This experiment met with some success, as was shown during the Young Turks' revolution against Sultan Abd-el-Hamid in 1908, when a Kurdish chief, Ibrahim Pasha Milli from the region of Viranşehir occupied Damascus with fifteen hundred tribesmen on behalf of the Sultan. After the deposition of Sultan Abd-el-Hamid the new Constitutional Turkish Government enticed the Arab Shammar tribes, which had always been opposed to the Kurds, to attack and drive him out. Ibrahim Pasha was killed during his withdrawal.¹ It must be said that the Kurds, who are excellent mountain guerrilla fighters, lose their fighting qualities when fighting in the plains outside their tribal area. The author himself has more than once witnessed this Kurdish characteristic.

After the 1908-1909 Revolution, the name of the Hamidiyah was changed into that of Ashiret Alaylari (Tribal Regiments). During the 1914-18 war the Kurds were altogether loyal to the Turkish Government. As a result of Russian intrigue among the Armenians before the war, the latter, who used to live more or less in harmony with their Kurdish and Turkish Moslem neighbours, became imbued with hopes of independence, although they constituted at most 30 per cent of the population of the Turkish eastern provinces in the region which used to be called Armenia by foreigners (parts of it had in the past constituted the Kingdom of Greater Armenia). At the end of the nineteenth century, probably with the tacit approval of Sultan Abd-el-Hamid's Government, the Kurds began to molest the Christian Armenians, and this resulted in armed clashes, as the Armenians were secretly armed by the Russians. There were massacres in Kurdistan and even in Istanbul, where the killers were chiefly the Kurdish porters (hammals) of the port.

When the Russian armies invaded Turkey after the Sarikamış disaster of 1914, their columns were preceded by battalions of irregular Armenian volunteers, both from the Caucasus and

¹ Elphinstone, *loc. cit.*, p. 43.

from Turkey. One of these was commanded by a certain Andranik, a bloodthirsty adventurer whom the author saw in 1920 promenading in Paris on the Champs-Élysées clad in the traditional Caucasian cossack dress and accompanied by two bodyguards armed to the teeth. He had come to take part in the Paris Peace Conference on behalf of Armenia, but was killed a few months later by regular Armenian forces while trying to seize power in that country.¹

These Armenian volunteers, in order to avenge their compatriots who had been massacred by the Kurds, committed all kinds of excesses, more than six hundred thousand Kurds being killed between 1915 and 1918 in the eastern vilayets of Turkey. In this way the region became seriously depopulated, as more than seven hundred thousand Armenians had been deported in 1915-16 to the southern Ottoman provinces—Jazirah, Mosul, Halep, and Antakiyah—most of them dying from hunger or exposure or being killed by the Kurds and Arabs. The Kurds fought bravely against the Russians, responding loyally to the Sultan-Khalif's appeal for the Holy War.

The Kurdish irregular cavalry on the eastern Turkish front consisted of some thirty regiments (123 squadrons). Their armament was composed of different kinds of rifles (Martini, Mauser, Russian Mossin), with a very scanty supply of ammunition. They had no machine-guns or supporting field or mountain artillery, and their discipline left much to be desired.²

The following tribes entered into the composition of the Reserve (Kurd) cavalry divisions (formerly Hamidiyah and Ashirat):

1st Division (Hinis): Zerikanli, Jeberanli, Zeriki, Hayranli, Yusufyanli, Jemadanli, Kaskalli, Shadilli.

2nd Division (Karakilise—now Eleşkirt): Jemadanli, Zeylanli, Sepiki, Zilaf, Adamanli, Pashmanli, Karapapakli, Sarachli, Jelali.

3rd Division (Erchis): Hasananli, Nisif, Haidaranli, Marharanli, Kalkanli.

4th Division (Viranşehir): Milli, Hizir, Deruki, Taï, Kiki, Karakechi.

¹ Hassan Arfa, *Under Five Shahs*, London, 1964, p. 122.

² Baki, *Büyükharpte Kafkaz Cephesi*, Istanbul, 1933, Vol. 1, p. 32.

Van Reserve Cavalry Brigade (Van): Makuri, Takuri, Shefketi, Sherkan, Sheydan, Shemsheki, Maylan, Shiyoli, Liyoli.

At the beginning of the war, a Turkish detachment supported by several thousand Kurdish irregular horsemen, penetrated into the Iranian province of Sauj Bulaq (Mahabad). The Iranian Kurdish tribes of Baneh, Mangur, Mamash, Dehbokri and others joined with them and defeated a Russian force at Miandoab. They then marched on Tabriz, which was hurriedly evacuated by the Russians, and occupied that town, from which the Iranian Governor-General also fled towards Teheran (December 1914). Such panic seized the Russian army, which was also pressed from the Erzurum-Sarikamiş direction, that a general evacuation of southern Caucasus was about to be ordered. The energetic action of some field commanders saved the Russian situation however, and the Turco-Kurds were expelled from Tabriz and pushed back towards Sauj Bulaq. During the subsequent operations most of the Sunni Iranian Kurds fought very gallantly against the Russians, especially those forming part of a detachment commanded by Colonel Omer Naji Bey.

South of Kordestan province, in the Kermanshah region, the attitude of the Kurdish tribes, especially the Kalhor (Bavandpur) and Guran, who are Shia, was less definitely in favour of the Turks than that of the northern Iranian Kurds, with the exception of the Sanjabi who are Ali-Ilahi, a sect even farther from the Sunni creed than the Shia and who fought until the end against the Allies. The others were bribed by the Germans, through the German Minister in Iran, Prince Reuss, and his military attaché, Count von Kanitz, to join the Free Persian Government (pro-German) of Nizam-es-Saltaneh, Governor of Kermanshah. After the advance of the Russian Army Corps of General Baratov, Nizam-es-Saltaneh retired to Baghdad and afterwards to Istanbul. The tribal force of Kurds which had gathered around him disintegrated, to the great chagrin of von Kanitz who committed suicide.¹

At the end of the war several Kurdish chieftains, seeing their former masters the Turks defeated by the British in Mesopotamia and retiring to the north, took an independent attitude and negotiated with the British in an attempt to obtain for

¹ A. G. Emelianov, *Persidskiy Front*, Berlin, 1923. See also Baki, *op. cit.*, and M. Larcher, *La Guerre Turque dans la Guerre Mondiale*, Paris, 1926, pp. 436-45.

themselves an autonomous status which they did not enjoy during the Ottoman rule.

One of the most tangible results of the war for the Kurdish tribes had been the supply of modern small arms—rifles, Lewis guns, etc.—and a great amount of ammunition which they obtained by disarming small parties of Turkish stragglers as they retreated through the mountain passes, or by appropriating to themselves the important war material abandoned by Russian soldiers weary of fighting and in a hurry to go back to Russia after the 1917 revolution. The Reserve Cavalry Kurdish units (former Hamidiyah) which were well armed, kept their rifles after the dissolution of their formations, and took them into their mountainous retreats. Another result of the war was the complete disappearance of the Christian minorities, Armenians and Assyrians, who were deported, or fled, or were killed during the war.

At the conclusion of the war with Turkey, public opinion in Europe and especially in America was very much concerned with the fate of the Armenians; their plight during the war and the wholesale annihilation of the Christians of the eastern Turkish vilayets had produced a feeling of deep sympathy in those countries. Since the second half of the nineteenth century, the Armenians had formed very active political organizations supported by their rich compatriots as well as by other progressive political groups in Europe. Their objective was the creation of an independent Armenian state to be carved out of the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire, and, since the Revolution and the disruption of the Russian Empire, out of the Armenian-inhabited parts of Russian Transcaucasia as well. It was decided at the Paris Peace Conference and embodied in the Treaty of Sèvres (1920) that an Armenian state should be created out of the Turkish provinces of Erzurum, Trabzon, Van and Bitlis. In 1914, according to the Turkish census figures, these provinces had an Armenian population of four hundred and seventy thousand as against two million, eighty thousand Moslems (Turks and Kurds), so that the number of Armenians in the whole of eastern Turkey (including the Diyar Bakr, Elazığ, Sivas and Urfa vilayets) did not exceed seven hundred thousand. These figures are disputed by Armenian sources, according to which the Armenian population in these vilayets numbered at least one million, two hundred thousand souls and

formed 50 per cent of the whole population. As a result of massacres and deportations, the number of Armenians left there had been reduced to less than twenty thousand, the Moslems being still nearly three million, five hundred thousand. The problem of creating an Armenian state in such conditions presupposed the expulsion of the Turks and Kurds (the latter being in the majority), and the transfer into the region of several hundred thousand Armenians from Russia, Iran and the Middle East. Such an operation could not be executed by peaceful means, as the Moslem population, and especially the warlike Kurds, well armed and entrenched in their mountain fastnesses, could not easily be expelled from the country where they had been living for at least as long as the Armenians. As the Allies were now weary and not ready to contemplate a new crusade on behalf of the Armenians, this scheme could not have been put into effect even if Atatürk had not risen to reassert the independence and integrity of Turkey.

Nevertheless, in the Allies' view, this question could have been settled by the promise of independence to the Kurds, as stated in section III of the Treaty of Sèvres (1920):

Article 62: A Commission sitting at Constantinople and composed of three members appointed by the British, French and Italian Governments respectively shall draft within six months from the coming into force of the present Treaty, a scheme of local autonomy for the predominantly Kurdish areas lying east of the Euphrates, south of the southern boundary of Armenia as it may be hereafter determined, and north of the frontier of Turkey with Syria and Mesopotamia, as defined in Article 27, II (2) and (3). If unanimity cannot be secured on any question, it will be referred by the members of the Commission to their respective Governments. The scheme shall contain full safeguards for the protection of the Assyro-Chaldeans and other racial and religious minorities within these areas, and with this object a Commission composed of British, French, Italian, Persian and Kurdish representatives shall visit the spot to examine and decide what rectifications, if any, should be made in the Turkish frontier, where, under the provisions of the present Treaty, that frontier coincides with that of Persia.

Article 64: If, within one year from the coming into force of the present Treaty the Kurdish people within the areas defined in Article 62 shall adhere themselves to the Council of the League of

Nations in such a manner as to show that a majority of the population of these areas desire independence from Turkey, and if the Council then considers that these people are capable of such independence and recommends that it should be granted to them, Turkey hereby agrees to execute such a recommendation and to renounce all rights and title over these areas.

The detailed provisions for such renunciation will form the subject of a separate agreement between the Principal Allied Powers and Turkey.

If and when such renunciation takes place, no objection will be raised by the Principal Allied Powers to the voluntary adhesion to such an independent Kurdish State of the Kurds inhabiting that part of Kurdistan which has hitherto been included in the Mosul Vilayet.¹

As is well known, the resurgence of Turkey under the vigorous leadership of Mostafa Kemal Atatürk prevented this scheme from being put to the test, and both Armenia and Kurdistan remained geographical expressions. The Armenians, however, were absent from the region which had been contemplated as their possible home, while the Kurds, to the number of one and a half million (in 1920), were inhabiting the area part of which had for a short time been earmarked as their possible national home. In this way, the few Kurds who were living abroad or in Istanbul, and had received a more or less modern education, cherished ideas of independence and considered themselves entitled, under the provisions of the Sèvres Treaty and the twelfth of President Wilson's fourteen points, to strive for that independence, relying for this on the victorious Allies. (The twelfth of Wilson's fourteen points states that 'the Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolute unmolested opportunity of autonomous development.')

In order to gain the sympathy of the Allies, and especially of the Americans, the small group of Kurdish intellectuals and former Government servants announced that they were sympathetic towards the creation of an independent Armenian state in the northern part of eastern Turkey, that they were

¹ J. C. Hurevitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, A documentary record 1914-56, Princeton, 1956, Vol. II, p. 82.

² *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, London, 1928, Vol. IV, p. 208.

quite ready to co-operate with such a state and that the misunderstandings between them and the Armenians (rather an understatement) had been entirely due to Ottoman instigation in accordance with their age-long policy of 'divide and rule' applied to the non-Turkish people of the Turkish Empire.

A committee was formed in Paris under the name of Khoybun, presided over by a former Turkish diplomat of Kurdish extraction, Sharif Pasha. I remember him well when he lived in Monte Carlo during the First World War, in his villa 'Mon Keif', not far from my father's villa 'Danishgah' (which is now called 'Villa Isfahan' and has become partly a museum of Iranian art and handicraft). He was a great friend of my father's, having been the Ottoman Minister at Stockholm in the late nineties, at the time that my father was representing Iran at the Swedish Court. He had been a staunch partisan of the absolutist régime of Sultan Abd-el-Hamid, and afterwards, although declaring himself on the side of the constitutionalist movement, fell out with the Union and Progress Committee of Tal'at, Mahmud Showkat and Enver. He openly declared himself against the entry of Turkey into the war on the side of Germany against the Allies, and was authorized, together with a number of other Turks sharing his opinions, to reside in France. He was a typical old Turkish grandee, easy-going, fond of champagne, night clubs and the good life in general, and appeared to have plenty of money to procure for himself what he wanted.

We used to see him quite often, and I learned only much later, that he was a Kurd and that he was active in the struggle for independence of his fellow Kurds. At the end of the war, he went to Paris and, thanks to his personality and the political acquaintances he had acquired during his diplomatic career, contacted members of the Supreme Allied Council and representatives of the Great Powers at the Paris Peace Conference, who accorded him a sympathetic hearing to his claims for Kurdish independence. He was clever enough not to antagonize Iran by claims on the Iranian Kurds, or the U.S.A. and the British on account of the Armenians. Not only did he accept the creation of an Armenian state to the north of what he intended to become Kurdistan, but he even pledged the Kurds to enter into an alliance with that state whereby they would be able to defend their independence against eventual Turkish

The Kurds

or Soviet Russian encroachments. The Turkish victory over the Greeks in 1922, and the emergence of Turkey as a military power, which received its consecration at the Lausanne Conference of 1923, frustrated his hopes of success.

Institut kurde de Paris

2

The Kurds in Turkey

THE proclamation of a Republic in Turkey was certainly forced on the Turkish nation against the will of the great majority of the population, in spite of the unpopularity of Sultan Mohammad VI Vahid-ed-Din, who had identified himself with the occupying powers, sacrificing the interests of the Turkish nation to what he imagined to be his own and his dynasty's interests, and inciting the Turks to fight against the Nationalist army, which was at that time defending Turkish soil against the invading Greeks. The hapless Sultan finally fled from his Palace of Dolma Baghcheh, to a British man-o'-war, on the eve of the victorious Nationalist army's entry into Istanbul. In this way the fate of the six hundred years old Ottoman monarchy was sealed.

Travelling at that time through north Kurdistan and Turkey on horseback, a journey of forty days during which time I spent the nights in peasant cottages where I talked with my hosts, I was able to observe the deep concern of the Anatolian peasants for the fate of the Ottoman monarchy. I first received the impression that the Kurds were not very much interested in this question, but I realized afterwards that their outlook on the events taking place in Istanbul was concerned more with the religious significance of the Ottoman rulers than with the political, and as the Khalifate was to be preserved by the Republican régime (Abd-el-Majid Effendi, Sultan Abd-el-Aziz's son, was nominated Khalif), the Kurds were satisfied that the religious aspect of Turkey was being preserved.

I. THE REBELLION OF SHAIKH SA'ID (1925)

This situation underwent a change when in March 1924 the Khalifate was abolished by the Turkish Government supported






by the Assembly, and Khalif Abd-el-Majid with all the members of the ex-imperial family were ordered out of Turkey at twenty-four hours' notice. The Turks had already foreseen the effects of the change in 1922; the Kurds foresaw it in 1924, and realized then that the Turkish Republic was heading for a complete laicization. Discontent at the abolition of the Khalifate was not confined to the Kurds. Many Turks were also shocked by it, and some Kurdish chiefs were encouraged by non-Kurdish Turkish personalities to start a movement for the restoration of the Khalifate and of the Shariat.

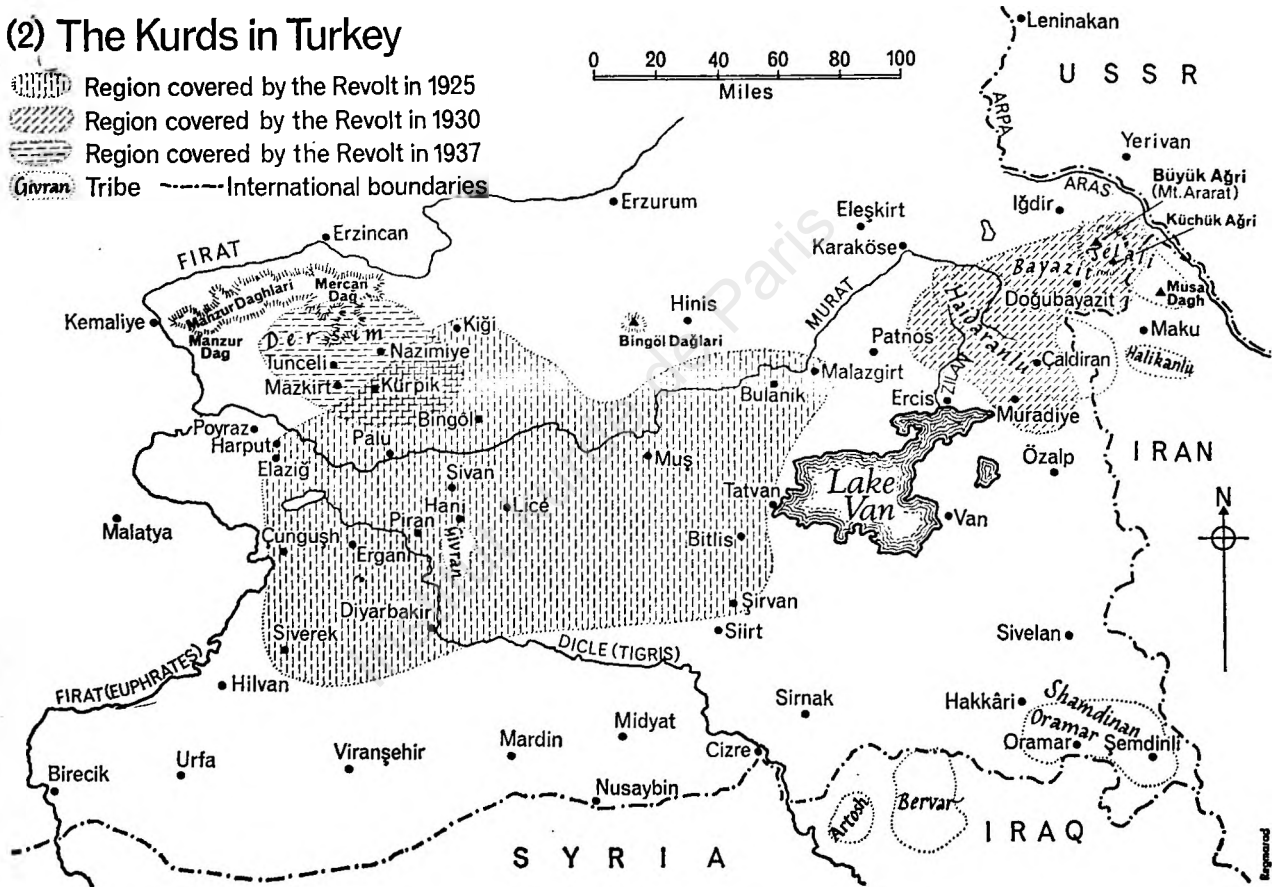
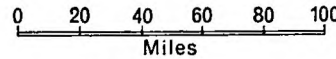
In February 1925 Shaikh Sa'id, the son of Shaikh Ali Effendi of Palu, hereditary chief of the Nakhshbandi sect of Dervishes and renowned for his strong religious beliefs, started an armed revolt against the Turkish authority, proclaiming a Jihad, or Holy War, against the Godless Turkish administration and calling on all Turkish Moslems to join his rebellion in order to suppress the Republic and to reinstate as Sultan-Khalif the eldest son of Sultan Abd-el-Hamid, Mohammad Selim Effendi, then thirty-five years old, who lived at that time in Beyruth. Shaikh Sa'id had a great influence in all Turkish Kurdistan, especially in the region between Lake Van and the western Euphrates, and even beyond Malatya, through his connexions with Shaikh Abdollah of Genj (Chungush) and Khalid Bey of the Givran tribe of Dersim. His tekke (Dervish monastery) was frequented by Kurds and even Turks from all over the country, and he was much respected as a religious chief.

The Turkish authorities appeared to have been taken by surprise, although the Prime Minister, Fethi Bey, declared at the Assembly in Ankara that they had expected this revolt to start in March. It had happened earlier on account of the attempt to arrest two of Shaikh Sa'id's followers, and Shaikh Sa'id's fear that their arrest and that of other people involved in the preparation of the revolt would prevent its occurrence.

Chungush, Ergani (Arghana), Palu, Piran and Elazığ (Ma'muret-el-Aziz), as well as Harput, were promptly occupied by the rebels, but the population, which had at first been well disposed towards the declared aims of the rebels, was repelled by the looting and exaction of the ordinary brigands and outlaws who had joined the rebellion only in order to loot the peaceful population. In some towns people opposed the insurgents and

(2) The Kurds in Turkey

-  Region covered by the Revolt in 1925
-  Region covered by the Revolt in 1930
-  Region covered by the Revolt in 1937
-  *Gıvran* Tribe
-  International boundaries



helped the Government forces against them. Nevertheless, the revolt soon spread in all directions. Siverek, Diyar Bakr, Licé and Muş fell to the rebels, whose original number of seven thousand increased rapidly when several local tribes joined their ranks.

The Government proclaimed martial law in the eastern vilayets, and many extremist Republican deputies asked for it to be proclaimed also in Trabzon and Istanbul, which shows that they understood that an important section of the Turkish population was in sympathy with the insurgents' aims. It was also pointed out that the rebellion had started shortly after the speech of a reactionary Turkish deputy, Hoja Zia-ed-Din Effendi, at the National Assembly in Ankara. In order to gain national support in their struggle against the rebels, the Government declared that religious fanaticism was only one of the causes of the rebellion, and that there were other underlying causes, such as the desire to proclaim the independence of Kurdistan, secession from Turkey and union with the Iraqi Kurds. They also hinted at the possibility of foreign (British) intrigues, as at that time Turkey was engaged in a dispute with Great Britain over the attribution of the Mosul Vilayet, which was finally settled through the arbitration of the League of Nations in favour of Iraq.

A committee was formed with the participation of the leaders of the opposition, Kazem Karabekir Pasha, the former Commander-in-Chief of the Turkish Eastern Army, and Reuf Bey, the former Commander of the Hamidiyah cruiser whose raids against the Greeks during the Balkan war had gained him the status of a national hero. In this way the Government contrived to form a unified front against the rebels and their sympathizers in the rest of Turkey.

In the middle of March the rebels progressed towards the north, repulsed the Turkish detachment which had started an offensive, and occupied Kiği and Bingöl. To the east they pushed as far as Bulanik and Malazgirt, occupying Sirvan to the north of Siirt.

Towards the end of March, the Turks concentrated a strong force of some thirty-five thousand men in a circle round the main force of the insurgents, thus preventing them from infiltrating to the east of Lake Van, to the north in the direction of Malazgirt-Çaldıran and to the south towards Hakkâri, and

cutting off their retreat towards both the Iranian and Iraqi frontiers. At the beginning of April, the Turkish forces then started a general offensive against the rebels, pushed back the Kurds without great difficulty and reoccupied Ergani, Hani, Elaziğ, Diyar Bakr, Piran, Licé and Bulanik. The rebels attempted to organize a resistance in the mountainous regions of Palu and Çungush, but were dispersed and Çungush was re-occupied by the Turks. Shaikh Sa'id was captured, probably as a result of treachery, as one of his former companions, a certain Major Qasem, afterwards claimed a reward.

Besides Shaikh Sa'id, several important chiefs of tribes including Shaikh Ali, Shaikh Abdollah, Shaikh Ghaleb, Kazem Isma'il, Rashid Bey Liganlu, Rashid Aqa of Kargabazar and twenty-five others were also captured. Finally, on 28 April, the last remnants of the rebel forces which had been dispersed in the mountains were killed, captured or made their submission to the Government. After the initial success of the rebels who succeeded in taking by surprise some elements of the Turkish 7th Army Corps and 1st Cavalry Division, the Turks had a great superiority in numbers, armament and leadership and had progressed methodically under cover of their aviation, taking each height after an artillery bombardment.

Shaikh Sa'id and nine of his companions were tried, condemned to death and hanged, others being condemned to terms of imprisonment. The causes of the rebellion were considered to have been the religious feeling against the abolition of the Khalifate and the laicization of the State; the bad economic situation of the eastern vilayets; the discontent of the tribal chiefs and influential persons who had been prevented from re-election by Government pressure, although they considered themselves to be supported by the great majority of the electors in their districts; and the fear of the feudal landowners (dere beys) and chiefs of tribes of having their privileges curtailed by the Government's action.

It was said that more than two million pounds were spent by the Government to quell this rebellion, and measures were subsequently taken to strengthen the central Government's hold on the tribes, several of which were moved to the south-west into Turkish-inhabited regions (Adana). Thus the process of detribalization was begun, though it only proceeded slowly thereafter.

The crushing of this rebellion which, although executed by Kurds in a region where they were in a majority, had had a Turkish religious and not a Kurdish national incentive, dashed the hopes of the Turkish conservatives and reactionaries and allowed the government of Atatürk to proceed more vigorously in enforcing its radical reforms, one of the most important of which was the adoption, in 1928, of the Latin alphabet instead of the Arabic which the Kurds together with their other co-nationals still use in Iran, Iraq and Syria.

Later in the same year Saiyid Abdollah, a Kurdish chief of the region of Shamdinan, whose father had been a senator and president of the Council of State in the cabinet of Damad Ferid Pasha, one of the last grand-viziers of the Sultanate, revolted in that region with the support of the local tribes and, on being attacked by Turkish forces, crossed the frontier into Iraq.

The stern measures adopted by the Turkish Government against the Kurds after the 1925 revolt caused many of the chiefs of the Mosul Vilayet, which was then in dispute between the Turks and the British—at that time the mandatory power in Iraq—to opt for inclusion in Iraq. This fact certainly influenced the findings of the League of Nations commission which was inquiring into the wishes of the populations of this region in 1925, and whose report brought the League of Nations to award the region to Iraq.

2. THE REVOLT IN NORTHERN KURDISTAN. IHSAN NURI AND THE JELALI

After the collapse of the Kurdish revolt of 1925 headed by Shaikh Sa'id, the Kurdish movement lost its religious and Ottoman character and became purely nationalist, embracing at the same time the Kurdish region in Turkey and in Iraq, although the different actions of the tribes were not necessarily connected, each rebel chief having in view his own particular interests. Nevertheless, times had changed, and it was considered proper to proclaim each revolt as having in view the independence of Kurdistan—or at least one portion of it, for the rebels in one country were not in a position to challenge at the same time all four countries having Kurdish minorities, Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria, especially as each hoped to receive some help from their fellow-Kurds of the neighbouring

countries, and in the event of defeat to be able to find a refuge there.

The son of Shaikh Sa'id, a young man called Salah-ed-Din, had taken refuge in Iraq, and with the help of an Englishman called Hamilton, entered the Military Academy in Baghdad. While studying in that town, he came into contact with a Kurdish political group called 'Association of the Friends of the Kurds', organized by Kurds who had, like himself, fled after the unsuccessful revolt of 1925. This association had branches in Halep and Damascus. Abandoning his studies and, it has been reported, still financially helped by Hamilton, Salah-ed-Din devoted himself to political activity, with a view to avenging his father's death. Profiting by the amnesty proclaimed by the Turkish Government, he went to Turkey, first to Hinis, and then to Erzurum, and with several other Kurds, notably Memduh, founded the 'Association of Northern Kurdistan'. He was afterwards arrested and taken to Ankara, where he was tried and imprisoned.

In the meantime preparations for the revolt were speeded up and on 20 June 1930, the Kurds of the Jelali tribe, dwelling on both sides of the Turko-Iranian frontier on the slopes of the Ağrı Dağ (Greater and Lesser Ararat), as well as in the Bayazid district of Turkey and the Maku district of Iran, attacked the Turkish posts in the plain of Zilan, led by Kurdish nationalist chiefs. Kurds of the Haidaranlu and Halikanlu tribes co-operated in this onslaught, and both Muradiye and the Zilan plain were occupied as well as Çaldıran on 24 June. Several local tribes joined the rebels at first, but in some places the population, supported by frontier guards and gendarmes, resisted.

These operations lasted nearly two months, the Turks first concentrating twelve thousand men under General Salih Pasha between Van and Iğdir, near the Soviet border, and then moving to the east. Saleh Pasha considered the Kurdish offensive towards Erzurum (Argish) and Patnos as the more dangerous since the Kurds tried in this direction to penetrate deep into Turkish Kurdistan, the region which had been the scene of the 1925 revolt. They hoped to be joined by the local tribes which had been severely punished by the Turks after that rebellion and whom they therefore imagined to be thirsting for revenge. The Kurds were well armed and ably led by their chiefs, amongst whom were several former officers of the Turkish Army, the

most prominent among them being Hosayn Kor, Byra, Demir Abd-el-Qader Abdal and Captain Ihsan Nuri.¹

The Kurds were counter-attacked from the direction of Malazgirt and Ozalp, and a Turkish thrust from Karaköse where Saleh Pasha had established his headquarters, towards Bayazid menaced their line of retreat towards Iran. They lost more than one thousand men killed in the Zilan plain and retreated in two groups to the north-east. Some of them crossed the frontier into Iran in the Avajik district, but the main force retreated towards Mount Ararat, which was their normal summer dwelling-place, and which offered them what they thought to be a secure position covered by formidable natural obstacles of lava rocks where they hoped to be able to resist for a long time. It must be noted that from 1915 to the end of the war in 1918, the Jelali tribe took refuge on Mount Ararat. Even after the Russian armies had advanced one hundred and fifty kilometres beyond this mountain deep into Turkish territory they had remained there—a two-year siege which only ended when the Turkish advance in 1918 freed them.

The Kurds' idea was to establish a foothold on Kurdish territory where a government would be resident and to proclaim the independence of Kurdistan, hoping that in this way they might be recognized by several sympathizing powers and be able to take their case to the League of Nations.

The Turkish Government had lodged several strongly worded protests with the Iranian Government, asking them to prevent the Kurds from entering Iranian territory or from invading Turkey from it. The Iranian Government was eager to preserve good relations with the Turks, and accordingly sent a detachment under Colonel Kalb Ali Khan Nakhchevan, a former officer of the Russian Imperial Army, who attacked the Jelali north of Maku, in the region of Musa Dagħ, and drove them towards the Lesser Ararat, the Colonel himself being killed during the fight. Nevertheless, the Turkish Government insisted on having a rectification of the frontier which would include the summit of the Lesser Ararat in Turkey, and thus enable them to make a complete encirclement of the Jelali (they numbered

¹ Ihsan Nuri was born in Bitlis, educated at the Turkish Military Academy in Istanbul, took part in the war against the Greeks and in the Congress of Sivas. He is living now in Teheran, where he published a book on Kurdish ancient history: *Tarikhe Rashid Nejad Kord*, Teheran, 1955.

some fifteen thousand tents). Ultimately this rectification was accepted by the Iranian Government in 1932, the Turks giving in exchange a territory of the same area in the district of Bajirge to the west of Rezaiyeh.

The Turks had much difficulty in progressing on the slopes of Ararat as the Kurds, being well concealed among the boulders, made any approach of the infantry extremely dangerous, even when protected by artillery fire. But the Turks had an advantage over the Russians of 1916-17, in that they had at their disposal a more numerous and far more efficient air force. If the planes could do little harm to the entrenched and well-concealed Kurdish sharpshooters, they severely strafed the encampments, inflicting heavy casualties on women and children and on the flocks. The slopes of Ararat are completely bare, but there are a certain number of caves where some of the Kurds could take refuge during the aerial bombardments.

At that time the Kurdish headquarters issued the following manifesto, which was distributed by secret means in Turkish Kurdistan, as well as in Iraq and Syria, and also sent to the League of Nations, to Beyruth and to Paris:

'Brother Kurds, you must be worthy to become a great nation, How can you allow the noble Kurdish nation to live as slaves under the bondage of the Turks, while all other nations have won their independence? A large free territory between Iran and Iraq had been promised to us. Unite in the struggle we have started to liberate our brothers from the Turkish yoke, in order to liberate these lands which have belonged to us for many centuries.'¹

On 21 July, the Turkish forces had cleared the southern and western approaches of Ararat from the Kurds and were progressing on the northern slopes of the mountain from the direction of Igdir.

During this time the Kurdish chiefs who were in Syria, in French mandated territory, were agitating against the Turks. With the help of Jalal and Soraya Bey Badr Khan—the great-grandson of the Badr Khan who had revolted against the Turks in 1833-1840—and Qader Khan, a chief called Hacho organized an armed force of some two hundred men. Crossing into Turkish territory, he occupied on 5 August the village of Habat, where he issued a proclamation calling on all the Kurds to rise against

¹ *Turkischer Post*, 29 July 1930.

the Turks in order to assist their brethren fighting on Mount Ararat. Hacho was attacked by Turkish forces and recrossed the frontier. Although unofficially the French were in sympathy with the Kurdish movement and had even allowed a Kurdish congress to be held in Syria, which several French officers in civilian clothes had attended, the French Government had to yield to a very strong note sent by the Turkish Government, and the above-named Kurdish leaders were moved away from the Turkish frontier, put under surveillance, and some of them even expelled from Syria.

The move of the Kurds in Syria to come to the assistance of those who were fighting at a distance of four hundred kilometres to the north was the first sign of co-operation between Kurdish elements not related to one another by local or personal interests. They were acting in the service of an ideal of Kurdish nationalism in the form either of independence or of a wide autonomy. The desire for complete independence underlying the avowed claims for autonomy were considered for the present impractical, in view of the division of the Kurdish lands between Turkey, Iran and Iraq, not to mention Syria where the Kurdish minority of some two hundred thousand to two hundred and fifty thousand souls was scattered over an extensive area, among an Arab-speaking majority.

In the same way the Iraqi Kurds also associated themselves with the all-Kurdish movement. Shaikh Ahmad of Barzan, in answer to a request for help from a friendly Kurdish chief, the son of Hosayn Kor, offered him the co-operation of five hundred Barzani horsemen for an attack on Turkish territory in the direction of Oramar (21 July 1930). This force was repulsed by the Turks and Hosayn Kor's son, who had returned to Turkey, was killed in a skirmish.

It seemed likely in Turkey that the Kurds, after two defeats and severe punishment, would keep quiet and submit to the inevitability of the Turkish republican and laic rule, but this indomitable and turbulent race was to manifest again its utter dislike of passive submission and regimentation into a dry administrative machine which would dispose of everything they liked and to which they were accustomed—a free life with a minimum of obligation to a remote overlord, and little interference from him. This was the simple ideal of the past on which was to be superimposed the ideal of nationalism and the proud

desire to be independent from the neighbouring races, since they considered themselves as good as those races and in consequence equally worthy of independence.

3. SAIYID REZA IN DERSIM

In June 1937, when the Turkish Government began to establish gendarmerie posts as well as schools and roads in their district, the Dersim (Tunceli) Kurds began to agitate strongly and soon, after a meeting of the chiefs of tribes at Kürpik (thirty kilometres east of Mazkirt), a revolt broke out.

A local chief called Saiyid Reza of the Abbasushaghi tribe, gathered around himself a few thousand fighters chiefly from the Yusufkhan and Demenan tribes. (According to the declaration of the Turkish Prime Minister, Ismet İnönü, at the Grand National Assembly, the number was one thousand to one thousand, five hundred.) Attacking the Turkish gendarmerie posts, he captured them or drove the gendarmes out of the Dersim district, which soon fell entirely into the Kurds' hands. The Turkish Government concentrated sufficient troops from Erzincan, Erzurum, Malatya and Diyar Bakr and succeeded in containing the extent of the rebellion to an area of some two hundred square kilometres, to the north of Kalan (Tunceli), in the Koti Deresi valley and the mountainous region to the south of Merçan Dağ. Prior to this the Kurds had attacked Nazimiye (Kizil Kilisse) and Mazkirt, but were driven back from there by the Turks. Ismet Pasha considered the revolt serious enough to warrant a visit to this region. Shortly afterwards he was replaced as Prime Minister by Jelal Bayar.

About the same time, a group of Kurds from Syria tried to penetrate into Turkey in order to spread the revolt among the southern Kurds and in this way help the rebels in Tunceli, but being weak in numbers they were repulsed and fled into Syria, leaving a few dead, among whom were Shaikh Abd-er-Rahim, brother of Shaikh Sa'id who had been executed in 1925, and Kor Jemil Sheyda, also a veteran of the 1925 revolt.

On 11 August, the Iraqi newspaper *Rabitah-el-Arabiya* published a declaration by two Kurdish political leaders, Imam Qasem and Isma'il Hakki, of Kirkuk, asking the Iraqi Government and the representatives of foreign powers in Baghdad to intervene against the Turkish policy of extermination of the Kurds. They alleged inhuman treatment of the Kurds by the

Turks, including the use of poison gas, and asked the foreign powers to send a commission composed of members from neutral countries to investigate the situation in the Dersim area.

The intention of the Kurds was to entrench themselves in the high mountains of the Manzur and Mercan Dağ where wintry conditions would prevent the Turkish forces from pursuing them, and to start the rebellion anew in the spring, in the hope that the Kurds of other regions of eastern Turkey would then join them. Apparently there was disagreement among some tribes over this, and indeed the Turks pressed them vigorously into the mountains, with the result that the rebels had to surrender.

On 14 November Shaikh Saiyid Reza, his two sons, and some other chiefs were tried and condemned to death, the other participants receiving terms of imprisonment. The Turkish Government also ordered the deportation of all the Kurdish clans implicated in the rebellion—almost fifty thousand persons—to other vilayets. On 19 November funeral ceremonies were held at the Kurdish mosque in Damascus for the executed chiefs and other victims of the repression of the rebellion.¹

4. THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT'S POLICY TOWARDS THE KURDS

The deportations and other stern measures taken by the Turkish Government both before and after Atatürk's death certainly rendered the recurrence of the Kurdish revolts difficult, especially since the very good relations between Turkey, Iran, and Iraq, embodied in the Baghdad Pact, and the effective occupation of the Irano-Turkish frontier by Iranian frontier guards and gendarmes, precluded any possibility of help from the Kurds living in these countries. During the thirties and forties, three railway-lines were built joining western Anatolia to the eastern provinces: from Sivas to Erzincan and Erzurum, from Malatya to Elazığ and Muş (which is planned to join the Iranian railways at Kotur) and from Diyar Bakr to Kurtalan, which is intended to reach ultimately as far as Cizre (Jazirah-ibn-Omar) and the Iraq frontier. These lines are primarily strategic, and designed to facilitate eventual military operations in case of an aggression on the part of the U.S.S.R., but will also allow the Turks to concentrate important military forces rapidly in the event of a new Kurdish rebellion. From the economic

¹ *Al-Akhhbar*, Damascus, 22 November 1937.

standpoint, they open the eastern vilayets' access to the Mediterranean and to Turkish and foreign markets, and with the building of a network of roads, especially between 1950 and 1961, they certainly contributed to the prosperity of the country. Nevertheless, these eastern vilayets remained underpopulated and kept their purely Kurdish character, since the Turkish immigrants from the Balkans were settled in the western part of the country, where conditions were similar to those of their countries of origin, and the few who had been settled in the mountainous regions of Kurdistan sooner or later drifted towards Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir and Adana, refusing to go back to the strange and inhospitable surroundings of the barren Kurd-inhabited lands.

It must be accepted that, in spite of the railways and roads, the inherent financial difficulties of the Turkish Government has precluded an extensive programme of industrial and agricultural renovation in the eastern vilayets, such a build-up being chiefly confined to the western provinces inhabited by Turks, where great progress has been realized during the last thirty-five years.

The Turkish Government has striven chiefly to eradicate the tribal system by which the tribes had for centuries been subject to hereditary chiefs enjoying great prestige and influence which was often exercised in opposition to the Government's policies. More often than not these chiefs were also the leaders of religious sects and communities, which flourish in Kurdistan as much as they do in the United States, the Kurds being religious and attached to their spiritual traditions. Many of these date from time immemorial, and have been intimately mixed with the teachings of Islam, which accounts for the different confraternities of Dervishes and religious orders, the banning of which by the Turkish Government was very much resented by the devout Kurds. The people lost the right to call themselves Kurds, being officially named Mountain Turks, and they were discouraged from using their language even on non-official occasions. They had to abandon their picturesque costumes and dress in drab European-style narrow trousers and coats. Within a few years, the same policy had been applied in Iran, and we know how much the Kurds resented and disliked it. They quickly reverted to their traditional wide trousers, short coats and turbans as soon as the prohibition on national dress was lifted by the present Shah.

The Kurds

The sealing of the eastern and south-eastern frontiers with Iran and Iraq resulted in the interruption of the supply of arms and ammunition. The progressive disarmament of the tribes inside Turkish territory left the Kurds powerless and without any further chance to rebel.

In 1960, the revolutionary military junta Government of Turkey became aware of hostility from the Kurds towards the new régime which they considered irreligious and radical, and ascribing these feelings to the influence of the Aqas—as the former Derebeys were now called—decided to deport the most influential of them to western Anatolia. About fifty Kurdish Aqas were sent to the vilayets of Bursa and Izmir, the Government undertaking to pay fifty Turkish lira a day to each of them. As they had a few members of their families with them, this sum was far from sufficient to defray their expenses, and, besides, it appeared that the Government did not pay them regularly. The deportation of the patriarchal chiefs of clans created discontent among their relatives and retainers several thousand of whom were likewise deported to the west which was a great hardship to them. Instead of decreasing, the discontent of the Kurds took a more violent form: hold-ups and armed robberies became such a frequent occurrence that the Government discouraged tourists from travelling in the eastern provinces. After a while, most of the deported persons were authorized to return to their former dwelling places, and the situation has now become more settled.

Are the Kurds inwardly satisfied with their present position? According to those Kurds of the frontier tribes who manage to cross the frontier on more or less lawful business, the Kurds in Turkey have not abandoned their aspiration for freedom and independence and their deep interest in events in Iraq. Their concern for the fate of their fellow Kurds who are engaged in a life-and-death struggle against the Arab Iraqi Government tends to indicate that they consider themselves as part of a nation separate from the dominant race of the country where they live. Though united by the strongest bonds of race, culture, speech and sentiment to those who inhabit regions geographically close to theirs, they are separated by frontiers established by the hazards of wars in which they have not taken part, except occasionally as mercenaries.

3

The Kurds in Iran

As in Turkey, the Kurds in Iran are partly nomads, partly sedentary, and partly semi-nomadic—that is, they inhabit villages in winter but move to nearby grazing grounds in summer with a section of the tribes in order to find fodder for their flocks. The Kurds live in three of the Iranian provinces. In Azerbaijan they occupy a comparatively narrow strip of land between the watershed of the Zagros mountains which run due south from the Ağri-Dağ (Ararat) on the west and the plains of Maku, Khoi and Rezaiyeh on the east, and in the more spacious territory of Mokri around Mahabad to the south of Lake Rezaiyeh. In the province of Kordestan all the inhabitants are Kurds. In that of Kermanshah they constitute the majority of the population with some Farsi speakers in the town of Kermanshah and several Lor (Farsi) tribes in the southern districts of Ilam and Harsin. All together they form a solid block of about one million individuals most of whom are organized in tribes which are subdivided into sub-tribes and clans. This organization has existed from time immemorial until quite lately, and even today it has not been seriously interfered with by the Iranian Government, as has been the case in Turkey. But the extension of the Central Government's control, the building of schools and hospitals, the construction of roads, the opening of administrative agencies in the most remote localities and, above all, the fact that the Administration now deals directly with the people and not as before only through the tribal chiefs, and that regulations are enforced on all classes of the population without any difference being made between landlords and chiefs on the one hand and tribesmen and peasants on the other, has started a natural process of detribalization which is gaining speed, especially since the implementation of land reform.

Until the advent of Reza Shah the tribes in Iran were armed, as they were in Turkey and afterwards in Iraq, but since the late twenties they have been gradually disarmed and, despite a few years' interruption during the Second World War, this process has been nearly completed today. The more important Kurdish chiefs in the past had been recognized by the Government as Wardens of the Marches and exempted from the payment of taxes in return for providing frontier-guards from their tribes. These tribes had become practically independent after the revolution of 1907 when the imperial power was disrupted. Part of the Kurdish country was occupied by the Ottoman Army in 1908 and later by the Russians between 1911 and 1917. During the First World War the Kurds were armed by the Turks and the Germans in the hope of securing their help against the Russians, and after the Russian Revolution they helped themselves to large quantities of arms and ammunition which the Russian soldiers, after massacring their officers, had abandoned in their haste to return to Russia.

I. SIMKO IN AZERBAIJAN

After the Obeydollah invasion in 1880, there had been no important revolt of Kurdish tribes in pursuit of independence, or even autonomy. The sporadic rebellions of the Galbaghi in Central Kordestan, and of a few other tribes, assumed more the character of inter-tribal wars or plundering expeditions, involving only one tribe at a time, and not directed against the structure of the State. A revolt of this kind, however, was brewing at the end of the First World War in the Kurdish part of Azerbaijan, where the powerful chief of the Shakkak tribe, Isma'il Aqa (commonly called Simko), thanks to his strong personality and reckless bravery, had gained an uncontested authority among the neighbouring tribes, from west of Khoi to north of Saqqez and Baneh.

Isma'il Aqa Simko was the son of Mohammad Aqa, Chief of the Shakkak tribe which in 1920 numbered about two thousand families (now some four thousand) and was subdivided into two branches: the Abdoi, living around Chehrik, west of the Salmas district, who were directly under Simko, and the Mamdoi, who, though under his uncle Omar Khan, recognized Simko as paramount chief. This tribe had been in the past sometimes peaceful and sometimes rebellious, and Mohammad Aqa's eldest

son, Ja'far Aqa, had become so powerful and unruly that the Governor of Tabriz, Nizam-es-Saltaneh, a local man from the Qarajadagh district, decided to get rid of him at all costs. He asked Ja'far Aqa to come to Tabriz with a few of his Shakkak horsemen to help in policing the town, where the situation was troubled because of the repercussions of the Russian Revolution of 1905 and the massacres and killings in the Caucasus between the Moslems and the Armenians. After a few days, he invited Ja'far Aqa to come and see him at Government Headquarters to discuss questions concerning the security of the town. Ja'far Aqa came without any suspicion, and Nizam-es-Saltaneh had him stabbed in his presence, by men concealed behind some curtains (1907). This dastardly act did nothing to endear the Government to the Shakkak tribes. Instead of conciliating them, it rendered them more daring and hostile.

At the end of the war the situation in the Iranian province of Azerbaijan was extremely confused and the population was subjected to terrible hardships on account of the depredations of Russian soldiers, the requisitioning of foodstuffs, the collapse of any administration there had been, and the famine and epidemics which had arisen as a consequence of this state of affairs.

To the west of Rezaiyeh Lake there are two districts inhabited by a mixed population of Shia Azeri-speaking people and Christian Assyrians, three-quarters of them Moslems and one-quarter Christians. The northernmost district is Salmas (today Shahpur), comprising some sixty villages, and the southernmost that of Rezaiyeh, with some three hundred villages lying in a plain between the lake and the Kurd-inhabited mountains to the west. The Rezaiyeh district borders on regions inhabited by Kurds to the north, west and south, and is thus a predominantly Azeri Shia enclave (with a Christian minority) among the Sunni Kurds.

During the war, some twenty-five thousand Assyrian Christians from Turkey, known as Jelus, fearful of sharing the fate of the Armenians, had fled to Iran with their families and settled in the Rezaiyeh region, thus doubling the number of their co-religionists in that district. They were taken under the protection of the American missionaries, who had been there for many decades endeavouring to convert the Nestorian Christians to Protestantism. The Turks had tried to remain on

good terms with the Assyrians, but Russian and American propaganda, conducted through the missionaries (who even before the entry of the United States into the war on the Allies' side were violently anti-Turkish), had induced them to throw in their lot with the Russians. Since the latter failed to advance beyond Van, they had decided to trek to the more hospitable land of Iran, fighting all the way with hostile Kurds from the Oramar, Bervar and Artosh tribes, and with the Barzani of Shaikh Ahmad.¹

Up to that time the Moslem and Assyrian peasant population of the Rezaiyeh district had always been on good terms with each other, but with the arrival of the warlike mountaineers the situation changed rapidly. These twenty-five thousand people were without any money, and expected to be provided with everything without payment. The population of Rezaiyeh, who were the nationals of an independent state the proclaimed neutrality of which had been unjustly violated by the neighbouring belligerents and who were not interested in the cause of the warring countries, saw no reason to provide the invaders with provisions which, on account of the war and foreign occupation, were already scarce. As a result of this reluctance the Jelus, who had been armed by the Russians to fight the Turks and the Kurds, began to loot the bazaars, and when part of the Moslem population tried to defend their property a general massacre ensued in which the formerly friendly local Assyrians participated, led by the Jelus' example. The Papal delegate, Monseigneur Sontag, tried to prevent bloodshed and exerted all his influence with the Assyrians in an attempt to stop the disturbances which claimed numerous victims every day, but the American missionary, Dr. Shedd, showed great partiality towards the Christians, refusing to interfere and encouraging the Assyrians in their hostile attitude towards the Iranian authorities and people.²

After the Russian Revolution and the departure of the Russian soldiers, the Allies, faced with the collapse of the Caucasian and north-eastern front, tried to induce the Caucasians, who would be directly menaced by a Turkish advance, to take the place of the Russians, thus preventing the Turks

¹ W. A. Wigram, *Our Smallest Ally*, London, 1920, pp. 16-19.

² See Ahmad Kasravi, *Tarikh-e-Hizhe Sale-ye-Azerbaijan*, Teheran, 1340 (1961), Chapter 15.

from advancing towards the Caucasus and the oil-rich region of Baku. Their endeavours were unsuccessful with the Caucasian Moslems, who refused to fight against their co-religionists, and with the Georgians, who were more hostile towards the Armenians than towards the Turks, with the result that the Armenians alone remained in the front line, and even they were divided, the Turkish Armenians being opposed to those of Russia, whom they accused of lukewarmness and sympathy towards Bolshevism.

The attitude taken by the new Soviet Government indicated that they did not intend to fight for the retention of the Turkish provinces formerly occupied by Armenians. The warlike Assyrian Jelus, however, who had taken refuge in the Rezaiyeh district and were seeking revenge against the Turks, seemed more inclined to fight against them, and the Allies moved part of the war-material they had concentrated in Tiflis for the use of the Russian army to Rezaiyeh, to be distributed among the Assyrians. Part of the Allies' armament had been kept back by the newly organized Georgian authorities, for the use of their own military forces.

There is no doubt that the idea of the Assyrians, headed by their religious chief, the Mar Shimun, and by a Jelu firebrand called Aqa Petros, was to secure the Rezaiyeh and eventually the Salmas regions as a national home, regardless of the fact that these districts belonged to an independent sovereign state which had officially been neutral in the war.

Simko with his Shakkak Kurds had been careful during the second part of the war to keep a neutral attitude and, although hostile to the Christian refugees, forebore openly to throw in his lot with the Turks, as he had done at the beginning of the war. This attitude was made easier for him since he was an Iranian and his country officially neutral. The Assyrian chief, Mar Shimun, who was more eager to secure an independent or at least an autonomous status in the rich districts which the Assyrians had occupied than to go back into the barren Kurd-inhabited mountains of Hakkâri and fight the Allies' war against the Turks, realized that he would not be able to carry out his plan without the temporary co-operation of the local Kurds, though he hoped to be able to liquidate them after the final victory of the Allies and defeat of the Turks. Simko was the most influential Kurdish chief in the neighbour-



1 Isma'il Aqa (Simko) seated, centre.
This photograph was given to the author by Simko's son.



11 *Front row, from the left: Haji Qazi of Saqqez; Imam Jom'eh of Saqqez (Molla Qafur); General Ibrahim Arfa; Amir As'ad Dehbokri; Majid, son of Hama Rashid Qaderkhanzadeh.*



111 *Seated left: Habibollah Mohit, deputy of Saqqez 1944-46; right: Ali Reza Ardalan, chief of the Ardalan tribe; standing extreme right: Shaikh Sadeq, afterwards hanged for rebellion.*

hood at the time and Mar Shimun, after contacting him through a local Armenian, found the shrewd Kurd favourable to discussion with the Assyrians. It was decided that the two leaders should come to Kohneh-Shahr, between Shahpur and Chehrik where Simko lived, in order to negotiate an agreement for common action against both the encroaching Turks and the legal Government of Iran. Simko weighed the chances of success and decided that if he was to become the ruler of a Kurdish enclave between the Turkish frontier and Lake Rezaïyeh he must first get rid of the Assyrian and Jelu Christians, who would never submit to his authority, especially as they were then backed by the allied powers. He also knew that if he allied himself with the Assyrians against fellow Moslems, he could never count on the support of the neighbouring tribes of Herki in the Mergever and Tergever districts, who had always been bitterly hostile to the Jelu. Only a short time before, the latter had plundered them while crossing through their lands during their march towards Rezaïyeh.

On 25 February 1918, Mar Shimun arrived at Kohneh-Shahr, escorted by one hundred and forty armed Jelu Assyrians. Simko was present with only a few followers so as not to arouse suspicion, but a stronger group of armed Kurds arrived after the first meeting between the two leaders. This took place inside a house and Simko had earlier given orders for the flat roofs of the adjoining houses to be occupied, while the dismounted Assyrians remained in the square with their horses. After the meeting, Mar Shimun came out of the house accompanied by Simko who shook hands with him in the most friendly manner, but as soon as Mar Shimun climbed into his carriage, Simko seized a rifle from the hands of one of his retainers, and fired a shot into the Assyrian priest's back. The latter fell and Simko's brother finished him off with his pistol. Simko's shot was the signal for the Kurds to begin shooting, and within a few seconds most of the Assyrians of the escort fell dead beside their horses, only a few managing to escape, among them David, Mar Shimun's younger brother. After this, Simko left Kohneh-Shahr and retired with his men to Chehrik.

When the Assyrians learned of this treacherous action, they avenged themselves first on the helpless Azeri population of Rezaïyeh, killing hundreds of men, women and children without discrimination, and looting their homes. They then sent a

detachment of some three thousand men to Kohneh-Shahr, who looted it, killing scores of innocent non-Kurdish Azeris, and then proceeded to Chehrik, which Simko had evacuated in time before retiring to the mountains. Having destroyed his house and other buildings they returned to Rezaiyeh, and on their way attacked the Salmas Lakistan district and the town of Dilmeqan (now Shahpur), from which they were temporarily repulsed by the inhabitants.

Meanwhile, the Turkish army of the Caucasus front—much depleted for the benefit of the Mesopotamian and Syrian fronts—advanced from Erzincan towards Erzurum, drove back the few Armenian units of the guerrilla leader Andranik, and entered Russian territory, occupying Kars before continuing eastwards. At the same time, German detachments had occupied Tiflis, where a pro-German Georgian Government had been established.

Prompted by the Allies, Andranik, who had retreated from Turkey with his detachment, had entered Iranian territory and, in order to join hands with the Assyrians commanded by Aqa Petros, had attacked Khoi from the north. Meanwhile the Assyrians, having occupied Shahpur, whence they expelled the Azeri inhabitants after a terrible slaughter of the innocent population, were marching from the south. The pluck of the inhabitants of Khoi, who managed to resist Andranik's Armenians until the Turkish forces arrived, foiled his plan, and Andranik retired towards Erivan while Petros returned to Rezaiyeh.¹

Although the Turks did not push on to Rezaiyeh, their reappearance in Azerbaijan encouraged the Kurds to resume a menacing attitude towards the Christians who were now short of ammunition. Their attempt to raid the arms-depot left by the Russians at Sharafkhaneh had been foiled by the local population with the help of a few hundred soldiers from Tabriz.

At that time, a British detachment had arrived in Iran from Baghdad, under the command of Major-General Dunsterville, which it was hoped would bolster up the defence of Iran and the oilfields of Baku by inducing some of the Russian forces which were still in western Iran to stay and resist the Turks under British leadership. Despite offers of money, the Russians did

¹ *Arfa*, op. cit., p. 160. See also Ahmad Kasravi, *Tarikh-s-Hizhde Sale-ya-Azerbaijan*, Chapter 18, and Wigram, op. cit.

not remain and only a small detachment of cossacks from different units under Colonel Bicherakhov (a Caucasian from Ossetia) consented to operate against the Iranian nationalists headed by Mirza Kuchik Khan in Gilan province. They opened the road to Enzeli (Pahlavi) and dispersed the Committee of Bolshevized Russian soldiers in that port, but then embarked for the Caucasus and did not appear in Iran again. Dunsterville heard of the Assyrian Christians in the Rezaiyeh region and decided to contact them, thinking that, if given sufficient arms and war-material and a few British officers, they would be able to threaten the line of communication of the Turks (who had in the meantime occupied Tabriz) coming from Julfa, and prevent them marching on Baku and the oilfields.¹ With this in view he occupied Mianeh, between Zanzan and Tabriz, pushed a cavalry squadron to Sayin Qal'eh (today Shahin Dezh), and sent a plane to Rezaiyeh. The airman, a Lieutenant Pennington, was warmly greeted by the Christians, and it was decided that a detachment of Assyrians should break through the Turkish and Kurdish forces between Rezaiyeh and Sauj Bulaq (Mahabad), come to Sayin Qal'eh, receive arms and ammunition from the British, and return to Rezaiyeh in order to attack from there the Turkish communications between Tabriz and Julfa.

The first phase of this operation was carried out, but the Assyrian detachment started too late and arrived at Sayin Qal'eh after the prescribed date, when the British squadron had already left. While the Assyrian detachment was in Sayin Qal'eh, the Assyrians who had been detached to the Salmas plain to prevent the Turks from attacking Rezaiyeh from the north retreated to that town and, on learning of the departure of Aqa Petros to the south, thought that they had been abandoned. With the reappearance of the Turks, Simko and other Kurds had again taken a threatening attitude. This threw the Assyrians into a panic and they rushed out of the town with their wives, children and flocks. They managed to break through the Kurdish tribes of the Mahabad region, but were attacked in Miandoab by an Iranian detachment sent from Tabriz by Majd-es-Saltaneh, a Governor appointed by the Turkish General Ali Ihsan Pasha, and there sustained heavy losses. All together some ten thousand Assyrians were killed or taken prisoner, which amounted to the same thing as neither the Kurds nor the

¹ L. C. Dunsterville, *The Adventures of Dunsterforce*, London, 1920.

Assyrians gave any quarter. Fifty thousand reached Sayin Qal'eh whence they were moved to Hamadan and there they were taken under British protection ultimately to be sent to Iraq, where we shall meet them in the next chapter under the guise of Iraq levies.

A few hours after the departure of the Assyrians, a Turkish detachment, chiefly consisting of Kurdish irregulars, entered the town. They pursued the Assyrians as far as Sayin Qal'eh and then returned to Rezaiyeh. After the Mudros Armistice of 30 October 1918, however, the Turks had to evacuate the Caucasus and Iran, and Azerbaijan was left with only a few hundred Iranian soldiers and gendarmes, at the mercy of many lawless and predatory tribes, both Kurdish and Azeri, well provided with arms and ammunition left over by the departing Russians and now used to plunder the peaceful population.

Some four hundred Turkish soldiers had deserted from their units during the Turkish army's retreat from Iran, and joined Simko with their arms. Besides this, Simko had appropriated three mountain guns left by the Russians which he entrusted to Turkish artillerymen from among these deserters, to each of whom he paid one gold Turkish lira a day.

Seeing himself alone in the field, Simko remembered his talks with the Assyrians about the possibility of founding an independent state in western Azerbaijan. The only difference was that with the departure of the Assyrians it would now be a purely Kurdish state, with himself as the ruler. No military forces of any value existed then in Azerbaijan, and the Azeri population of Rezaiyeh and Shahpur, cowed and decimated by the Assyrians, could easily be dominated, expelled or annihilated. His great friend and adviser was Saiyid Taha ibn Abd-el-Qader, the grandson of the famous Shaikh Obeydollah who had invaded Iran in 1880 already with the idea of creating an independent Kurdish state. It was known that the Allies would not be hostile to such a scheme, provided an Armenian state also came into being in the north-eastern Turkish vilayets, and the weakness of the Central Government of Iran, devoid of resources and prostrate as a result of the vicissitudes of war, rendered this scheme quite possible in Simko's eyes. Simko became particularly offensive after the new Governor of Rezaiyeh had been to visit him at Chehrik to beg him to restrain his tribesmen from looting and attacking the peaceful inhabitants of the Shahpur

and Rezaiyeh plains. The Sub-Governor of Azerbaijan, Mokarram-el-Molk, then hit on the idea of sending Simko a parcel supposed to be a box of sweetmeats from Simko's mother-in-law to her grandson, Simko's young son, but in fact containing a bomb. When the parcel was opened, the bomb exploded killing one of Simko's brothers, but Simko himself escaped unhurt by throwing himself on the ground with his infant son.

Simko now gathered a strong force and threatened to attack Rezaiyeh, Shahpur and Khoi. The frightened Mokarram arrested two persons who he said were suspected of having prepared and dispatched the bomb and sent them to Simko under an escort of Qarajadagh horsemen. The infuriated Kurdish chief ordered their limbs to be cut off and afterwards threw them from the high rock on which his castle was built, over a precipice, together with the thirteen men of the Qarajadagh escort (since the man who had killed his brother, Ja'far Aqa, thirteen years ago, was a chief of that tribe). In 1923, when the Government forces had occupied Chehrik after the defeat of Simko, I was shown the skeletons of these people lying at the bottom of the ravine.

The conciliatory behaviour of the Sub-Governor did not appease Simko; on the contrary, it induced him to extend the region of his depredations. In the summer of 1919, a new Governor was appointed, and Simko decided to start an open rebellion by seizing the town of Rezaiyeh. Having occupied the port of Golmankhaneh and thus cut the only remaining line of communication between Rezaiyeh and Tabriz, he sent armed parties of Kurdish horsemen into the town, who expelled the Governor, took prisoner the few Iranian soldiers forming the Governor's guard, and occupied the town which was then completely looted. Simko next attacked Shahpur with four thousand men, including his Turkish mercenaries, and after two days of severe struggle crushed the resistance of the inhabitants of the Lakistan district. Most of those who escaped from Shahpur after that town had been taken were pursued and killed on the road to Sharafkhaneh and Tabriz.

The Government mustered all available fighting men and sent them to Sharafkhaneh. The region of Tasuj on the north of Lake Rezaiyeh was occupied, and a Russian officer of the Iranian Cossack Brigade, Colonel Filipov from Teheran, took command of the Government forces, attacked the Kurds in the

Salmas (Shahpur region), and drove them back towards Chehrik. Unfortunately, instead of following up this success by pursuing and finishing off Simko, who had been abandoned by his allies from the other Kurdish tribes, he opened negotiations, and Simko, who had meanwhile evacuated the Rezaiyeh region, was allowed to remain in the district of Chehrik on condition that he kept the peace and refrained from raiding the neighbouring localities.

In 1920 Simko began to talk openly of Kurdish independence, which in his eyes simply signified the establishment of his personal despotic rule over the other Kurdish tribes of Iranian Azerbaijan and, with their help, the seizing and exploitation of large sections of non-Kurdish regions to the west and north-west of the Rezaiyeh lake, such as the plain and town of Rezaiyeh, Salmas and possibly Khoi. The population of these districts is entirely composed of Azeri—that is, Turkish-speaking—Shia Iranians, whose customs, dress, speech, physical appearance, creed and political outlook differ completely from that of the Kurds, the latter being warlike and often predatory tribesmen, the former peace-loving cultivators.

After the departure of Filipov and the Iranian detachment, Simko succeeded in gathering again the Herki Kurds and reoccupying all the territories he had held a few months before, raiding as far as the walls of Khoi. A detachment sent against him from Tabriz was defeated near the village of Shakar Yazı and retreated towards Sharafkhaneh, leaving some sixty dead (1920).

In the summer of 1921, a detachment of gendarmerie, comprising three infantry companies, one machine-gun company, and two cavalry squadrons, was sent from Teheran to Tabriz to reinforce the local forces consisting of four infantry companies, one machine-gun company, two cavalry squadrons and six light mountain-guns. I was then in command of one of the squadrons sent from Teheran. In September, I was sent with my squadron and a mounted machine-gun section to reinforce a detachment of eight hundred men holding the Mahabad region south of Lake Rezaiyeh. When I arrived in Miandoab, I learned that this detachment had received a surprise attack from some four thousand Kurds under Simko and been utterly defeated, losing more than four hundred killed, all prisoners being shot by Simko and his followers. Only three hundred and eighty-five men escaped. After this Kurdish victory, all the Kurdish tribes

of the Mahabad region, including the Mamash, Mangur, Dehbokri, Piran, Zarza, Gowrik, Feyzollahbegi, Poshtdari, Baneh and Qaderkhani, joined Simko and threatened Miandoab and Maragheh. As I had only one hundred men all told, and the men who had escaped from the Mahabad carnage were so demoralized that I had to send them all to Tabriz, I found myself at a loss as to how to organize the defence of that sector. Fortunately, when I arrived in Miandoab, I found there some five hundred horsemen from the Afshar Azeri tribes of Sayin Qal'eh (Shahin Dezh) under their tribal chiefs. Taking them under my command, I organized a detachment of six hundred men and occupied the line of the Tatava river which formed there the linguistic frontier between the Azeri Turks and the Kurds.¹ A few days later, I was relieved by a force of three hundred Iranian Cossacks, and after returning to Tabriz I proceeded to Khoi, where the Teheran column had been concentrated.

The Governor-General of Azerbaijan was then an old and distinguished gentleman called Mokhber-es-Saltaneh Hedayat. He was a cultured man, but had read a German book about the conduct of war and imagined himself able to conduct military operations against the tribes. He ordered about the few military units available in Azerbaijan in such a way that they were weak everywhere, whereas the Kurds were able to manoeuvre on internal lines and strike with all their forces by surprise on the weakest spots of the front.

As soon as I arrived in Khoi, I was sent with my squadron to reinforce the gendarmerie detachment of six hundred men operating on the Hirsapass. I was to effect a junction with two thousand Azeri irregulars from Qarajadagh under their chief, Amir Arshad, who were advancing from Sofian and Sharafkhaneh towards Salmas. These irregulars were well armed, as Amir Arshad, chief of the Qaradagh (Qarajadagh) tribesmen of the Ahar region situated to the north of Tabriz, had in 1920 disarmed the Armenian forces of General Nazarbekov after his defeat by joint Soviet and Turkish forces at Erivan and retreat into Iran. Amir Arshad had with him a number of former Russian officers of Caucasian origin who had been in the armed forces of the short-lived Azerbaijan Caucasian Republic, and had fled to Iran when that country had been

¹ Arfa, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

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reoccupied in the spring of 1920 by the Soviet Red Army. As usual Simko, by the swiftness of his movements and the impetuosity of his attack, prevented this junction. Advancing along the crest of the chain separating the Khoi plain from that of Tasuj, he made a sudden deploy to the right, and attacked the Qarajadaghis in their flank, while simultaneously pressing their advance detachment in front near Qiziljeh. The undisciplined irregulars were thrown into confusion and fled towards Sharafkhaneh, leaving two hundred killed, among whom was Amir Arshad himself. Simko then turned north and struck at our detachment on the Hirsapass. The Teheran Gendarmes stood their ground and inflicted some casualties on the Kurds, who were repulsed, but as our ammunition was exhausted and none was available in Khoi, the commander of the detachment ordered a retreat towards Khoi, which was effected under the protection of two squadrons, including mine. The Kurds, as usual, refrained from pursuit.

In November I tried a surprise attack with my squadron on the Kurdish village of Ezdikan, possession of which would have opened to us the way towards the plain of Salmas, but a local Azeri landlord, in whose village I had been stationed and who was to act as my guide in this operation, deserted us in the middle of our night march. He fled towards the Kurds and alerted them, with the result that instead of surprising them, I was surprised myself. At daybreak I found myself surrounded by Kurds of the Ezdikan and Esteran sections of the Kuresuni tribe and after six hours of severe fighting, during which my horse was shot dead under me, I was forced to retreat, leaving forty killed and nine prisoners in the hands of the Kurds. These men were brought before Simko, who asked the N.C.O. to explain to him the mechanism of one of the machine-guns they had captured. The man began to explain, then suddenly turned the gun on Simko who, bouncing from his seat, seized the man's hands, assuring him that he now understood perfectly how to work the gun. The man's daring so pleased Simko that he released him and his comrades, making each of them a present of a gold Turkish lira.

After this episode, the whole detachment, rearmed and reinforced by a hundred Azeri irregular horsemen from the Orusanlu tribesmen of Maku under their chief Bayat-Makui, attacked the Kurds on the Qaratapeh hills. The detachment

fought with great courage and some sixty men were killed in the fight, but the six hundred gendarmes were no match for the three thousand Kurds of Simko. The Makuis who were on our right flank left the fighting without orders, and as the detachment was under threat of being cut off from Khoi, the order to retreat was given and obeyed. The next day the whole detachment left Khoi in the direction of Sharafkhaneh, but the Kurds did not attack Khoi or try to intercept our retreat.

In May 1922, after the evacuation of Gilan by the Soviet forces and the surrender of a rebel communist force of seven hundred men under a local leader called Halu-Qurban, this force was incorporated as a unit into the army, given uniforms and sent to Azerbaijan with orders to advance from Miandoab to Mahabad. The men of the detachment lacked discipline and although they had been good guerrilla fighters in their native Gilan forests, they were not accustomed to the conditions of warfare in open plains or barren hills. A striking-force of Kurds belonging to the tribes of the Mahabad (Sauj Bulaq) region attacked them from the hills, killing Halu-Qurban with one hundred and fifty others. The rest fled in disorder towards Maragheh, where they were finally disbanded and sent home to Gilan.

The next act in this prolonged struggle took quite a different form. General Reza Khan Sardar Sepah, the newly created War Minister and Commander-in-Chief of the Iranian army after his successful *coup d'état* of February 1921, had at once reorganized the Iranian army by amalgamating the different forces of Cossacks, gendarmes, soldiers and tribal levies into a homogeneous regular army. Realizing that the practice of sending small detachments against the rebels resulted only in defeat and loss of morale and the strengthening of the rebels, he ordered the newly organized Guards Brigade, consisting of five infantry battalions, two mountain batteries, three squadrons and a sapper detachment, to march to Azerbaijan, forming at the same time a mixed brigade with all the scattered forces in Azerbaijan. This force, comprising eight thousand men, and commanded by General Amanollah Mirza Jahanbani, Chief of Staff of the army and a most distinguished officer, who had received his military education in Russia, was concentrated in July in the Tasuj plain north of the Rezaiyeh lake. On 23 July 1922 the entire force moved forward towards the Salmas plain

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in two columns, advancing along the crests of two parallel chains of hills, while the cavalry squadrons maintained liaison and covered the flanks. The advance guards of both these columns were attacked by the Kurds at 8 a.m., Simko having mustered more than ten thousand men from all the Kurdish tribes from Mahabad to Qotur, including some three thousand Turkish Kurds. During the morning, the Kurds attacked four times on foot, penetrating the Guards' infantry position on the southern ridge (Boz Dagh), and using their swords and daggers, which was most unusual, as the tribesmen do not use this form of attack. They were continuously repulsed, however, both sides losing heavily in the hand-to-hand fighting. The Kurds then tried to make a mounted attack on the right flank of the Guards, across the five-mile gap separating them from the Tabriz Brigade, but as my dismounted squadron was occupying this gap I subjected them to rifle fire which made them turn back and gallop away. The Kurdish artillery fire was well directed by the Turkish artillerymen, but fortunately for us most of the shells did not explode and our casualties were therefore few. At 5 p.m., the Kurds gave way: we saw through our field-glasses their mountain-guns being loaded on mules and then, all of a sudden, they melted away towards the hills to the west. Our cavalry started in pursuit and pushed them towards the Turkish frontier. During this pursuit, we secured three mountain-guns which they had to abandon, and the four hundred Turkish artillerymen were taken prisoner and sent to Turkey. At 6 p.m. our infantry entered the town of Dilmeqan (Shahpur) whose inhabitants had been reduced from some ten thousand to a couple of hundred. At the end of the day, the ten thousand men of the Kurdish forces were reduced to one thousand Shakkaks of Simko's own tribe, as all his confederates had fled to their tribal dwelling-places and sued for pardon, saying they had been deceived by Simko.

Although Simko, after passing into Turkish territory, tried to re-enter Iran, he was again defeated in a brief fight and fled once more into Turkey, where he was disarmed and sent inland far from the Iranian frontier. His house and castle at Chehrik were destroyed by the military. In 1924 Simko was pardoned and came back to Chehrik, and in 1925 he was received by Reza Shah who had come to power and to whom he swore eternal loyalty.

Nevertheless, in 1926, without any pretext or grievance, he allied himself with the Begzadeh of Mergever and Tergever and the Herki chief Haji Aqa, and invaded the plain of Salmas where he tried to enter the town of Shahpur, but was repulsed by the garrison consisting of two infantry battalions. No troops were sent from Teheran, but Reza Shah sent General Shaibani to direct operations. Shaibani took with him several officers, including my brother Ibrahim Arfa, who was then a captain, and several planes. Simko was besieging Shahpur, but the Iranian forces from Rezaiyeh, Sharafkhaneh and Khoi attacked the Kurds respectively from the south, the east and the north, while the Shahpur garrison sallied out from the town. The Kurds were repulsed with heavy losses and pursued up to the frontier by the air force and the cavalry. In order to facilitate the co-operation of the Iranian and Turkish forces on both sides of the frontier, the Turkish military attaché accompanied our forces, and as soon as Simko appeared beyond the Turkish frontier, he was encircled by Turkish troops, disarmed and interned. After his release a few years later, he returned to Iran, but could not induce any tribes to rebel and was killed after a skirmish near Ushnu (Oshnoviyeh).

When we recaptured the town of Rezaiyeh in August 1922, the whole population turned out to greet us, but of the twenty-five thousand inhabitants before the war only four or five thousand remained and these looked more like walking skeletons clad in rags than human beings. They had been subjected to terrible ordeals first by the Assyrians, who massacred more than one hundred thousand of the Azeri people of the Rezaiyeh and Shahpur towns and provinces, and then by the Kurds. The three hundred villages were abandoned and empty of inhabitants, as the Kurds killed anybody who ventured to visit them; the fields were uncultivated, the renowned Rezaiyeh fruits rotting on the trees, and the cattle and sheep had long since disappeared. It took years for the Iranian Government to make good these losses and finally several thousand Assyrians were authorized to return to Rezaiyeh, where they are now living on good terms with their Azeri neighbours.

The Simko episode may be considered as the first attempt by the Kurds in Iran to create an independent or autonomous region, but the chief actor, Simko, had neither the desire nor the ability to create a state in the modern sense of the word, with an

administrative organization. He was chiefly interested in plunder, and as he could not loot his own tribe or the associated tribes, he raided and tried to dominate non-Kurdish regions, like Salmas, Rezaiyeh, and eventually Khoi, reducing the population of these districts to utter ruin and despair.

2. THE KURDISH REBELLION IN THE KORDESTAN PROVINCE

Although unrelated to Simko's action in Azerbaijan in 1926, a more important revolt occurred farther south in the Kordestan province. A person who had been very much in the news several years before, but whose existence had been forgotten since the First World War, suddenly reappeared on the scene in that region. This was Salar-ed-Dowleh Qajar, who had revolted first against Mohammad Ali Shah in 1907 and then against Ahmad Shah Qajar in 1911, aided by the Kurds with whom he had concluded family alliances by his numerous marriages with the daughters of Kurdish chiefs. Twice defeated by Government forces, he tried in 1915 to reassert what he considered to be his right to the throne by an alliance with the Germans, promising them the support of several Kurdish tribes. When this scheme failed, he retired abroad and was not heard of for a long time. After having come to Iraq, he managed to slip into Iran with a few mounted retainers. Although he was seen crossing the frontier by a British officer on patrol, the latter, having no orders, did not interfere and only sent a report to Baghdad. The British High Commissioner informed the British Legation in Teheran and the Legation sent a note on the subject to the Iranian Government. The delay caused gave Salar-ed-Dowleh several weeks to negotiate with the Kurdish chiefs and prepare his rebellion.

A renowned stormy petrel of the region, Sardar Rashid, who had several times before indulged in minor revolts against local Governors, but, after spending some time in detention, had been pardoned by Reza Shah and was at that time in Ravansar, north of Kermanshah, now started a new rising, calling on all the Kurds to revolt against the Government and help Salar-ed-Dowleh. An Iranian cavalry squadron was attacked by the Kurds near Ravansar, sustaining heavy casualties. The tribes of the Baneh, Saqqez, and Sardasht region, including the Sardasht Gowrik, Suseni, Poshtdari, Malkari and Mangur under

Molla Khalil Suseni, rebelled, attacking the gendarmerie posts and military patrols. The town of Sardasht was occupied by the rebels, who burned the Government buildings. Farther south, the Marivan and Awroman tribes, with Mahmud Khan Kanisanani, Mahmud Khan Dezli and Ja'far Soltan, joined Salar-ed-Dowleh, and even at Ushnu trouble arose among the Zarza tribes, though the region of Mahabad remained unaffected. The famous Shaikh Mahmud of Suleymaniyah, who had had trouble with the British, and had taken refuge in Iran with Mahmud Khan Kanisanani of Marivan, also chose to give his moral support to Salar-ed-Dowleh. Shaikh Mahmud belonged to the Saiyid and Shaikh family of Barzinja who traced their ancestry to Musa Kazem, the 7th Imam. Being not only a religious chief, but also a kind of great feudal lord, he had great influence not only in the Suleymaniyah district where he lived and possessed important estates, but in all eastern Kurdistan, and even in the Iranian Kordestan province.

The rebel tribes advanced on Sanandaj, the chief city of Kordestan province, which was cut off from Kermanshah in the south and Saqqez in the north, but as the caravan track between Sanandaj and Hamadan had lately been improved and rendered passable for motor traffic, the Naderi infantry regiment (three battalions) arrived in forty-eight hours from Teheran, and the Kurds refrained from attacking them. A cavalry group of two squadrons was also sent by road and arrived at the end of September 1926. Forces from the Tabriz division advancing from the north reoccupied Baneh and Sardasht. In the Javanrud and Ravansar regions, Sardar Rashid was attacked by forces coming southwards from Sanandaj and northwards from Kermanshah. Finally he fled to Iraq together with Salar-ed-Dowleh.

The chiefs of the rebellious tribes made their submission, and the *status quo ante* of relative peace and security was re-established from Kermanshah in the south to Maku in the extreme north; but the Shah decided that the time had come to bring the unruly Kurdish frontier tribes definitely under control by disarming them and establishing effective administrative control of these districts. The detachments which had come from Teheran were therefore concentrated at Hamadan to prepare for the next spring's campaign, while a mixed brigade was organized in Sanandaj.

A former minister of war, General Abdollah Khan Amir

The Kurds

Tahmaspi, was sent from Teheran to negotiate with the Kurdish chiefs with the object of bringing them over to the side of the Central Government. Being an able negotiator, he succeeded in convincing several of them to join the Government forces against the few remaining rebels. Those who accepted were Ja'far Soltan of Awroman, Mahmud Khan Dezli of Marivan and most of the Baneh and Saqqez tribes. Only Mahmud Khan Kanisanani, who was sheltering Shaikh Mahmud, and the Rezav Kurds of upper Awroman remained in dissidence.

In June 1927, the Teheran forces returned from Hamadan to Sanandaj and then moved on Marivan, while Mahmud Khan Dezli with four hundred tribesmen attacked from the west. The son of Ja'far Soltan, Mohammad Amin Lohuni, who had also started from the south, abandoned the fight against the rebels and returned to Nosud, where he remained neutral.

The Government forces, numbering some two thousand five hundred men, advanced through hilly country where they met with little resistance. After the occupation of Marivan, Shaikh Mahmud returned to Iraq and Mahmud Khan Kanisanani surrendered and was sent for a time to Teheran. Except for a skirmish near Rezav, in which I participated with my cavalry group of three squadrons, the campaign was practically bloodless, and was in no way to be compared with our operations against Simko, or those of the Turks in 1925, 1930 and 1937. The Kurds did not fight for independence or autonomy, and at the end of the campaign the rebel tribes were disarmed. Those who had helped us, however, were allowed to keep their arms for the time being. Mahmud Khan Dezli refused to give up his arms when asked to do so, but in December 1930 a surprise attack in the middle of the night by the Sanandaj Brigade after a swift advance in deep snow forced him to flee across the frontier to Iraq.

Ja'far Soltan, attacked in his turn, showed more resistance, but after some fighting on the Shamshir pass, half-way between Ravansar and Nosud, against the forces of the Kermanshah Brigade commanded by Colonel Razmara, who afterwards became Prime Minister and was assassinated, he too crossed the frontier into Iraq. The fighting in Kordestan province lacked the fierceness and cruelty of the Azerbaijan fighting, as no hatred existed between the Kurds and the Persian-speaking Iranians who were their neighbours.

After that, the only serious fighting between the Iranians and the Kurds before the Second World War occurred in the Maku district, where an Iranian column had been sent at the request of the Turks, to co-operate with them against the Jelali in 1930-31.¹

3. THE FIRST REVOLT OF THE KURDS DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR—HAMA RASHID

The invasion of Iran by Soviet and British forces and the occupation of the northern and western provinces of Iran resulted in the disorganization of the Iranian army in the occupied regions, and the weakening of the Central Government's control there. Owing to a wrong order given by the War Minister, General Ahmad Nakhchevan, the conscript soldiers were at once demobilized, and although this order was rescinded after a short time, it was extremely difficult to make them come back, especially in tribal regions such as Kordestan. The Kurds of the frontier region, helped by those who came from Iraq, surrounded and disarmed small scattered frontier posts and garrisons, and many arms passed into their hands in this way.

The Baneh garrison was taken prisoner by the Russians, who liberated the soldiers, and sent them back to their homes, while transporting the officers and some of the N.C.O.s to the north. They also occupied the town of Sanandaj for a few hours, but as this place, according to the Soviet-British arrangements, was destined to be in the British zone, they then left it and retired towards Saqqez, while Sanandaj was occupied by a motorized battalion of Indian troops.

As soon as the Red Army left Baneh taking with it the Iranian officers, Hama Rashid, a Kurdish leader from the Baneh tribes who was living at Vineh on the Iraqi side of the frontier, invaded Iran with four hundred horsemen. He occupied Baneh after two days of fighting against a handful of Iranian soldiers who had escaped capture by the Soviet forces. At the same time, tribesmen of the Marivan region, reinforced by Iraqi Kurds from the Panjvin area, attacked the frontier post of Basheh (formerly Bashmak) and occupied it, together with the army cantonment of Qal'eh Shahpur in Marivan which had been abandoned by the military because of the invasion and the advance of the British and Russian forces. Although Sanandaj

¹ See p. 40.

had also been abandoned, the Kurds did not enter it, as it had been occupied by the British, and shortly afterwards some elements which had been garrisoned in that town returned to their barracks, and an energetic general, Mahmud Amin, was appointed Military Governor of Sanandaj.

The Commander of the Western Army Corps, General Moqaddam, sent a column consisting of three infantry companies (three hundred men) with six armoured cars under the command of my brother, Colonel Ibrahim Arfa, to recapture Saqqez and Baneh.¹ After having occupied Saqqez, the column moved towards Baneh, but being surrounded by more than two thousand tribesmen (for Hama Rashid had meanwhile been reinforced by the frontier tribesmen of Baneh and Khorkhoreh) the column had to retreat towards Saqqez where five of the armoured cars were lost when the Kurds cut off their retreat by burning a wooden bridge. Part of the infantry was taken prisoner by the Kurds, but my brother succeeded in reaching Miranshah with a handful of men after two days march through the hills. Having then retreated to Divandarreh, he was besieged by four thousand of Hama Rashid's Kurds, who had been joined by the Vakilis, Ardalans, Rasul Aqa and Ali Jawanmardi Gowrik, Sarshiv and Suleyman Jaf. Although my brother had then only one hundred and seventy men, he repulsed the Kurds, and as two Kurdish chiefs were killed and Rasul Aqa wounded, they lost heart and retreated towards Saqqez. On the road they were attacked and completely plundered and stripped by the Tilekuhi tribesmen of Ali Habibi who had come from Hubatu by way of Miranshah in order to help the Government forces.

After that, my brother went to Kermanshah, where he was appointed to the command of the 12th Division which was operating against dissident Lors, and General Amin was appointed commander of the Kordestan Division.²

As the Kurds, under Mohammad Rezai Marivani, Mahmud Kanisanani, Mohammad Rashid Almaneh, Mohammad Ali Moradi Galbaghi, Ali Walajiri, Faraj Komasi, Ijlal Gambari and Mahmud Loyi, had advanced towards Sanandaj, General Amin,

¹ Hosayn Ramtin, *Farman-e-Atesh dar Kuhistan-e-Bakhtar*, Teheran, 1323 (1944).

² My brother has been mentioned under the name of Colonel Merdivan on page 219 of Sir W. Slim's *Unofficial History*, London, 1959.



iv Kurdish Mollas in Saqqez.



v *Standing, from left to right:* Mir Haj Ahmad, Iraqi officer; Lieut. Nuri Ahmad, Iraqi officer; Colonel Izzet Abd-el-Aziz, Iraqi officer; Molla Mostafa Barzani; Qader Beg Badr Khan, from Syria; Captain Khairollah, Iraqi officer. The three others are Barzani warriors.



vi Mohammad Qazi, president of the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad, 1946, hanged in 1947.



vii Abdollah Mandan (Herki). Participated in the Komula rebellion, 1945-46, but rallied to the Government of Iran and was decorated for fighting against the Barzanis in 1947.

who had meanwhile arrived at Sanandaj, went to meet them in order to negotiate an agreement. He was arrested by the Kurds but released in twenty-four hours, after representations on the part of the officer commanding the British forces in Sanandaj; at the same time the Kurds asked for recognition of the independence of Kurdistan. After ten days the British commanding officer replied that he was unable to settle the question then and there but that it must be forwarded to the High Command in Baghdad. The concentration of Iranian forces in Sanandaj prevented the Kurds from advancing on that town, and after a while they disappeared, as tribal forces who have neither the patience nor the logistical means to remain concentrated for a long period are wont to do.

In November General Amin assembled a relief column and advanced on Divandarreh. After a fight in the village of Zagheh he repulsed the Kurds of Hama Rashid and relieved the Divandarreh column which advanced again towards Saqqez. This town was occupied, but many Kurds who had concealed themselves in the houses attacked the military in conjunction with those who were counter-attacking from outside. General Amin was killed and the column was partly dispersed and partly taken prisoner. A tribal detachment of three hundred Tilekuhi Kurds under their chief, Ali Khan Habibi, which had been co-operating with the Government forces, was also dispersed, Habibi being killed by Hama Rashid.

After the death of General Amin, Colonel Ibrahim Arfa was appointed commander of the Kordestan Division. He organized a new column and advanced again from Sanandaj towards Divandarreh where he was joined by Mohammad Khan Habibi, Ali Khan's brother, and the Tilekuhi Kurds who wanted to avenge the killing of their chief, and also Habibollah Khan Mandomi. The Marivani Kurds who had been frustrated by British intervention in their endeavour to seize Sanandaj were no longer talking about the independence of Kurdistan and even sent a representative to my brother to propose co-operation with him against Hama Rashid.

I had been sent from Teheran to Kordestan to ascertain the situation, and I happened to ride from Sanandaj to Iranshah (formerly Miranshah), between Divandarreh and Saqqez, in company with that representative. He assured me of the loyalty of his tribe towards the Shah and Iran, hinting that they had

been induced to some hostile actions by 'foreign intrigues', and that they were ready to help us to repulse and punish Hama Rashid if we would give them more arms and ammunition. As I knew that they had plenty of these, I suspected that they wanted to see what would be the outcome of our operations and then rush to help the victor. Of course I did not show him what was in my mind but praised him for the loyal feelings of his tribe towards the Government and assured him that their service would not be forgotten. I arrived at Miranshah on the eve of an attack by the Government column against the village of Sonnateh, which was effected at daybreak after a five-hour march through deep snow. I took part in the fighting. The Kurds of Hama Rashid were utterly defeated and the Tilekuhi tribesmen looted their enemies' homes, removing everything from samovars to women's wedding clothes. I tried to interfere with this but had little success and realized that this was the normal procedure in tribal fighting.

In May 1942, Colonel Arfa, with two thousand men supported by fourteen light tanks and the tribal fighters of the Tilekuhi, marched on Saqqez, defeated Hama Rashid and proceeded to Baneh. On the way there, he received orders from his new chief, General Shahbakhti, not to advance any farther but to enter into an agreement with Hama Rashid. Major Fletcher, the British political officer at Kermanshah, motored to Saqqez and presided over the negotiations. Hama Rashid was finally appointed Governor of Baneh on behalf of Teheran and allowed to keep his arms, while the Iranian military and police forces were to keep outside the Baneh-Sardasht region.

After a time Colonel Arfa, now promoted General, was appointed to the command of the 2nd Division in Teheran, and General Hushmand Afshar was put in command of the Kordestan Division. In the summer of 1942, Baneh was reoccupied by the Government forces and has remained so up to this day.

4. THE KURDISH RISING IN MAHABAD, 1945-1946

Soon after the Soviet invasion of northern Iran, the Soviet authorities invited a group of influential Kurdish tribal chiefs and other notables to visit the Soviet Azerbaijan Republic, and took them by train to Baku. There they were received by Baghirov, the Prime Minister of the Azerbaijan S.S.R., and

taken around the oilfields and several industrial and cultural organizations. Although after the collapse of their movement most of these Kurds, being afraid of Iranian reprisals, denied that the Soviet authorities had talked to them about the possibility and desirability of the formation of an independent Kurdish State, it is probable that such talks had taken place and that the Russians had promised them moral support and by implication material support as well. If the Soviets did not enlarge on this possibility more openly, it was because they had officially undertaken, in the Anglo-Soviet agreement, not to interfere in the internal affairs of Iran. The Kurdish guests were for the most part tribal chiefs and landowners who were not at all reliable from the doctrinal point of view, and the Russians did not at that time want to be accused of having territorial designs on an Iranian province. The guests included Qazi Mohammad, a lawyer and notary from Mahabad, Amir As'ad Dehbokri and his son Alyar, Majid Khan of Miandoab, Haji Baba Shaikh, the Ilkhanizadeh Aqas from Bukan, Rashid and Taha Herki, Zero Bahadori from Barandost, Saiyid Mohammad Sadeq, Hasan Mamdoi of the Shakkak, Musa Zarza, Haji Qarani Aqa and Kaka Hamza Mamash and Saiyid Mohammad Sadeq, son of Saiyid Taha and great-grandson of Shaikh Obeydollah of 1880 fame. After two weeks they returned to Iran with the impression that the Russians were ready to help them.

It appears that Soviet policy on the Kurdish question had not taken a definite shape at that time, since there were probably conflicting views on the problem. From the point of view of general politics, the Soviet Government would have liked to help in the creation of a Kurdish State, comprising the Kurds of Iran, Turkey and Iraq, which would be friendly or even subservient to Russia. In this way, the anti-Communist and anti-Soviet régimes of Turkey and Iraq, which were considered to be under Western influence, would be considerably weakened, and a door opened to Soviet infiltration into the Middle East. On the other hand, such a state, covering important regions not occupied by Soviet forces, might show a spirit of independence which would not coincide with Soviet policies and perhaps even ultimately fall under Western influence, since political power in all the Kurdish regions was concentrated in the hands of big landowners, chiefs, and religious leaders, who were all

conservative and even reactionary-minded people, and likely to be suspicious of Soviet intentions and hostile to the spreading of Communist ideas.

The Soviet authorities were aware of the latent hostility of the Kurds towards the Iranian Azerbaijanis, who were thought to be more easily assimilable on account of their racial, cultural, and linguistic ties with the Soviet Azerbaijanis to the north of the Aras river. This hostility had already been demonstrated, for, as soon as the restricting power of the Iranian police and gendarmerie had been removed subsequent to foreign military occupation, the Kurds of the Shakkak and Herki tribes showed their appreciation of their newly-won freedom of action by attacking the Azeri villages and looting the peasants, the worst offenders being Zero Bahadori, Rashid and Kamil Begs' Herki Mandan of Mergever, Omar Aqa's Mamdoi Shakkaks, Taher and Mahmud's Abdoi Shakkaks, Nuri Beg's Herki Sandan and Mohammad Hosayn's Begzadehs of Tergever. Their zone of raiding, as in the days of Simko, was the Rezaiyeh and Salmas plains inhabited by Azeris, and the representations of the Soviet consul in Rezaiyeh, who wanted to conciliate the peasant Azeri population, did not deter them from their activity.

In Mahabad, which was also within the Soviet zone, the fading away of the Iranian Army led to a progressive elimination of the Iranian Government employees and their replacement by local Kurds from the middle-class town community. In agreement with the Soviet occupying forces, Amir As'ad, chief of the Dehbokri tribe, was appointed Governor of the Mahabad region by the Central Government. This appointment was purely nominal, as several chiefs of the other Mahabad tribes—the Mangur, Mamash, Piran, Gowrik and Zarza—and even many chiefs of different clans of the Dehbokri tribe itself, did not accept his leadership. Moreover he was old and half blind, and lacked the necessary authority to administer this region, inhabited as it was by turbulent and rival Kurdish tribes. So, little by little, the power shifted into the hands of a group of Mahabad Kurdish citizens.¹

In September 1942, several people of this group organized the Komula, abbreviation for Komula-e-Zhian-e-Kordestan (Committee for the regeneration of Kordestan). This organization

¹ W. Eagleton, Jr., *The Kurdish Republic of 1946*, London, 1963. See also: Najafqoli Pesian, *Marg bud, Bazgasht ham bud*, Teheran, 1328 (1949).

In Iran

was purely local, and had no ties with the Khoybun, or the Heva (hope) party of the Iraqi Kurds. The objective of this party was the autonomy of the Kurdish-inhabited Iranian regions, and ultimately the union of all Kurdish lands in an independent state, and for this purpose they decided to reach their first aim with the help of the Soviet, and to decide upon their further action according to the way events developed both in Iran and in the rest of the world.

In 1943, the Government sent there a colonel with a Kurdish assistant to supervise security measures on behalf of the Central Government, and General Hushmand Afshar, the Commander of the Kordestan Division, also came from Sanandaj to inquire into the situation. The Government forces consisted of only a police detachment of some fourteen men, since the Russians did not allow soldiers to be stationed at Mahabad. The Russians did not permit the General to remain at Mahabad more than a few hours, and the two security officers were also very shortly expelled. In May 1943 an attack on the police station was made by Kurdish townspeople who wanted the policemen's arms. After an exchange of fire, the police station was stormed, several policemen killed, and the last vestige of Iranian authority in Mahabad disappeared. From that time, the Iranian Government began laborious negotiations with the Soviet Embassy about sending a military force to Mahabad to restore the Central Government's authority.

Before that, in 1942 the Iranian Government had been authorized by the Soviet Occupational Authorities to reorganize its security forces in Azerbaijan, which consisted of army units, gendarmerie and police. The army forces comprised the 3rd Division of three brigades at Tabriz, Rezaiyeh, and Ardabil. Each had one infantry regiment with three battalions, one of them being composed of new recruits, and the Rezaiyeh Brigade had two mountain-guns, six light tanks, and a few gendarmerie companies. One of the Tabriz battalions was stationed at Miandoab, facing Mahabad.

I was then Chief of Staff of the Iranian Army, and had to administer and control its different units which were stationed partly in Russian-occupied territory, partly in the British-occupied region and partly in provinces outside the foreign-occupied zones. My task was in this way extremely delicate and necessitated constant contact with the Embassies and military

authorities of the occupying countries. My relations with the British were smooth and as I had an old friendship with the British Military Attaché, Major-General W. A. K. Fraser, and cordial relations with the Ambassador, Sir Reader Bullard, and all the Embassy Staff, all the problems which arose were resolved in a spirit of mutual understanding. The British knew that their presence in Iran was temporary and allowed a completely free hand to our commanders in their zone of occupation, which was restricted to the Khanaqin-Kermanshah-Hamadán-Arak-Qom-Teheran road and to the Teheran-Ahvaz-Khorramshahr railway, together with Khuzestan province. It was a different proposition with the Soviets. Our units in the Russian-occupied zone could not move even one platoon without the authorization of the local Soviet commander, and all their movements within their garrison-cities were closely controlled. When I asked them to allow me to send to Mahabad a mixed column which had been concentrated for that purpose at Saqqez they refused, because Saqqez was outside the Soviet zone, and said they would allow the dispatch of only one infantry battalion from Tabriz without any supporting units. I knew that to send one battalion to Mahabad without a cavalry cover and sufficient artillery would result in its being attacked and annihilated in the mountainous region around Mahabad, in the same way as the hapless detachment of Major Malekzadeh had been destroyed there in 1921. This would have allowed the Russians to say that the Iranian Army was not fit to fight the Kurds or able to control them, and would have furnished them with a pretext to support the Kurds openly in their desire for independence.

In the end, since the stipulations of our cease-fire agreement only obliged us to inform the occupational forces of the movement of our troops, without stipulating that we had to ask their authorization for it, I ordered Hushmand Afshar to send a detachment consisting of one infantry battalion, one cavalry squadron, one section of two mountain-guns and a section of sappers by way of Bukan (Bowkan) to Miandoab and then, being reinforced by the battalion stationed there, to Mahabad. The Russians sent a force to halt the progress of this detachment compelling it to return to Saqqez, on the pretext that the movement would upset the balance of the military forces in Azerbaijan. I retorted that an army which was destroying the

mighty power of the Wehrmacht need not be afraid of a small detachment sent from Saqqez, but they remained obdurate.¹

A little later, as our patriotic Shahsevan Azeri tribes in the Ardabil area were preventing any expansion of Communism in their zone, the Soviet Ambassador Maximov asked me to order the Ardabil Brigade to disarm them. I replied that I was quite willing to undertake the disarmament of all the troublesome elements of Azerbaijan, but that I would begin with the Mahabad region where these elements had shown themselves much more offensive than in Ardabil. Maximov did not reply and the question was dropped.

It was at about this time that Qazi Mohammad and Saif Qazi came to Teheran, and one day Qazi Mohammad's brother, Sadr Qazi, who was a member of the Iranian Majles (Parliament) and whom I knew, asked by telephone if I would receive his brother and his friend. They came to the General Staff and had a long conversation with me. Sadr Qazi and Saif Qazi were mild-spoken and conciliatory, and expressed the hope that in future the Iranian Government would take into consideration their special position saying that they would be happy to co-operate with us for the well-being of the Iranian nation as a whole. Qazi Mohammad was more outspoken, and talked of past grievances, the maladministration of the Kurdish region by incompetent and unsuitable Government employees, and the desirability of employing Kurdish civil servants in the Kurdish regions. I replied that H.I.M. the Shahinshah had the same feelings of solicitude and love towards the Kurds as towards the other sections of the population, and I pointed out that many Kurds were holding high Government offices in Teheran and the provinces, one of them even being a Cabinet Minister. I agreed that there had been cases of maladministration, and that we must work together hand in hand to remedy these shortcomings and effect the necessary reforms under the High Guidance of our Sovereign. He, being a Shahinshah, i.e. an Emperor, was not the ruler of any particular racial community, but of all the peoples who from times immemorial constituted the Iranian Empire—Farsis, Azeris, Baluchis, Kurds, Turkomans, Arabs from Khuzestan, or Mongolian tribes from Khorasan—each of them keeping their ancient customs and traditions and at the same time proud of being a part of the Iranian nation. We

¹ Arfa, *op. cit.*, p. 333

parted outwardly good friends, but I could see that Qazi Mohammad was a hard nut to crack, and that he would give us trouble in the future.

Qazi Mohammad, who was to become the leading personality in the short-lived Komula Kurdish Republic, belonged to a family of Sunni religious leaders of Mahabad, and was the son of Qazi Ali, who had collaborated with Simko in 1921 during the latter's occupation of Mahabad. He was a cultured man and spoke a refined Persian, although with a marked Kurdish accent. He wore a religious garb, consisting of the traditional Arabian aba or cloak, with a white turban, but afterwards, though keeping his turban, he exchanged his aba for a European-patterned overcoat which came down to his heels. Although Sadr Qazi was not in the Tudeh Communist Party, which then counted eight deputies in the Iranian Majles, he often sided with them, and after I had adopted a strong attitude against the rebellious activities of the Kurds and supported General Hushmand Afshar in his dealings with them, he became hostile, denouncing me as a reactionary. General Hushmand Afshar had gained the sympathy of the tribal elements in Kordestan province, and of the working-class population of the towns, but was disliked both by the few Communist-minded townspeople and especially by the big landowners who were residing in Teheran and took exception to his progressive attitude towards their sharecropping peasants. In 1944-5, there was trouble in the western part of Kordestan province, where the two former rivals and enemies, Mahmud Khan Dezli and Mahmud Khan Kanisanani united and attacked a Government detachment near the Boridar village. They were defeated and fled. Mahmud Khan Kanisanani was taken prisoner and died of pneumonia a few weeks later. The Kurds of Kordestan province remained quiet and did not participate in the republican movement of the Kurds in the Soviet zone.

In that zone the Kurdish tribes for a variety of reasons joined the Komula group, which had become a party and was afterwards identified with the Kurdish state. First of all, they were prompted to do so by the occupying Soviet authorities, who interfered openly in all questions of internal politics and in 1943 and 1944 agitated actively in this cause. Secondly, they did not want to remain politically inactive, and, so to speak, miss the bus or bandwagon of Kurdish independence, which

they certainly desired to see materialize. Thirdly, they did not want to become a subject part of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. They felt racial hostility towards the Republic for they disliked the Azeri Turks, and they were politically suspicious of it since the leaders of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic were all Communist-minded and tacitly contemplating a union with the Azerbaijan S.S.R. The Kurdish chiefs, on the other hand, were conservative and looked towards a Kurdish Union outside the sphere of the U.S.S.R. Thus they wanted to be part of a purely Kurdish organization, which at the time meant the Komula of Mahabad.

In April 1943, some hundred members of the Komula elected a Central Committee, the chairman of which was Rahman Zabihi, a non-tribal Mahabadi.¹ From that time on, the tribal chiefs were increasingly left out of the deliberations of the Komula, and this caused several of them to become secretly disaffected and look more and more towards the Iranian Central Government.

Qazi Mohammad was neither a tribal chief, nor a politician, and the leftist-minded Komula people had mixed feelings towards him, since, being a religious leader, he was certainly conservative and therefore in their view a reactionary. The Soviet authorities realized that without this highly authoritative person the Komula would stagnate and the tribal chiefs would definitely be lost to the cause through the hasty actions of the too eager leftist elements. They therefore advised them to bring in the Qazi, and he was invited to join the Komula, of which he became the spiritual leader, although he was never elected to the Central Committee.

During the first period of the occupation, the Soviet Government thought it would be possible to communize Iran through the formation of a Communist Party, which was called 'Hezb-e-Tudeh-ye-Iran' (the Masses' Party of Iran), without frightening the moderates throughout the country. This plan was frustrated by the 1942 elections, at which only eight Tudeh members were elected, three by direct pressure on the part of the Soviet-occupying authorities, and four through the influence of the Central Iranian Government. This was at the time headed by Soheyli (afterwards Ambassador in London, where he died in 1958), who appeared to have been advised by the British to let

¹ Egleton, op. cit., p. 35.

some leftist-minded people be elected in order to conciliate the Russians. In this way, only one Tudeh deputy had been genuinely elected by people who were not even aware of his definite Communist sympathies. The Soviet Government then adopted a change of tactics, and undertook to create a separatist and autonomist movement in Azerbaijan, through a local party different from the Tudeh but with the same political doctrine and the same ultimate aim—to communize Iran.

In September 1945, the Soviet Government invited the Kurdish leaders to visit Baku a second time. Qazi Mohammad headed the party, with Manaf Karimi, Ali Raihani from Mahabad town, Qazi's cousin, Saif Qazi, and Kazem Ilkhani-zadeh, Abdollah Qaderi Mamash, Hamza Nalos Mamash and Nuri Beg Begzadeh.¹

They were again received by Baghirov, the Prime Minister of the Azerbaijan S.S.R., who promised them everything they asked for: independence, military and financial support, etc. During this interview, Qazi Mohammad did not fail to emphasize the point that the Kurds were not ready to be a part of Azerbaijan, and that they intended to form, together with the Kurds of Iraq and ultimately of Turkey, the Great Kurdistan of their dreams.²

It was at this time that the famous Molla Mostafa Barzani, with his brother Ahmad, pressed by the Iraqi forces, supported by a strong air force, crossed into Iran in the region of Ushnu (Oshnoviyeh) with some ten thousand tribesmen, intending to join the Kurdish Independence movement there and probably also to lead it. It is difficult to imagine that this decision could have been made without the foreknowledge and acquiescence of the Soviet authorities, as they certainly had means to prevent any such intrusion in what was officially their zone of occupation. Baghirov's hints to Qazi Mohammad in Baku concerning the suspicion he professed to entertain that Molla Mostafa was a British agent,³ could mean that the Soviet did not want to show its hand then, especially to Qazi Mohammad who certainly would have been uneasy about the appearance on the Kurdish scene of a potential rival. The arrival of the Barzanis widened the international importance of the Mahabad Kurdish move-

¹ Eagleton, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

² Proceedings of the trial of Qazi Mohammad in 1946.

³ Eagleton, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

ment, giving a concrete shape to the symbolic meeting of Kurdish representatives from Iran, Turkey and Iraq at a place where the frontiers of the three countries meet, and the enactment of a kind of Grütli pact, pledging the creation of a Greater Kurdistan.

Barzani will be dealt with in more detail in the next chapter of this book, suffice it to say here that, although he was rather the leader of a religious sect than a tribal chief, the Barzanis being chiefly a band of his religious followers, Molla Mostafa owed his prestige and fame to his being a tireless warrior against alien authority, his fighting qualities appealing strongly to the warlike Kurds. A few Iraqi officers of Kurdish race accompanied Molla Mostafa, having deserted their units to join him, and these included Mir Haj, Khairollah Mostafa, Nuri Beg and Captain Abd-el-Aziz Gilani, the son of Shaikh Abdollah Effendi, who was one of the most important personages among the Kurdish Nationalists.¹

Although Qazi Mohammad may have been aware that in the long run Molla Mostafa might become a rival, he was very pleased to have the support of the Iraqi Kurds as it reinforced his position with both the Azerbaijanis and the Russians, binding the Mahabad movement to that of the Kurds outside the Russian-occupied zone of Iran. Besides, the three thousand Iraqi tribesmen who were armed were a welcome military addition to the Komula as the Barzanis were well provided with small arms and ammunition and to the end formed the core of the Mahabad Kurdish forces.

In order to conform to the Soviet Government's action in changing the name of the Tudeh in Azerbaijan into that of Democratic Party of Azerbaijan, the same process was required from the Komula, and in September 1945, the Kurdish Democratic Party came into being, though to the Kurds themselves it retained the name of Komula.

The programme of this Party was drawn up according to the directions of the Soviet Consul in Rezaiyeh, Hashimov, and comprised the following items:²

i. The Kurdish people of Iran shall have self-government in the administration of their local affairs.

¹ *ibid.*, p. 56.

² *ibid.*, p. 57.

The Kurds

2. The Kurdish language shall be the official language and shall be taught in the schools.
3. A Provincial Council in Kurdistan shall be elected immediately according to Iranian constitutional law and shall exercise its right of controlling and overseeing all public meetings.
4. All government officials shall be Kurds.
5. Revenues collected in Kurdistan shall be spent there.
6. The Democratic Party of Kurdistan shall make efforts to establish complete fraternity with the people of Azerbaijan and the minority elements living there.
7. The party shall work for the improvement of the moral standards, the health, and the economic conditions of the Kurdish people by the development of education, public health, commerce, and agriculture.

As may be seen, this programme is vague and also contains a basic contradiction. In paragraph 3, care was taken to state that Iranian Constitutional Law would be respected. At the same time, other provisions are in opposition to this law, tending to create in what is named 'Kurdistan' a completely separate state. For instance, in paragraph 5, it is stated that the revenues (presumably *all* the revenue, and not just part of it) are to be spent in 'Kurdistan'. Should Iranian Constitutional Law be interpreted in this manner, and all the provinces have self-government? According to this pattern the Central Government would be unable to finance such general expenditures as the army, the Central Government offices, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and so on. If it lacked these organs, it would cease to exist, and there would then be no question of a 'Kurdish People of Iran', this people being either completely independent—which the Soviet Government was at that time loth to contemplate—or part of Azerbaijan—which solution would be abhorrent to the Kurds. On the other hand, it was not stated in which area this Kurdish people would exercise its sovereignty. Would it be in the region where it was in the majority, or in the one it claimed for political, geographical and economic reasons and which included several districts inhabited by a majority of non-Kurdish people, such as Solduz, Rezaiyeh, Shahpur, Khoi and Maku? Or would the Kurdish people enjoy these rights even in the regions where they were in a minority, in this way having a kind of extra-territorial status?

It is certain that many of the Kurdish tribal chiefs did not see

eye to eye with those who directed the newly-formed Kurdish Democratic Party, and even Molla Mostafa had personal views about the future of the Kurdish nation.

After the end of the war against Germany, Soviet Russia was ready to reassert its domination and influence wherever it had existed before the First World War. The Baltic States and Bessarabia with part of Finland had already been occupied during the war, and Russia now claimed the Kars and Ardahan provinces which had been taken from her by Turkey according to the 1918 Brest-Litowsk and 1921 Kars Treaties, reasserted her dominant position in Manchuria after the expulsion of the Japanese, and sought to re-establish her hold on Azerbaijan, which had been under Russian occupation and in the Russian zone of influence from 1907 to 1917.

Her endeavours to communize the Azerbaijan people did not meet with any more success than those for the communization of the rest of Iran, as the Azeri people were much attached to Islam and to the idea of belonging to Iran. The Azerbaijan S.S.R. was always looked upon as being a lost province, and not as the main Azeri nucleus to which they would like to be reunited, especially as Baku had already lost its Azeri character with the influx of Russian, Armenian and other Soviet elements, while Tabriz had always been the chief Azeri city. Moreover there were four million Azeri-speaking people in Iran, and only some two million five hundred thousand Azeris in Soviet Russia. For this reason, the Soviet authorities had to act through thoroughly communized elements which were brought from the Azerbaijan S.S.R. In the days before the Russian Revolution of 1917, each year some twenty to thirty thousand workers from the Ahar, Sarab and Ardabil districts of Iran used to cross the frontiers into Russia for seasonal work in the Baku oilfields and port (like the Mexicans who go to work each year in the United States). After having earned some money, they returned to their homes in Iran, but every year, two or three thousand of them chose to stay in Russia, where they married local Azeri girls and founded families. Some of them adopted Russian nationality, but most of them kept their Iranian passports. In the thirties, some fifty thousand of these people were expelled from Russia to Iran, many of them having never been to their country of origin, and speaking only Russian and Azeri. **Reza**

Shah ordered them to be sent to the districts from which they or their parents had originally emigrated to Russia, but as they were town dwellers and factory workers they could not be employed in the rural regions and flocked towards Ardabil, a town of about sixty thousand inhabitants, where they formed a discontented section of the population, being mostly unemployed. Having already received in Russia a communist education, it was these people who were indoctrinated and used to foment a 'people's revolution'. They were quite openly armed with Iranian rifles, one hundred thousand of which had been taken from the Teheran Arsenal by the Russians in 1942, ostensibly to be used against the Germans with ammunition captured from them. They had, in fact, been kept for such an occasion.¹

On 15 December, the pseudo-rebels, who were brought in buses and lorries to Mianeh, attacked the Government offices there and took control of the town, cutting the communications between Azerbaijan and the rest of Iran. However, the telegraph line was purposely left intact in order to allow the Tabriz military authorities, who had been cowed by the occupation forces, to convey to Teheran the necessity of ceasing all armed resistance. On that ominous day I communicated with General Darakhshani, the Commander of the 3rd Azerbaijan Division, who appeared either to have completely lost his morale or to have been won over by the Committee of the Democratic Party of Azerbaijan whose chief was Pishevari, one of the Azeri emigrés from the Caucasus, active in the Russian Communist Party since 1920. I ordered General Darakhshani to resist to the end but if he considered it impossible, to retreat towards Teheran. Quite clearly he disliked both these alternatives hinting at the inevitability of submission, but I unequivocally maintained my orders.

The next day, the Mohajirs, as the Caucasian emigrés were called, together with some troublesome and discontented local elements, attacked the gendarmerie posts all over the country, killing the gendarmes and massacring the officers they had taken prisoner, and an attack on the garrisons of Tabriz, Ardabil and Rezaiyeh appeared to be imminent.

I reported the situation to the Shah, who ordered me to send

¹ This had been proved by checking the numbers of the rifles taken afterwards from the rebels with the serial numbers of the rifles delivered in 1942 to the Russians.

a detachment to Azerbaijan. Being myself an Azerbaijani and well aware of the feelings of the great majority of the Azeri population, I decided to send a small detachment comprising only two infantry battalions, two mountain-guns and two light tanks, being sure that the appearance even of these twelve hundred men on their borders would be enough to make all the population of Azerbaijan rise against the clique of communist Mohajerin, and in this way call the Soviet bluff that the Azerbaijani wanted to secede from Iran.

The Soviet authorities were also quite aware of this, and preferred not to allow the column to reach Azerbaijan. During the march of the detachment from Teheran to Qazvin, they tried several times to induce the Commander, Colonel Azimi, to halt, saying that he would receive orders to this effect from Teheran, but as I had ordered him to proceed without paying heed to these representations, he reached the outskirts of Qazvin, where his advance was held up by the appearance of superior forces of Soviet infantry with tanks who barred his route, threatening to shoot. I then ordered him to halt on the road immediately facing the Russians, without retreating even the few kilometres to a village which would have afforded camping facilities. This force remained there for several weeks under tents, in spite of the snow and the cold, in order to demonstrate that it had been stopped by the Soviet armed forces and not because it was loth to advance towards its goal.

Meanwhile, the Iranian Army garrisons in Tabriz and Ardabil were forced to surrender by the threatening attitude of the occupational forces, who openly co-operated with the communist Mohajerin. The Rezaiyeh Brigade alone was able to resist for a few days. Notwithstanding the threats of the Soviet authorities, Colonel Zangeneh, the Commander of this brigade, not only prevented a mob of Mohajerin and a number of local Armenians and Assyrians from seizing the town, but managed to hold the periphery to a depth of twenty kilometres and to repulse the tribal forces of the Herki and Begzadeh Kurds who were attacking the town from the north, west and south.¹

Nevertheless, after the arrival of important reinforcements from Tabriz and an ultimatum from the Soviet authorities, the

¹ Najafqoli Pesian, op. cit.

Rezaiyeh Brigade had to surrender on 17 December. The officers were allowed to proceed to Teheran and the soldiers were disbanded. The commander was brought to Tabriz and there tried and condemned to death for having resisted the rebels, but later he was exchanged for several prominent communists held as hostages in Teheran.

After the Azerbaijan Democratic Party's coup in Tabriz, a Provincial National Assembly was chosen from among its members, and a government appointed by the Assembly, under the chairmanship of Pishevari. On advice (or pressure) from the Russians, Qazi Mohammad sent a mission presided over by his cousin Saif Qazi, to represent the Komula at the Assembly. To the susceptible Kurds it was represented as a goodwill mission sent to congratulate the Azerbaijan Democratic Party's Government on their appointment. After a few weeks this mission went to Mahabad and failed to return to Tabriz.

On 17 December, the Iranian flag was hauled down and the new Kurdish flag (the same horizontal colour stripes, but with the red at the top, white in the middle and green at the bottom, like the Hungarian flag) with the Kurdish coat of arms, raised above the Government buildings in Mahabad, Ushnu, and Naqadeh. All men who had seen military service in the Iranian Army were mobilized and received Russian arms and uniforms, the first contingent of three hundred men forming the nucleus of the twelve hundred strong Mahabad regular army, led by ex-Iraqi officers. Their military instruction was rather confused: the soldiers had Iranian military training and the officers British-Iraqi instruction; while the Russians, wishing to Russianize them, provided Russian military manuals translated into Kurdish.

On 22 January 1946, Qazi Mohammad invited the chiefs of tribes and other notabilities to Mahabad, and at a gathering at Government Headquarters the Kurdistan Autonomous Republic was proclaimed, after which Saif Qazi, clad in a Russian General's uniform, greeted Qazi Mohammad as leader and President of the Kurdish Republic. Following this ceremony, Qazi Mohammad reviewed the Kurdish military forces comprising the new regular army, the Barzanis and other Iraqi warriors and the local tribal contingents. During this display, Qazi Mohammad had also donned a Russian General's uniform but kept his white turban as a mark of his religious standing.

Immediately after this review, Qazi Mohammad appointed the first cabinet of the Autonomous Republic of Kurdistan as follows: 1. Haji Baba Shaikh, Prime Minister. 2. Mohammad Hosayn Saif Qazi, Minister of War. 3. Ahmad Ilahi, Minister of Economy. 4. Mohammad Amin Mo'ini, Minister of Interior. 5. Karim Ahmadain, Minister of Posts and Telegraphs. 6. Haji Rahman Ilkhanizadeh, Minister of State (officially without portfolio, but really in charge of foreign relations with the U.S.S.R., Azerbaijan and Iran). 7. Manaf Karimi, Minister of Education. 8. Sadeq Haidari, Minister of Propaganda. 9. Khalil Khosrovi, Minister of Work. 10. Haji Mostafa Daudi, Minister of Trade. 11. Mahmud Valizadeh, Minister of Agriculture. 12. Isma'il Ilkhanizadeh, Minister of Roads. 13. Saiyid Mohammad Ayubian, Minister of Health. All these people were from Mahabad town, or landowners from its vicinity, except for the two Ilkhanizadeh who were from the Dehbokri tribe and related to the former Governor Amir As'ad. Nevertheless, the chiefs of tribes were backing the Government, for they were determined to supervise its internal policy so as to allow no drastic reforms which could injure their interests. On the other hand, the small group of leftist middle-class people hoped, with the aid of the Russians, to get rid first of the tribal chiefs and then of the newly constituted bourgeois and conservative cabinet. Qazi Mohammad was aware of all these currents and cross-currents, and intended to utilize them according to his own ideas and objectives, but he knew that for the time being he could not act against the strong advice of the Soviet occupational authorities, nor dispense with the military help of the Barzanis and the local tribes. Molla Mostafa Barzani also understood the intricacies of the political set-up. Although his coming to Iran and joining the Komula only came about because he was being pursued by the Iraqi forces after his 1944 rebellion, he certainly intended to make use of the fact that for the first time the embryo of a Kurdish state had been set up in a region inhabited by a majority of Kurds and where his men constituted the chief armed force available at that time. He wanted to work once again for his old objective of bringing into being a Kurdish State which would include not only the Kurds of western Azerbaijan, and the Kurds of Iran, but would also embrace the whole Kurdish nation now divided between Iran, Turkey and Iraq.

Qazi Mohammad had a poster printed with his picture in an oval surrounded by Kurdish flags and surmounted by the Kurdish coat-of-arms, under which was written in Arabic script: 'Pishva-e-Mo'azzam-e-Kurdistan, Jenabi Qazi Mohammad' (The Great leader of Kurdistan, His Excellency Qazi Mohammad), and this he displayed in all the Government offices. Behind his desk he had a huge map of the Middle East, printed in England, on which the frontiers of a prospective Greater Kurdistan were added by hand. This area not only covered the Kurd-inhabited regions of Iran, Turkey, Iraq, Syria and even the U.S.S.R., but also reached to the Mediterranean near Iskandarun (Alexandretta) and to the Persian Gulf between Hendijan and Bushehr and included important non-Kurdish towns such as Erzurum, Erzincan, Kars, Maku, Shahpur, Mosul, Rezaiyeh, etc., indicating that Qazi Mohammad intended to be the leader of all the Kurds in the Middle East.

The idea of the Soviets was, on the contrary, to speed up the secession of Azerbaijan from Iran and its union with the Azerbaijan S.S.R., and they did not want the Kurdistan state under its bourgeois and tribal leaders to become independent and, instead of forming the nucleus of a communist Kurdish state, to be attracted towards a Western type of democracy. In order to achieve their aims, the Soviet authorities summoned the Kurdish leaders, including Qazi Mohammad, to Tabriz for negotiations with the Azerbaijan authorities. These negotiations were presided over by the Minister of Education of the Azerbaijan S.S.R., Mirza Ibrahimov, who advised the Kurds to accept an autonomous status inside a new [Iranian] Azerbaijan Republic until such time as the Iraqi and Turkish Kurds would join them to form an independent Kurdish State.¹ The Kurds retorted that if they must join a larger state, why not Iran, with which country they had much more racial and linguistic affinities than with the Turki-speaking Azerbaijan. The Russians could not argue a similarity of political régimes between Azerbaijan and Kurdistan, as Azerbaijan was becoming more and more subjected to communism, whereas, although using the name of republic, the Kurdish leaders were definitely non-communist and had even more conservative ideas than the rulers in Teheran.

¹ Eagleton, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

The relations between the Kurdistan Republic and that of Azerbaijan were becoming more and more strained, on account of the Kurdish claims on the towns of Khoi, Rezaiyeh and Shahpur and the rich, cultivated plains which surrounded them and without which the Kurds would be confined to a narrow mountainous strip along the Turkish frontier and the Mahabad region to the south of Rezaiyeh. As these coveted districts were inhabited by an Azeri majority, the Azerbaijanians were not ready to contemplate their cession to Kurdistan, and to make sure of them they had sent in units of the newly organized Azerbaijan Army. The Russians, being anxious to prevent a clash between the Kurds and the Azeris, decided to bring the leaders together to reach an agreement which was signed on 23 April 1946, and comprised the following articles:

1. Exchange of official representatives.
2. Government employees will belong to the race predominant in their districts.
3. Appointment of a joint Economic Committee.
4. Conclusion of a Military Alliance.
5. Any negotiations with the Iranian Government will be carried with the knowledge and approval of both parties.
6. Both parties will contribute to the cultural and linguistic progress of their minorities.
7. Any action against the friendship and alliance of the two Governments will be punished.

The most important question had been omitted from the terms of this agreement, namely, the specification of the territories of the two contracting countries and their frontiers. The most important article was the one concerning a military alliance between the two Governments. The Russians decided to evacuate Iran both because of pressure from outside and with a view to placating the Iranian Government so that it would be willing to grant an oil exploitation concession in the northern provinces of Iran and to negotiate Azerbaijan autonomy. But before doing so they wanted to strengthen the defensive power of Azerbaijan and of the Kurdish Republic, who, being allied, would be able to concentrate their forces on their southern borders facing the Iranian military forces, instead of watching each other around Lake Rezaiyeh. Having provisionally secured their eastern border towards Azerbaijan, the

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Kurds began to prepare themselves to advance to the south in order to conquer Kordestan province and join hands with the numerous and well-armed tribes of this region.

A certain number of Begzadeh, Suseni and Sardasht Gowrik tribesmen, joined by Poshtdari tribesmen from Iraq, numbering in all about one thousand men, occupied part of the Sardasht plain, closing in on the Iranian garrison of Sardasht, which consisted of one infantry battalion and two light tanks. There were two infantry companies at Kelteh guarding the ford of the River Zab, and two battalions with three tanks at Baneh. The forces in Saqqez were more important, consisting of four battalions, one cavalry squadron, one mountain battery, and two tanks, this place being threatened by Hama Rashid from Khorkhoreh, and a tribal force of Feyzollahbegi from the north. The same Feyzollahbegi were also concentrating in the region of Bukan, intending to attack Takab which was garrisoned by two battalions and one squadron. The communications of the Iranian forces were difficult on account of the great distance which separated them, and their security was threatened by groups of rebels operating along the roads and tracks.

The 1945-6 winter had been very cold. The roads and mountain tracks had been covered with snow until April and the Iranian garrisons of Sardasht, Kelteh, Saqqez and Takab (formerly Takan Tapeh) had great difficulty in supplying themselves with food and ammunition.

On 14 March 1946 the Kurds who had surrounded Sardasht cut the telephone wires between there and Baneh and asked for the surrender of the town. This was rejected and an attack on the town was repulsed, but a column of one hundred men sent from Baneh to reinforce the garrison of Sardasht was attacked by the Kurds and had to retreat to Baneh after sustaining losses. At this time, Lieutenant-General Jahanbani was sent from Teheran to appraise the situation and on his recommendation reinforcements were sent from Teheran. The Commander of the Division, Brigadier-General Homayuni, was also ordered to reinforce the Saqqez garrison with troops sent from Sanandaj.

The military situation on the border of Azerbaijan and Kordestan provinces was greatly influenced by the general political situation between Iran and the U.S.S.R. According to the tripartite treaty of January 1942 between Iran, the

United Kingdom, and the U.S.S.R., the joint Soviet-British Military occupation of Iran was to cease six months after the end of hostilities between the Allied Powers and Germany and her allies, and the independence and territorial integrity of Iran would be respected. The United Kingdom Government evacuated Iran on 1 January 1946, but the Russians remained, intending not only to keep Azerbaijan but to bring to power in Iran a pro-Soviet and if possible a Tudeh-controlled Government, which would proclaim its acquiescence to a continued occupation of Iran by the Soviet forces.

As we have seen, this plan had been frustrated by the measures taken by the General Staff on orders of the Shah, and although the detachment sent by me to Azerbaijan had been prevented from proceeding by the Russians at Qazvin I managed to send arms, ammunition, a few light machine-guns, and wireless sets, with several trusted officers and N.C.O.s by a roundabout route through Qom, Arak and Hamadan to organize resistance among the patriotic Azeri tribes of the Khamseh province between Qazvin and Azerbaijan who had risen against the Soviet-protected Azerbaijan Communists. The Soviet plan was then to attack Teheran from the west with the newly organized 'People's Azerbaijan Army' called Qizilbash, and from the north and south with local Communists organized by the Soviet authorities on the model of the Red Guards of the first months of the Communist Revolution in Russia. The advance of these elements towards Teheran was to be facilitated by the rising of a Communist fifth column inside Teheran which would strike the defending forces in the back.

By reinforcing the Teheran garrison with forces brought from the south, I prevented this scheme, while, by sending arms to the loyal populations of Khamseh, Gilan and Mazanderan, I prevented the progress of the communist detachments towards Teheran, who were attacked on their flanks and drawn towards the mountains instead of being able to march on Teheran under the protection of Soviet armoured units which had been concentrated at Karaj, twenty-five miles to the west of the capital. Meanwhile the Government had complained to the Security Council about the continued occupation of Iran by Soviet forces, and under pressure from this body the Soviet Government decided to open negotiations with the Iranian Government to ensure the granting of an oil concession and the recognition of

Azerbaijan province's autonomy before evacuating the country. The Iranian Central Government wanted both to gain time and to prevent any incident which would give the Soviet a pretext to delay the evacuation of Iran. For this reason, although enough forces were now gathered around Teheran, the operations against the encroaching Azerbaijan Communists were conducted only by irregular groups of volunteers, led and directed by a few army officers. Qavam signed an agreement with the Soviet authorities on 5 April 1946.

The situation was different on the Kordestan-Mahabad border. There the Iranian Government forces were not faced by hastily armed and unseasoned Azeri recruits, many of whom had no interest or desire to fight their fellow countrymen for the sake of Pishevari and the Russians, but by skilled Kurdish fighters, accustomed to the mountainous surroundings of Kurdistan, and motivated by the ideal of Kurdish nationalism. These forces were planning to break through the thin line of Iranian outposts, invade Kordestan province, and bring about a rising of all the Kurdish tribes of that province of more than half a million souls. The success of such an enterprise could have endangered the position of the Central Government forces in all western Iran by outflanking their positions in the Hamadan-Qazvin zone covering the central provinces of the country. For these reasons, when major forces became available after the evacuation of Qazvin by the Russians and the removal of the direct threat against Teheran through the occupation of Qazvin by Iranian forces, the Sanandaj-Saqqez front was reinforced, and operations were started to disengage Baneh and Sardasht and the vicinity of Saqqez. On 21 April 1946, a light column was sent from Baneh to Sardasht, and reached that town without encountering any opposition. On 29 April, a column of about six hundred men (infantry, cavalry, and one mountain-gun) moved towards Qahrabad. It neglected to secure the northern spur of the Kuh-i-Almalu and this hill was occupied by the Kurds after the column had moved to the north of it, so that when the column was attacked by the Feyzollahbegi and Gowrik Kurds, reinforced by the Barzanis from the front and the rear, it sustained heavy losses and had to retreat to Saqqez. This town was now dominated from the north-west, the north and north-east by the Barzanis, the local tribes, and Hama Rashid, who had been promoted to General of the

Kurdish Army, as were Molla Mostafa, Saif Qazi and Qazi Mohammad himself.

About this time, a band of Herki, Gowrik, and Kelasi attacked the post of Robat near Sardasht but were repulsed.

In May, after the departure of the Soviet Army from Iran, Pishevari, the leader of the Azerbaijan Autonomous Government, came to Teheran to negotiate with the Iranian Prime Minister Qavam-es-Saltaneh, in accordance with what had been arranged between Qavam and the Russians. In order not to hamper these negotiations, the Government adopted a policy of non-provocation, but at the same time of containment towards the Azerbaijanis and the Kurds.

Major-General Haj Ali Razmara, who later became Chief of Staff and eventually Prime Minister and was assassinated in 1951, was sent from Teheran as Inspector of the army forces in the west of Iran, to apply this policy, but the task proved to be extremely difficult in the face of continual provocations and encroachments by the Kurds. He invited the Kurdish chiefs to a conference at Saqqez, and the following resolutions were drawn up and signed by the two parties:

1. The representatives of the Kurdish Democrats [*sic*] will give orders to all their detachments to refrain from shooting, not to advance from the places actually occupied by them, not to reinforce their positions and not to interfere with the traffic on the roads.
2. In order to prevent any clash, the Kurdish detachments will have to retire to a distance of at least four kilometres from Saqqez and three kilometres to the north of the Saqqez-Sardasht road and not to advance beyond the Saqqez and Zarineh Rud rivers. This clause to be ratified within twenty-four hours by the Kurdish High Command.
3. Both the Kurdish Democrats and the Iranian Government will refrain from strengthening their posts in that region and the Iranian planes will not fly beyond a distance of four kilometres to the north of Saqqez, and to the north of the Saqqez-Sardasht road.
4. In order to avoid misunderstandings, the Kurdish Democrats will appoint three liaison agents, one each to Saqqez, Baneh and Sardasht to keep contact with the Iranian military authorities.
5. The time limit for the execution of Paragraph 3 will be the 7th of Khordad (28 May) at 8 a.m.

Signed on behalf of the Kurds: 1. Lieut.-Colonel Izzet Abd-el-Aziz 2. Major Ibrahim 3. Major Ja'far Karimi.¹

¹ Najafqoli Pesian, *op. cit.*

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Both the Central Government and the Kurds had signed this document with the idea of gaining time to concentrate their forces. The Iranians wanted time to create a strong defensive line and then to start a general offensive in the direction of Mahabad. The Kurds planned to occupy Baneh, Sardasht and Saqqez and then to invade Kordestan province. For this reason, alleging the indiscipline of their tribal contingents, the Kurds kept parties of sharpshooters around Saqqez and on the hills dominating the Saqqez-Baneh-Sardasht road, subjecting the Iranian transport columns to continual sniping, in order to prevent the reinforcement of the garrisons which they intended to attack at the first opportunity.

As the many protests to Qazi Mohammad about this sniping produced no result, General Razmara ordered several battalions stationed at Hamadan to go to Saqqez. The Takab garrison was also reinforced as it was being threatened simultaneously from the east by the Azerbaijan Democrats and from the west by the Feyzollahbegi Kurds. At the same time, an agreement for a cease-fire in the Shahin Dezh and Khamseh region, on the model of the one arrived at with the Kurds, was signed between the representatives of the Iranian Army and those of the Azerbaijan Democrats.

At the beginning of June, the Kurds had concentrated most of their forces on the Sardasht-Saqqez and Saqqez-Miandoab fronts, as their Treaty of Alliance with Azerbaijan and the assurances of the Soviet authorities guaranteeing their eastern frontier allowed them to leave that border empty of troops for the time being. But the Milan, Jelali, Haidaranlu, Kuresuni and Shakkak in the north-eastern part of Azerbaijan could still dispose of some four thousand armed fighting men who preferred not to take part in the southern operations.

The numbers given in Eagleton's *The Kurdish Republic of 1946* are fairly accurate, in spite of the difficulty of assessing the exact number of tribal fighting men at any one time, since different contingents come and go at will, and are not subject to orders emanating from their Supreme Command. It can be said that at the time of their maximum concentration on the southern and south-eastern sectors of the Mahabad Republic out of twenty thousand able-bodied fighting men there were some thirteen thousand active in these regions, not counting

the four thousand who stayed in the north. The remaining three thousand did not join, either on account of lack of arms or for personal reasons. The total number of the tribal Kurds of north-western Azerbaijan, in the zone controlled by the Mahabad Democrats in 1945, was at that time about forty thousand families, or some two hundred thousand souls, without counting the town dwellers in Mahabad, Bukan, Ushnu and some smaller places.

Although the majority of these men were mounted on sturdy little Kurdish horses, the Kurds never fought with swords or lances and only used their daggers in a hand-to-hand fight. On attacking, they usually charged in dispersed order until close to their enemy, then dismounted and attacked on foot using their firearms. Sometimes they charged in mounted order, with two men on each horse; then one would dismount and advance from cover to cover, firing his gun, while the other galloped to the rear to take cover behind a hill or a ridge. Several times I saw them firing from horseback without taking aim, chiefly in order to frighten their foes and demoralize them. Their usual tactic was to surround their enemies by occupying hills from which they could dominate them, then, by narrowing the circle, force them to surrender. Although I had fought against the Shakkak and the Kuresuni in the course of a year and a half in 1921-2, against the Marivani in 1927 and against Hama Rashid in 1942, I was only once present at a real assault with hand-to-hand fighting, and that was on the morning of 24 July 1922, during the Kurds' desperate attack on the positions of the Pahlavi Infantry Regiment. They used to scream like the Arabs (who shouted *yu, yu, yu* unceasingly when attacking the French in Algeria). Even the women joined them in this, when the fighting was going on near villages or encampments, and it certainly had a very demoralizing effect.

The Iranian army forces in Kordestan consisted of eight infantry battalions (each comprised of three rifle companies and one heavy machine-gun company), three of them being at Saqqez, some cavalry and three mountain pack batteries, in all between five and six thousand men, half of them in the Saqqez area. On 15 June 1946, as the communications with Baneh were continually interrupted by firing from the hills to the south-west of Saqqez, near the villages of Khaidar and Haijanan, it was decided to occupy these hills. An infantry battalion covered

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on its flanks by two cavalry squadrons and supported by tanks and the fire of an artillery battery, occupied hills 7605 and 7046 (quarter-inch map J-38 W, July 1942) and dislodged the Hama Rashid Kurds after fierce fighting, both sides sustaining heavy casualties. The next day, a Kurdish counter-attack was also repulsed, so that when General Razmara met Qazi Mohammad on the 27th at the village of Sara near Saqqez he was able to persuade him to give urgent orders to the Kurdish forces to conform to the stipulations of the agreement entered into. From that day, the supply columns to Saqqez and to Baneh and Sardasht were no longer attacked or fired on. This fighting is known both to the Kurds and to the Iranians as the battle of Mamshah, by the name of one of the hills which fell to the Iranians.

On 9 May, the Soviet Army evacuated Iran, and a few days before that a commission under Pishavari had come to Teheran to discuss the terms of Azerbaijan's autonomy in the cadre of Iran. The negotiations broke down principally over the terms concerning military organization. Pishavari left for Tabriz, while the Prime Minister of Iran, Qavam-es-Saltaneh, issued a declaration stressing his own wish for conciliation and deploring the uncompromising attitude adopted by Pishavari.

The Soviet Government, being eager to see these negotiations succeed, began to apply the necessary pressure on the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic in particular, and on 12 June 1946 a deputation composed of Mozaffar Firuz, deputy Prime Minister, Brigadier-General Abdollah Hedayat, deputy War Minister, and Brigadier-General Mohammad Ali Alavi Moqaddam, who was to become the Commander of the Azerbaijan Division, arrived at Tabriz to take up the interrupted negotiations on the basis of mutual concessions. On 15 June a general agreement was arrived at, but as the military provisions were still contrary to the spirit of Iranian sovereignty the Iranian military members refused to endorse it, and the mission returned to Teheran.

On 20 August, an Azerbaijan deputation, headed by the President of the Azerbaijan National Assembly, Shabistari, and a former Colonel of the Iranian Army, Panahian, who had deserted to Azerbaijan and had there been promoted General and appointed Chief of Staff, came to Teheran to try to induce the Iranian Government to accept their military conditions. As these were tantamount to the creation of an independent

Army of Azerbaijan completely outside the control of the Iranian High Command, the Shah refused categorically to consider any further concessions, and in spite of the intervention of the Soviet Ambassador Sadchikov, who assisted at several meetings of the Azerbaijan and Iranian delegates, the negotiations dragged on for several weeks and then the Azerbaijanis departed to Tabriz without having achieved their aim.

The Kurds did not participate directly in all these negotiations, but it was understood that as the region subjected to the Komula was entirely situated in the Azerbaijan province of Iran, any provisions concerning this province would be applicable to its Kurdish region. This would leave the whole of Kordestan province outside the scope of the negotiations, so the Komula leaders concentrated their forces on the border of that province in order to invade it, hoping that by creating there the same conditions as in Azerbaijan, any settlement reached for Azerbaijan would be extended also to Kordestan province. These plans were frustrated by the timely concentration of the Iranian forces in the Saqqez region and the lack of co-operation of the greater part of the Kurdish tribes of Kordestan, some of which, like the Tilekuhis, even co-operated with the Government forces.

According to the Qavam agreement with the Soviet Government (5 April 1946) which led to the evacuation of Iran by the Soviet Army, the Russians would receive a concession for the exploitation of oil in northern Iran on the basis of a joint Irano-Soviet company, with fifty-one shares to the U.S.S.R. and forty-nine to Iran. This concession was to be ratified by the Iranian Majles. The elections for the 15th Majles having been postponed by a resolution of the 14th Majles until after the evacuation of the country by foreign forces, the Russians had to evacuate their zone of occupation in order to get the concession legally confirmed by a Majles elected under Qavam's auspices which they thought would accept the Irano-Soviet agreement without demur.

Then Qavam declared that in order to hold free elections the whole of Iran must be occupied by the security forces of the Imperial Iranian Army, and until this was accomplished no elections would be held. The Soviet had to yield again, hoping that when the elections did occur and the 15th Majles was elected, its ratification of the oil concession and of the

autonomy of Azerbaijan would facilitate the spreading of communism and the assertion of Soviet economic and political influence all over the country.

During October, the newly appointed Governor-General of Azerbaijan on behalf of the Central Government, Dr. Javid, who according to the agreement between Qavam and Pishevari was a member of the Azerbaijan Democratic Government, was negotiating with Qavam about the exchange of Khamseh province with Sardasht and Takab. Khamseh was not part of Azerbaijan but had been occupied by the Azerbaijani Army (Qizilbash) and Gendarmerie (Fedayi); Sardasht and Takab the Azerbaijanis claimed as part of their province. Qavam was willing to accept this exchange because he wanted to placate the Russians and the leftists in Iran, but the Army authorities—the Minister of War and the Chief of Staff—by order of the Shah, strongly opposed it. Finally the Government decided to occupy Khamseh province, at the same time keeping its garrisons in Sardasht and Takab, since these places had a great strategic importance for the defence of Hamadan and Kordestan province and, incidentally, for an eventual offensive for the reoccupation of Azerbaijan. About that time Qazi Mohammad came to Saqqez to see General Homayuni, the Divisional Commander, with a written order signed by Qavam agreeing to exchange Takab and Sardasht with Zanjan and the Khamseh province. Homayuni referred the question to the General Staff, but the Staff, being constitutionally directly dependent on the Commander-in-Chief, that is the Shah, refused to execute the Prime Minister's order, and Qazi Mohammad returned to Mahabad empty-handed.

The Iranian Army units concentrated in Qazvin were organized in a division which was called the 3rd, indicating that it was to become the Division of Azerbaijan, and its command was given to General Mir Hosayn Hashemi, an Azerbaijani very popular in Tabriz.

On 22 November 1946, the 3rd Division advanced on Zanjan, its flanks protected by the irregulars under their local chiefs, the Zolfaqari brothers, Hedayatollah Yamini, Yadollah Khan Aslahadarbashi, Mohammad Hasan Afshar and Moqaddam, led by Colonel Bayandor and Major Bakhtyar. The advance-guard reached Zanjan on the same day at 11 p.m., the main motorized column on the 23rd at 2 a.m., and a detachment transported by

railway at 3.30 a.m. No resistance was encountered as all the Azerbaijani Democratic forces retreated quickly in order to escape from the wrath of the population which rose against them as soon as it heard of the approach of the Government forces. To the south of Zanjan the Azerbaijani had an advanced line with about one thousand five hundred men with many machine-guns but no artillery. Their main defence line was on the Qaflian Kuh ridge just to the south of Mianeh which formed the geographical border of the Azerbaijan province.

The decision to advance into Azerbaijan was taken in Teheran during a consultation between the Shah, the Prime Minister Qavam, the War Minister and the Chief of Staff. The Prime Minister had some qualms about the risks of intervention by Soviet forces in aid of the Azerbaijan Democrats, but the Shah, supported by the Chief of Staff, decided for the advance of the Army, and the necessary orders were given directly by him to the Staff.

The 3rd Division in Zanjan and the 4th in Sanandaj and Saqqez were considerably reinforced, and all together a force comprising 22 infantry battalions, 4 cavalry regiments, 2 mountain and 2 field batteries, 3 light tank companies (some 30 tanks) and support forces (mortars, anti-tank guns, sappers, etc.), was concentrated in Khamseh and Kordestan, in all some seventeen thousand men, and in addition some three thousand irregulars. The Azerbaijan Democrats had on the Azerbaijan-Khamseh front about ten thousand Qizilbash (army) and eight thousand Fedayi (gendarmerie), and on the Kurdish front approximately thirteen thousand Kurds, all of them irregular tribal fighting men, with the exception of one thousand two hundred Mahabad Army levies of indifferent military value. With the departure of the Soviet Army, and the withdrawal of the few Russian instructors, the fighting value of the Azerbaijanis became very low, and their morale shaky, the best officers amongst them being the two dozen Iranian deserters who knew that there would be no pardon for them and were ready to fight desperately against their former comrades.

The Kurdish tribal fighters were good warriors, but the chiefs of these tribes were lukewarm in the cause of the Komula, and after the departure of the Russians most of them felt quite ready to return to the patriarchal rule of the Iranian Central Government instead of being daily disturbed by the communistic

innovations of the Russians and Azerbaijan Democrats. Only the Barzanis were ready to fight seriously, but being in a minority among the local tribes and in a strange land where they were considered as guests, their position was becoming daily more delicate; their fight would now be for their own survival and not for the existence of the Kurdish Republic, the fate of which had become more than doubtful.

Immediately after the evacuation of Zanjañ, the Shah flew in his plane to that town. There he gave orders for a further advance towards Tabriz, and made a proclamation to the Armed Forces which was issued on the eve of the Army's march into Azerbaijan. According to these orders, the forces of the 3rd Division under General Mir Hosayn Hashemi, were to advance on the Zanjañ-Mianeh-Tabriz road, covered on their right flank by the Azeri irregulars from the Tarom and Khalkhal districts, and on their left and more exposed flank by the Khamseh irregulars of Colonel Bayandor (the Zolfaqaris, Yamini, Afshar, etc.). The 4th Kordestan Division under General Homayuni was to contain the Kurds on the Saqqez-Baneh front and to execute an encircling movement with its main forces from Takab in the direction of Shahin Dezh, Miandoab, and Mahabad, to cut off the retreat of the Barzanis and the other Kurdish elements which were in front of Saqqez. This force would have a liaison with the 4th Division in the Sareskand district between Mianeh and Maragheh. A column coming from Rasht along the Caspian Sea coast would reach Astara, on the U.S.S.R. frontier and then turn to the west and march towards Ardabil, where it would join hands with the loyal Shahsevan and Shatranlu tribes which had been secretly armed by me when I was Chief of Staff and had not ceased to co-operate with the Iranian forces during the whole period of the Soviet occupation.

On 2 December an advance guard of the 4th Division occupied Sarcham on the Mianeh road and, three days later, on the fifth, the main column advanced towards Mianeh. The Democrats had blown up the Qizil Owzan bridge and occupied a strong position on the Qaflan Kuh ridge south of Mianeh. This position was turned from the west and also attacked from the east, and an encircling movement of the Khamseh irregulars forced the Democrats, whose morale had become very low, to evacuate their position and retreat towards Tabriz. Mianeh was

occupied by the Iranians on 10 December at 4 p.m., and, in spite of the darkness, the cavalry and irregulars pursued the retreating Qizilbash towards Turkeman (Turkemanchai) inflicting on them heavy casualties. The next day, when the Tabriz population learned of the Democrats' defeat, it rose against them and, seizing the Government offices, started to kill all the Democrats they could lay their hands on. On hearing of this, the retreating Democrats were seized by panic, left the Tabriz road, dispersed, and fled towards the Soviet frontier, abandoning their war material. Pishevari and most of his Ministers managed to escape, but one of them, Beria, was seized by the Tabriz populace and torn to pieces. The Iranian Army did not come upon any resistance after Qafan Kuh and it was met everywhere by an enthusiastic population.

On the Kurdish front things were even easier. North-west of Lake Rezaiyeh, the important Shakkak tribe of Omar Khan and Taher Khan, suddenly turned against their Azerbaijani allies and attacked them in the Rezaiyeh, Shahpur and Khoi regions, driving them towards the east.

On 7 December, the Iranian forces concentrated at Takab began their advance towards Shahin Dezh, and after four days of fighting on the hills of Sursat, Biyan and Minbar, they occupied Shahin Dezh on the eleventh. On the thirteenth, a motorized column advanced from Shahin Dezh towards Miandoab under the protection of the air force. There a Democrat battalion surrendered and the Azeri population of Miandoab greeted the Iranian units with enthusiasm. The Barzani Kurds who had hastened to the Shahin Dezh sector of the front to reinforce the Azeri Qizilbash retreated towards Mahabad without fighting when they heard that the resistance of the Democrats had collapsed. Maragheh was occupied by Army units from Tabriz and from Miandoab simultaneously.

After Miandoab had been occupied, the Kurdish tribes of the Mahabad, Baneh, Sardasht and Saqqez regions left the front and departed towards their tribal zones, while their chiefs called on the Iranian military authorities to announce their submission. On 14 December the Saqqez forces began their advance to the north and on the seventeenth Qazi Mohammad with the other Kurdish leaders came out of Mahabad to greet the Iranian Army and surrender the town which was occupied both from the north by the main column coming from Miandoab and from

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the south by a cavalry column which had advanced from Saqqez and Bukan. Qazi Mohammad and all the members of the Komula Committee and Kurdish Democratic Government were arrested after an interview with General Homayuni. Molla Mostafa also came to confer with the General. He agreed to return to Iraq if the Iraqi or British Governments would guarantee his safety and that of his tribe, and it was decided to send him to Teheran to confer with the British Embassy on this matter. He remained for several weeks in Teheran, but as he had no satisfactory reply from the British he returned to Naqadeh where his tribe was still assembled in arms. The Iranian Government proposed that he should bring his whole tribe to Hamadan and settle it on empty land in the vicinity of that town. They would have to give up their arms and become peaceful Iranian subjects. After consultation with his brother Shaikh Ahmad, who was acting as a kind of elder statesman, Molla Mostafa refused this solution. Then he was given the choice either to go back to Iraq without any guarantee, or to surrender and deliver all the arms held by his tribesmen. If he failed to comply, the army would advance to Naqadeh and disarm him by force. As no answer to this offer was received, the army occupied Naqadeh and the Barzanis retreated towards Ushnu. This town was also occupied by the Iranians and the Barzanis passed into the mountainous region of Mergever and Tergever. Here the Herki tribes of Rashid Beg and the Begzadeh of Nuri Beg offered Molla Mostafa hospitality, but later, on the approach of an Iranian column from Rezaiyeh, they abandoned him, submitting to the Iranians and even co-operating with them against the Barzanis who were also being pressed from the south by the Mamash and the Zarza. After a series of skirmishes, the Barzanis finally crossed into Iraq on 25 April 1947.

On 31 March 1947, after a trial by a military court, Qazi Mohammad, his brother Sadr Qazi, a former deputy, and their cousin, Saif Qazi, were hanged for treason. In this way, the Soviet-engineered and supported Kurdish rebellion in Iran came to an end. The reason for such a rapid collapse as soon as foreign support had been removed was due to the fact that there was no unanimity among the Iranian Kurds to fight to the bitter end, endure hardship and make sacrifices for a dubious independence under Soviet and Azeri communist domination.

Neither was there any co-operation or unity of purpose among the Kurdish chiefs. The Shakkak of Simko had fought much better in 1919 to 1922 because they were under one chief and they had the incentive of plundering an alien Azeri population. In 1946, there was no possibility of plundering, as the Azeri were, however unwillingly, their allies, and the Kurds of Kordestan their prospective allies. The only prospect was to be killed or wounded for an abstract idea, and on behalf of the Russians whom the Kurds never cared about, and the Azerbaijanis whom they frankly disliked. As for the Iranians from Teheran and elsewhere, the Kurds considered them closely related to themselves by race and speech and did not feel any animosity such as they felt towards several other neighbouring races. After having tried to resist the establishment of the Central Government's control during Reza Shah's reign, they had since then become used to it and had profited by the general progress of the country. Their rebellion there had been more or less forced upon them.

In May, Molla Mostafa realized that the Iraqi Government had not forgotten his 1945 revolt, and that he had soon to face unpleasantness from the Iraqi Government. Several of his friends were arrested and executed¹ and he had reason to expect the worst himself. He therefore took the decision to cross into U.S.S.R. This he did with some five hundred well-armed fighting Barzani men, passing through Turkey and Iran on a fourteen-day march in which he covered three hundred and fifty kilometres and had only one encounter with the Iranian armed forces. He remained there for eleven years and during this time the Russians took great care of him and of his men, trying to indoctrinate them and keep them ready for an eventual intervention either in Iran or in one of the two other neighbouring states. These Barzanis were kept for a time in the region between Shahtakhti and Nakhchevan, just across the Aras river, but afterwards they were moved to the district of Zangezur, in the Azerbaijan S.S.R., where most of the sixty thousand Kurds of the U.S.S.R. live.² They were distributed in Kurdish villages

¹ Among them Captain Izzet Abd-el-Aziz.

² Forty thousand Kurds live in the Zangezur district; ten thousand are distributed between Armenia S.S.R., in the Yerivan district and Georgia S.S.R., in the Akhalkalaki and Akhaltsikh districts and in the Ajariya A.S.S.R.; the remaining ten thousand Soviet Kurds live in the northern Caucasus and in the Central Asian S.S. Republics.

around the little town of Garrusi, and twelve Soviet army officers, chiefly Kurds and Moslems were in charge of them. They were taught Russian and Kurdish in the Cyrillic alphabet and received also military guerrilla-type instruction. During their sojourn in Russia there were many secret comings and goings through Iran to northern Iraq and vice versa, and much propaganda work was carried out for Kurdish independence in Iraq. The emissaries never remained for long in Iran, however, for they risked being caught by Iranian gendarmerie and police authorities and they could not be sure of local tribal sympathy after the fighting which had occurred between the Barzanis and the Iranian Kurds during the winter and spring of 1947 when the Barzanis killed several Mamash Aqas and Herki Begs. The Soviet authorities had the impression that they had converted Molla Mostafa to communist ideas, for the shrewd Kurd considered it wise to appear to be won over to Marxism. He travelled to Moscow and of course to Baku and elsewhere, always accompanied by his Soviet guardian angels, but living in the midst of his fellow Barzanis he remained a true Kurd, and as he was already more than forty years old when he came to the U.S.S.R., his feelings and beliefs were not much influenced by the constant brainwashing to which he was subjected. The subsequent career of Molla Mostafa is concerned with events in Iraq which will be related in the next chapter.

5. THE PRESENT POSITION OF THE KURDS IN IRAN

After the reoccupation of the formerly Soviet-occupied zone in Azerbaijan, the Kurds of that region, who had for a time become part of the Komula Kurdish Republic, were disarmed without difficulty and settled down to the life they had led before these happenings. The sedentary Shakkak, Herki and Begzadeh tribes returned to their stone-built villages in the thickly wooded ravines and on the bare slopes of the hills near the brooks and springs of Somai, Barandost, Tergever and Mergever. The nomad Jelali returned to their black tents north of Maku between the slopes of the Lesser Ararat and the Karasu and Aras rivers; the Zarza, Dehbokri, Piran, Mamash, Mangur, Gowrik, Sarshiv, Feyzollahbegi, and Banei went to their grasslands. The tribes returned, not with the bitter and humiliated feelings of a vanquished nation which had lost its dearly-won but short-lived independence, but only with the knowledge that this

venture, like many others before, had not come off and that for the time being they had better sit quietly and show themselves good citizens. If circumstances had not allowed them to enjoy the traditional game of plundering the Azeri villages, they had nevertheless had enough alarms and excursions to gladden their warriors' hearts and, as they were defeated by disciplined soldiers not by fellow tribesmen, they were saved the usual punishment of the vanquished in such mountain warfare—that of being plundered in their turn. To excuse themselves for having participated in this rebellion, they alleged that they had been forced to do so by the all-powerful occupational Russian forces. Some said they had been deceived by Qazi Mohammad and his Democrats who had told them that they really were not at war with the Central Government but with local commanders who had misunderstood the orders from Teheran. Others said that they had pretended to be with the Democrats only so as to be able to attack them when the favourable moment should come, and this they did as soon as the Government forces appeared in their vicinity. All of them professed sentiments of loyalty when the Shah came to Rezaiyeh and graciously received their deputation.

In Kordestan and Kermanshah provinces, which had not been directly affected by the bid for independence by the Kurds of Azerbaijan province, the conditions were different. The Kurds there had not tried to become independent with the support of foreigners, so they did not consider themselves obliged to appear meek and apologetic. Nor did they show any eagerness to part with the arms they had acquired at the time of the disintegration of the Iranian military units in 1941 following the invasion of Iran by the British and Soviet armies. After the evacuation of the country by the foreign forces, the Central Government reorganized the Iranian Army and strengthened it with modern war material. With the help of an American military mission, it strove to increase its military efficiency, reverting to Reza Shah's policy of controlling the frontier provinces and disarming and pacifying the turbulent tribes, so as to restore the security which had been badly disturbed as a consequence of foreign invasion and occupation.

In the Kurdish province, as elsewhere, the disarmament operations were started by reorganized army and gendarmerie units stationed in their former garrison localities. Many tribes

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complied, but others hastened to send their arms into Iraq, where the tribesmen were allowed to be armed, and there the rifles were either concealed or sold at a good price. This was what Ja'far Soltan's sons did in the Awroman district. To the south of this district, the Javanrudi revolted, supported by a section of the Awromi under Mohammad Saleh Lohuni, and, after a convergent drive of the Iranian forces from Kermanshah and from Sanandaj, they passed into Iraq where they remained for a time. Later they returned, having left their rifles behind in the hands of their friends the Palani, Jaf and Bajlavi Kurds of Iraq.

The Iraqi revolution of 1958 had immediate repercussions on the Iranian Kurds of the frontier districts. During the Nuri-Sa'id Government, Iraq had no diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R. and a cold war was being waged between the respective radios and press. One of the first acts of Abd-el-Karim Qasem had been to make a rapprochement with Soviet Russia and all the Socialist (Communist) States, and to renew diplomatic relations with them. As a result of this, Molla Mostafa Barzani flew from Prague through Cairo direct to Baghdad while his eight hundred followers were embarked in Batum on a Soviet ship and taken through the Bosphorus, the Dardanelles, the Suez Canal and the Persian Gulf to Basra and from there by train to Baghdad where they were welcomed as heroes. Some people questioned how it was that the five or six hundred Barzanis who had crossed into the U.S.S.R. in 1947 had now become eight hundred, and it was said that a certain number of Soviet citizens, Kurds or others, had joined them on that journey. It was also said that two of the officers who had been in charge of the Barzanis in Russia had been seen in Rashid Street in Baghdad several days before the ship transporting the Barzanis had entered the port of Basra.

Molla Mostafa began by taking in hand the Kurds' movement for autonomy which was then recognized by the Iraqi Government. At the same time, his actions were clearly tinged by leftist and even Communist ideas. A special militia, consisting chiefly of Communist elements, was organized all over Iraq and began to victimize the Kurdish Aqas and landowners. Wild talk about the partition of the estates and even the possibility of a capital levy alarmed the chiefs of tribes who were big

landowners in the Kurdish inhabited districts of northern Iraq.

As a result of this interference by the leftist elements at that time supported by the Iraqi armed forces, some three thousand Kurds passed into Turkey in the region of Shamdinan (Şemdinli), and more than ten thousand into Iran where the Iranian military authorities disarmed them and, with the aid of the Red Lion and Sun (the Iranian equivalent of the Red Cross), provided them with tents and foodstuffs, and settled them in camps at some distance from the Iraqi frontier. Some of the chiefs of tribes came to Teheran and one of them, whom I met there, declared to me that he had forty thousand armed fighting men in Iraq, and that they were ready to fight the Iraqi Army and Qasem's Government if allowed to do so by the Shah of Iran. Of course this was just an Oriental compliment, and certainly he did not expect the Shah to give him such an order. After several weeks Abd-el-Karim Qasem realized that this policy was alienating an important section of the Kurdish population and the militia was dissolved and disarmed, the army and the police being again put in charge of the security of the country districts and of the frontiers. Learning that the situation in northern Iraq had again become normal, the Kurdish refugees returned there from Iran. At the frontier they were given back the arms which had been taken from them.

During the sojourn of the Iraqi Kurds in Iran, the Iranian Kurds showed themselves hospitable, for the presence of these refugees in Iran was due to a squabble between the Kurds who followed the leftist policy of Molla Mostafa and the Mohajerin from the U.S.S.R., and the conservative tribal elements, and no Kurdish nationalist feeling was involved. Moreover, the sympathy of the Iranian Kurds was more on the side of this conservative element whose traditional way of life was the same as that of the Iranian tribal people.

After Molla Mostafa had fallen out with the Iraqi Government of Abd-el-Karim Qasem and the Kurdish rebellion against Arab-Iraqi domination had begun in earnest, the more politically-minded Kurds began to realize that this movement was of the same essence as the rising of the Turkish Kurds in the twenties and thirties and of the Komula of 1946. Since 1961, the responsible public opinion of the liberal Kurds, both in Kordestan and Azerbaijan provinces and in Teheran, has been

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on the side of Molla Mostafa and the Kurdish Autonomists' rebellion. The tribal chiefs and conservative-minded land-owners keep outwardly an attitude of neutrality, taking care not to be accused of disloyalty to the Iranian Crown but expressing sympathy with the Iraqi Kurdish movement in private. At the same time they rejoice inwardly that these disturbances take place in the neighbouring country of Iraq and not in Iran, and that their traditional position as chiefs of tribes and local notabilities is for the present not exposed to Communist-inspired innovations.

Many of the middle-class Kurds employed in Government service or in the liberal professions consider the struggle of Molla Mostafa and the Kurdish Heva party as that of the Kurdish nation for its freedom and dignity and wholly sympathize with it without considering themselves disloyal towards the country of which they are citizens. The broadcasts from Soviet, East German and Egyptian radios, which are favourable to the Kurdish rebels, are eagerly listened to and the tales of Kurdish victories over the Iraqis are accepted at their face value, while the Iraqi communiques are discarded as false and unworthy propaganda. This attitude is chiefly academic, but many young firebrands from the frontier tribes have gone into Iraq to fight with the rebels, especially from the Awroman, Merivan, Baneh and Poshtdari tribes.

There are rumours about Soviet-made arms secretly conveyed from the Caucasus across Iranian territory to Molla Mostafa in Iraq. As this would entail a journey of three hundred kilometres through Iranian territory, across a region garrisoned by strong Iranian army forces and along tracks guarded by many police, gendarmerie and frontier guard posts, it is difficult to believe that important consignments of war material could pass by this route, for the Iranian Government has declared a strict neutrality in this Iraqi Civil War, as it can be termed, and entertains correct and, at the time of writing, even friendly relations with the Iraqi Government of Abd-es-Salam Aref.

4

The Kurds in Iraq

THE events before 1919 in the Kurd-inhabited region which has since become part of Iraq have been dealt with in Chapter I, as it was then part of the Ottoman Empire. Since that date the Kurds of Iraq have been subjected to quite different political and social conditions and their life has progressed on different lines from those of their brother Kurds left in Turkey.

During the first years of their separation from Turkey, the position of those living in the northern part of Iraq was influenced by three facts: firstly, the Iraqi-Turkish frontier had not yet been fixed; secondly Turkey claimed sovereignty over Mosul province in accordance with the National Pact proclaimed by the Turkish Nationalists in 1920; and thirdly, these regions had not been included in the zone occupied by the British as a result of the Mudros Armistice of 30 October 1918.

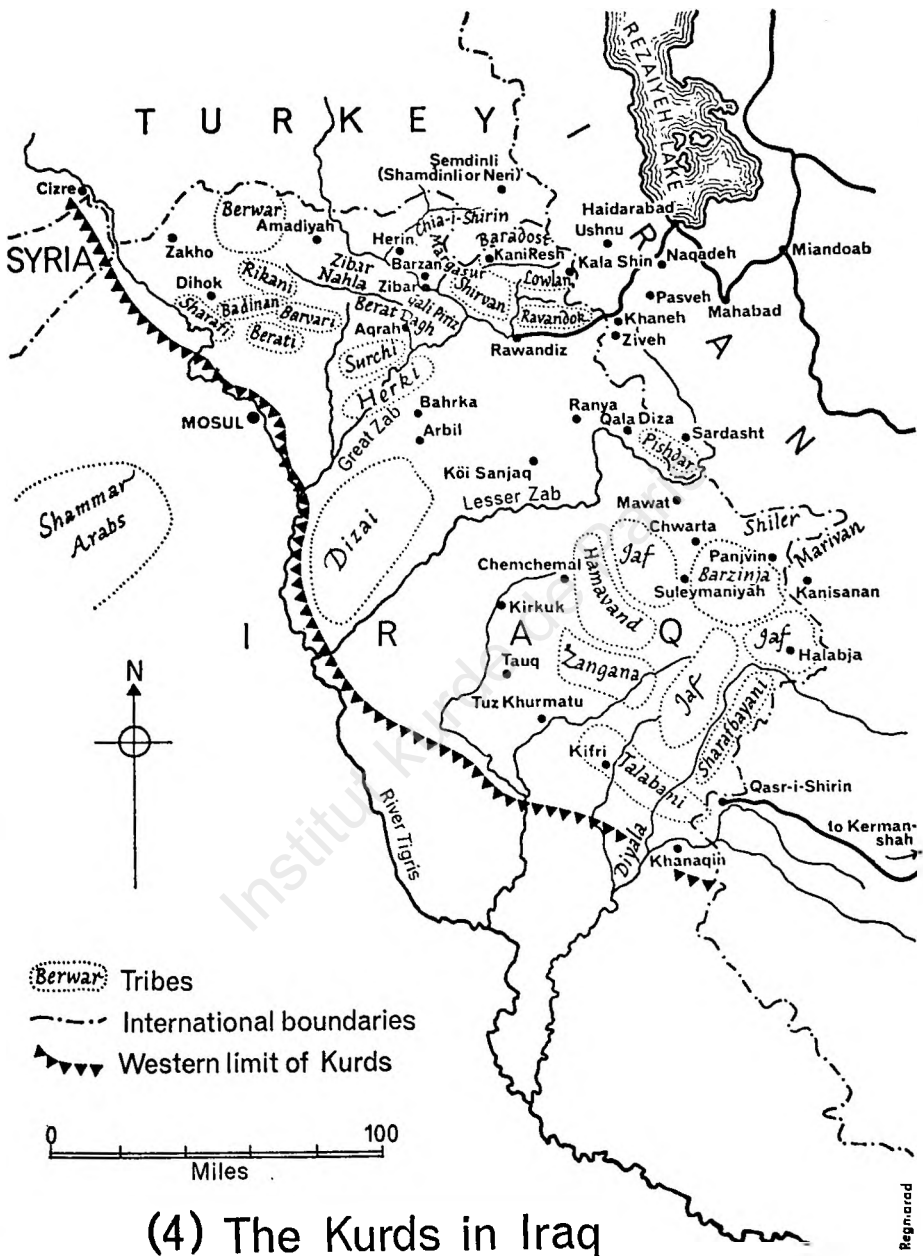
In spite of the repression of the sporadic rebellions of the Kurdish Amirs during the first half of the nineteenth century, there was no latent hostility of the Kurds towards their Turkish masters, as at that time these rebellions did not have a national character, and the discomfiture of the Amirs was not followed by wholesale reprisals against the population of the dissident districts or tribes. Besides, the Kurds, being staunch Moslems, felt an innate loyalty towards the Sultan-Khalifs and their risings had been chiefly directed against the Pashas of Baghdad and other vilayets when their rapacity and exactions became unendurable. In this way, after the Armistice and the occupation of the Mosul vilayet by the British, the majority of the Kurds of these parts still considered the moribund Ottoman Empire as their spiritual home and except for a few leaders and chiefs of tribes who realized that the Empire had been definitely destroyed, they still hoped to be again reunited with Turkey

and their brother Kurds of the north-eastern vilayets, and in this they were encouraged by Turkish Nationalist resistance to the Greeks. The proclamation of Sultan Mohammad VI calling on all Moslem Ottomans to attack the Turkish Nationalists in Ankara, produced in the Kurdish mind a clash of loyalties, but up to the proclamation of the Republic and the abolition of the Khalifate, they still remained loyal to Turkey and ready to collaborate with the Turks in case of a Turkish invasion of, or infiltration into the Mosul vilayet. In any case, there was more sympathy between the Sunni Ottoman Turks and the Kurds than between the latter and the Arabs. Indeed, the Commission of the League of Nations which was inquiring into the feelings of the population in the Mosul vilayet, then in dispute between Turkey and the mandated territory of Iraq (1924), recognized the fact that the Turkish elements in Iraq (who for political reasons the British insisted on calling Turkomans, although all the Turks of the Ottoman Empire were of Turkoman, that is Oghuz, stock) would be easily assimilated to the Kurds. If a number of the Kurds of the Khanaqin liwa (district) had been induced by the British to co-operate with them against the Turks in April 1918 as part of a force called the Kurdish Irregulars organized by Captain R. C. Geard,¹ this was chiefly due to the complete destitution of the population of this district resulting from the depredations of the Russian Army before and especially after the Revolution, for it meant that they would be able in this way to earn some money and obtain rations to share with their families.

A few days after the surrender of Turkey, at the beginning of November 1918, British forces under General Marshall occupied Mosul, and the Turkish General Ali Ihsan Pasha² had to sign, under protest, a capitulation, according to which he had to evacuate the whole of the Mosul vilayet. In this way, the Kurds were brought into direct contact with British administration. The first impact of this contact was not happy, especially in the northern part of the Mosul vilayet. We have related in Chapter III how the Christian Assyrians from Rezaiyeh, together with the Christian Nestorian Jelus from Hakkâri, who had come from Turkey to Iran, had fled from Rezaiyeh to Hamadan and been taken by the British occupational forces to Ba'qubah, near

¹ Arnold Wilson, *Mesopotamia, 1917-1920*, London, 1931, p. 84.

² See Chapter III above.



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Khanaqin. These people, and especially the Jelus, seeing that their British co-religionists had defeated their enemies the Turks and reduced the Kurds to impotence, insisted on being transferred from Ba'qubah and resettled in their former habitats or as near to them as possible. There they adopted an attitude of arrogance and self-assertiveness which angered the Moslem population and provoked their hostility against the British whom they accused—often not without justification—of partiality towards the Christian Assyrians and Jelus. It must be remarked that the British had at that time still fresh in their memory the abominable way their soldiers had been treated as prisoners of the Turks and Kurds after their surrender in Kut-el-Amara, whilst the Jelus and Assyrians had fought against these same Turks and Kurds for the Allied cause, and had been uprooted, expelled, and massacred by their common enemies.

Against the wishes of the brothers of the murdered Mar Shimun, who represented the Patriarchal House, the famous Aqa Petros proposed to take the bulk of the Nestorians (Assyrians) to a region between Barzan, Oramar and Sham-dinan—a plan approved of by the British.¹ Aqa Petros invaded this Kurdish tribal district and massacred the Moslem population, but the Kurdish tribes (Barzanis, Zibaris, Herki, Oramar, etc.), united and threw back the Nestorians, some of whom after a time settled around Amadiyah. In 1919, two battalions were recruited among the Nestorians,² and engaged in operations in the hilly country between Zakho, Dihok, Aqrah, Amadiyah and Barzan under British officers, since British troops were not employed there at this time and were not as skilled in the particular conditions of mountain warfare as the sturdy Jelus.

By 1923, these levies of Christian Nestorians numbered approximately two thousand five hundred, but their use by the British did not endear the latter to the Kurds, as the levies, profiting by the fact that they were armed and under British command, were behaving with the utmost brutality towards the Moslem population, as they had done in Rezaiyeh in 1918.

After the armistice the government of the Mosul vilayet was

¹ Arnold J. Toynbee and others, *Survey of International Affairs*, 1925, Vol. I, London, p. 48 et seq.

² J. G. Browne, *The Iraq Levies 1915-1932*, London, 1932, pp. 6-7.

taken over by the army, through its Civil Administration whose members were mostly army officers. From the beginning the Kurds assumed that they would get, if not immediate independence, at least autonomy under the temporary supervision of the British. The British did not at the time dispel this illusion, and the army authorities on the spot seemed quite disposed to agree to the idea of a Kurd-administered region on condition that the Nestorian refugees from Turkey would also receive a district where they could organize a national home.

I. SHAIKH MAHMUD OF SULEYMANIYAH

On 7 May 1918 British forces occupied Kirkuk and, a few days later, Suleymaniyah. The chief personality in that region was Shaikh Mahmud of the Barzinja Shaikhs, but other chiefs of tribes exercised their leadership independently in different districts and even in Suleymaniyah there were notables who were opposed to him. Nevertheless, at a meeting held in Suleymaniyah the Kurdish chiefs and notables decided to set up a Kurdish Government under him with the help of the British authorities. Strategic as well as political considerations induced the British High Command to evacuate Kirkuk and Suleymaniyah, and the Turks did not lose time in reoccupying these districts, where those Kurds who had negotiated with the British were arrested and fined. However, Shaikh Mahmud was soon released and Kurdish tribal irregulars were again organized to co-operate with the Turks and fight the British. The Hamavand, a most warlike tribe which had originally come from Iran and had been severely treated by the Turks, together with some other tribes, felt a strong resentment against the British for having first asked for their collaboration and then abandoned them.

After the Armistice, the British reoccupied the districts they had evacuated, and negotiations started again with the local Kurdish chiefs concerning the administrative organization of their country.

An official communication dated 10 May 1919 from the British Government to Sir Arnold Wilson, then Acting High Commissioner in Iraq, reads: 'Constitution of Iraq. We authorize you to take in hand the construction of five provinces for Iraq proper. . . . You will also proceed with the creation of the Arab province of Mosul fringed by Autonomous Kurdish

States under Kurdish chiefs, who will be advised by British Political Officers.'¹

It appears from this communication that in the view of the British Government of that time, Iraq proper (excluding the Mosul vilayet) was to become a kind of protectorate. The question of Mosul was reserved for the time being, but the Arab part of it would presumably have to join what was understood as 'Iraq proper'. As for districts containing a majority of Kurdish inhabitants, an autonomous régime, on the lines of the Indian Native States, was envisaged.

A very able political officer, Major E. W. Noel, who had been to Iran and spoke Persian fluently, was sent to Suleymaniya in May 1918 to advise—and control—Shaikh Mahmud who had been appointed governor of the district by the British. The sub-divisions were under Kurdish chiefs also assisted by British political officers. In this way, the Kurdish chiefs of the sub-divisions were nominally under Shaikh Mahmud, but depended at the same time on British authority, and this dual hierarchy did not fail to create friction and misunderstanding. Although Shaikh Mahmud's realm was extended by the British to Kōi Sanjak, Ranya and Rawandiz, all the Kurdish leaders in these regions were not as obedient to Shaikh Mahmud as he would have liked, and he suspected the British political officers of encouraging them in their somewhat truculent attitude towards him. In order to put an end to this unsatisfactory situation, which rendered practically impossible the much-needed task of reorganizing the administration and regenerating the country, Shaikh Mahmud asked for a unified autonomous state to be created. This he planned to rule according to the ideas of Kurdish self-government, though for the time being it would be under the protection of Great Britain.

At the end of 1918 a former Turkish diplomat, Sharif Pasha, of Kurdish race and belonging to the Suleymaniya Baban family, who had spent the war years in France because he was opposed to the Union and Progress Committee which had ruled Turkey during the war, established contact with several Kurdish chiefs, including Shaikh Mahmud, Saiyid Taha and Simko in Iran, in order to promote the idea of an independent Kurdistan. He made a proposal to several heads of delegations

¹ Wilson, op. cit., p. 123. See also S. H. Longrigg, *Iraq 1900 to 1950*, London, 1953, p. 103.

(in particular the U.S., French and British) at the Paris Peace Conference, that out of the former Ottoman dominions, two allied states, under a Great Powers' mandate, should be formed: an Armenian state in the vilayets of Van, Muş, Bitlis and part of Erzurum and Erzincan in the north, and a Kurdish state comprising Hakkâri, Mardin, Urfa and Mosul in the south. This proposal was in harmony with the twelfth point of President Wilson's declaration¹ concerning the fate of some territories of the Ottoman Empire, and received for a short time a sympathetic hearing from several delegations. However, different political tendencies and rivalries among the Powers and the victory of the Turkish Nationalists against the British-supported Greek armies prevented the realization of this proposal. It was feared that such an independent or autonomous Kurdish state would be tempted to rejoin Turkey whose rule the Kurds certainly preferred to that of the Arabs in Iraq, and in such an event, with the Turks at Kirkuk and Suleymaniya once more, the very existence of Iraq would become precarious.

Meanwhile Shaikh Mahmud was becoming more and more dissatisfied with British interference in Kurdish administration, and the British authorities decided to put him under strict control. Major Noel was therefore replaced in April 1919 by Major E. B. Soane, who had a thorough knowledge of southern Kurdistan and was considered sufficiently tough to deal with the recalcitrant Shaikh Mahmud. The latter was supported by his own numerous and influential Barzinja family of Suleymaniya as well as by the Hamavand and part of the Jaf tribes. The Jaf of Halabja were opposed to his rule, and, with British sanction, seceded from the Shaikh's dominion. In May 1919, Shaikh Mahmud proclaimed his independence, summoned a force of Ja'far Sultan's Awromi from across the Iranian frontier and, overpowering the local levies in the British service, occupied first the town and then the whole district including Halabja.

A British force was directed from Kirkuk to Suleymaniya, but was repulsed, and a large detachment of nearly a division then advanced on Suleymaniya. After a fierce battle on the Bazyan Pass, Shaikh Mahmud was defeated, wounded, taken prisoner and sent to Baghdad. He was condemned to death, but his sentence was commuted to imprisonment and Major Soane

¹ See page 30 above.

returned to Suleymaniya. After that, this region was more or less peaceful, but in the northern districts of Zakho, Amadiyah, Barzan and Rawandiz, the British encountered hostility and several of the officers sent to contact the tribes or to reconnoitre were attacked and killed, thus necessitating punitive expeditions which had to fight the Kurds in difficult terrain amongst a hostile population.

For reasons mentioned above, the idea of an independent or autonomous Kurdistan did not materialize, and it was intended that the Mosul vilayet should be joined to the Iraq Kingdom, which came into existence after the Arab revolt in central and lower Iraq, and the accession to the Iraq throne of Amir Faisal, Sharif Hosayn's second son, on his expulsion from Syria by the French in 1920. Nevertheless, it was agreed that the Kurdish regions of the Mosul vilayet would have a special position: that in it Kurdish would be taught in schools as well as Arabic, the Kurdish language (Kermanji) would be accepted in law courts, and that, as far as possible, Government employees would be appointed from among Kurds rather than Arabs.

The Turkish Nationalists' victory against the Greeks on the Sakaria river, which definitely checked the Greek advance towards Ankara, emboldened the Turks to adopt an active policy on the border of the Mosul vilayet, which they claimed in accordance with their National Pact, in which the regions considered to be part of the new Turkey, were defined. During the whole of 1921 there were Turkish infiltrations into the border districts, but in the spring of 1922, a real invasion was started by so-called irregular forces comprising Turkish military units, Kurdish tribal levies led by Turkish army officers of Turkish and Kurdish race. The Zangana and Hamavand tribes became openly hostile to the British, and two British officers were murdered. Some of the Herki and Baradost tribal sections remained neutral owing to the influence of Saiyid Taha, who was at that time collaborating with Simko against the Iranian Army and wished to be on good terms with the British in the hope that they would induce the Iranian Government to grant an autonomous status to the Kurds of Azerbaijan. In connexion with this, there was at the time much talk in Teheran about the journey to Kurdistan of an ex-officer of the Imperial Russian Army, Captain Verba, who had been instructor in the Persian Cossacks Division but was known to be pro-British, and of his

interview with Simko. Some said he went as a British agent, others presumed he had been sent by the Iranian Government itself. Whatever the truth may have been, his mission appears to have been unsuccessful as the hostilities continued and terminated with Simko's defeat and expulsion. On the Iranian frontier, Babakr Aqa Pishdari professed to be hostile to the Turks, but in March the Turkish forces occupied Rawandiz and the district was overrun by a famous Turkish guerrilla leader, Ali Shafiq, or Öz-Demir. Ranya was also occupied by the Turks, and their commandos pushed towards Kōi Sanjaq and Suleymaniyah.¹ The Baban and anti-Shaikh Mahmud groups abandoned that town, together with the British, and in the hope of rallying the independence-minded Kurds against the Turks, the British released Shaikh Mahmud himself from his confinement and sent him to Suleymaniyah, where he arrived accompanied by Major Noel. Once there, Shaikh Mahmud allied himself with all the pro-Turkish and anti-British elements, received the visits of Turkish officers, and tried to extend his influence up to Kirkuk.

The question of the ownership of the Mosul vilayet remained unsolved until the Lausanne Conference, and even after that it was not definitely settled before the League of Nations award of 1926. Nevertheless, neither the British nor the Turks wanted to precipitate matters, so the Turkish forces in occupation of Rawandiz and the neighbouring district were officially considered to be 'Kurdish irregulars'. The British-supported forces in the northern part of Kurdistan were chiefly composed of Christian Assyrians and Kurdish levies from tribes hostile to the Turks. The intense Turkification of the Kurds in the eastern vilayets of Turkey, which had already started in 1921, did not predispose the frontier Kurds in favour of the Turks. On the other hand, the behaviour of the Christian Nestorians, both irregulars and Iraq levies, towards the Moslem population provoked bitter hostility not only against the Nestorians themselves but also against the British, who, it was considered, showed partiality to them, as for instance on the occasion when two Assyrian companies of the Iraq levies mutinied in Kirkuk and massacred some fifty Moslems in that town and none of them was punished on the pretext that the culprits could not be identified.

¹ Longrigg, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

The new Iraq Army, supported by the levies, reoccupied Rawandiz in April 1923, and Saiyid Taha was installed there as sub-Governor. From there, these forces advanced towards Suleymaniyah, which was occupied in May, but as no local chief dared assume power in that district the column soon left the town which then reverted to the rule of Shaikh Mahmud who had for a time taken refuge in Sardasht, on Iranian territory, but had returned to Suleymaniyah on 11 July. Ranya and Halabaja were detached from the Suleymaniyah district and made part of the Kirkuk division, and Shaikh Mahmud was left unmolested on condition that he did not interfere in the administration of these districts. Although he failed to abide by the terms of this agreement, he was not interfered with seriously, the R.A.F. only bombing his raiding parties occasionally, to remind him of the possibility of more severe retribution. In this way, the Suleymaniyah district was physically separated from the Turkish-occupied region, as Rawandiz was in Iraqi hands. Shaikh Mahmud considered that Halabja, Kōi Sanjaq and Ranya ought to be part of his fief, and as he interfered continually in these districts, Suleymaniyah was reoccupied by a large Iraqi force, after a severe aerial bombardment, and Shaikh Mahmud fled again to the hills on the Iranian frontier where he waged a guerrilla warfare against the Iraqi forces (July 1924).¹

In 1926, after much recrimination on the part of the Turks, who even threatened to wage a war on the British and Iraqis, the award of the Council of the League of Nations was accepted by the Turkish Government and a tripartite Anglo-Turkish-Iraqi Treaty was signed by which the *de facto* frontier line which had already existed since the Armistice, was recognized as the permanent frontier between Turkey and Iraq, with a few modifications, and a border commission was appointed to delimitate it on the ground.

In the winter of 1927 the renewed activities of Shaikh Mahmud against Iraqi rule in the Suleymaniyah district necessitated an Iraqi expedition against him, and, as has been recounted in the previous chapter, he took refuge in Iran with Mahmud Khan Kanisanani, a tribal chief in the Marivan district. In the summer of 1927, as a result of the military operations of the Iranian Army in that district, Shaikh Mahmud was forced to return to

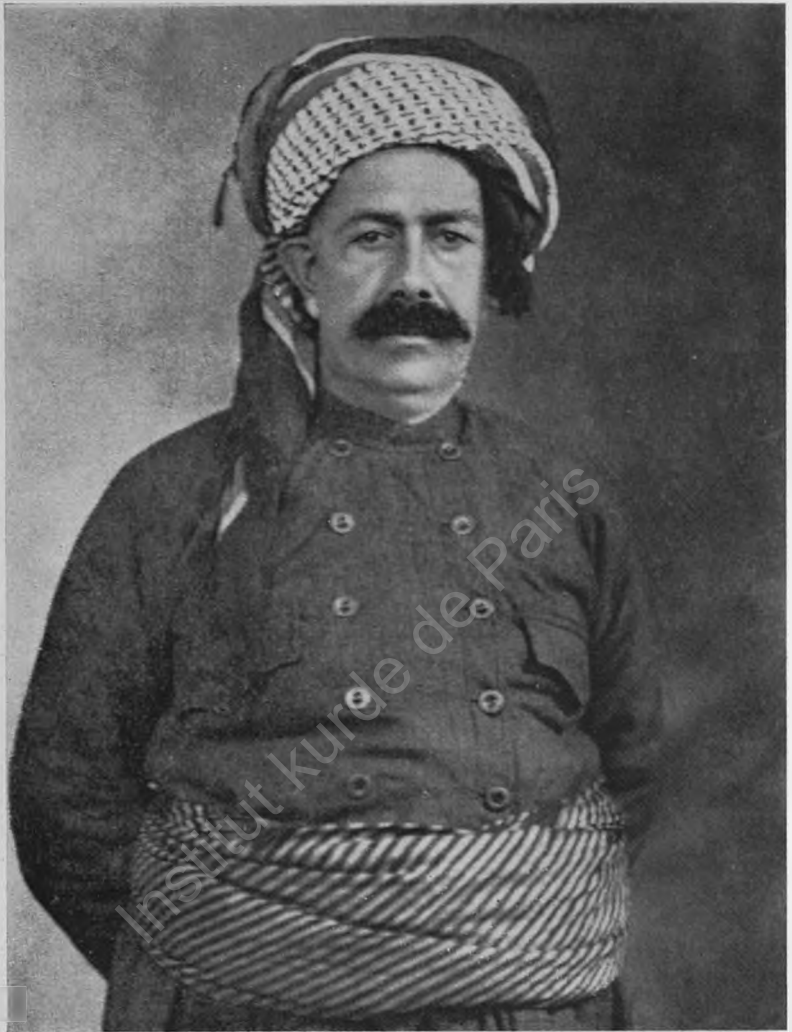
¹ Arnold J. Toynbee, *Survey of International Affairs*, 1925, Vol. I, 1927.



viii *Left: Mohammad Javanmardi, son of Ali Javanmardi, chief of the Gowrik Saqqez tribes, with relatives.*



ix *Kurds of Mahabad dancing during a marriage festivity.*



x Shaikh Mohammad Barzinja of Sulaymaniyah.

Iraq, where he was again arrested and sent for a time into exile in the south.

In spite of the agreement concerning the districts inhabited by a Kurdish majority in predominantly Arab-populated Iraq by which these districts received a special status—the Kurdish language being taught in schools and most of the local Government employees being Kurds—there was no feeling of sympathy between the Kurds and the Arabs. Most of the Kurds were still hoping to become independent in the future, and in a petition submitted by a number of Kurdish deputies to the Baghdad Parliament, they asked for the formation of a special Kurdish province with an autonomous status inside the Iraqi State. The Kurds wished to become a separate entity as soon as the British Mandate over Iraq terminated, or, if that was not possible, to remain for a time a Mandated British Territory even though Iraq was no longer one. As no answer was given by the Iraqi Government, the Central Committee of the Kurds in Mesopotamia addressed a complaint to the League of Nations' Permanent Mandate Commission.

2. SHAIKH AHMAD OF BARZAN

Troubles began again in the Kurdish district in 1927. In that year, a religious leader of the Barzan locality started a new sect, differing from his former Sunni Orthodox one. Shaikh Ahmad was the son of Shaikh Mohammad, son of Ishaq, son of Ya'qub. Ya'qub had come from the village of Bahrka, ten miles north of Arbil, to the vicinity of Zibar, and settled there with his family and clan on the opposite, northern, bank of the Great Zab river. This place was named Bar Zan, which means in Kurdish 'migration place'. These people being warlike and predatory were joined by many local adventurers from Zibar and neighbouring villages, and Shaikh Mohammad became their religious as well as their military leader. He had four sons, Abd-es-Salam, Ahmad, Molla Mostafa and Sadeq (or Siddiq, according to the Kurdish pronunciation). Abd-es-Salam revolted against the Ottoman Authorities several times, and was forced to take refuge in Iran with the Iranian Kurdish tribes. After a time, on the instigation of the Turks, Mohammad Sharif Shakkak, the chief of the Mamdoi Shakkaks and father of Omar Khan, forced him to go back to Turkey where he was finally killed by the Turks. His younger brother Ahmad then became

head of the family and assumed his father's title of Shaikh. The new sect, which was destined to exalt the spiritual position of Shaikh Ahmad to a degree close to deification, provoked the hostility of a section of local Kurds and even of Shaikh Ahmad's young brother Sadeq, who, having killed a Molla who was propounding these ideas, was himself killed in the ensuing scuffle.

Later, Shaikh Ahmad orientated his sect towards a mixture of Islam and Christianity and even allowed his followers to eat pork. This new move provoked the violent intervention of Shaikh Rashid of Baradost and caused intertribal war in the district, and although Shaikh Ahmad defeated his opponents, this violent opposition and the endeavours of his brother Molla Mostafa, caused him to revise his religious ideas and revert to a more orthodox Islamic doctrine. An Iraqi brigade was sent to Barzan to re-establish order, but was defeated with heavy losses, and only saved from total annihilation by the timely intervention of the R.A.F. Shaikh Ahmad released his prisoners—both the Iraqi military and the Baradost Kurds—and withdrew from this district, but in the spring of 1932, when the British wanted to settle the Nestorian Christians who had been expelled from Turkey in the vicinity of Barzan, Shaikh Ahmad attacked them and a local war was started a second time in this region. Iraqi forces numbering two brigades again entered the Barzan district and took Margasur, but the Barzanis, having occupied the hills, attacked the Iraqis and inflicted on them an even more severe defeat. The R.A.F. intervened again, bombing the dwellings of the Kurds, and after a third intervention of much stronger forces supported by the R.A.F., Shaikh Ahmad was finally driven into Turkish territory with his family and followers. The British, Turkish and Iraqi Governments agreed to allow them to return to Iraq and to pardon them, but when they returned to Iraq, the Shaikh, his family, and eighty of his principal supporters were sent to Nasiriyah in southern Iraq, where they remained four years. After that they were brought to Suleymaniyah and kept there for the next seven years.

Molla Mostafa came into contact there with politically-minded Kurdish people who were imbued with the ideal of Kurdish independence, and was much influenced by their views. In 1943, during the Second World War, he escaped from Suleymaniyah and returned to Barzan, where he renewed his activities against the Iraqi Government. We will now for a time

leave the Barzanis and return to Shaikh Mahmud of Suleymaniyah.

The parliamentary elections for the Iraqi parliament in September 1929 were boycotted by the Kurds in Suleymaniyah since they accused the Government of interference in the elections, and riots occurred in several towns in the Kurd-inhabited zone.

In September 1930 Shaikh Mahmud, who had escaped to Iran, penetrated into Iraq and occupied Panjvin, demanding the creation of an autonomous Kurdistan comprising the Kurd-inhabited districts from the Turkish frontier to near Khanaqin. Shaikh Mahmud tried to occupy the neighbouring districts, and after several months of military operations tried again to take refuge in Iran, but was prevented from doing so by the intervention of the Iranian Army. He had to submit to the Iraqi authorities, and was again sent to Nasiriyah as a forced residence. He was afterwards allowed to return to Suleymaniyah, but on account of his renewed intrigues was once more sent to Nasiriyah. He died in 1956.

3. MOLLA MOSTAFA OF BARZAN

When Molla Mostafa accompanied by three friends arrived in Barzan in 1943, he wrote to the local Iraqi authorities announcing his arrival and promising to keep the peace and to refrain from any rebellious action. At the same time he began to assemble his followers and to start warlike preparations which were interpreted by the Iraqi Government as preliminary to revolt. His family, who had stayed at Suleymaniyah, was then sent to Hillah in southern Iraq, and military forces were concentrated in the direction of Barzan with a view to operations against him. Molla Mostafa began to make contact with the chiefs of neighbouring tribes, and especially to make friends with his former enemies, telling them that this time he was not working for his personal aggrandizement or that of his Barzan community, but for the liberation of the whole Kurdish nation, including the Kurds who lived in Turkey and Iran. He considered that the moment was propitious, because of the war and the dissatisfaction of the British with the Arabs in Iraq who had tried to expel them from the country and join the Germans.

Having raised an armed force, Molla Mostafa tried to join Sa'id Birokh, a Kurd from Turkey who had started to fight

against the Turks. But the Turks defeated and captured Birokh, so Molla Mostafa contented himself with capturing and disarming frontier guards and gendarmerie posts, which gained him much prestige among the frontier people, many of whom joined his ranks.

His brother Shaikh Ahmad, who was still under surveillance in Suleymaniyah, sent him a message by order of Nuri-Sa'id Pasha to persuade him to surrender, but he paid no heed to it and instead attacked a strong Iraqi column, which he defeated, inflicting severe casualties, with the result that many levies and soldiers of Kurdish origin deserted their units to join him in what they considered to be a fight for Kurdish autonomy.

Molla Mostafa was supported by a Kurdish Nationalist Party called Heva (Hope) which was first organized in Kirkuk, but very soon had ramifications in Baghdad, Suleymaniyah, Mosul and other towns of northern and central Iraq. This Party was then secret, but it issued declarations and communiqués both in Arabic and Kurdish and comprised chiefly Kurdish intellectuals and Government (Iraq) servants. The Turkish and Iranian Kurds were not represented in this Party, but there were sympathizers with its doctrine among the progressive Kurdish circles of both countries. The Party was officially asking for an autonomous status inside the Iraqi state and addressed petitions to the Iraqi Government and also to the representatives of the Allied Powers in Baghdad, hoping to have some support from the British.

The British Ambassador advised Prime Minister Nuri-Sa'id to give a sympathetic hearing to the Kurds, at the same time asking Molla Mostafa to cease any offensive action against the Iraqi Government as, at that time, Iraq was allied to the United Kingdom and any aggressive move against it would be considered a hostile action against all the Allied Powers.

Molla Mostafa then ceased raiding the police posts and Nuri-Sa'id, who was himself sympathetic to the Kurds and ready to accept their more moderate demands, sent a Minister without Portfolio, Majed Mostafa, himself a Kurd, to the Kurdish area. Majed Mostafa realized that after his acceptance of a ministerial post in the Iraqi Cabinet, the Kurdish Nationalists would consider him to be a traitor to the Kurdish cause, and he would be prevented from doing anything for the preservation of peace in the Kurdish regions. In order to allay the suspicions of the

Kurds, he asked the Heva Party to appoint three authoritative representatives to contact him. The Party appointed Captain Izzet Abd-el-Aziz, Captain Aziz Saiyid Abdollah, and Colonel Amin Rawandizi (all deserters from the Iraq Army) and they proceeded to Baghdad. They had conversations with Majed Mostafa, and he appointed them as liaison agents with Molla Mostafa and sent them to Barzan to have talks with this leader. As a result of these talks, and with the knowledge and acquiescence of the Heva Party's Central Committee, the following proposals were submitted to the Iraqi Government:

1. The constitution of a Kurdish province to comprise the districts of Kirkuk, Suleymaniyah, Arbil, Dihok and Khanaqin.

2. The appointment of a special Minister for Kurdish Affairs inside the Iraqi Cabinet, who would be responsible to the Iraqi Government for the affairs of this province.

3. A Kurdish assistant-Minister to be appointed to each Ministry.

4. The Kurdish province to have cultural, economic and agricultural autonomy, and all internal matters to depend from the Provincial Authority, except those concerning the army and the gendarmerie.

These proposals were endorsed by all the Kurdish leaders and then sent to the British and Iraqi Governments. Meanwhile, Majed Mostafa increased the number of Kurdish liaison agents to seven, appointing them to the tribal chiefs of the different districts, with a mission to make them favourably disposed to the Central Government and with promises of adequate reforms after the end of the war. But these Kurdish agents were loyal to the Heva Party and took the opportunity of their semi-official standing to propagandize nationalist ideas according to the instructions of the Heva Party, and to condition the Kurds for a struggle against the Arab Government of Iraq. In May 1944, Nuri-Sa'id himself made a tour in the Kurdish zone, conferring with the Kurdish leaders in Mosul and Kirkuk, but he had no interview with Molla Mostafa. Nuri-Sa'id declared himself ready to meet some of the Kurdish demands, including the creation of an all-Kurdish liwa (district) and the appointment of Kurdish Government officials with the approval of the Minister representing the Kurds in the Cabinet and some other proposals agreeable to Kurdish national feelings. The Arab Ministers of the Iraqi Cabinet, however, found these demands too radical,

for they thought that once the Kurds obtained them they would be in a situation to ask for more concessions and the Government would be in a weaker position, both morally and materially, as the Kurds would have fuller representation and would develop separatist tendencies.

Some of the Heva leaders considered Majed Mostafa to be genuinely helping the Kurds to attain autonomy, but others suspected him of deceiving them and of acting exclusively in the interest of his Arab masters, and this division of opinion among the leaders weakened the Party. The Mutesarrif (Governor) of Suleymaniyah was General Baha-ed-Din Nuri, an able and cultured Kurd who was acting according to the ideas of Nuri-Sa'id. I met him several times when he was afterwards appointed Ambassador in Teheran, and was much interested by his clear and dispassionate views on the Kurdish question.

With the departure of Nuri-Sa'id from office and the coming to power of Pachachi, this policy of goodwill underwent a change. General Baha-ed-Din was recalled, and the Central Government did not show itself disposed to accord the Kurds the freedom they wanted. At the same time the liaison agents, seeing that their mission had terminated, returned home.

Among the active members of the Kurdish organization affiliated to Molla Mostafa were two former Iraq army officers, Mostafa Khoshnao and Mir Haj Ahmad, whose comings and goings roused the Government's suspicion. They were arrested but Khoshnao managed to escape and fled to Bitavateh, where he remained for a time. Another of the leading Kurds, Captain Izzet Abd-el-Aziz, had gone to Beyruth and Cairo to contact the Kurdish Nationalist organization Khoybun, the headquarters of which were in Beyruth. On his return to Baghdad, having been warned by his friends that the Government wanted to arrest him, he fled to Barzan where he was joined by Khoshnao and several other young Kurdish ex-officers and intellectuals, and political activities were started in the Kurdish zone. These activities resulted in the strengthening of the Heva Party's morale, and its members for a time forgot their differences and worked together to help the Barzanis and their confederates in their struggle against the Iraq Government.

The Germans were aware of the discontent of the Iraqis against the British, as both the Arabs and the Kurds were then hostile to them, and they dropped four Iraqi agents from a plane

near Mosul. Two of them were captured but two escaped, and after they had crossed the frontier into Iran they were given shelter by a Saqqez Kurdish chieftain who was afterwards arrested by the British occupying forces in Iran and sent to a concentration camp for a few months.

In January 1945, Molla Mostafa sent a delegation directly to the Iraqi Government, to the Heva Party, and to the British Ambassador asking for the immediate implementation of Kurdish autonomy. At this time, there were four different organizations of Kurdish Nationalists whose aim and character differed, their divergences often being due to personal rivalry.

1. The 'Heva Party' had its headquarters in Baghdad, with branches at Kirkuk, Suleymaniyah, Arbil and some other Iraqi towns. This organization was leftist-minded, some of the Kurdish intellectuals being much influenced by Communist doctrines. Their organ was the *Azadi*, which was frankly Communist-Internationalist, advocating a united front against reaction, feudalism and imperialism. This Party had little sympathy for the tribal chiefs whose feudalist leanings had nothing in common with the socialist doctrine of the Heva, and it was loth to realize that for the present, the only fighting power rested with these chiefs. It recognized Molla Mostafa as the actual leader of the Kurdish movement, but was suspicious of his dictatorial and theocratic attitude, and intended to use him for the time being and to discard him once the objective of independence or autonomy was attained.

2. The 'Freedom Group' was formed in Barzan under the leadership of Molla Mostafa, with the assistance of the following, all of whom except one were non-tribal and belonged either to the Iraqi Army or to the liberal professions 1. Izzet Abd-el-Aziz from Amadiyah, an officer of the Iraqi Army; 2. Mostafa Khoshnao, an officer; 3. Abd-el-Hamid Baqer, from Khanaqin (tribal); 4. Mohammad Mahmud, from Suleymaniyah; 5. Ahmad Isma'il, from Arbil; 6. Showkat Na'man, from Amadiyah; 7. Hefzollah Isma'il from Aqrah.

This group had been formed after the Heva Party, elated by Molla Mostafa's declaration, had sent him a letter recognizing him as the leader of the Kurdish Autonomy Movement and pledging their support.

3. Outside Iraq, in the Iranian zone occupied by the Soviet Army, a Kurdish organization under the name of 'Komula'

had been formed. This has been mentioned in the preceding chapter.

4. The 'Khoybun' Kurdish Nationalist Organization was formed after the First World War, its aim in the first place being the ultimate independence of the Kurdish nation theoretically within the different regions where the Kurds were in the majority. In time, political, economical and prestige factors induced it to claim as Kurdish regions where the Kurds were in a minority, such as parts of Syria, central and southern Turkey, and Iran where the Lors, Bakhtiari and other Farsi-speaking tribes had never considered themselves to be other than Iranians.

Although the first three of these organizations were morally supported by the Khoybun, neither their immediate aims, nor the political system they contemplated establishing in their particular regions were unreservedly accepted by the Khoybun leaders who, being chiefly liberal intellectuals, sympathized rather with a Western form of democracy.

The Freedom Group started its work on 12 February 1945, and in its reply to the Heva Party's letter stated that its primary objective was the establishment of an Autonomous Kurdistan, and that its foreign policy was one of complete neutrality. This declaration contained a fundamental inconsistency: as an autonomous region it would be obliged to submit to the policy of its suzerain state and therefore could not dictate its foreign policy to the other components of that state.

The programme of the Freedom Group was as follows:

1. To bring about the co-operation of the tribes of the Barzan region in the first instance, and then that of all the Kurdish tribes of Iraq.

2. To bring about the salvation [*sic*] of Iraqi Kurdistan by political and conciliatory measures.

3. To establish contact with other liberal Kurdish organizations.

4. To write petitions to the representatives of foreign powers.

5. To publish propaganda.

6. To struggle against the reactionary and exploiting policy of the Iraq Government.

7. To prepare armed forces.

After this followed a correspondence between the Heva Party Headquarters and Molla Mostafa's own Freedom Group.

Although both organizations seemed to support each other in the conduct of the struggle for Kurdish autonomy, some differences are apparent even in the first letters exchanged. The Heva had proposed to transfer their headquarters from Baghdad to Barzan to be close to the Commander-in-Chief, but the latter (i.e. Molla Mostafa) was not keen to have a group of talkers and probably critics beside him, and tactfully conveyed to them the desirability of remaining in Baghdad in order to be in touch with the provincial Kurdish organizations. Each group politely complained to the other of not being kept informed of the moves being contemplated. On the one hand Molla Mostafa intended to keep his freedom of action, with the freedom group subservient to his wishes. He was determined not to be hampered by the unwanted advice and criticism of a body who had no knowledge of the necessities of an armed struggle and whose interference could have, in his opinion, only an adverse influence on military operations. On the other hand, being relegated to the mountain fastness of the border region, he was cut off from everything, and in dire need of information, medicines, food supplies, arms, ammunition, etc., and he wanted the Heva to supply him with all these necessities. Some of these the Heva people managed to smuggle to him by by-passing the Iraqi military posts. One batch of such supplies consisted of a typewriter, a radio, paper, and some sanitary equipment.

In March 1945, the Heva Party presented a memorandum to the U.S. Ambassador in Iraq, Loy Henderson, asking for the United States' support to achieve an autonomous status and complaining against Iraq for not having put into effect the reforms promised to the Kurds by Nuri-Sa'id and against the United Kingdom for giving military help to Iraq to crush the rightful rising of the Kurdish people for their freedom. The memorandum stated that the Kurdish people expected the great American democracy to exert the necessary pressure on the British and Iraqi Governments to induce them to honour the pledges given many times to the Kurds in conformity with the twelfth point of President Wilson's Declaration at the end of the First World War. Copies of this memorandum were handed to the U.S.S.R., Chinese and French Embassies.

Simultaneously, notes and declarations were issued by the Freedom Group, the Heva Party and the newly organized Kurdish Youth Organization, and sent to the Government

agencies, the Embassies, and the leading political, intellectual, and business groups and personalities in Iraq.

On 1 March Molla Mostafa was informed by the Heva of Baghdad that the Iraqi 4th Brigade, reinforced by police and other detachments, intended to attack Barzan on the fifth. On hearing this, Molla Mostafa organized his armed forces into three sectors:

1. The Eastern Sector in the Margasur and Baradost area, under the command of Mostafa Khoshnao, assisted by Mohammad Mahmud.

2. The Western Sector in the Amadiyah (Amedi) area, commanded by Izzet Abd-el-Aziz, with Abd-el-Hamid Baqer.

3. The Southern Sector in the region of Aqrah under the command of Shaikh Suleyman.

The commanders of the three sectors arrived at headquarters on the third and on the next day the sectors were occupied by the tribal contingents assigned to them.

From that date until the beginning of August, intermittent correspondence was exchanged and a series of contacts made between Molla Mostafa and his officers on the one hand and British and Iraqi officers on the other hand. The British, represented by Major Moore, Captain Stokes and a few others, strongly advised Molla Mostafa to order his officers to evacuate their positions, return to Barzan and from there go south and choose any place they liked as their residence, on condition that it should be outside the Kurdish zone. Molla Mostafa rejected their suggestions, and the Iraqi Government, deciding to adopt a tougher line of conduct, ordered the police authorities to arrest all Barzanis found carrying arms. On 10 August, while Molla Mostafa was inspecting his detachments outside Barzan, a scuffle occurred when the police tried to arrest a certain Wulo Beg, the chief of the Shirvan tribe. The police were repulsed, sustaining casualties, and several Iraqi posts were occupied after a fight by the Barzanis under the leadership of Shaikh Ahmad, who was in charge of the Kurdish forces there during the absence of his brother the Molla. Shaikh Ahmad was much more inclined towards launching an open rebellion than his more cautious younger brother Molla Mostafa, and it was said that Izzet Abd-el-Aziz, who was at that time also in Barzan, influenced Shaikh Ahmad to start a rising. In this way, Molla Mostafa,

who had in the meantime returned to Barzan, was confronted with an accomplished fact, and as the Iraqi armed forces began to advance towards the Kurdish positions, Molla Mostafa ordered his men to resist, but at the same time sent letters to the British Ambassador and to the other representatives of the Allied Powers in Baghdad, asking them to induce the Iraqi Government to recall its forces from the neighbourhood of Barzan.

Meanwhile, as Molla Mostafa had rejected the Iraqi ultimatum to order the Kurds' evacuation of their defensive position and retreat towards Barzan as a preliminary to their dispersion, the Iraqi armed forces moved forward under the protection of the Iraqi air force. On 25 August 1945 the 4th Brigade tried to execute a turning movement to envelop the Kurdish position in the eastern sector (Baradost), and the Kurds, greatly outnumbered, retreated towards the high hills to the north of their initial line of defence. Afterwards they attacked the Iraqi from the flanks and inflicted heavy casualties on them, neutralizing their advance in that sector.

In the southern sector, according to Kurdish sources,¹ the Iraqi suffered an even greater defeat. The 5th Brigade, advancing from Aqrah towards Zibar, after having passed over the ridge of the Berat Dagh, penetrated into the Nahla valley, and after crossing it began to ascend the southern slopes of the Gali Piriz, the crest of which they had subjected beforehand to a severe artillery and aerial bombardment. Molla Mostafa, who had concealed himself with a handful of men among the boulders and had not suffered from this bombing, unexpectedly opened fire on the Iraqis when they appeared on the ridge, whilst small parties of Kurds who had taken up position on the Berat Dagh to the right and the left of the Iraqi Brigade's line of advance, subjected the Iraqis' flanks to murderous fire, and the brigade was for a while in a very critical position. After two days of fighting on the Berat Dagh, reinforcements, including some three hundred Kurdish Surchi tribesmen who were hostile to Molla Mostafa, came to the rescue of the hard-pressed Iraqis, and the advance towards Gali Piriz was resumed, Molla Mostafa retreating towards the upper reaches of that mountain.

After their reverses in the Baradost region, the Iraqi 4th Brigade, reinforced by the 2nd Brigade, resumed their advance to the north. They were attacked from the rear by a detachment

¹ Isma'il Ardalan, *Asrar-e-Barzan*, Teheran, 1325 (1946), p. 39.

of Milli Kurds under Mohammad Aqa Margasuri, and again sustained heavy losses. After that, the Kurds retreated towards the north, taking with them part of the booty they had seized from the Iraqis.

Five hundred Badinan and Zibar tribesmen loyal to the Iraqi Government were occupying positions to the west of Barzan, in the vicinity of the village of Herin. Molla Mostafa decided to attack and drive them out of Herin, as they were threatening the rear of the Kurdish southern sector's position on the Gali Piriz. He was counting on the artillery support given by a mountain-gun which had been previously taken from the Iraqi, but owing to a misunderstanding this support was not available, and Molla Mostafa had to retreat to his position on the Gali Piriz as this hill was again being attacked by the Iraqi forces.

On the morning of 25 September 1945, Molla Mostafa found himself on the top of the mountain surrounded by hostile forces. The three hundred Surchi tribesmen (loyal to Iraq) attacked from the east, forcing a Barzani group under Zhazhoki to retire, while the Iraqi 5th Brigade, supported by two batteries of artillery and some aircraft, progressed in the centre along the southern slopes of the hills. On the west, five hundred men of the Bervari, Berashi, Sherfani and Duseki tribes allied to the Government attacked along the crest of the ridge, followed by four hundred Kurds of the Zibari tribe. Molla Mostafa fought until dark and then abandoned the hill and retreated towards the Chia-i-Shirin hills to the north of Barzan, which constitute a formidable natural defensive position, more than seven thousand feet high, and instructed Shaikh Ahmad and other tribesmen allied to him to evacuate their villages and concentrate on this position. Molla Mostafa's position now became critical, the Turks having occupied their frontier posts with strong forces, barring the tracks leading towards Turkey, and the Iraqi forces with their anti-Barzani Kurdish allies pressing hard to the north. But on 30 September news came that pro-Barzani Kurds were in occupation of Kani Resh, near the Iranian frontier, and that the west-east track running along the Ru-Kuchuk, Baraz Gir and Rubar-i-Shektiv rivers was free of the enemy. Molla Mostafa then directed all his men to assemble in Kani Resh, with their wives, children and flocks, and to pass into Iran, where a Kurdish nationalist organization was in control of the frontier region under Soviet protection.

The vicissitudes of the Barzanis and of their allies in Iran from 1945 to 1947 have already been related in the last chapter.

The 1945 Molla Mostafa rebellion differs from the 1931 rising of his brother Shaikh Ahmad, inasmuch as Shaikh Ahmad had revolted in order to prevent the British and Iraqi Governments from settling Assyrians—their age-long enemies—in the vicinity of Barzan, and was therefore not connected with the struggle for Kurdish independence or autonomy. The successive rebellions of Shaikh Mahmud of Suleymaniyah had been local movements with the autonomy of a Kurd-inhabited region in view, but in 1945 for the first time a co-ordinated action by a Kurdish nationalist party with tribal and religious leaders had been undertaken. Even then the chiefs of many Kurdish tribes who were hostile to the Barzanis and seeking only their personal interest, co-operated with the Iraq Government and it was chiefly thanks to them that the Iraqi army forces had been finally able to quell the rebellion and force Molla Mostafa and his supporters to flee.¹

4. THE KURDISH REVOLT AND THE WAR AGAINST THE ARABS

From 1945 until 1958 no major tribal disturbances or nationalist upheavals occurred in Iraq despite daily provocation in the Kurdish-language broadcasts from a 'secret' radio situated in the Caucasus and operated by the Soviet authorities with the collaboration of Molla Mostafa and other expatriate Kurds. There were also some comings and goings from Russia to Iraq and vice versa by Kurdish emissaries who took political instructions from Molla Mostafa to his followers who had remained in Iraq and passed information from Iraq back to Molla Mostafa. But, in general, the absence of the Barzanis had disorganized the Kurdish movement for independence, and the Heva Party was lying low. Shaikh Mahmud had returned from exile and had died, and no other Kurdish nationalist leader of authority had appeared among the Iraqi Kurds, who were looking, some with hope and others with apprehension, across Iran to the Caucasus, where Molla Mostafa and his men were making preparations for some events at an unknown date which would perhaps never come.

Then, quite suddenly, if not unexpectedly, the July 14th

¹ Longrigg, *op. cit.*, p. 327. See also, Ardalan, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

revolution broke out and a Government favourable to the U.S.S.R., and which professed to be ready to adopt a liberal policy towards the Kurdish minority, came to power. Molla Mostafa and his followers returned from Russia and halcyon days followed, but they were not to last long.

Molla Mostafa arrived by plane with six companions—As'ad Khoshavi, Midhat Ahmad, his nephew Shaikh Suleyman and his cousin Shaikh Babo, and two others—and was lodged in the late Nuri-Sa'id's home and driven in the murdered regent Abdolillah's car. At first he co-ordinated his activity with that of the advanced Iraqi political groups, including the Communists and Kamil el-Chadirchi's National Democratic Party. With some of the members of the former Heva Party (which had been suppressed in Nuri-Sa'id's time together with all other political organizations) Molla Mostafa founded the 'Part Democrat Kurdistan' with a very leftist programme comprising radical land-reform and the co-ordination of Iraq's external and economic policies with those of Soviet Russia and other Socialist countries.

Soon after his return, the other Kurds who had shared his exile in the U.S.S.R. arrived in Baghdad via Basra. Most of them hurried to their former districts of Barzan, Aqrah, Margasur and Amadiyah, but a few remained in Baghdad and took part in the P.D.K.'s activities.

Molla Mostafa, together with the Iraqi Communists, was the link between Abd-el-Karim Qasem's Government and the U.S.S.R., and everything he asked for was granted. He was given arms to enable him to fight the enemies of the new régime. These were in the first place the reactionaries—Arab shaikhs, Kurdish Aqas and pro-monarchist landlords—and afterwards the unionist Nasserites, who were striving to make Iraq join the United Arab Republic, then comprising Egypt and Syria with Yemen as a confederate member. Every Kurd who joined the P.D.K. was issued with a pink or a green card (according to whether he was an attached or an associated member) and these cards gave the right to possess a firearm—in the case of an attached member, without any payment. The Popular Militia of the National Resistance Organization, in which the Communists played a prominent role, was created by Qasem to defend his régime against its enemies. It replaced the police and frontier guards, and, as many of the Kurds who had

been with Molla Mostafa in Russia entered this Militia, a Kurdish colonel, Taha Bamarni, from Arbil, was put at the head of it.

Being newly back from the U.S.S.R., where he had been constantly fed with the idea of independence for all the Kurds living in Turkey, Iran and Iraq, Molla Mostafa and his friends decided to convene a congress of representatives of the Turkish, Iranian and Iraqi Kurds, which was to take place in Baghdad, and to establish a programme of action in order to gain autonomy and then independence for the Kurds in these countries. This line of action did not correspond with the ideas of the Iraqi Communists, who were internationalists and were striving for the communization of Iraq, and would therefore not cooperate with a Kurdish nationalist movement, even if it was outwardly tinged with Socialism. Abd-el-Karim Qasem himself was thinking of a completely independent Iraq, and in order to escape from Nasser's pan-Arab encroachment he was ready for Iraq to become an Arab-Kurdish state, but he was not prepared to allow a movement which ultimately would bring the Kurdish-inhabited regions to secede and join other Kurdish districts carved out of Iran and Turkey with or without the help of the U.S.S.R. On the other hand, the Kurds of Turkey and Iran were not ready to send their representatives to Baghdad as they feared that this might arouse the suspicion of their respective Governments and provoke hostility which might lead to reprisals. Being in this way discouraged from all quarters, Molla Mostafa and the P.D.K. thought of organizing a congress with representatives of the Iraq Kurdish districts only. This endeavour also failed on account of the dissatisfaction of the Kurdish tribes' chiefs with the radical political programme of the P.D.K., and especially with the proposed land-reform, as most of them owned villages and estates.

Seeing that the projected congress, if it were composed of members of the P.D.K. from Baghdad and a few other towns, would not represent the Kurdish nation of Iraq, Molla Mostafa abandoned his scheme and later went on a short journey to the U.S.S.R. to bring back some documents which he had left there and presumably also to consult his Soviet friends.

At this time, the P.D.K. was still trying to collaborate with other Iraqi leftist political groups with which it had more in common than with the authoritarian Molla Mostafa, the same

antagonism having sprung up between them and him as in 1945 between him and the Heva Party, many of the Heva members now being in the P.D.K.

Meanwhile, after the failure of the Rashid Ali el-Gilani, Abd-es-Salam Aref plot against him, Qasem broke openly with Gamal Abdul Nasser, seeking more and more the support of the Communists in order to neutralize the activity of the pro-Nasser elements who were numerous in the army, especially among the young officers. The United Arab Republic's radio broadcasts and newspapers openly branded him as traitor to the Arab cause, secessionist, and allied to Israel, the imperialists and the Communists, and accused him of influencing the Iraqi Arab nationalists against the Revolution. On 8 March 1959, the 2nd Iraqi Army Division stationed in Mosul under Colonel Shawaf revolted against the Qasem Government, announcing its intention of marching toward Baghdad. This action put Qasem in a difficult position. If he sent the forces stationed in Baghdad against the rebels, the pro-Nasser elements there might attack him from the rear and bring down his Government. It was also possible that part of these forces, when face to face with their comrades of the 2nd Division, would refuse to fight and might even join them. Qasem, however, found a way out of his dilemma. He asked the Mosul Communists to rise against Shawaf and the Molla Mostafa Kurds to attack Mosul and crush the insurgents before the Shammar Arab tribe, which was pro-Nasser, could advance from the outskirts of the Syrian desert and come to the aid of the rebels.

The Kurds surrounded the town and with the aid of the Communists defeated and killed Shawaf. The Communists indulged in all kinds of atrocities and massacred the well-to-do Arab and Turkish populations of Mosul and also the pro-Nasser officers of the 2nd Division. The Shammars quickly took refuge in Syria.

This association of Molla Mostafa with the Communists and the harsh measures of Qasem against the landowners frightened the chiefs of numerous tribes, and in the late spring of 1959 some twenty thousand people passed into Iran, and four thousand into Turkey. The names of these tribes and their chiefs is of interest on account of their influence on later events in Kurdistan.

Daud Jaf, nephew of Osman Pasha who was the husband of



x1 Molla Mostafa of Barzan (Photo *Paris Match*)



xii *Fourth from left: Abdollah Aqa Mandan with tribesmen.*



xiii *Sitting from left to right: Mozaffar Khan Habibi, chief of the Tilekuhi tribe; Ali Khan Hamaveysi, chief of the Hamaveysi tribe of Tilekuh; The late Mohammad Habibi, former chief of the Tilekuhi tribe, before Mozaffar Khan; Mohammad Ali Khan Amir Hosayni, chief of the Galbaghi tribe. Standing from right to left: Abd-el-Qader Saberi, from Saqqez; Yahya Khan Galbaghi; Mohammad Hamaveysi; Mohammad Khan Fatchi.*

These Kurdish chiefs have taken part in fighting on the side of the Iranian Government against dissident Kurds, since 1941.

the famous chieftainness of Halabja, Adila Khanum Beg, crossed into Iran with several thousand armed followers, most of them remaining to this day in Kermanshah.

Ali Beg with the Sharafbayani tribe of the Kanaqin district, took refuge in Qasr-i-Shirin.

The Talabani tribe of Kirkuk and Suleymaniyah, led by Shaikh Najm-ed-Din, arrived at Kermanshah.

The family of the late Shaikh Mahmud, with Shaikh Hosayn, came to Marivan.

The brothers of Hama Rashid Qadirkhani, Izzet and Ali, from Shiler, came to Baneh, Hama Rashid himself remaining in Iraq, on good terms with Qasem but hostile to Molla Mostafa.

The Sovayd tribe from Chwarta (near Suleymaniyah), under Abd-el-Rahman Aqa, arrived at Baneh.

The Poshtdari tribe under the son of Babakr Aqa and Haji, son of Abbas Aqa, crossed into Iran and stayed at Sardasht.

The Shaikh clan, from the neighbourhood of the Iranian frontier, near Khaneh, under Shaikh Ala-ed-Din and his brother Shaikh Morteza. They have remained in Iran since then.

The Mangur tribe of Iraq (different from the Mangur of Mahabad), with Ali Hasan Aqa.

Shaikh Osman Nakhshbandi from Biareh, very influential among the two hundred thousand members of the Nakhshbandi religious order, who have remained in Iran, in the Awroman district.

Abd-el-Karim Barzinja with his clan. He stayed in Iran, but his son, Shaikh Mohammad went over to Molla Mostafa, with two thousand men.

Shaikh Mohammad Nakhshbandi, from Halabja, has remained in Sanandaj.

People of the Dizai tribe, from Arbil, came to Mahabad.

The Herki tribe with Fattah Beg and Said Beg.

The Baradost tribe with Mahmud Khalifa.

Shaikh Mohammad Amin Keman with his tribe.

The Lowlan under Shaikh Rashid.

The Zibari with Mohammad Zibari went to Turkey with four thousand men as well as the Rikani and Barvari. The last three tribes had gone to Turkey at Şemdinli (Neri), from where they were taken to a safe distance from the Iraq frontier.

This mass exodus proved both to Qasem and to Molla Mostafa that the Kurds were not ready for socialization, and a

more moderate attitude was adopted. The Popular Militia was put under some sort of discipline under army officers and replaced on the frontier by army and police units, before being definitely disarmed and disbanded, and the official authorities refrained for the time being from talk about land reform. After some months, the tribes who had left Iraq returned from Iran and Turkey, only a few chiefs with their retinue remaining in Iran up to the time of writing. This was achieved through the mediation of Shaikh Ahmad Barzani, who had adopted a neutral attitude. He was on friendly terms with Qasem although he was still considered as the chief of the Shaikhs of Barzan family and enjoyed the respect of his younger brother Molla Mostafa.

Although still outwardly on good terms with Qasem, Molla Mostafa realized that the Iraqis were not ready to accord to the Kurds the desired autonomy, and many elements among the working population of Baghdad were becoming openly hostile to Kurdish nationalism. He then brought from Barzan one hundred armed Barzanis, lodging them in the P.D.K.'s headquarters, to act as bodyguard to himself and to protect the P.D.K.

In July 1961, Molla Mostafa and the P.D.K. presented to the Iraq Government a petition officially asking for a wide autonomy inside Iraq and containing the following points:

1. Kurdish to become the first official language in the Kurdish autonomous region.
2. The police to be entirely Kurdish, as also the army units stationed in the Kurdish region. The words of command in the Kurdish units to be Kurdish.
3. The Kurdish provincial government to control education, health services, communications and municipal and rural affairs.
4. A substantial share of the oil industry of the Mosul-Kirkuk region to be spent in Kurdistan.
5. External affairs, defence and overall financial policy to be left to the Central Government, but the Vice-Premier, the assistant Chief of Staff and the assistant ministers of all ministries to be Kurds.
6. The employment of Kurdish Army units outside the Kurdish region to be made only with the consent of the Kurdish Republic authorities, except in the case of an external threat.

These proposals were examined by the Iraqi Revolutionary Council and finally rejected, as constituting a threat to the territorial and political integrity of Iraq, especially as the Shia population of the south of Iraq would then also be tempted to ask for autonomous status. The P.D.K. then presented a second note in the shape of an ultimatum, asking for a favourable answer. At the instigation of the Government, Arab workers demonstrated in front of the P.D.K. headquarters, trying to enter the premises. The Kurdish guards fired on the mob, killing and wounding several demonstrators. The situation becoming explosive, Molla Mostafa left Baghdad with several of his followers and members of the Part Democrat Kurdistan, and went to Barzan by way of Kirkuk and Arbil. His son Loqman was placed under surveillance by Qasem, but his brother Shaikh Ahmad remained in Baghdad, trying to act as a mediator, and was allowed to travel to Barzan and back more or less at his convenience.

Supported by the Barzanis and allied tribes, Molla Mostafa assembled about seven thousand armed warriors and began to occupy strategic places, hills, bridges, and frontier posts, expelling and disarming the police and small scattered garrisons, but allowing the prisoners to go, as he had done in 1945.

For the same reasons that had decided him against sending the army against Shawaf in 1959, Qasem preferred, as far as possible, not to engage important military forces in the Kurdish mountains and so he resorted to the tactics employed by the Iraqi Army in 1945, arming and sending against the rebels rival and hostile tribes who understood fighting in the rugged hills of northern Kurdistan.

The Lowlan and Ravandok tribes of Shaikh Rashid, the old enemy of Molla Mostafa, the Herki of Fattah Beg, the Baradost with Mahmud Khalifa and a few others, were set against the Barzanis and tribal warfare began as in 1945. This time, however, the conditions were different. The Iraqis were no longer supported by the British; the national feeling of the Kurds was much more developed than it had been then; many young people of the loyal tribes defected to the rebels, as did also a certain number of Iraqi soldiers, N.C.O.s and officers of Kurdish race. The radio broadcasts of Cairo and for a time Damascus, were supporting the Kurdish struggle for freedom and in this way raising the morale of the Kurds and showing

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them that this was not an ordinary tribal war, but a struggle for their freedom and liberation from the Iraqi yoke. Qasem began to bombard the villages, encampments and even small towns occupied by the rebel Kurds, killing indiscriminately women, children, flocks, combatants and non-combatants, but the Kurds were not cowed. They dispersed their camps and families in the deep valleys, cleverly using the shaded slopes of the mountains according to the time of day to conceal and camouflage themselves from aerial observation. As has been proved many times, planes cannot observe their targets effectively in mountain warfare, as high peaks, sharp crests of lofty ridges and air pockets prevent them flying low. In spite of these difficulties, the air bombardment inflicted heavy losses on the Kurds of northern Iraq, and caused great hardship by destroying their flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle and stores of grain and fodder. The rebels lacked medicine and sanitary equipment, they had few doctors, and their normal routine of life was interrupted, but the lofty hills offered them shelter and allowed them to continue to fight.

The P.D.K. tried not to break completely with the Iraq Government but to negotiate with them through the good offices of the leftist parties, and even of the Communists. Its Secretary-General, Ibrahim Ahmad, a lawyer, was really a Marxist, but, depending on who were his interlocutors, showed himself either a convinced Marxist-Leninist or a liberal democrat. Those who had occasion to talk to him and to observe his actions, considered him as a crypto-Communist of the Fidel Castro brand. He was certainly much more amenable to accepting Communism than Qasem, Nasser, Aref or Molla Mostafa himself would be, but, like Castro, he had to conceal this fact in order to induce the tribal chiefs to take part in the struggle. Nevertheless, he differed from the Communists in his views on the desirability of fighting against Qasem.

The Communists were supporting Qasem, to a certain extent, in his opposition to Nasser but, although Nasser was on good terms with the U.S.S.R., the Soviet Government was far from pleased to see Syria join Egypt and become a part of the United Arab Republic, instead of sliding easily towards Communism with the help of Khalid Bektash, and General Bizri. The prospect of Iraq joining the U.A.R. was also far from pleasing to the Soviets, as the work of subversion would be much more difficult

in a strong Arab Union than in weak, divided countries subjected to the exploitation of foreign imperialism and local landlords and plutocrats in which the discontented masses could be easily directed towards Communism.

Ibrahim Ahmad knew very well that if he acted according to the instructions of international Communism, he would lose the support of the Kurdish Nationalists, and Molla Mostafa would remain the only champion of the Kurdish cause. The P.D.K. would lose its Kurdish character and become a mere appendage to the Communist Party of Iraq, and Molla Mostafa would then be able to organize a new Kurdish Nationalist Party which would be joined by the great majority of tribal and even urban Kurds, except for a few detribalized workers in the oil industry and a handful of intellectuals having no following and no contact with the masses of rural and tribal Kurds.

In December 1961, on account of the indignation provoked by the Iraqis' intensive bombardment of Kurdish villages, it became evident that the P.D.K. could not continue to negotiate fruitlessly with the Iraqi Government and the leftist parties while supporting and encouraging the rising of the Kurdish tribes in the north, and Ibrahim Ahmad, with the other leaders of the Party, discreetly left Baghdad and joined the rebellion in the Kurdish hills. This move helped to give the rebellion the organization it was lacking. The administration of the rebel-occupied regions was taken in hand, subsections of the Party were organized in all important localities and propaganda for the war effort was undertaken, whilst carefully avoiding any reference to subsequent social and economic reforms which might be offensive to the tribal chiefs and local landowners. It was simply stated that the structure of the future Kurdish state and its political and economic organization would be elaborated after final victory and submitted to the Kurdish nation which would legislate on it after a referendum.

The P.D.K. is ruled by a presidium of five people, each of whom is at the head of a commission, corresponding to a ministry, responsible for specific activities. Ibrahim Ahmad, being the Secretary-General of the Party, looks after the internal affairs of the organization, and is second in importance to Molla Mostafa. One can say that Molla Mostafa is the effective Commander-in-Chief of the Kurdish armed forces, but has much less power as Chief of the Kurdish State. Ibrahim Ahmad's

position can be compared to that of a Prime Minister with very extensive powers. The P.D.K. proclaims itself to be 'Marxist-Leninist', but does not use the name of Communism, although declaring that it is not opposed to it. Thus there is no conflict between the Iraq Communist Party and the P.D.K., the Communists who used to criticize and to attack the P.D.K. during Qasem's régime, becoming more friendly to it after the coming to power of the Baath Government on 8 February.

Molla Mostafa Barzani has become chief of the Kurdish rebellion by virtue of his history, since his operation against the Royal Government of Iraq and the British in 1945, his participation in the Mahabad rising against Iran, and the eleven years' long exile in the U.S.S.R. rendered him the national hero of Kurdistan.

The intellectuals of the P.D.K. consider him autocratic and reactionary—in spite of his sojourn in Russia—as the members of the Heva Party did in 1944-45. He has lost his grip on Party administration and the social and economic programmes to be implemented in the event of the emergence of an autonomous Kurdish state or province. On the other hand, the chiefs of tribes consider him too radical but accept him as commander, nobody else having at this time his prestige and war experience. In 1945, Molla Mostafa's relations with Heva were delicate and sometimes strained. His relations today with the P.D.K. are much worse, but they have to work together against the common enemy of the moment—the Arabs.

During his fight against the Iraq Government of General Qasem, Molla Mostafa disposed of two different categories of armed forces. There were the tribal irregulars, who constituted at the beginning the chief fighting force. These acted in the traditional way of tribal guerrillas, assembling at a certain point at a given time to deliver an attack or raid a locality, then returning to their home in a village or an encampment and resuming the routine of their daily life, looking after the cattle and the flocks, cultivating their fields or orchards. They kept their rifles and ammunition concealed somewhere under ground or in a cave in order to escape the possibility of being disarmed by Iraqi forces, and then resumed the fight after the departure of the enemy. This was the way the Barzanis and the other tribes fought against the Turks in the twenties and thirties, against the Iraqis before 1961, and against the Iranians in 1945.

Since then, in the same way as the Komula had understood the necessity to supplement the tribal warriors who were undisciplined and unpredictable and for that reason not always available when they were needed, with a permanent disciplined force, so also the P.D.K. persuaded Molla Mostafa to agree to the organization of such a force in their struggle with Iraq. Although the front-line remained fluid, as the rebels did not dispose of enough forces to enable them to hold continuous fortified positions, the lofty hills of northern Iraq offered inaccessible refuges where the Kurdish detachments could retreat for a time and then launch again a lightning attack on an ill-protected column progressing or camping in a valley or on the slopes of the mountains.

The permanent force of the insurgents is called Lashgar-i-Shoreshi-ye-Kord; the soldiers are called Pishmargeh and the officers Sarmargeh (which mean respectively, 'Facing Death' and 'Heading Death'). Their uniform consists of the usual Kurdish costume—wide trousers, short jacket, turban with special insignia. They are organized in platoons (*dasteh*), companies (*pel*) and battalions (*sarpel*), the latter numbering about one hundred and fifty to two hundred and fifty men. They are armed with rifles of different makes: British, Iranian, American, Russian and old Turkish Mausers, machine-guns, sub-machine-guns, Bren guns, Sten guns, mortars, a few bazookas, hand-grenades and a certain number of mountain-guns taken from the Iraqis. Their chief purveyor is the Iraqi Army itself, as many arms fell into the hands of the Kurds during the fighting, and many others have been brought to them by Kurdish deserters from the Iraqi Army, who numbered some three thousand in 1962.

It was with these forces, whose number varied from ten to twenty thousand including those tribesmen who were not incorporated, that Molla Mostafa inflicted on Qasem's army the first major defeats. According to Kurdish sources, nearly three thousand casualties were inflicted on the Iraqis and their Kurdish allies in the spring of 1962.

The Kurdish tribes who have remained loyal to the Iraqis and co-operated with them against the Barzanis, are more or less the same as those who had been hostile towards Molla Mostafa from the beginning, although several of them had, either because of Kurdish national feeling or from fear of reprisals

against their villages, joined the Barzanis and now fight against the Iraqis. The tribes who fought in 1961-2 against the Barzanis were the Lowlan under Rashid, the Herki Berati of Fattah Beg, the Baradost with Mahmud Khalifa, the Zibari, Rikani, and Barvari. After the defeat of the Iraqis in 1962, these tribes were pushed out of Iraqi Kurdistan by the rebels into Iran and Turkey, but after a while, through the mediation of Shaikh Ahmad, Qasem and Molla Mostafa agreed to allow them to return to Iraq and settle in the neighbourhood of Arbil, Qasem promising not to make them fight against the Barzanis, and Molla Mostafa also promising not to make them join him in his struggle against the Iraqis. The Zibaris, Rikanis and Barvaris came back from Turkey to Mosul, but Molla Mostafa did not allow them to go to their former dwelling-places in Zibar, Dihok, Aqrah and Amadiyah.

Qasem, being badly pressed both by the Communists and the Nasserites, considered it useful for his popularity with the nationalist as well as anti-imperialist shades of opinion, to raise the question of Kuwait and to assert Iraq's right to that oil-rich Arab Shaikhdom which had been coveted by Iraq since King Ghazi's time. This policy necessitated his sending some army units to Basra and prevented him from concentrating important forces in the Kurdish mountains. When a column did succeed in making its way through hills infested by Kurdish guerrillas and occupied an important locality, the occasion was hailed by the Iraqi press and radio as an important victory. But the insurgents immediately took the surrounding hills, cutting the column's communications and lines of supply. The column was thus practically isolated and had either to stay in its camping places besieged by the rebels and precariously supplied by air, or to try to retreat towards its former bases, necessitating a difficult operation of disengagement and the sending of a relief column through enemy-occupied territory to bring it out.

These sporadic operations lasted until the overthrow of Qasem's Government in February 1963, when the situation appeared to change as the new Government, presided over by Abd-es-Salam Aref, Gamal Abdul Nasser's friend, seemed ready to negotiate with the Kurdish insurgents and to grant them autonomy on satisfactory conditions. Contact was established between General Molla Mostafa Barzani—he always uses

the title of General given to him in 1945 by the Komula Government of Mahabad—and the Iraqi Government through his brother, Shaikh Ahmad, and a Kurdish delegation presided over by Jalal Talabani of the Talabani tribe of the Diyala region near the Iranian frontier, went to Baghdad to negotiate an agreement concerning the conditions of the autonomy of the Kurdish region inside Iraq. These negotiations started well, both sides showing good will, but after the Baath *coup d'état* in Syria, and the start of negotiations in Cairo for the creation of an Arab Union, comprising Egypt, Syria and Iraq, the talks lagged. The Iraqi Government, taken aback by the magnitude of the Kurdish demands and considering that their acceptance would be the prelude to the secession of that province, procrastinated, alleging that the status of the Kurdish Province must not be decided until negotiations concerning the future Arab Union had been concluded.

At the same time, the Iraq Government declared that they must extirpate the Communists who were hostile to the union of the Arabs and had supported the former Qasem régime, and that the Kurdish insurgents must dissociate themselves from them and even co-operate in their destruction. After that the Iraqi air force bombarded several villages and encampments said to have been in the Communists' possession and the Kurds kept a neutral position although a few weeks before they were fighting together against their common enemy, the Iraqis.

As the negotiations seemed to have reached a deadlock and no answer had been given to the Kurds, Jalal Talabani was instructed to go to Cairo and put the matter before Nasser, who had always showed sympathy to Kurdish aspirations and whose radio broadcasts used to attack Abd-el-Karim Qasem's Kurdish policy and support the Kurds in their struggle for freedom. On his way to Cairo, Jalal Talabani stayed a few days in Beyruth where he declared to the press that the negotiations between the Kurdish delegation and the Iraqi Government were not broken off, but only postponed, and that the Kurds wanted to know what would be their position in the Arab Union when this came into being.

In Cairo, Nasser was sympathetic but non-committal, and warned Talabani against any idea of secession, promising to advise Aref to accept the just demands of the Kurds, without, however, specifying which ones he considered just and which

unjust. He asked the Kurds to await the implementation of the Arab Union for the practical realization of their aspirations. The tone of the Sowt-el-Arab—the 'voice of the Arabs'—had undergone a noticeable change and the Kurds were no longer encouraged to fight the Iraqi Government as they had been in the days of Qasem's rule. Talabani returned to Baghdad and reported to Molla Mostafa and the P.D.K., but the sturdy Kurds, although rather disappointed, did not lose heart, and the conversations between them and the Iraqis, optimistically labelled 'negotiations' for the sake of public opinion, continued for some time. The Iraqi Government was ready to grant the Kurds some rights on the lines of those Nuri-Sa'id had in view in 1944 and which the Kurds appeared then to have been ready to accept: Kurdish to be the official language in the Kurdish region together with Arabic; more Kurdish primary and secondary schools, perhaps even a Kurdish University and high schools; Kurdish officials to be given preference over others in the Kurdish region; and a few other concessions of secondary importance. The demands of the Kurdish delegation, especially their military and financial clauses, seemed to the Iraqis quite unacceptable, since if they had their own army, well provided with arms and military equipment, they would be able to start a new rebellion in the future in much better conditions than formerly with the object, this time, of attaining complete independence, and if they were to receive the 50 per cent they had first demanded, or even 30 per cent of the revenues of the oil exploited in the Mosul and Kirkuk regions, they would be much less ready to accept a continued connexion with Iraq than they had been before. During these conversations the insurgents were equipping themselves with arms and ammunition either smuggled by secret means from abroad or, more often, sent by Kurdish sympathizers in the Iraqi Army and from their own stores.

Meanwhile, the international position of the Kurds became for the time being much strengthened by the Socialist countries falling out with Iraq as a result of the persecution of the Communists by the new Baath Iraqi Government. The Soviet and East German radios began to attack Iraq for its repressive actions against the Kurds, accusing it of genocide by the bombing of Kurdish villages and mass killing of people and flocks. When relations between Iraq and the U.A.R. became

again strained, the attitude of Nasser also underwent a change in favour of the Kurds, but whereas the Soviet were openly supporting the struggle of the Kurds for independence, the Egyptians only deplored the continuation of hostilities. Nasser declared in an interview that he considered that all peaceful ways of settling the Kurdish question ought to have been explored before starting warlike operations, and that, from what Talabani had told him, he had the impression that the Kurdish demands were not far removed from what he considered as reasonable.

The struggle of the Kurdish people of Iraq for their freedom did not fail to have its repercussions in Turkey. The internal strife between the partisans of the 1960 Revolution represented by the army and the Republican People's Party of Ismet İnönü and the Justice Party of General Gümüşpala, chiefly composed of members of the old Democrat Party of Menderes, and the unrest caused by the discovery of plots and counterplots, proving the instability of the Turkish régime, encouraged a number of Kurds from different sections of the population to begin an agitation for Kurdish rights in the eastern vilayets of Turkey with a Kurdish majority. In spite of their internal quarrels, the Turks reacted promptly and sternly. The leaders of the movement were arrested, tried and imprisoned, and the frontier with Iraq was strongly manned, nobody being allowed to pass. The Turks had not forgotten the Kurdish risings of 1925, 1931 and 1937, and were not disposed to tolerate trouble in their eastern provinces on the frontier of Iran and the U.S.S.R., where, with the Soviet Government in its present mood, complications were to be expected.

Both parties to the negotiations with the Iraqi Government professed to be conciliatory, but the Kurds insisted on nearly all their claims, and the Iraqis considered that the acceptance of these would be tantamount to the disintegration of Iraq. Finally, the negotiations broke down, and Talabani left Baghdad with his fellow-delegates, the rupture thus becoming definite. An Iraqi ultimatum was rejected by Molla Mostafa, and war operations were resumed.

In June, the Iraq Government issued a declaration accusing the Kurdish rebels of asking for impossible conditions and fixing a time-limit for the cessation of the rebellion. At the same time it promised pardon and reintegration into their units for the

The Kurds

deserters from the Iraq Army if they surrendered within three days. This time-limit was afterwards prolonged for a few days and then weeks, but none of the deserters surrendered, nor were the Kurds ready to lay down their arms and accept the Iraqis' conditions. The Government then declared that the rebels would be attacked without delay by important forces and annihilated within a few days.

The new Government of the Council of the National Revolution had already practically abandoned its claims on Kuwait, and forces concentrated in the neighbourhood of Basra were recalled and sent to the north. The offensive against the Kurds started simultaneously from three directions, with three divisions operating in the regions of Amadiyah, Aqrah and Rawandiz. Other detachments were employed in the regions of Ranya, Kōi Sanjaq, Qala Diza, Chwarta, Suleymaniyah and the vicinity of Khanaqin. Together with the advance of the Iraqi Army forces, a violent bombardment was directed on the localities which were known to be in the hands of the rebels. Although nearly two-thirds of the whole Iraqi Army were engaged on the principal sectors of the operation, and more troops on the secondary sectors, the fighting proved much more difficult than had been anticipated, the advance of the columns being slow and their hold on conquered localities and strategic spots precarious, as their lines of communication were at once cut and the different units isolated from each other. The Government forces occupied towns and big villages, but all around them the rebels were in control. By some means they had come into possession of light anti-aircraft machine-guns with which they brought down several Iraqi planes, causing the Iraqis to take more precautions and fly at a higher altitude which made the observation of their targets more difficult. Nevertheless, thanks to their superior numbers, fire power and air support, the Iraqis progressed and succeeded in reaching the vicinity of Zibar and even of Barzan. The tactics of the Kurds consisted in not allowing themselves to be surrounded and forced to surrender. Knowing every inch of the country, they always managed to slip away before their enemy could close the circle around them, and they were ready to abandon villages, camping grounds and strategic hills and passes, rightly considering that what counts in war is the army itself and not geographical zones, even if they are considered indispensable and reputed to be

impregnable. In this way Zibar and even Barzan were abandoned, the Kurds retiring into the inaccessible hills to the north and north-east.

The Iraqi High Command enlisted the services of several Kurdish tribes hostile to the rebels. These were (October 1963):

1. The Sharafi tribe, under Abdollah Aqa Sharafani, with six hundred fighting men.
2. The Zibari, under Mahmud Zibari, eight hundred men.
3. The Baradost, under Mahmud Khalifa, three hundred men.
4. The Lowlan and Rawandok tribes, under the old Shaikh Rashid, five hundred men.
5. The Berati section of the Herki tribe under Fattah Beg, three hundred men.
6. The Mandan section of the Herki under Sa'id Khan with four hundred men.

In addition to these, the Iraqis also organized an irregular force intended to be composed of detribalized Kurds and local Arabs from the Mosul and Jabal Hamrin regions, under the name of 'Salah-ed-Din Ayyubi Force', but the Kurdish element of this force is insignificant, and the Arabs predominate.

The Iraqi Government continued to persecute the Communists, hundreds of whom were arrested and imprisoned and scores executed, especially those who had been responsible for massacres in Mosul in 1959 at the time of the Shawaf rebellion, so the Soviet Government addressed a solemn protest against the ruthlessness of the Iraqis in Kurdistan, accusing them again of genocide because of their bombing of inhabited localities in that region. As the Soviet had been since the beginning opposed to Cento, the presence of Turkey and Iran in the pact was seized upon as a pretext to accuse these Governments of helping Iraq to crush the Kurds, and the Soviet Government warned them that, as this situation was creating disturbances in the vicinity of the frontier of the U.S.S.R., it would be obliged to take adequate measures to protect its interests. Both Turkey and Iran formally denied any participation in Iraq's repressive action against the Kurds, announcing that they had closed their frontiers to any infiltration or encroachment.

Meanwhile the Kurds were announcing victory after victory, claiming to have killed, wounded, or taken prisoner a great

number of Iraqi soldiers and Kurdish irregulars loyal to Iraq. In the space of two weeks, 1,340 Iraqis were alleged to have been wounded and 720 taken prisoner, whilst 20 tanks, 164 machine-guns, 9 mortars, 1,000 rifles with 80 Sten guns were said to have fallen into the hands of the Kurds who claimed that during the same period they had lost only 134 killed and 273 wounded. They also complained that the Iraqi air force had razed to the ground 167 villages, killing 634 civilians and wounding 1,309 persons, chiefly women and children.

In May, the Mongolian Popular Republic had asked the Secretary-General of the United Nations to put the Kurdish question on the agenda for the next session of the General Assembly in the form of a protest against the massacre of the civilian population by the Iraqi Air Force and a demand for the cessation of hostilities. In the face of this political offensive of the Communist States, the position of the Western Powers was rather delicate. On the one hand, public opinion in most Western countries was sympathetic towards the struggle of the Kurds for freedom. The Kurds were known to be a brave and persevering nation, who had the misfortune to be divided between three Powers, as Poland had been for a hundred and twenty-three years, and they evoked an interest which was romantic and picturesque. On the other hand, the United Kingdom and United States Governments were allied to Turkey and Iran, and had to take care not to touch their susceptibility. When the Russians stopped delivering war material to Iraq, which they had begun to do soon after the 1958 Revolution, the British began to provide arms and ammunition to the Iraqis as they had done before 1958. So also did the Americans. As a result, the Soviet accused the 'Western Imperialists' of participating in the annihilation of the Kurdish people struggling for freedom.

Time passed, and the Kurdish fighters did not show any intention of surrendering. In order to bolster up their people's morale, their propaganda machine let it be understood that they were helped and supported not only by the Communist Governments headed by Soviet Russia and—separately—by China, but also by America, Israel, and even the U.A.R. This was accepted as gospel not only by the Kurds of Iraq, but also by those living in Iran and Turkey. But in September 1963 they had a great disappointment. Just as the General Assembly was about to

open, Mongolia withdrew its complaint, without giving any explanation. As Mongolia must be considered as a complete satellite of the U.S.S.R., and her complaint had certainly been delivered in conformity with the instructions of her powerful ally, its withdrawal must be understood to mean a reversal of the Soviet group's policy towards the Kurds. Although the Communists are now bitterly hostile towards Iraq, they do not forget that the Kurdish rebellion is directed against the Arab part of that country, and Iraq with its six million, five hundred thousand inhabitants is only a part of the ninety-five million people of the Arab world, with most of whom the Soviet Government wants to be on good terms.

Gamal Abdul Nasser made it clear that although he was in favour of some concessions to the Kurds he was definitely opposed to any secessionist action, and if Israel was favourable to this movement it was certainly not to be expected that Nasser should support it.

The reaction of Molla Mostafa was characteristic of the proud nature of these sons of the hills. 'We do not expect our rights to be won by negotiations in chanceries, but by victory of our arms in our sacred struggle for liberty', was his declaration when he learned of the decision of Mongolia to withdraw its complaint. To underline this attitude, he attacked the Kurdish tribes who were hostile to him and drove them into Turkish territory, where they were interned and disarmed, thus depriving the Iraqis of a number of very valuable allies.

The fight continued for a time, and after the union of Iraq with Syria, Syrian reinforcements joined the Iraqi forces operating against the Kurds, the armies of these two states having been unified and put under the single command of an Iraqi General.

On 18 November 1963, the Baathist Government of Iraq was superseded and Abd-es-Salam Aref became the uncontested ruler of the country. From the point of view of internal politics, the attitude of hostility to the Communists did not change, but the new Government adopted a markedly pro-U.A.R. attitude and the persecution of the Baathists started at once. The Syrian military forces, numbering some 5,000 men, who had been sent to co-operate with the Iraqi Army against the Kurds, were recalled to Syria, and after a short time the Iraqi Government, acting on advice from Gamal Abdul Nasser, supported by the

President of the Algerian Republic, Ben Bella, announced its intention to negotiate with the Kurds on the basis of the grant of special rights.

The negotiations started between Molla Mostafa, represented by Saleh el-Yusef Barzani, and General Abd-er-Razzaq Mahmud, governor of Suleymaniyah, a cease-fire taking place. These negotiations were temporarily concluded on 10 February 1964. The Iraqis lifted the blockade of the Kurdish-occupied regions, allowing foodstuffs, medical supplies, etc., to be sent to the Kurds. The prisoners from both sides were to be liberated and the persons arrested on account of their participation in the revolt or for having helped the insurgents were to be released. The Government also announced its intention to dismiss the pro-Government Kurdish irregular formations. On the other hand, the Kurds were to allow the free provisioning of the Iraqi garrisons in the Kurdish regions and to abstain from any attacks on Iraqi convoys and detachments. The Iraqi Administration was to be re-established in the Kurdish regions, but the Iraqi Government announced at the same time its resolution to take into consideration the 'National Rights of the Kurds' based on decentralization, without, however, entering into details which were to be specified later after further exchange of views between Kurdish and Iraqi negotiators.

The announcement of the cease-fire was met with great rejoicing in the Arab part of Iraq, and especially in Baghdad and Mosul, but the Kurds, though relieved to know that they would no longer be subjected to aerial bombardment and starvation because of the blockade, were more reserved, as nothing had been said about the nature of the Government's concessions to them—the word 'autonomy' not having been even mentioned—and although important reforms were promised for the whole of Iraq there was no special reference to Kurdistan.

However, a plan for the economic rehabilitation of northern Iraq was announced: the towns and villages destroyed by bombing were to be reconstructed, new schools built, the building of roads undertaken, and tourism encouraged. Martial law and revolutionary courts were to be abolished in the near future, but on account of the Government's struggle against the Baathist and Communist subversion inside the country, they could not be dispensed with immediately.

As has been mentioned before, the leaders of the Part Democrat Kurdistan have never been on the best of terms with Molla Mostafa, whom they considered too domineering and whose conservatism they disliked, but they were obliged to accept him as the uncontested military chief of the rebellion and the only man having the confidence of the majority of the warring tribes. Now that he had himself initiated the cease-fire negotiations on lines widely differing from the claims which had been made by the chiefs of the rebellion, they considered him to be no longer indispensable, and so they presented to him a memorandum disagreeing with the terms of the cease-fire and declaring that the Iraqi Government did not intend to make any appreciable concessions to the Kurds and was only trying to gain time to consolidate its position in the country.

This document was signed by the Secretary of the Part Democrat Kurdistan Ibrahim Ahmad, the Ambassador at Large Jalal Talabani, the Chief of Staff Omar Dababa, Molla Hilmi, Lieutenant-Colonel Nuri Ahmad Taha, Jamil Bey, Ali Asghar and the chief of the operational department, Major Isma'il. The document concluded with a declaration that the military operations against the Iraqis ought to be pursued until a satisfactory settlement should be forthcoming.

Molla Mostafa, who as military commander of all the Kurdish forces considered himself to be the person best qualified to form an opinion on the subject, decided that the continuation of war against the Iraqi Government was no longer possible. The whole Kurdish region had been ruined by the bombing of the Iraqi Air Force. The crops vital for the continuation of the rebellion had been destroyed, the population had been increased by an influx of refugees without shelter or means of livelihood, the ammunition stocks were exhausted, and, last but not least, the morale of the people was shaken by the knowledge that the U.A.R., since the crushing of the Baaths, was no longer supporting the rebellion. In March 1964 Jalal Talabani and Aqravi had been sent by the Kurdish Rebel Organization—both Molla Mostafa and the P.D.K.—to Cairo, to enlist the further support of Nasser, but the latter, contrary to his previous attitude, contented himself with giving vague promises that he would advise the Iraqi President, Abd-es-Salam Aref, to treat them with understanding.

It is not to be supposed that the leaders of the P.D.K. were

ignorant of the appalling conditions of the Kurdish rebels, but they wanted to seize this occasion to get rid of Molla Mostafa by compromising him in the eyes of the Kurds and showing that he had become a stooge in the hands of the Iraqi Government. Then, after a token show of renewed hostilities, they would negotiate with the Iraqi themselves without the participation of their former war-leader.

Molla Mostafa, aware that the bulk of the rebel tribes and about nine-tenths of the Pishmargeh—the rebel regular forces—were supporting him, transmitted the P.D.K. declaration to the Iraqi Government. Aref then promised the fulfilment of some of the Kurdish demands after a delay of a few months, and declared that if the P.D.K. leaders' acted hostilely against Molla Mostafa, he would order the Iraqi forces to co-operate with him in crushing the dissenters. After this, the P.D.K., whose centre was at Mawat, near Chwarta, north-west of Suleymaniyah, began active agitation against Molla Mostafa, representing him as a traitor to the Kurdish cause and sold to Iraq.

Meanwhile, Jalal Talabani was said to have managed to come to Teheran with the newspaper men accompanying General de Gaulle during his visit to Iran, and to have contacted several people there. He succeeded in returning incognito to Iraq. This escapade gave Molla Mostafa when he heard of it a pretext to declare that P.D.K. was supported by Cento powers, who wanted to use the Kurdish rebellion for their own benefit.

The defection of the P.D.K. forced Molla Mostafa to come to terms with certain tribal leaders who had up to then held a more or less aloof position and had been friendly or at least neutral towards the Iraqis, to help him conduct his struggle. Among them were Shaikh Latif Hafidzadeh, a son of Shaikh Mahmud of Suleymaniyah, Hama Rashid Qaderkhanzadeh, and the Posht-dari chieftains.

In July, after conversations with General Taher Yahya, the Iraqi Premier and General Abd-er-Rahman Aref, Chief of Staff of the Iraqi Army and brother of the President, who had come to visit him at Ranya, Molla Mostafa called upon the P.D.K.—who were at Mawat—to deliver their arms and to submit to his orders.

The P.D.K. refused to obey this order, and 2,000 Barzanis and 500 men of Hama Rashid, under the command of Loqman,

Molla Mostafa's son, and Enver, Hama Rashid's son, advanced towards Mawat. The P.D.K. leaders, with 630 Pishmargh who threw in their lot with them since they were not in a position to resist, crossed the Lesser Zab river into Iran in the neighbourhood of Sardasht. They refused to allow the Iranian authorities to disarm them, saying that they intended to return to Iraq after a short time. Ibrahim Ahmad went to Teheran, but Jalal Talabani and Omar Dababa remained with the bulk of their force at Dulekan, twelve miles from the Iraqi frontier.

Shaikh Ahmad, Molla Mostafa's elder brother, then tried to reconcile the P.D.K. with his brother, but failed, and some twenty days later the P.D.K., reinforced by a hundred more Pishmargh from the southern district of Kurdistan, recrossed into Iraq, trying to return to Chwarta. A small number of Barzanis who had been watching the Iranian frontier attacked them and inflicted some losses on them, after which about 200 Pishmargh deserted to join the Barzanis and the remaining 320 fled to Baneh in Iran where they were disarmed and subjected to surveillance. The Iraqi Government protested against their being in the close vicinity of the frontier and the refugees were sent to Saqqez and later to Hamadan, but their followers abroad and especially in Syria, Lebanon and western Europe continued to support them, agitating against the Iraq Government and Molla Mostafa.

In mid-September, a Congress of Iraqi Kurds summoned by Molla Mostafa, at Ranya gave him full powers to administer the Kurdish rebellion, but at the same time invited him to recall the P.D.K. dissidents from Iran, Hama Rashid being instructed to open talks with them. After this Omar Dababa returned to Iraq where he had an interview with the representative of Molla Mostafa, Saleh el-Yusef. He then went back to Iran to fetch Jalal Talabani, and both went to see Molla Mostafa at Ranya.

As a result of talks and the intercession of Shaikh Ahmad and Hama Rashid, Molla Mostafa agreed that all the dissident refugees, excepting Ibrahim Ahmad and Sa'id Aziz, should return from Iran and submit to him. The P.D.K. would cease its party activity, in accordance with the Iraqi law suppressing all political parties, and both the military and civilian affairs would become vested with Molla Mostafa. The latter solemnly pledged himself to resume hostilities against the Iraqis if

autonomy should not be granted after a reasonable lapse of time.

On 4 October 1964, a conference of Kurdish notables was held at Ranya under the presidency of Molla Mostafa, and it was decided that as seven months had elapsed since the last promises made by the Iraqi Government without any steps having been taken to implement them, the Kurdish Revolutionary Organization considered itself free to take any steps it deemed suitable to secure the autonomy it believed to be its right.

It was also decided that three Assemblies should be formed and charged with looking after Kurdish Affairs:

1. The Senate, under the chairmanship of Shaikh Latif Hafidzadeh (son of the late Shaikh Mahmud of Suleymaniyah).
2. The Majles-e-Shorā (Consultative Assembly) presided over by Mamand Abbas Aqa (Chief of the Aku tribe, a faithful friend of Molla Mostafa).
3. The Majles-e-Shorā (Revolutionary Council), in charge of warlike operations, presided over by Molla Mostafa himself.

Each of these Assemblies would consist of 16 members: 4 representing the tribes, 4 selected by the Part Democrat Kurdistan, 4 representing the intellectuals and townspeople, and 4 nominated by Molla Mostafa.

In this way, Molla Mostafa at the time of writing controls two of the three Assemblies, and by choosing Shaikh Latif to preside over the Senate he ensures the collaboration of the conservative and religious elements who favour an early reconciliation with the Iraqi Government presided over by Abd-es-Salam Aref, and leaves the chauvinistic leftist members of the Part in a minority.

This has been followed by the appointment of a Council of Ministers, presided over by Molla Mostafa himself.

Contrary to the hopes and expectations of Nasser and Aref, who are the chief protagonists of the Union of all Arabs and their confrontation with Israel, the Yemen war has not been concluded and the Kurds have not reduced their claims, unacceptable to the Iraqis, for a wide autonomy, and so the bulk of the Egyptian and Iraqi armies remain engaged in eccentric operations. The unexpected declaration of President Burgibe about Palestine and the unyielding attitude of Syria's General Amin el-Hafez, have emphasized once more the impossibility of the Arab rulers coming to terms over the adoption of a single

foreign policy which alone would allow them to stand up to Israel. So it is that neither the military nor the political means for this purpose are available.

It was decided therefore on the one hand to abandon the confrontation policy, putting the blame for this on the uncompromising attitude of some of the other Arab leaders, and on the other hand to activate the liquidation of the Yemen and Kurdistan questions by force. This new phase of Arab politics resulted, as far as Iraq is concerned, in the build-up of an important striking force and the resumption of operations against the Kurdish rebels. At the same time, not wishing to antagonize world opinion, the leftist section of which is openly on the Kurdish side, it is denied that a general offensive is under way, and, officially, the operations are directed against 'brigands', and are taking the shape of local actions. These consist in pushing the Kurds along the crest of the mountains, then occupying the valleys and the towns which become operational centres, and keeping the control of communications by means of pickets established on commanding heights. This kind of warfare necessitates the employment of important forces, more than three-quarters of which must be used to guard the lines of supply.

In order to show a spirit of conciliation, Molla Mostafa has declared that he has abandoned his claim to autonomy, but at the same time he maintains his demands on all the attributes of such a status and particularly on the delimitation between the Kurdish and the Arab zones of Iraq, this being tantamount to the coming into being of a Kurdish state.

The Kurds are now trying to secure the good will of the Iraqi opposition, including the Communists, the Chadirchi Democrats and the left wing Baathists (those who oppose both Iraq's Aref and Syria's Hafez). They still hope that Nasser will bring pressure on Aref to reach an agreement with the Kurds, but since the idea of a confrontation with Israel has been abandoned, Nasser is more interested in preserving the integrity of Iraq than in accepting the terms of the Barzanis, and of course Iraq's Nasserites are following this line.

As in their preceding offensive, the Iraqi forces have been able at first to occupy many localities including Ranya and Barzan, but the fighting in the vicinity of Qala Diza, Chwarta, Mawat and Panjvin has been indecisive and in many places they have

been repulsed with heavy losses, even Ranya having been temporarily evacuated.

The Iraqis have lost an invaluable ally through the death of Shaikh Rashid of Lowlan, Molla Mostafa's great enemy, but a few Kurdish tribes are still fighting against the Barzanis and if the Iraqis are politically divided, the Kurds do not show greater unity in the prosecution of the war.

At the time of writing (July 1965) the Kurdish question in Iraq does not seem to be any nearer to a solution than at any other time since the coming into being of Iraq (1919) and this situation certainly provides some powers with the occasion to interfere in Iraqi and, by extension, in Middle Eastern politics.

5

Conclusion

I DO not intend to make here a synthesis of the four preceding chapters, but to help the reader to understand the thoughts, wishes and aspirations of the different sections of the Kurdish people living in Turkey, Iran and Iraq, and the hopes they entertain of seeing their aspirations fulfilled. I shall also try to put some of the facts which have been distorted in the interest of conflicting propaganda from different sources, Kurdish and non-Kurdish, into what I consider to be their true perspective, without allowing myself to be influenced by racial or national considerations.

Although the Kurds have always lived under two—or, as at present, three Powers—by their speech, customs and costume, as well as by their own consciousness of being Kurds and thus different from the non-Kurdish Arabs, Iranians, Turks, Armenians and Assyrians who surround them and with whom they are mixed in many districts, they have always formed an entity and for the same reasons they consider themselves now entitled to be counted as a nation even if in the past this conception was alien to them. Kurdish propaganda is careful to show all Kurdish rebellions against the State whose territories they inhabit as popular risings for the attainment of freedom from a foreign yoke and as prompted by nationalist sentiment, but those who were well acquainted with the Kurdish world before the last war know that the reasons for these risings differed in nearly every case, and that they were prompted more often than not by the personal interests of Amirs and chiefs of tribes, or by the desire to get rid of some local administration which hampered them in their lawless ways, or was rapacious and extortionate. Sometimes, again, they rose in defence of their religion, if they considered it in danger from the Government under which they

were living, and sometimes in protest against interference by the Government over tribal or communal fighting. Only two of the many Kurdish uprisings before the First World War can be considered as bearing a national character—that of Badr Khan of Buhtan which lasted from 1826 to 1847 and the incursion of Obeydollah into Iran in 1880. Even these two movements were in great part motivated by other factors, the first by the personal ambition of Badr Khan and the second by the religious animosity of the Sunni Kurds against the Shia Azeris and also by the fact that it provided the occasion to plunder the unwarlike peasants of the rich agricultural districts of Rezaiyeh, Miandoab and Maragheh.

Kurdish national feeling, in the modern sense, manifested itself clearly only after the downfall of the Ottoman Empire, the bid for independence of the Arabs and Armenians, and the coming into being of an educated class of Kurdish intellectuals most of whom had studied abroad and been influenced by modern social and political doctrines in an atmosphere of spiritual freedom. These men resented what they considered to be the subjection of their people to non-Kurdish governments and the consequent impossibility of fighting for their ideals in a country of their own. They have little in common with the tribal chiefs and religious leaders of Kurdistan, except for their mutual dislike of being ruled by non-Kurdish governments.

The tribal chiefs and the traditionally-minded Kurds realize that in present conditions the attainment of complete independence is impossible, as the three states on which the Kurds depend would certainly unite to prevent it by force. The political union of all Kurds, therefore, presupposes the complete disruption of the existing order of things in the Middle East, and this could be brought about only by the intrusion of Soviet Russia into these regions and the disintegration of Turkey, Iran and the Arab States. For this reason, those Kurds who would dislike a Soviet Communist domination or paramountcy even more than they object to that of certain of their present rulers, content themselves with claiming an autonomous status in their respective regions. On the other hand, the intellectuals, whose qualified representative in Kurdistan is now Ibrahim Ahmad, and outside the Kurdish lands Parez Vanli (a Kurd from Turkey), although they also realize the impossibility of creating a united independent Kurdistan for the time being,

they are not afraid of bringing into existence such a state through the action of the U.S.S.R., as they would have nothing against the adoption of a socialist régime of a Marxist-Leninist brand and a close association with the U.S.S.R. Thus it can be assumed that in the view of the progressive elements of the rebellion, the objective of the struggle is at the same time to attain by stages national self-rule and to bring about a social and economic revolution on the lines that have been followed in Algeria.

Foreign political circles, and even realistically-minded people among the Kurds, are of the opinion that the creation of a unified Kurdish state, having an independent existence separate from the surrounding countries, would present insurmountable difficulties on account of the geographical features of the Kurd-inhabited regions. The Kurds dwell in highlands and at the top of valleys, the natural outlets of which are to the plains where dwell the non-Kurdish races—Turks, Iranians and Arabs. In Iran the Kurds occupy a comparatively narrow strip of rugged mountainous zone on the eastern slopes of the Zagros chain and could not thrive if separated from the cultivated areas of Khoi, Rezaiyeh, Miandoab and Hamadan. In Iraq the valleys are orientated to the south, that is, towards the plains of central Iraq and Jazirah. Likewise in Turkey the agricultural lands are situated to the west and south of the Kurd-inhabited regions, and, in spite of Kurdish pretensions, this region is everywhere separated from the open sea by wide territories inhabited by non-Kurdish elements. In the same way, the oilfields of northern Iraq, which are coveted by the Kurds, are mostly situated in regions where the population is of mixed stock, Arabs and Turks outnumbering the Kurds in many districts.

It is thus not enough simply to trace a line on the map in order to incorporate into a country lands which, because of the opposition of the inhabitants or other adverse circumstances, could never be a natural part of it. Indeed, the economists consider that an independent Kurdistan, surrounded by not too friendly neighbours, could not be in a position to subsist economically. But man does not live by bread alone, and we have seen in a not very remote past new frontiers traced in a most extraordinary way, with no reference to geography, economy, or history, thus bringing countries into existence

either in order to satisfy the emotional desire of their inhabitants to be united in a single national home, or for the sake of forming an attachment to a strong Power which considers the possession of a certain region as indispensable for its prestige or its strategical needs. Slovakia may be put in the first category, and Kashmir in the second.

Today there is no organization representing the Kurds of all the countries in which they dwell. The Iranian Kurds do not possess such an organization in Iran and to my knowledge there are no Iranian Kurds represented either in the Khoybun or in the Association of Kurdish Students in Europe and the U.S.A. The few Iranian Kurds who study abroad cling to their non-Kurdish fellow-students, and have little contact with the Kurdish students from Turkey or Iraq. There are also few Turkish Kurds among these students, although one of them, Parez Vanli, is particularly active and has lately published an emotional and virulent indictment of the Iranian Government for not allowing the Kurdish language to be taught in schools.

The rulers of Iran consider that it is much more logical and easier to have only one language in official use in a country, and it can easily be seen that the existence of several different languages complicates administrative work, increases the task of the students in schools, and, instead of neutralizing, exacerbates the feelings of rivalry among the nationals of different races, creating irredentist tendencies and dividing the nation. Quite recently in India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Belgium, Canada, and even in peaceful Switzerland, the most bitter strife has been caused by the plurality of languages used, and as Persian has become, thanks to its high cultural value, a supra-national language, spoken in the past and still learned in a much wider region than that of Iran in its present-day frontiers, it is clearly the appropriate language of the Iranian Empire. It can indeed be said that the Persian language is the cultural heritage of all the inhabitants of Iran, and during my time of office as Ambassador in Turkey and Pakistan I had occasion to observe that all educated Turks and Pakistanis, too, considered the Persian language and its literature as part of their own cultural background.

All over Iran dialects are spoken which differ from the literary Persian much more than the Kurdish language does. The Raiji

speech of Kashan and Josheqan, Semnani of Semnan, Sangsari of Mazanderan, Talishi, Gilaki, Rashti, and Mazanderani of the Caspian Sea provinces, are all dialects of true Iranians, as are those of the Lors, the Tats and the Tajiks, and the Azeris, Baluchis, and even Turkomans have the same pleasure in speaking Persian and reading Persian poetry as the Iranians from Isfahan and Shiraz. It is significant that the foreign correspondent of a newspaper (Eric Rouleau, of *Le Monde*) noticed that Ibrahim Ahmad, the Secretary-General of the P.D.K., has as a bedside book the *Divan* of Hafez, the most admired poet of Iran, who lived in the fourteenth century, but whose writings are still understood by every cultured Iranian, literary Persian not having changed much since that time. Persian was the official, court, and literary language not only of the Persian Empire, but also of all the Turkish and Turkoman dynasties and to some extent, of the Ottoman Court from the Seljuk to the end of the fifteenth century. The Kurds—as also the Azeris, of whom I am one—love their language and have always great pleasure in speaking it, but they are proud to have Persian as their literary and official language.

Nevertheless, all other languages are allowed in Iran and many books and publications in Arabic, Kurdish, Baluchi and Azeri are printed in Teheran every year, whilst programmes in all these languages are broadcast daily from the different radio stations of Teheran and the provinces.

As for Kurdish, it is certainly a language by itself and not a dialect of the Persian (Farsi) language and is itself subdivided into several dialects and sub-dialects. It would be a valuable gain for Middle-Eastern culture if these dialects were to be unified, so that a greater number of poetic and prose works understood by all Kurds might enrich existing Kurdish literature.

To sum up, it can be said that the attitude of the three Powers on whose territory the Kurds are living, is as follows:

1. The Turks say: 'You are Turks not Kurds; there are no Kurds in Turkey.' (They accept as Kurds only those in Iran and Iraq.) For this reason, they do not allow that there is any Kurdish question in Turkey.

2. The Iranians accept the Kurds as such, but they say that, as the Kurds belong to a group of the Iranian race they form the Kurdish branch of that race and are therefore part of Iran,

and in any case Iran is a multiracial empire based on history, tradition, and a common fealty towards the Shahinshah. So for the Iranians also, no Kurdish question exists.

3. The Iraqis say: 'You are Kurds, we are Arabs, but together we are Iraqis. Iraq is a part of the Arab Nation, but as you are not Arabs, we agree to granting you autonomy on our terms, on condition that you continue to be a part of Iraq, without the right or the power of secession.'

What is the Kurdish answer?

In Turkey the Kurds do not dare to say anything lest they be denounced as traitors and dealt with as such.

In Iran they also do not say anything, not from fear, as our Government is lenient, but because they are divided about their aims and few of them envisage the possibility of separating themselves from Iran.

In Iraq they are positive: they would like to have independence, but are ready to accept a wide autonomy on their own conditions. Under the British Mandate they enjoyed a small degree of local separate life, and now they would like to have more.

For the time being it cannot be seen what turn the Kurdish revolt in Iraq will take, but the spirit of Kurdish aspirations for the assertion of their individuality is likely to be strengthened with the spread of education, the decline of the influence of tribal chiefs and landowners, and the increase of that of a sophisticated and leftist-inclined intelligentsia over the mass of the Kurdish population of Iraq.

The Kurds living abroad are out of touch with those living in Turkey, or Iran, or in Iraq, whose complexes they do not share, and for this reason they openly ask for the union of all Kurds and for their independence.

So, even if the existence of a Kurdish question is denied, the Kurdish problem remains.

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Glossary of Geographical and Personal Names

A=Arabic, T=Turkish, P=Persian, K=Kurdish, AZ=Azeri

Spring	Ain A, Bulaq T, Chesmeh P
Mountain	Jebel A, Dağ or Dagh T, Kuh P
Hill	Tell A, Tapa T, Tapeh P
Fort, fortified	
locality	Qal'ah A, Qala K, Qal'eh P, Kale T
Fortified	
village	Robat A, T, P
Lower	Sofla A, Ashaghi T, Payin or Zir P
Upper	Awlia A, Yukhari T, Bala P
River	Shat, Nahr, Wed A, Chai or Su T, Rud P, Ru K
Tower	Borj A & P, Kule T
Inhabited	(After a place-name) Abad P
Lake	Hawr A, Göl T, Dariacheh P
Head	Ras A, Bash T, Sar P
Valley	Wadi A, Ova T, Jolgeh P
Ravine	Masil A, Dara T, Darreh P
White	Abiaz A, Ak T, Sefid P
Black	Aswad A, Kara T, Siah P
Big	Kabir A, Büyük T, Bozorg P
Little	Saghir A, Küçük T, Kuchik P
Road	Shari' A, Yol T, Rah P
Town	Qasabah A, Şehir T, Shahr P
Village	Qariyah A, Köi T, Kand AZ, Deh P
New	Jadid A, Yeni or Yengi T, Now P
Province	Valaya A, Vilayet T, Valayat, Ostan P
District	Nahiyah A, Nahiyeh T, Nahiyeh, Bakhsh P
Old	Qadim A, Eski T, Kohneh P.
Citadel,	
Palace	Qasr, plural Qsur A, Saray T, Qasr, Kakh P

Glossary

Desert	Sahra, Badiyah A, Chöl T, Dasht P
Dam	Sadd A, Band P
Abu A	Father of, as Abu Sa'id, father of Sa'id
Abd A	Slave of, as Abd-el-Qader
Din A	(last syllable) religion (of the) as Rokn-ed-Din, Column of Religion
Allah, Ollah, or Ullah A	(of) God, as Abdollah, 'Slave of God'
Bin or Ibn A	Son of
Dokhtar P	Daughter, girl
Bint A	Daughter
Shaikh	Means with the Kurds a chief of a religious group, which with the Arabs signifies also a chief of tribe, corporation or any kind of group
Saiyid	A descendant of the Prophet
Sa'id	A proper name
Haji, Haj	One who has accomplished a pilgrimage to Mekka. Is also sometimes given as a name to people born on a Friday, for instance, Haj Ali Razmara

The sound I (ee) in Turkish often becomes E in Persian, E in Turkish becomes A in Persian. The L in the middle word Nur-el-Din, Rokn-el-Din, Abd-el-Rezzaq, etc., is pronounced and transliterated as Nur-ed-Din, Rokn-ed-Din, Abd-er-Razzaq, Abd-es-Salam by changing into the first letter of the last part of the name. When this letter is an A, B, H, J, K, L, M, Q, V (or W), the L of the El does not change, as Abd-el-Qader, Abd-el-Hadi, etc.

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Names of members of ruling dynasties and important tribes will generally be found under the name of the dynasty, family or tribe. The following abbreviations have been used: A. = AGHA, AQA; B. = BEG, BEY; EFF. = EFFENDI; H. = HAJI; KH. = KHAN; P. = PASHA; S. = SAIYID; SH. = SHAIKH; d. = district; m. = mountain, hill; p. = pass; prov. = province; r. = river; t. = town; tr. = tribe; v. = village.

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