DERK KINNANE

The Kurds and Kurdistan

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THIS small work is an introduction to a nation which, despite its distinct culture and millions of people, has yet to achieve a durable government of its own. Part of the people described here have been at war since 1961 in a struggle to establish such a government within the Iraqi Republic.

This war, little known to the world, has been fought with appalling savagery assisted by the advanced military equipment supplied to Iraq chiefly by Great Britain and the Soviet Union.

But it is not only the Kurds of Iraq who are discontented with the government which rules over their homeland. The Kurdish nation suffers peculiarly as a subject people whose homeland is divided between four states (excepting the small part in the Soviet Union) and three foreign peoples.

The international concern which the Kurdish problem arouses has been amply reflected in the varied responses of Ankara, Teheran, Damascus, Cairo and Moscow to the events in Iraqi Kurdistan since 1958. Washington, too, cannot be indifferent to these people who populate the marches of Arab, Turkish and Persian states.

My direct experience of Kurdistan is small and this work is indebted to the extensive experience and scholarship of C. J. Edmonds, William Eagleton Jr., Basile Nikitine, and Vladimir Minorsky.

I am also most grateful to Taufiq Wahby Beg for giving so generously of his erudition in Kurdish culture and history and to Prince Kamuran Aali Bedir-Khan, Professor of Kurdish at the Sorbonne, for the benefit of his experience and learning.

To David Adamson of the *Sunday Telegraph* goes my deep appreciation for sharing his knowledge of the current situation. I eagerly look forward to his forthcoming

book *The Kurdish War*. And a particular acknowledgement to Silvio van Rooy, President of the International Society Kurdistan, who has accumulated and made available so much information on all aspects of the Kurds and their circumstances.

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February 1964 D.K.
Somerton Lodge
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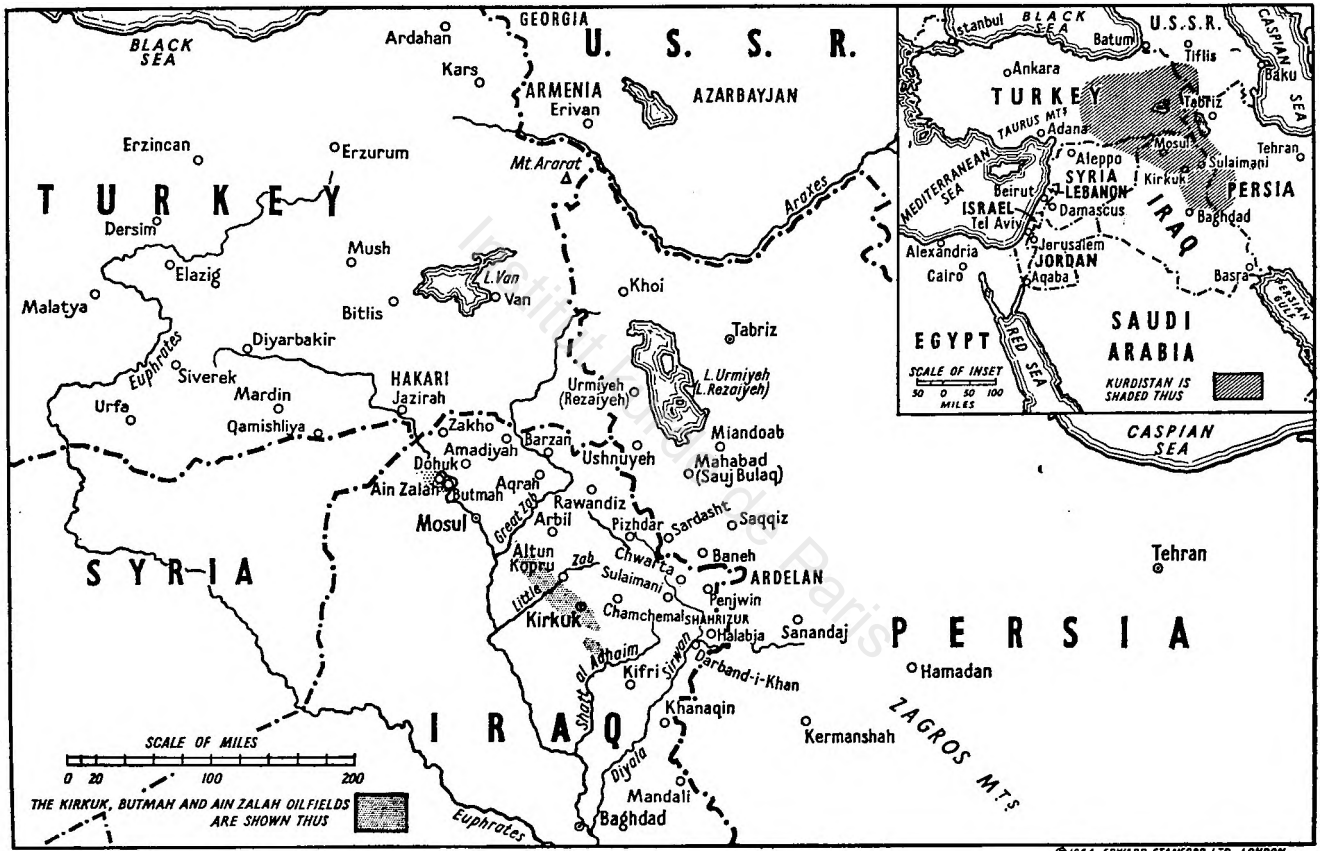

I. THE COUNTRY AND THE PEOPLE

In this introduction to the Kurds and their national problem, Kurdistan means the land where the Kurds form the overwhelming majority of the population, far outnumbering any of the minorities living among them.[1] This land is a complex of mountains enclosing valleys and descending to foothills and plains. It is a land of mountain Kurds, some still nomadic, and plains Kurds growing grain or living in cities, some of vast antiquity.

Otherwise poor in mineral wealth, Iraqi Kurdistan contains one of the richest oil fields in the world. At its southern end this field passes through Kirkuk town. The refusal of the Baghdad Government to include this part of Kurdistan in a proposed Kurdish autonomous area has been one of the major obstacles to a settlement of the rebellion. There are other fields in the north at Ain Zalah and Butmah and many wells elsewhere but Kirkuk field is the great prize. The rebels have not demanded that revenues from these northern fields should go exclusively to them; they are asking that the oil revenues be divided according to the ratio of Kurds to Arabs in Iraq.

Oil has also been drilled and copper and iron have been found in Turkish Kurdistan. But none of these minerals are in important deposits. The greatest undeveloped resource of Kurdistan is water. The numerous rivers and mountain streams offer a great potential for improved irrigation and electric power.

The Kurds are good farmers and the plain of Arbil in Iraqi Kurdistan produces a high grade of wheat. Tobacco is an important source of income for the Iraqi Kurds and is also of a high quality. Goats and sheep are the principal herds. Horses and donkeys supply transport and

[1] See map opposite.

power for farm labour. Raisins, apricots, melons, almonds, figs and other fruit grow wild or cultivated in gardens and orchards.

In summer the heat, especially in valleys and plains, is intense. In winter the cold is penetrating and bitter. In southwest Iraqi Kurdistan the peaks reach three thousand feet. Farther north they rise to ten and twelve thousand feet. The highest is Mount Ararat which lords it over Kurdistan at seventeen thousand feet. Not only are the mountains high but so is the plateau on which they rest: Lake Van, in the heart of Turkish Kurdistan, is over six thousand feet above sea level.

Population figures available for West Asian countries are unsatisfactory. It has often been Government policy to cook the figures, while the people being counted will themselves often evade giving accurate information.

It has been particularly difficult to arrive at any figures for Turkey where until a few years ago the Government did not recognise the existence of a Kurdish nationality. Well-informed estimates, however, agree that there are about 1,200,000 Kurds in Iraq, 1,400,000 in Persia, 2,500,000 in Turkey, 250,000 in Syria and between 60,000 and 100,000 in the Soviet Caucasus, making a total of between five and six million. The claims of ten to twelve million put forward by Kurdish nationalists include the Lurs, the kindred people of the Southern Zagros in Persia who are classed as Kurds by the medieval Arab historians but are not covered by the name Kurd as generally understood in the West. They have not (as one prominent Kurdish scholar has admitted) been affected by the Kurdish nationalist movement.

One truth with regard to population is unassailable: in Iraq and Turkey the Kurds comprise a distinct minority second only to the Arabs and Turks respectively. The Kurds also occupy very large areas of both states. Equally important, in both countries, as in Persia and Syria, the frontiers of the state divide up a homogeneous population

whose number exceeds that of some independent West Asian states.

The Kurds in Syria, Turkey and Persia include tribes whose ancient life took them and, when possible, still takes them, to and fro across lands divided by international frontiers. The partition of Ottoman Kurdistan after the first World War was not only between Turkey and Iraq; part of the ancient Kurdish homeland is in the Jazirah which was arbitrarily divided between Iraq and Syria. Contact between Kurds on the different sides of these borders has been far easier and more extensive than between the Kurds of the Soviet Union and their fellow nationals in Turkey. The Russian Kurdish enclave remains, as it was even before the first World War, peripheral to the main body of Kurds and Kurdistan. But Soviet economic development in Armenia and the lavish attention given Kurdish culture, in particular the Kurdish language, has given these Kurds some advantages not enjoyed in the greater part of Kurdistan.

The Kurdish language belongs to the Iranian group and is thus one of the great Indo-European bloc. Throughout Kurdistan, Arabic, Turkish or Persian are second languages which are only scantily known to the great majority of Kurds. Although related to Persian, Kurdish is distinct in grammar, syntax and vocabulary. It is spoken in two principal dialects roughly distributed between the northern and southern regions of Kurdistan, *Kirmanji* and *Kurdi*. A third dialect is called *Macho-Macho* by the Kurds, *Zaza* in Turkish and *Gorani* in Persian. Linguists assert that it is not Kurdish but the *Macho-Macho* speakers consider themselves Kurds and the language was used for poetry at the courts of the viceroys of Ardelan and the Baban princes of Sulaimani. It was esteemed as a more polished and civilised tongue than the local Kurdish. Today it is spoken by the Qizilbash sect in Turkey, the Kakais sect in Iraq and in

Persia from the Hewraman tribe in the central Zagros as far south as the Khanaqin-Kermanshah road.

So far very little Kurdish literature has been written in the major European forms of the novel of drama. The best known contemporary Kurdish writer in the English speaking world is the novelist Yashar Kemal. The most popular of his translated works is *Mehmed, My Hawk* which vividly describes Kurdish life as lived in recent times in Turkey. The bulk of Kurdish literature is poetry which may belong either to popular traditions or to more sophisticated forms. Popular poetry is transmitted by oral tradition. But there is a written literature as old as the tenth century A.D. Most writing is done in the Arabic alphabet, but in recent times some nationalists have preferred to use the Roman alphabet. The Cyrillic was imposed for a number of years on the Kurds in the Soviet Union but finally dropped.

Illiteracy throughout West Asia remains extremely high. The towns and cities, with their educational facilities and the economic stimulus to literacy, have a much higher proportion of literates than has the countryside where ninety per cent illiteracy is typical. This picture applies in Kurdistan despite efforts in recent years by all governments concerned to increase literacy. For the rural Kurds literacy is not yet essential tomaking a living or fulfilling a traditional social role. Teachers sent from the capital cities of the states which rule in Kurdistan are sometimes afflicted by a psychological distance from their pupils as great as the geographical distance between the great cities and the marches. And instruction in Arabic, Turkish or Persian is not likely to stick when the business of daily life is conducted in Kurdish. But teaching in Kurdish, except in Iraq, has been completely out of the question. In Turkey and Persia the Governments have sought to impose their cultural hegemony. The Kurds themselves have sometimes resisted the introduction of modern schooling as a subversion of Islam and the Kurdish way of life. But in the towns, especially in Iraqi Kurdistan, there has been a constant

demand for more schools and instruction in Kurdish. Kurdish is taught and studied at the universities of Baghdad, Teheran and Istanbul.

Conditions in language and education are vastly different in the Soviet Union. The Kurds living in Soviet Armenia have never constituted a self-governing community but have been greatly encouraged in cultural matters by the Leninist policy for cultural minorities. At a time when there were twenty-six primary schools in Iraqi Kurdistan, the Soviet Kurds, one eighth as numerous, were served by forty-one primary schools. Kurdish secondary and higher education is also provided for at Erivan, the capital of the Armenian republic. Writing in Kurdish is supported by the generous resources of Soviet publishing and, as is common under Communist régimes, the rich store of Kurdish folklore has been particularly exploited. The Communist formula of nationalist form containing 'socialist' contents has disadvantages obvious to non-Communists. Seen through the eyes of Kurdish nationalists the disadvantages remain but the advantages in propagating reading and writing in the national language are at the same time enviable.

Publication in Kurdish began with the newspaper *Kurdistan* established by the Badr Khan family in 1892 in Cairo. Down to the present much of the most interesting literary, historical and critical work done in Kurdish has been published by presses outside Kurdistan, especially in Damascus and Baghdad. A great deal, of course, has also been published in Kurdistan in Sulaimani and Kirkuk. The Kurdish of Sulaimani is now the most widely favoured among the intelligentsia in Iraqi and Persian Kurdistan. Sulaimani, a town dating from towards the end of the eighteenth century, became after the first World War the liveliest centre of Kurdish culture. The heritage of the Baban dynasty's patronage of literature and the presence of a Turkish military school, from which young Kurds went on to staff college in Constantinople, provided a cultural matrix. This matrix was strengthened when this charming

city, backed by impressive mountains and overlooking fine valleys, became after the first World War the seat of a Kurdish government under Shaikh Mahmud Barzinji.

Except where foreign forms were borrowed, as among the court poets of Sulaimani, the Kurdish verse forms are much freer than either Persian or Arabic. Metaphor and imagery are expressed in a rapid and compressed lyricism in the popular *lawj* form. The *lawj* may deal in lyric fashion with an appeal to or description of the beloved, a description of a battle or praise of some lord for his chivalric excellence. The epics of popular poetry are reminiscent of their European counterparts. They deal in heroic adventures and romantic sentiments, they depict love and battle, nobles, monsters and the miraculous. They are chanted, several hundred verses long, from memory by bards to audiences in the meeting rooms of the nobility or in the town cafés.

If war and love are the most common material upon which Kurdish poetry draws there is also a satiric tradition which takes its occasions from slights and insults to the author. C. J. Edmonds in *Kurds, Turks and Arabs* gives several examples of such lampoons by the renowned Shaikh Reza Talabani. The mordant scorn of the Shaikh is delightfully rendered in Edmonds' witty translation.

Popular and classical poetry have retained their audiences and bards. Poetry still comes easily to the Kurds and new poets continue to abound.

Like much of their culture dress among the Kurds is composed of some elements common to their neighbours and others distinctively Kurdish. Among the middle class town dwellers European dress is favoured. But traditional dress is still very widely worn, in part, if not entire.

When nomadic Kurds migrate with their flocks they live in the same type of black goat hair tent used by nomadic Arabs. These tents are spacious, each accommodating a household and divided into quarters for the men to meet

in, for the women, for cooking and for sleeping. In towns and villages where stone is available the rich and powerful build their houses from it. The Kurdish nobility traditionally builds as well as conditions permit. The ancient princes of Bitlis, for example, erected houses that were long admired by visitors from afar. Most often however, houses are built from sun baked brick by the affluent and from mud brick by the poor.

Traditional décor is by European standards extremely austere and meagre. The richest furnishings would be carpets probably as fine as the family can afford. Otherwise the most noticeable pieces of furniture would be chests to contain household utensils and clothes. But throughout the present century a taste for European furniture has grown among the nobility and middle class.

Villages and towns are built on the plains as well as on the mountain sides, and the Kurds are long familiar with city life. In Iraq Sulaimani and Arbil are wholly Kurdish cities; Arbil claims to be the oldest continually inhabited site in the world. It is perhaps the most impressively exotic city in all Kurdistan. The heart of the city is a ring of mansions atop a very large *tel* or hill which rises sixty feet above the surrounding plain of Arbil. The outer walls of these mansions join together giving the effect of the continuous wall of a citadel. A few paths lead up the sides of the *tel* and into the narrow, twisting streets lined with the houses of the nobility and notables. The mansions stand in crowded isolation, each house immured in its privacy, while the quarter as a whole seems to keep aloof, taking advantage of the empty slopes of the *tel* to keep its distance from the surrounding sprawl of offices, markets and humbler dwellings. The *tel* is not a natural hill but the accumulated rubble of successive towns, each built on the remains of earlier habitations.

II. KURDISH SOCIETY

KURDISH traditional social organisation is based on secular and spiritual chieftains and their families, comprising the nobility, and their followers, the common villagers, farmers and herdsmen. The Kurds of the mountains, *agha* and commoner, tend to belong to the same great tribal families. In the plains and foothills the tendency is to a less tribal and more feudal relationship where *aghas* and commoners are not related by family. A sharp social distinction marks off those Kurds without tribal or family affiliations. They are looked down on by other Kurds and often badly exploited by their *agha*. Such feudal relationships may be the survival of tribal conquest which reduced earlier inhabitants to servitude.

Equal and sometimes more powerful than the merely temporal *aghas* are the Kurdish shaikhs. The term among the Kurds does not mean temporal authority but designates religious leadership, most often in one of the great dervish orders. Through personal spiritual authority and the acquisition of land rights, a shaikh born poor can gain wide temporal power and reach the top of the social order. Although becoming a shaikh is a matter of study and certification, it is usual for the sons of shaikhs to follow such instruction, thus in effect giving an hereditary continuity to the position.

The present war in Kurdistan has greatly accelerated a shift of power to the urban intelligentsia and away from the feudal and tribal upper class. This intelligentsia has been increasingly influential over the last twenty-five years. The old social order, on the other hand, has been deteriorating in authority since before the first World War. This deterioration has been caused by the inability of the nobility to cope with economic and social changes. Especially

weakening to the old order has been the increased intervention of the representatives of the State in the daily lives of both urban and rural Kurds.

Social change has not come in the same way or at the same pace throughout Kurdistan. In Iraq, where the monarchy did not attempt any serious change in Kurdish social organisation, a nationalist movement has emerged led by educated Kurds impatient with the tribal order. In Turkey, where Kemal sought to root out the conservative religious and social authorities among the Kurds, Kurdish nationalism retains more of its connexion with loyalty to the old religious and social personages.

But the number of Kurds receiving education in the modern professions of science, law and government is constantly increasing throughout Kurdistan. Slowly but definitely the implications of modern power sources in oil or water are spreading through the fabric of Kurdish life. Motor transport along paved roads has already enlarged the world of thousands of simple Kurds. But the old continues cheek by jowl with the new, emerging society. The proximity of the two worlds is as intimate as the family. The path to the new society is a modern advanced education. Most Kurds receiving such education, but not all, are from affluent families having tribal or feudal status. The evolution of Kurdish society can be partially expressed by the relationship of a devout uncle who commands tribal warriors and his 'progressive' nephew who studies public administration abroad.

The following account of Kurdish tribal society is based on the monograph of the social anthropologist E. R. Leach who visited the Kurds of the Rawandiz area in Iraq in 1938; though naturally limited, its findings are sufficiently typical to be appropriate here.

To begin with Leach noted the difference between the Kurds in the mountains and those in the plains, a difference which the Kurds themselves have recognised in their literature. Speaking in terms of anthropology Leach wrote, 'the

plains Kurds now differ so markedly from the hill groups that in most respects they must be treated as a separate culture.'

The economy of the plains Kurds is pastoral–agricultural. Sheep and goats make up most of the livestock; wheat, tobacco, barley and rice are the principal crops. The mountain Kurds, including the nearly vanished wholly nomadic ones, depend exclusively on grazing flocks and whatever they might trade illegally across the frontiers. Leach observed that the Harki tribe brought salt to Iraq and carried back wheat and barley to Persia, migrating annually from their home near Lake Urmiyeh to find winter fodder for their flocks in the Iraqi plain of Arbil. Such great migrations are kept up by very few tribes today. Much more common is the movement of tribe and flocks from lowlands in winter to neighbouring mountain sides in summer.

The type of tribal organisation varies greatly and Leach is not altogether successful in his account. If Fredrik Barth corrects certain details Leach offers, Barth's *Principles of Social Organisation in Southern Kurdistan* is itself incomplete although a most useful work. Drawing on both anthropologists a composite picture of tribal organisation is offered as a generalised representation.

The largest political unit in tribal society is the *ashiret*. This is an Arabic word and like most terms defining tribal organisation subject to differences in meaning according to place. *Ashiret* in its widest meaning is a confederation of tribes over which a paramount chieftain may preside. The *ashiret* is made up of *tira*, the primary political and land-owning group whose members descend from a common patrilineal ancestor.

The *tira* is divided into *khel* which are a collection of households living as a village or camping together. The *khel* members all descend from a common patrilineal ancestor who in turn is a descendant of the *tira* founding father. An *agha* or *beg* heads each *khel*, *tira* or *ashiret*. The *tira agha* tends

to exercise the greatest political authority within the political economy.

The title *agha* implies landlordship but is given as a courtesy title to the children and brothers of the actual landlord. The common unit of landholding is a village including its houses and the land the villagers cultivate. If an *agha* owns more than one village he appoints a headman in the villages he does not live in. The chief responsibility of the village *agha* is the maintenance of a guest house, a vital part of village life where Government rest houses and hotels are still restricted to the bigger towns or a few places on those few roads carrying considerable motor traffic. Writing about the guest house Leach said:

> It is a cardinal feature of Kurdish custom that the stranger, whatever his rank or position, is entitled to free board and lodgings at the expense of the Agha. The more lavish the Agha's hospitality the greater the esteem of his fellows; so much so that the prestige a man gains by virtue of being a good and generous host may in terms of reputation fully discount disadvantages of birth. . . . It must be admitted that a mere reputation for generosity may not bring with it any particular tangible reward in the form of economic advantage or practical influence. But the pattern in the society is such that this form of reputation is esteemed above all others, and it is in the light of this set of values that the institution of the guest house must be considered.

Because the *agha* spends so much of his day in and around the guest house conducting business and meeting visitors, it is a focal point for the life of the whole community. The *agha* himself supervises the ordering of the guest's meals in accordance with the dignity of the guest. The cooking is done by womenfolk who remain out of sight to the guest. If the visitor is a man of social eminence the *agha* himself or one of his sons will sleep in the guest house in token protection. Hospitality in practice is not unlimited or unrecompensed. A guest of low social position who overstayed his welcome would be made aware of it and a guest of some

position would be expected to present gifts to the *agha* as soon as the preliminary introductions were over. These gifts might be sugar, tea, coffee, cloth, matches, soap, tobacco or cigarette paper.

From the *agha*'s point of view the guest house is a great burden. Because there is honour in being a lavish host and because of the heavy rent due to the *agha* from his villagers, the question of how much a guest house costs to run is difficult to answer satisfactorily. The *aghas* would have an understandable inclination to exaggerate the cost. With no universally established system of book-keeping what one *agha* might count as income another would ignore; so also with expenses. Leach reported that one *agha* included purely personal items in his expenses while taking no account of gifts received in his income. This raises the possibility that a guest house could be run at a profit to the *agha*. Some *aghas* of generous hospitality clearly lose money running their guest house.

The heavy rent, sometimes fifty per cent of his crop, which the villager owes his *agha* may be made more bearable where the commoner is regarded by the landlord as part of the family. This advantage for the commoner is more usual in mountain communities where ninety per cent or more of a village population may belong to the same *hoz*. In one village studied by Leach the *agha*'s household contained twenty of the ninety people in the village. The two married sons of the *agha* and his brother each had households of eight persons. Thus forty-four persons, half the village, were closely connected to the *agha*. Leach could not discern any fixed point at which a villager would cease to be regarded as part of the *agha*'s family. One *agha* he met included second cousins as relatives entitled to sit unbidden in the guest house. This privilege appeared to be the only social distinction between the *agha*'s recognised relatives and the other villagers who might sit there only by invitation.

Aghas tend to marriages of alliance with influential neighbours or to the children of town notables who bring

a touch of appreciated sophistication to the family. Although polygamy is not favoured by the urbanised educated Kurds, it is still practised in the country by those who can afford to maintain more than one wife, and even occasionally by Christian Assyrians. The *aghas* as a class have financial resources beyond the common villagers and polygamy is more frequent among those of them untouched by modern views.

Women among the Kurds enjoy considerably more freedom than among the neighbouring Arabs, Turks or Persians. The veil is uncommon and though modest in behaviour they are not particularly shy of strange men. The life of the woman villager or nomad is physically a rough one of heavy work. Among all classes women are respected and listened to. They have on occasion exercised the political leadership of tribes with great success and to the entire satisfaction of their followers. There was an instance of one *khanum* being returned by her followers to the Iraqi parliament in elections which specified the exclusive candidacy of males. The urban Kurds, much more concerned with modern education than their country cousins, have long demanded more and more schools to which they send both sons and daughters.

The Kurds have earned a bad reputation in Europe for brigandage. But brigandage has never been so large a part of life in Kurdistan as is believed by many with a superficial knowledge of the Kurds. The Kurds are themselves responsible for this inflated belief. A national addiction to exaggeration working on the highly esteemed values of courage, daring, assertive pride and leader worship has resulted in a cult of heroic brigandage which the Kurds have eagerly imparted to foreign visitors. At all times the vast majority of Kurds have made their livings from herding and farming. But from time to time as opportunity or provocation arose an *agha* and his followers would swoop down on neighbouring villages, Kurdish or non-Kurdish, to pillage the inhabitants, Government officials and treasure, or foreign

travellers. Only a very few have made brigandage their whole vocation and these full-time armed robbers have been mostly men displaced from a normal social position in their tribe or village.

But brigandage is an accepted and approved part of tribal life and is held to be a respectably manly occupation. It is the logical expression of tribal circumstances—economic scarcity, political fragmentation and social dependance on the leader. As is to be expected brigandage is most often the sport of mountain Kurds.

The rule of *aghas* and shaikhs would inevitably be strengthened by successful raids, and the decline of brigandage has gone together with the decline of the tribal feudal order. As the State has built roads and installed police posts brigandage has become more and more a game not worth the candle.

The old system gave the *agha* power, privilege and more of the good things of the world than his followers enjoyed. He paid for these advantages according to his individual ability or inclination by being the magistrate of his people, arranging marriages and judging disputes, and by protecting their interests in dealings with the State and neighbours. On the whole the system was acceptable to the peasants when the *agha* ruled more than the State. The coming of the gendarmerie and the advent of motor transport bringing remote villages into contact with the big towns with their opportunities for employment have subverted the functions of the *agha*. But loyalty to tribal leaders remains very strong among the Kurds. The *agha* or shaikh may be feared and hated but his followers continue to submit to his authority and leadership. With the very apparent shortcomings of the traditional order and its incongruity with modern ideas of a good society it must be remembered that the modern forms of authority which the governing states have introduced in Kurdistan do not necessarily improve the life of the common Kurd. Leach asked tribesmen about the comparative merits

of justice as administered by the *agha* and by his magisterial successors:

> It was admitted that the decisions of the Agha in the old days were somewhat arbitrary, being based on considerations of wealth and nepotism rather than moral right, but at least a decision was arrived at quickly. The modern procedure on the other hand, though plainly well intentioned is considered in practise to be slow, complicated and costly, and since the wealthier litigant can nearly always manage to appeal to a higher court if the first decision goes against him, the 'justice' is nearly as one sided as before. Moreover it was argued that the police were just as corrupt as the Aghas with the disadvantage that whereas formerly the Aghas were to some extent limited in their decision by kinship obligations, the police had no interest at all except to sell justice to the highest bidder. Though this is certainly an overstatement of the case many of the Iraqi police do appear to be exceedingly corrupt.

The vast majority of the Kurds are Muslims of the Sunni sect. Islam came to the Kurds during the swift Arab rise to imperial dominion in the first half of the seventh century. Among the *sunni* there are four recognised codifications of jurisprudence, theology and social custom and the *sunni* Kurds belong to the *shafai* rite. There are Kurds of the other Muslim rite, the *shia*, particularly in Persia south of Saqqiz where they predominate. Other Kurds belong to various sects some of which, like the Yezedis, are far removed from Muslim orthodoxy.

Historically the *sunnis* as a political entity tended to support the Turkish empire with its Sultan-Caliph. The *shia* centred in Persia and tended to support that empire. The suspicion and animosity between *sunni* and *shia* remains politically charged. It plays an oblique part in the present Kurdish problem in Iraq. The Baghdad Government fears that should the Kurds win autonomy the large Arab *shia* population in the south-east of the country will seek similar advantages. Complicating the matter is a lingering suspicion in Baghdad of Persian ambitions in lower Mesopotamia.

But political and doctrinal antagonism has not prevented *shia* holy men from influencing *sunni* practices. Such influences have reached the Kurds in the flow of religious thought from east to west, the predominant direction of such traffic for the last five hundred years and more. Earlier influences from the West, however, have been powerful in shaping Kurdish religious life, especially ascetic and mystic traditions derived from Eastern Christianity and neo-Platonic metaphysical speculation. These elements informed the Sufi mystical tradition which, institutionalised in the dervish orders, became the religion of the Kurdish masses. The orders, which grew up around teachers eminent for their holy lives or learning, established a procedure for transmitting spiritual authority to disciples which has continued uninterrupted, in one order at least, for a millenium.

The Kurds distinguish between shaikhs who come from families claiming descent from the Prophet and those who cannot. The latter are called 'prayer-carpet shaikhs' in reference to the modest worldly possessions with which they enter the religious profession. The shaikhs of Barzan began in such circumstances, poor men living among poor people. But those who are considered descendants of the Prophet form a rich, honoured and influential class whose men bear the title *saiyid*. The *saiyid* families have contributed the greater part of the better known shaikhs. The Prophet and his family were, of course, Arab, and the Kurdish *saiyids* exemplify the taste among the Kurdish nobility for claiming Arab ancestry. The practice is reminiscent of the claims to Norman antecedents widely made among the English aristocracy before the rise of exacting genealogical examinations. The English admired the Normans for the law and government they brought, the Arabs are respected by the Kurds as the bringers of Islam.

The shaikhs are associated with one or another of the great dervish orders of which the most important among the Kurds are the Qadiri and the Naqshbandi. The Qadiri

order was founded by Shaikh Abd al-Qadir al-Gilani who lived 1077–1166 A.D. The primate of the order has always been a descendant of the founder and guardian of his tomb in Baghdad.

The Naqshbandi order was founded by Muhammad Beha as-Din from Bukhara who lived 1317–1389 A.D. Like the Qadiri, the Naqshbandi family is prominent in Iraqi affairs. Adherents of both orders are to be found throughout Kurdistan while other Kurds are members of other orders or such sects as the Qizilbash in Turkey or the Ahl-i Haqq (or Kakais) in Iraq and Persia.

The popular following a shaikh attracts will depend on his charisma and his reputation for thaumaturgical powers, that is, White Magic. The age of miracles is not quite past in Kurdistan. Published in 1939 in Kurdish, *The Miraculous Acts of Shaikh Kak Ahmad* offers rich examples of the attributes enjoyed by a renowned shaikh. C. J. Edmonds quotes one miraculous incident involved with an historic event. The Qadiri shaikh, Kak Ahmad, sent a *gulebend*, a charm against bullets, to Sultan Abd al-Hamid. Such charms are written on paper and enclosed in small envelopes of brightly coloured cloth worn close to the body or sewn into clothing. One day as the Sultan was leaving the Hamidiyah mosque in Constantinople a bomb planted by Armenian nationalists exploded under the mounting block as he was about to enter his carriage. Seventy or eighty carriages and one or two hundred people were blown skyhigh, the shaikh's biographer reported, but the Sultan was completely unharmed and not so much as a drop of blood came from the horses of his carriage. Observing the carnage around him the Sultan said, 'I am wearing Kak Ahmad's *gulebend*; how can a bomb make any impression on me?' The assassination attempt referred to was presumably that made on 21 July 1905.

Those Kurds who accept such events as unexceptional are not on that account simple-minded. They can show a shrewd appreciation of the characters of the people around

them and of social events which affect their lives. Nor are they necessarily reluctant to widen their knowledge and understanding. Often, on the contrary, they eagerly seek as much education as they can get. In an English class at Baghdad University one young Kurd was the most conscientious student, always prepared and always eager to participate in discussion. During a class discussion of the Icarus myth, he told the class of a similar incident which had happened near his home a few years before. This try at unassisted flight, however, had been successful. Without rudely challenging him, his classmates made clear their dismissal of such thinking. There is little room for a gentle tolerance or good humoured indulgence of such thinking on the part of 'progressive' thinkers. There is a strong impetus among the young educated to reject the ghostly, lock, stock and barrel. In psychology the intangible processes of Freudian theory are viewed sceptically; behavioural psychology with its rock-like basis in controllable and observable phenomena is preferred.

Islam does not inform the active political thought of the young educated, who are increasingly secularised. Both the Communists and the Baath politicians reflect this condition. Islam is still respected and is appealed to as a historic basis for social justice. Religious dignitaries are treated with respect and courted for political purposes. But the political passions, which are the strongest passions throughout West Asia, are given shape by ideas of economic development tied to social justice. However vague the idea of 'socialism' or 'progressiveness' may be, it is at the centre of the concern of the young educated class. Defined negatively it is against 'imperialism', the survivals of the politico-religious order of fifty years ago and the unconvincing imitations of European parliamentary government advocated by liberal nationalists of the interbellum years. Among the Kurdish nationalists these sentiments have been organised in the Kurdistan Democratic Party. The effectiveness of the KDP in the present war, militarily, politically and ideologically, makes

the present struggle qualitatively different from the previous risings in the name of self-rule. The party has brought the detribalised, urban intelligentsia to positions of considerable power among the Kurds for the first time. Although the KDP is uncertain in its intentions towards the traditional order and cannot afford to alienate at this time the more conservative tribal and spiritual leaders supporting the nationalist effort, it is essentially a party committed to advancing Kurdish well-being through economic and social change.

While education and some experience of the great world have led the young *élite* to a critical view of their inheritance, parallel forces are corroding the old authority among those Kurds who make their living in the oil fields, the police, the army or elsewhere away from the influence of their shaikhs. But the hold of Islam on such people remains strong and supplies for the uneducated their view of man and the world. The dervish shaikhs with their esoteric knowledge are still regarded as above the commonalty.

Living as neighbours among the Kurds inside Kurdistan are the Assyrians who have allied themselves with the Kurds in the present war. The Assyrian culture, though Christian, has many similarities with the Kurdish and the two peoples live well with one another. Like the Kurds, the Assyrians have in the past kept a semi-autonomous freedom under various overlords.

During the nineteenth century the Assyrians suffered at the hands of the Kurds as did the Armenians. In the case of the Armenians the Kurds were the tools of Ottoman policy directed against rising nationalism. The Assyrians, however, suffered not from Ottoman ill-intentions or religious fanaticism but from being difficult and rival tribes in areas where Kurdish chieftains were seeking to expand their own power.

In the first World War the Nestorian Assyrians allied themselves with the Russians against the Turks; the Russian

collapse left them in the air and they were subsequently adopted by the British. Their centre in Persia was destroyed and they suffered heavy losses throughout their mountain homelands. After the war and the successes of the Turkish nationalists under Kemal the Assyrians settled in northern Iraq, their expectations for a national home having come to nothing. Some found employment in British levies and later at British military bases, particularly at Habbaniyah. Altogether some 50,000 families, living in villages between Amadiyah and Mosul town, make up the bulk of the surviving Assyrians.

III. KURDISH HISTORY

THE origins of the Kurds is a matter of scholarly dispute. In *Les Kurdes* Basile Nikitine reviewed for the layman the various opinions of linguists, and other scholars who have studied the Kurds, on the earliest inhabitants of what has come to be Kurdistan. Nikitine wrote:

> In short two theses are presented to us on the problem of the origins of the Kurds. One insists on their Iranian (Indo-European) origin and their removal in the seventh century B.C. from the region of Lake Urmiya to Bohtan. The other thesis asserts the autochthonous character of the Kurds, related to such other Asian people as the Khaldes, Georgians and Armenians, and of the language they spoke which was later replaced by an Iranian one.

With so much yet to be learned about the early history of this part of West Asia the safest thing for the laymen to say is that from the beginning of history the mountains above Mesopotamia were inhabited by people who fought and sometimes defeated the empires of the plains, the Babylonians and the Assyrians. In any event, either by assimilating or displacing the previous inhabitants the heart of Kurdistan was settled, probably by the seventh century B.C., by Iranicised tribes. These tribes are the cultural progenitors of the modern Kurds.

About the time of the Arab conquests in the seventh century the term Kurd was beginning to be applied as an ethnic description of the Iranicised tribes with their Asian, Semitic and Armenian blendings. The name Kurdistan denoting the land occupied by the Kurds was first applied by the Seljuk Sultan Sandjar in the twelfth century when he created a large province of that name. In the fifteenth century, however, this province shrank, and in both the Ottoman and Turkish empires the area called Kurdistan was only a part of the actual area in which the Kurds predominated.

From the fall of Nineveh in 612 B.C., when the Medes vanquished the Assyrian empire, to the battle of Chaldiran in 1514 which roughly established the partition of Kurdistan between the Turkish and Persian empires, the Kurdish tribes came under the dominion of the successive conquerors of West Asia. They knew as invaders the Selucid, Parthian, Sassanian, Armenian, Roman, Byzantine, Arab, Seljuk, Mongol and finally Ottoman peoples. From the worship of the sun the Kurds passed under the influence of the religions of Zoroaster, Christ, Mithras and Islam. During these millenia many Kurds rose from mere tribal leadership to establish a dynastic state which might last a century before succumbing to the attacks of an imperial power, rival Kurds or the two in alliance. Among these dynasties the best known is the Ayyubi, which produced the greatest Kurd, Salah ud Din, Saladin.

Throughout Kurdish history a pattern was repeated. Countless deeds of magnificent courage and determination were done. Leaders again and again fought valiantly against imperial powers to preserve the rule of Kurds over their own people. When the foreign government was weak the Kurdish princes and chieftains rejoiced in independent action. When the empire was strong those Kurds who enjoyed its favour gladly fought those Kurds who did not. It was easier for a Kurdish prince to be vassal to a foreign overlord than give up his struggle with a rival Kurd. When the Kurds did think in terms of a political horizon beyond the tribe it was of the supranational body of Islam.

In the early years of the sixteenth century Turkey and Persia were the major powers of West Asia. The two empires were at war for half the time between 1514 and 1639, and had the Kurds been united they could at the least have held the balance of power between the two empires. But rivalries among themselves kept the Kurds disunited. Hakim Idris, who was Prince of Bitlis, set up for the Sultan a *cordon sanitaire* of autonomous Kurdish states which eventually protected the Ottoman frontier all the way

from Georgia to the southern Zagros. The greater Kurdish princes struck money and had public prayers read in their name, a prime mark of sovereignty in Islam. The chieftains were left to rule their tribes according to their ways. The system flourished for a century and a half.

Conditions were about the same in Persia. During the dynastic upheavals of the eighteenth century the Kurds showed no sense of unity even when one of their own, Kerim Khan Zand, became shah. When he died and another Kurd, Luft Ali Khan, attempted to reign, he was defeated by a northern alliance which included the Kurdish prince of Ardelan.

In 1826 Sultan Mahmud II began to extend Ottoman civil administration in Kurdistan as part of his reform of a decaying empire. The Kurdish princes resisted and it was a quarter century before they were finally deprived of their principalities. The feudal lords had already been weakened by their own excessive demands on their followers. Nevertheless, they were able to lead their followers into rebellion many times throughout the first half of the nineteenth century.

In 1843 Emir Badr Khan of Jazirat-ibn-Omar on the Bohtan began an attempt to gain freedom from Ottoman control. It was the first uprising which might be called nationalist in a modern sense, as Badr Khan planned to establish a Kurdish Government extending over the considerable confederation he headed. Badr fought the Ottoman army for four years. His government was reported by American missionaries to have imposed a just rule of law and prosecuted favouritism and graft. With his allies, who included the Persian Kurds of Ardelan, he presented the Sublime Porte with a grave military problem shadowed by the larger political implications of Badr Khan's hoped-for Persian support.

Badr Khan surrendered to Osman Pash in 1847 and was sent into exile. By 1849 the Sultan had destroyed the Kurdish Government of Bitlis founded by Hakim Idris,

that of the Baban dynasty in Sulaimani and all the others dating from the Ottoman rise to empire. When the Ottoman Government was distracted by the Crimean War the Kurds rose again, once more in Hakari and this time with the Nestorians as allies. The revolt spread from Van to Baghdad. The leader, Yezdan Sher, was taken in 1855 and removed to Constantinople.

The last major uprising of the nineteenth century was from 1878 to 1881 and was led by Shaikh Ubaidalla of Nehri who attacked Persia with some success. Under British and Russian pressure Turkey co-operated with Persia and the Shaikh's attempt to establish a Kurdish state came to an end. Ubaidalla was exiled to Mecca where he died.

In 1892 the Ottoman Government opened 'tribal schools' in Constantinople and Baghdad. These schools were intended to inculcate loyalty to the empire in Arabs and Kurds while training them in the discipline of a modern army. The experiment did not last long.

In 1878 Shaikh Ubaidalla wrote to a British vice-consul:

> The Kurdish nation is a people apart. Their religion is different and their laws and customs are distinct. . . . The chiefs and rulers of Kurdistan, whether Turkish or Persian subjects, and the inhabitants of Kurdistan one and all are united and agreed that matters cannot be carried on in this way with the two governments. . . .

The European idea of political nationalism, that is, a people organised in an independent state, had reached West Asia. Shaikh Ubaidalla was a feudal lord, spiritual and temporal, and the political nationalism he talked of ran against the great political and religious traditions of Islam and the institution of the Sultan-Caliph. While respecting the rights of peoples to be governed by their own religious laws, Islam had from its inception thought of the State as co-extensive with the community of Islam. The institution of the Sultan–Caliph expressed this concept and the Kurdish rulers were happy with it as long as they

retained their princely autonomy. When the Ottoman government introduced Government by Turkish officials, thus violating the considerable freedom of action they had long enjoyed, the more far-sighted Kurdish leaders embraced political nationalism.

Following the Young Turk revolution in 1908, Kurdish political clubs were established in Constantinople, Mosul, Diyarbakir and Baghdad, all imperial centres with a leavening of intelligentsia educated in Western thought. The Kurds got such education in Constantinople, the centre of ferment in the declining empire or, in the case of the young princes of the Badr Khan and Babah families, in exile in France and Switzerland. This intelligentsia, however, counted for little in the countryside, where the feudal and tribal leaders generally regarded them with hostility and suspicion as carriers of ungodly and revolutionary ideas.

The new parliament in Constantinople meant little for the politics of Ottoman–Kurdish relations. These continued to be conducted through diplomatic manoeuvre frequently lapsing into military action. In these circumstances the Kurdish intelligentsia could do little. What little they did in the way of political clubs and schools teaching Kurdish was carefully watched by the Government and in 1909 these were closed down.

In 1910 a new society of students and lawyers was formed. But even in these sophisticated circles rivalries between feudal families undermined the nationalist enterprise. The followers of the Badr Khans and of Abd al-Qadir spied on each other and then informed the Turkish authorities. Such was the miserable infancy of Kurdish political nationalism on the eve of the war which was to wipe away the Ottoman empire.

The Turkish Government presented the first World War to its empire as a holy war, a *jihad*. The majority of simple Kurds responded happily to the chance to make war for their Sultan-Caliph. Some Kurdish religious scholars

however refused to support what they considered an improper call for a *jihad*. Among the intelligentsia the war was viewed as an opportunity for the nationalist cause. At the end there was indeed a great opportunity but it was to be lost.

Kurdistan lay immediately below the Ottoman empire's historical enemy to the north, Russia. Although the Russians had at times dabbled in feeding Kurdish hopes their policy developed into backing for the Armenians at the expense of the Kurds. But they never turned their face wholly against the Kurds and from time to time whispered encouragements to them.

As Armenian nationalism had become increasingly threatening to the Sublime Porte the Sultans encouraged the Kurds at the mortal expense of thousands of Armenians. When the war came, the Kurds fighting for the Sultan once again found the Armenians a proper enemy. But by the end of the war the situation was profoundly changed and the Kurds and Armenians were reconciled. Kurds sheltered Armenians from Turkish massacre in 1916. In the same year a Kurdish envoy in Tiflis unsuccessfully sought Russian aid from Grand Duke Nicholas, the Commander-in-Chief of the Turkish front.

When the war began Russian forces swept into Kurdistan from Persia where they had been stationed since 1909. Massacre by Russians, Armenians, Assyrians, pestilence, famine, the slaughter of flocks and the killing hardships of migration in severe winter were the price paid by the Kurdish tribesmen for the glory of fighting the *jihad* for their sultan.

In 1915, the Young Turks, still believing their country to be on the winning side in the war, confirmed their policy towards the subject peoples of the Ottoman empire. The Kurdish Emir Bedir-Khan tells of how, hearing of the plan to transport the Kurds to Western Anatolia and 'Turkify'

them, he was instantly converted from support for the Pan-Islamic movement to Kurdish nationalism.

In March 1918 the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk ended the Ottomans' war with Russia. By that time the Russian army was a spent force and its conquests in Armenia and Kurdistan had been lost to the determined efforts of Mustafa Kemal combined with the collapse of Russia into revolution. The Turkish empire came to its end militarily on 31 October 1918 when an armistice was signed with the British on board H.M.S. Agamemnon in the Aegean. Mustafa Kemal's Turkish Nationalist party was in power within a year, determined to resist Allied demands. The National Pact adopted by them as policy declared those territories not occupied by the Allies on 30 October 1918 to form a whole which did not permit of division for any reason. British forces, though already occupying most of what is now Iraqi Kurdistan, took over Mosul town only on 3 November. The protesting Turks insisted, probably with some truth, that the Kurds there wished to remain in the Ottoman state. The Kurds were still loyal to the religious authority of the caliphate and at this time the secularised *étatisme* of Kemal lay in the unforeseen future. The Turks made a great effort to win the confidence of the Kurds during this period. The National Pact however prefigured the later Government policy denying the very existence of the Kurdish nationality: the Pact declared the areas unoccupied on 30 October 1918 to be inhabited by an Ottoman–Muslim majority united by religion and race.

Outside Turkey, Kurdish nationalists had begun, as soon as the war ended, soliciting for Kurdish statehood, sinking their differences with the Armenians in order to pursue mutual interests. They based their appeal on President Wilson's Fourteen Points of January 1918, which provided for an unmolested opportunity for autonomous development for minorities within the Ottoman empire, and on two similar Anglo-French declarations later the same year.

When British forces were replaced in 1919 by French in Syria and Cilicia, Mosul remained in the British sphere of influence; but the frontier between French Syria and British Iraq was defined in 1922 and arbitrarily divided Kurdish-populated Jazirah.

The peace treaty signed at Sèvres by the Sultan's Government (still recognised by the Allies despite the Nationalist majority in parliament) provided for an Allied commission to draft a scheme of local autonomy for the predominantly Kurdish area east of the Euphrates, south of Armenia and north of Syria and Mesopotamia. The Constantinople Government promised to execute the Commission's decisions and to allow self-government to the Kurds if within a year the majority of them wanted it and the League of Nations considered them fit for it.

However, there were other provisions in the treaty which would have reduced Turkey to colonies of the major European powers. Under the leadership of Mustafa Kemel the Turkish Nationalists rejected the treaty signed by the puppet Government, and the Turkish war of independence began. The Turks won and forced the Allies to draw up the new peace treaty, the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, which made no mention of the Kurds.

Mustafa Kemal at that time might easily have thought Turkification would proceed satisfactorily. A more pressing aspect of the Kurdish problem was the Mosul question. The Treaty of Lausanne left to be settled later the Turkish frontier with Iraq which meant, in effect, how much of Kurdistan was to come under Turkish control. Eventually the League of Nations awarded the Mosul *vilayet* to Iraq, but as Turkey did not recognise the League's jurisdiction the matter was only finally settled by Turkey, Britain and Iraq on 5 June 1926.

The Turks were reluctant to lose the *vilayet* for several reasons. Among them were the oil fields of Mosul and the possible threat of nationalist incitement spreading from the Iraqi Kurds to their fellows in Turkey. The British had

attempted to establish a reliable Kurdish Government in the *vilayet* but failed in the attempt. The Iraqi Kurds did not pose a threat to the Ankara Government; the threat came from the Kurds within the Turkish state.

IV. THE TURKISH REPUBLIC

In 1924 Turkey became a republic and in the following year the caliphate was abolished. The secularisation and modernisation brutally imposed by Mustapha Kemal's Nationalist Party lost him the support of all sections of the Kurdish community, and in 1924 the Progressive Republican Party was formed to oppose it. Dominated by former members of the Young Turk party and conservative religious leaders, the party was supported by prominent Kurds and also by the Committee for the Caliphate, anxious to restore the former Sultan. Shaikh Abd al-Qadir, son of Shaikh Ubaidalla, was a prominent member; he had also held office in the Young Turk Government.

In this cause the Kurds rose early in 1925 under the leadership of Shaikh Said of the Naqshbandi order; initially successful (it encompassed most of Diyarbakir and Elazig provinces), the rising was broken for want of support by April, and ruthless measures of repression and reprisal were taken. Tribal rivalry had as usual prevented full Kurdish participation.

A new group of Kurdish intelligentsia in exile, the *Khoybun*, declared in 1927 the formation of a Kurdish Government with its capital on Mount Ararat, and the embers of discontent were fanned by repression into flame even among those leaders who had not joined Shaikh Said's rebellion, and who were in fact much more influential than the new Government, despite its conservative political nature. The very able leader of these military forces was a former officer of the Ottoman army, Ihsan Nuri Pasha; the rebels were able to cross into Persian territory and received supplies from as far away as Tabriz, and the Shah did not comply with Turkish requests that the Persian army

help to isolate the rebels. The British were charged, baselessly, with inciting the Kurds, who were more reliably reported to have Armenian co-operation.

In 1930 the rebels made their greatest effort in a revolt which spread throughout Bitlis, Diyarbakir, Van and Bohtan. The Turks put 45,000 men in the field; their vastly superior weapons and resources prevailed and despite Ihsan Nuri's popularity and ability as a commander the revolt was again brutally put down. Ihsan Nuri escaped to Persia where he has lived since.

In 1937 disturbances in Dersim in north-western Kurdistan resulted from Ankara's determination to bring the Kurds into line and Kurdish determination to retain tribal administration and a measure of autonomy. Official Turkish announcements spoke only of resistance to compulsory education, and claimed that the insurrection was virtually at an end. In fact the fighting continued into 1939 and Tunceli province, in which Dersim lay, was under martial law until 1946. Dersim was the last armed revolt by the Kurds in Turkey.

The Turkish policy, after overcoming the Kurdish rebels, was to exile their *aghas*, transport farming families and enforce military service on the young men. By setting up military posts and building some roads and railways the Ankara Government succeeded in destroying the political effectiveness of the traditional order. Vestigial remnants continue today but by the end of the Second World War the system of *aghas* and shaikhs was in the past. After the death of Ataturk in 1938 and with American presence during the war, the political atmosphere began to relax in some ways. In 1947 the Prime Minister, a member of the Kemalist Republican Party, praised the Kurds for their citizenship and loyal army service. The next year the Government allowed the teaching of Islam in Turkish schools. In the 1950 elections the Democratic Party, founded in 1946, swept to power and remained the Government until 1960. The policies of this party went further towards easing

the pressure of 'modernisation' on the lives of villagers, religious functionaries and the remaining nomads. It also tolerated a remarkably vigorous religious reaction to the years of laicism. The dervish shaikhs reappeared and political power began to return to them and the village notables.

Under the Kemalist rule the local agencies of the state enjoyed little prestige or respect in the villages. Those whom the villagers in fact respected and listened to were still determined by wealth, age and moral and religious position. The Democratic Party restored in some degree the official participation of such people in public life and in doing so attracted a mass following. It also however became corrupt and repressed all opposition and public criticism. On 27 May 1960 the army, as guardians of the Kemalist revolution, overthrew the régime of President Celal Bayar and Premier Adnan Menderes. Acting in the name of democracy, the army was in the anomalous position of destroying a régime enjoying broad popular support.

Any easing of life which the Democratic Government had brought to the Kurds was only part of the general situation and not due to any sympathy for nationalist activities. These did not pass unnoticed by the State. In January 1961 forty-nine Kurdish intelligentsia were put on trial but then released with a caution. They were rearrested and a second trial began in Ankara in May. *Kurdish Facts*, the organ of the International Society Kurdistan, reported early in 1962 that twenty-six of the defendants were sentenced to death.

In the spring of 1961 eight prominent feudal leaders living in exile in Bursa were arrested and charged with being reactionaries, making Communist propaganda and seeking an independent Kurdistan. In April General Guersal, head of the military *junta* which replaced the Democratic régime, praised the reissue of a book by Sherif Firat who had asserted that the Kurds are of Turkish origin. Guersel declared that no nation exists with a personality of its own calling itself Kurdish and that the Kurds

were not only compatriots but racial brothers of the Turks. He went on to say the eastern regions of Turkey were both gate and fortress and their loss would make it difficult for the Turks to maintain themselves in central and western Anatolia.

On 8 May, the day the second trial of the forty-nine intelligentsia began, demonstrations took place in Mardin, Deykir, Siverek, Diyarbakir, Bitlis and Van. According to *Kurdish Facts* the marching Kurds carried signs which read 'We are not Turks, we are Kurds', 'Down with Guersel, Menderes, Inonu—All Tyrants', 'The Turkish Government must recognise our national rights'.

The army was called in to reinforce the police and the demonstrators were fired on. *Kurdish Facts* reported that in Mardin 121 people were shot and 354 wounded, in Diyarbakir 194 were killed and about 400 injured. On 13 May General Guersel admitted that 140 people had been arrested. Ankara decided to meet this explosive situation by allowing some of the nationalist activities recognised outlets. In 1963 two bilingual Turkish-Kurdish newspapers appeared. By the end of the year, however, they were both suppressed. At the same time a group of thirteen students were arrested for conspiring with foreigners. Two of the group were Iraqi Kurds and the implication was that the rebels were spreading their influence among the Turkish Kurds. On 17 December the military prosecutor in Ankara demanded the death penalty for twenty-three Kurds charged with attempting to set up a Kurdish state in Turkey and to send arms to the Kurds in Iraq. In his speech to the court the prosecutor declared that those 'people who were called Kurds are Turkish by race' and that the idea of a Kurdish state in Turkey was the work of 'international Communism'. These accused and the others first brought to trial in 1961 were acquitted in April 1964.

The great poverty of Turkish Kurdistan continues to weaken the whole Turkish state. In the winter of 1962–3 near-famine afflicted the area, forcing the farmers to eat their crop seed and slaughter their livestock. The area is still poor in basic transport facilities and the building of a major road and railway are the two leading development projects under way.

The road runs from Cizre (Jazirah) on the Tigris 450 miles to Zemian in Persia where it joins the road from Tabriz to Teheran. It should be open to traffic in 1964. The railway is part of a CENTO project to connect Turkey, Persia and Pakistan. The line will start at Mush in Turkey and run through Kurdistan to Sharaf Khaneh in Persia. It will include a fifty-mile ferry across Lake Van and should be operating by 1965, making possible for the first time continuous travel by train from London to Teheran.

V. IRAQ BETWEEN THE WARS

THE British were in touch with Kurdish tribal leaders months before the armistice with Turkey. When the fighting was over the British established political officers throughout the Mosul *vilayet* and in parts of Kurdistan further west. One of these officials was C. J. Edmonds who later wrote: 'British policy at that time was to avoid commitments in the hills by setting up one or several semi-autonomous Kurdish provinces to be loosely attached to whatever regular administration might ultimately be established in the plains.'

Casting about for a suitable man to head a Kurdish Government the British settled on Shaikh Mahmud Barzinji. He was the head of the leading *saiyid* family in the region and a person of wide influence and following, though not so wide as he encouraged the British to believe. His original area of authority was reduced to Sulaimani province and the adjacent part of Kirkuk province. Still, the British High Commissioner in Baghdad accorded him the title of Ruler (*Hukmdar*), and began to organise a Kurdish levy. A Kurdish Government had been launched. But Shaikh Mahmud was far from the ideal of a good ruler. Before the war he had used strong arm gangs to terrorise Sulaimani city. He disliked and was suspicious of Kurds who had received modern higher education. But he was respected as a leader by a great many ordinary Kurds and had the support of numerous kinsmen and allies among the toughest tribes.

In April 1919 the British decided to trim Shaikh Mahmud's power. He responded by organising a revolt. On 23 May Mahmud's forces attacked Sulaimani and quickly dispersed the half-trained levy under the command of the Shaikh's brother, Colonel Shaikh Qadir. They then seized the Government funds, imprisoned all the British

present and raised their flag, a red crescent on a green field, over the British Political Office. A small British force sent from Kirkuk to deal with the rebels was severely beaten. In Persia tribes rose in the name of a Kurdish state. The British put down the rebellion in six weeks.

Shaikh Mahmud was taken prisoner and exiled to India, and the rebellion collapsed. In the meantime the state of Iraq was taking shape under British direction in Baghdad. But the Turks were at the same time using the allure of the caliphate and fear of their return by conquest to gain support among the Kurds for the return of the Mosul *vilayet* to Turkey.

In 1920 a referendum was held in Iraq to approve the accession of Prince Faisal to the throne of the new monarchy. The Kurds of Sulaimani boycotted the election while the province of Kirkuk voted against the Prince. The British did not establish themselves securely in Kurdistan and their influence was maintained by a few officers in the face of mounting tribal resistance. In Baghdad the Arab nationalists were opposed to giving Kurds senior positions in the national Government. The British in Iraq were themselves divided. Those in Kurdistan supported Kurdish participation in high office while those in Baghdad took a dim view of the Kurds. Soon the Turks were sending in armed men to impress the Kurds with their military presence. British standing was further shaken when an assistant political officer was killed in a tribal fracas.

The British were in a difficult and confused position. They clearly intended that the Mosul *vilayet* should be tied to Baghdad but H.M. Government had committed itself to at least that degree of Kurdish self-rule which inhibited direct rule by an Arab administration in Baghdad. The British still hoped to be able to establish an indirect rule through a Kurdish leader who would be impervious to Turkish threats and blandishments and enjoy popular support. Turkish influence was spreading throughout the tribal areas and inspired an insurrection of the Hamawand

and Jabbari tribes in 1922. To combat the Turkish call for a national rising the British brought back Shaikh Mahmud. Edmonds wrote, 'We had despaired of keeping out the Turks with our own resources and had brought back Mahmud to consolidate Kurdish national feeling as the sole means of doing so.'

Despite his assurances before returning to Sulaimani, Mahmud soon tried to extend his power beyond this province. Three weeks after a wildly enthusiastic reception the Ruler of 'Independent' Kurdistan issued a rescript 'given in Sulaimani, the capital of Kurdistan' and announcing a 'Cabinet of Kurdistan'. In November Shaikh Mahmud took the title of King (*Malik*).

The leading families in Kirkuk and Mosul provinces identified themselves with the former Turkish ruling class either by descent from Turkish stock or by assimilation and no more wanted a Kurdish ruler than they did the Arab Faisal. And the majority of Kurdish leaders in the Mosul *vilayet* had shown no interest in supporting a Kurdish state headed by Mahmud. But a number of Kurds who had been officers in the Ottoman army came to Sulaimani to offer their services. They formed an intelligentsia which Mahmud soon alienated. Instead of using these qualified men for his administration Shaikh Mahmud preferred to appoint ill-educated shaikhs. Jemal Beg, according to Edmonds one of the most able of the ex-officers, was murdered for criticising Mahmud.

At the end of October two more eminent Kurds appeared on the Iraqi scene. One was Ismail Agha, known as Simko, *agha* of the Shikak tribe in Persia. Simko came to Iraq to seek asylum from the combined Turkish and Persian armies which had driven him from his homeland. He offered his resources to the British to drive the Turks out of the Mosul *vilayet*. With him came Saiyid Taha, a nephew of Shaikh Abd al-Qadir. A man of great standing among all Kurds, he suggested to the British that he would participate in the anti-Turkish drive in the expectation of his appointment to

authority in the Rawandiz area. The British sought to get Mahmud, Taha and Simko to work together. But rivalry between the three leaders was more powerful than a desire to deal with the common enemy, the Turks, who had repudiated the Treaty of Sèvres and were an immediate military threat to the entire Mosul *vilayet.*

The British were still seeking to implement a Kurdish Government but the Kurdish leaders could come to no agreement. The Turks were now in touch with Shaikh Mahmud and though they would give no assurances about the fate of Kurdistan if Turkish rule were restored, Mahmud sought to stir up an anti-British revolt in Kirkuk. In Februrary 1923 the British demanded that Mahmud go to Baghdad. He evaded complying and token bombing by the R.A.F. followed. On 4 March Mahmud took to the mountains, taking with him the Government moneys.

From this secure position he continued to collect taxes and called for a *jihad* against the British. In the meanwhile the Turks had obtained Persian co-operation to move troops across Persian territory and were preparing an offensive against Kirkuk. The British sent two columns against the Turks and their Kurdish allies and checked the attempt to regain the *vilayet* by force of arms.

Shaikh Mahmud was isolated but not subdued in his mountain stronghold and, on the withdrawal of the British column, re-entered the town of Sulaimani. Before very long, however, in view of the Shaikh's renewed interference in parts of the province which were now being administered from Kirkuk and which in the spring had sent representatives (including his own brother, Qadir) to the Constituent Assembly in Baghdad, it was decided that the town should be reoccupied, this time by a mixed force including units of the Iraqi army (July 1924). With this decision the attempt to set up an autonomous Kurdish administration was finally abandoned in favour of a policy of integration in the Iraqi state.

The sessions of the Constituent Assembly in Baghdad were stormy with Arab nationalism and Kurdish discontent. But when the vote came on the Anglo-Iraqi treaty laying the grounds for an independent Iraqi state, the votes of seventeen Kurdish delegates provided more than half the slim majority of thirty-seven out of sixty-nine votes which carried it. The treaty was passed only after a rider was attached declaring the measure null and void if the British Government failed to safeguard Iraqi possession of all the Mosul *vilayet*.

The Turks continued to struggle to regain the *vilayet* through intrigue and diplomacy for another two years. Part of this fight was waged to win the support of a League of Nations commission sent to investigate the opposed Turkish and Anglo-Iraqi claims. The commission concluded that the inhabitants of the *vilayet* did not wish to be returned to Turkey. Shaikh Mahmud strangely made no effort to present himself and his claims before this international body concerned with the future of a large part of Kurdistan. Instead he continued raiding on and off until 1927 when he submitted to the Iraqi Government.

In 1930 a revised Anglo-Iraqi treaty was signed which provided for an end to the mandate in 1932. Disappointed by the absence of any specific safeguard for Kurdish rights, the Kurdish nationalists campaigned for a boycott of the general elections for a new parliament which would be asked to ratify the treaty. In the course of a demonstration soldiers of the Iraqi army fired on a crowd at Sulaimani, causing casualties. Shaikh Mahmud rose again. He now sought a Kurdish autonomous area under British protection and free of direct rule from Baghdad. The British refused.

It was eight months before Mahmud surrendered after a campaign by the Iraqi army and the R.A.F. It was his last rising. The treaty was passed and in due course Iraq became an independent state. But on the eve of Iraq's admission to the League of Nations British pressure resulted in the issue of a declaration of constitutional force by the

Iraqi Government acknowledging the special position of the Kurdish people in Iraq. In the view of the Kurds, tribal leaders and intelligentsia, this guarantee of Kurdish rights has never been satisfactorily honoured.

Before the complete transfer of power from the British to Iraqi hands, the new régime had begun to make its presence felt in Iraqi Kurdistan. The British had left the tribal order, despite their difficulties with it, basically undisturbed. Some of the tribal chiefs had not paid taxes for several years and the new Iraqi Government now set out to enforce its authority. Among these chiefs was Shaikh Ahmad of Barzan, who was also in trouble for religious unorthodoxy which aggravated the perennial conflict between tribes. The Baradost tribe, setting out to punish the heretics, was soundly beaten, as were two successive Iraqi army columns, by the Barzani led by the Shaikh's younger brother, Mulla Mustafa Barzani who was to become the pre-eminent Kurdish leader of today.

After the defeat of the second column the R.A.F., after dropping the usual warnings, bombed Barzan in support of ground troops. Shaikh Ahmad took refuge in Turkey. There he was arrested and in 1935 turned over to the Iraqi Government which interned him first at Hilla, south of Baghdad and later in Sulaimani.

The Barzanis, Mulla Mustafa's followers, provide a good example of the rise to power within the Kurdish social system of a shaikhly establishment. The first shaikh, receiving his vicarship from Shaikh Ubaidalla's father, lived in a small village in a poor valley. Between 1906 and 1945 his tribe increased from a mere 750 families to 9,000 men, women and children, well able to deal with the neighbouring tribes who had previously outnumbered them. The ruling shaikh in 1908, falling out with the Turks, courted Russian interest and on the outbreak of war was hanged; his successor was the present Shaikh Ahmad, then a young man already showing signs of emotional instability.

In 1919 Shaikh Ahmad favoured the Turks against the British. But nothing out of the ordinary happened until 1930. Neither the hardships which followed nor the emergence of Mulla Mustafa as the effective military chief has altered Shaikh Ahmad's position as the spiritual leader of the Barzanis. Mulla Mustafa has never sought to usurp the religious office his brother holds and it should be noted that in this instance 'Mulla' is a personal name and not the title of a Koranic teacher. Journalistic references therefore to the 'Red Mulla' are incorrect. In the present rebellion the Shaikh seems to play the role of the Barzani holy man of peace and conciliation. In the first two years of the revolt he bombarded General Qasim with telegrams assuring Az-Zaim of the Barzanis' peaceful intentions and loyalty to the Government. The political and military leadership however is with the Shaikh's gifted brother.

In so far as the Kurds had hopes for what the second World War might bring they hoped that the British would recognise their loyalty to the Allied cause and note the preference among many Arabs for an end to British influence in Iraq. But suggestions by the Kurds that the British should help them at the expense of the Iraqi Government had no success.

In 1943 Mulla Mustafa escaped from Sulaimani and, gathering his warriors in Barzan, began to attack police posts. By the end of the year his position was so strong (he had again defeated the Iraqi army) that the Prime Minister, Nuri Said, sent Majid Mustafa, also a Kurd, to negotiate. When he agreed to Barzani's demands, Mulla Mustafa and his followers increased them to include considerable freedom from Baghdad control, which the Arab nationalists in Nuri's Government would not agree to. The Government fell and the new one, while willing to continue talks with Mulla Mustafa, was unwilling to concede his essential demands. The negotiations, conducted through Kurdish officers of the Iraqi army, resulted in the release of Shaikh Ahmad in 1944. Not until a year later did the Government

realise that the negotiating officers were Kurdish nationalists and members of *Hewa* (Hope), a secret Kurdish society organised during the mandate and attracting memberships from the middle-class intelligentsia.

In March 1945 an amnesty bill was prepared for Mulla Mustafa and other Kurds who had fought the Government. But hostilities flared up again and lasted throughout the summer. The army and air force and several tribes in the pay of the Government badly damaged the morale of the Barzanis. In addition to these forces were another group of Kurdish 'immigrants' from Turkey loyal to the sons of Saiyid Taha. They were led against Barzani by a young regular officer, Abd al-Kerim Qasim. By September the Barzanis could not endure much more and Mulla Mustafa led his people out of Iraq across the mountains into Persia. With him went those Iraqi army officers who had negotiated on behalf of the Baghdad Government. Altogether some ten thousand Kurds arrived in Persia, three thousand of whom were warriors.

Except for two months in 1947 Mulla Mustafa was not to return to Iraq for thirteen years.

VI. SYRIA

When the British and French came to a final division of the Ottoman empire France was given access to the Kurdish area west of Mosul. This was accomplished by the 1922 frontier agreement which gave to the French mandate territory of Syria a duck's beak which protrudes from the north-east corner of Syria into the Jazirah. Whether or not oil was thought to lie in the area, it brought French influence close to the proved oil fields near Mosul and Kirkuk. In 1930 France obtained additional territory as far as the Tigris in a settlement with Turkey. During the twenties and thirties many thousands of Kurds fled from Turkey and settled in Syria just below the frontier.

While the Jazirah has the largest Kurdish settlement in Syria the Kurds do not make a clear majority of the population. The area is populated by Arabs as well as Kurds and Christians as well as Muslims. The result of this was that while the different minorities wished to be free of rule from Damascus they equally feared rule by a neighbouring minority. In 1931 the appointment of an Arab nationalist official to the area provoked a Kurdish revolt which the French army crushed.

The large Kurdish colony in Damascus, occupying its own quarter, was a centre of nationalist activity throughout the interbellum years. Damascus was the headquarters of the *Khoybun* which was involved with the 1927–30 Kurdish struggle in Turkey.

On the whole the Kurds were well treated by the French. Their numerical inferiority ruled out a serious Kurdish threat to the State, while their nationalist spirit alienated them from the Arab nationalists, the most serious enemy of the French.

As in every country where they lived, individual Kurds in Syria rose to high office in the Government service. One

Kurd, a general in the Syrian army, was for a while the country's strong man in the early years of confusion following the end of the second World War and the coming of independence from France.

In 1958 Dr Nur ad-Din az-Zaza founded a clandestine Kurdistan Democratic Party in Syria seeking self-rule for the Kurds. In December 1960 Zaza was put on trial in Damascus and with thirteen others given a one-year sentence. Fifteen other nationalists received eighteen months each. By the middle of 1961 all had been released and Syria had withdrawn from the United Arab Republic. That year Zaza and Muhammed Issa Mahmud were candidates for the new parliament elections in December. Two hours before the elections Zaza was arrested in the Kurdish town, Qamishliyah, where he was seeking election. According to Kurdish nationalists the Syrian army and gendarmerie broke up the voting and stuffed the ballot boxes with pro-Government votes.

Under the Baath régime the Kurds are more seriously threatened than before and the Government has intensified its Arabisation of the Jazirah.

VII. THE SOVIET UNION

THE Kurds in the Soviet Union are outside the modern development of the Kurdish nationalist ferment. Significantly, Eagleton[1] mentioned only one Soviet Kurd known to have been present in Persian Kurdistan during the Mahabad republic.[1]

The Kurds, living mostly in Soviet Armenia, but with small colonies scattered in Central Asia, benefit from the effort and money lavished on education and economic improvement by the Communist Government. They appear to have also suffered their share of the horrors of the Stalinist régime.

Numbering a hundred thousand or more, they have never formed a self-governing community of their own and, somewhat remote from the great historical events in Kurdistan before the first World War, have been isolated from their non-Soviet fellows since then.

[1] William Eagleton, Jr., *The Kurdish Republic of 1946*, London, Oxford University Press for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1946.

[1] See pp. 51 ff.

VIII. PERSIA IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

In the opening decades of the nineteenth century Kurdish Viceroys or *valis* ruled in Persian Kurdistan with royal assurance; by 1865, however, they had been replaced by a member of the imperial Qajar family. But the former viceregal family continued to hold high office and many other Kurdish lords were also loyal to the *Shahinshah*. As amongst Kurds in Turkey, most were hostile to modernisation, and in 1912 the powerful Kalhor tribe of the Kermanshah area supported a Qajar attempt to overthrow the Constitutional Government in Teheran.

The Russians had also supported the Qajars against the Constitutionalists and from 1909 kept troops in northern Persia. The Turks moved into Iran on 29 December 1914 and within ten days had occupied Tabriz. But the Russians, whose forces were concentrated in Azarbayjan, forced the Turks out by the end of January.

Moving south, the Russians overcame Simko and his tribe, the Shikak, and stayed in Urmiyeh until the Bolshevik armistice. In the chaos which followed the withdrawal of the Russians and the Turks, Simko set out to make himself master of Persian Kurdistan west of Lake Urmiyeh. To do this he had to deal with the Assyrians who had risen against the Ottoman empire and who formed a large and militant colony in Persian Kurdistan. Relations between the Shikak and Assyrians were further envenomed by a blood feud between Simko and the Mar Shimun, whom Simko had shot at a dinner to which he had invited him to discuss an alliance. Simko joined the Turks in hunting down the Assyrians, and the greater part of the Assyrian nation, whose principal urban centre had been Urmiyeh, was destroyed before they could reach the safety of British protection to the south east at Hamadan.

Simko's treachery here is undeniable, but it must be remembered that it was in the tradition of the tribal blood feud and one which even Governments resorted to: Simko's elder brother Jafar Agha, a successful brigand, was shot down on a visit to the Persian Governor of Azarbayjan who had sworn on the Koran to the chief's safety.

In the aftermath of the first World War, with the Russians, Turks, Assyrians and Persians gone, Simko in turn was recognised by the Persians as Governor of the Kurdish area west of Lake Urmiyeh. But Teheran continued to make appointments in Simko's domain. So in 1921 Simko attacked Sauj Bulaq and killed six hundred Persian gendarmerie. Assisted by Turkomans from Azarbayjan the Persian Government began a military drive against Simko, forcing him to move westward. The Turks now joined the fight and Simko was pressed by two armies to the east and west. He was forced in the face of these vastly superior forces to move southward into Iraq where he offered his services to the British.

Reza Khan had begun his climb to power in Persia and throughout the twenties imposed his authority by force and intrigue on the Kurdish tribes. The lords were forced to take up residence in Teheran or other towns and so could no longer direct resistance to the imperial Government. By 1930 Simko was ready to surrender to the Persians. He set off to make his submission and to receive the pardon of the Persian Government. He was killed by a Persian ambush on the way.

By the time Simko was killed Reza Khan had begun to confiscate tribal lands, to force the nomads to abandon their traditional life and remain sedentary, and to impose a European dress. Sometimes whole tribes were transported from their ancient lands. Where schools were introduced Kurdish was not allowed. The results of such treatment of the tribal people was often disease, famine, a loss of purpose and dignity. Towards the end of Reza Shah's reign, the economic ill effects of the Government's tribal policy had

forced it to be relaxed somewhat. And when the Persian Government's influence collapsed in 1941 under the British and Soviet invasion of western Persia the old tribal order quickly re-asserted itself. The invasion came on 25 August 1941. On 16 September the Shah abdicated in favour of his heir, Muhammed Reza, the present Shah. British power was centred in Kermanshah, Russian power in Azarbayjan. The two zones of influence met on a line between Saqqiz and Sardasht. The Russians had moved into Persia to protect the rear of their front in the Caucasus and to secure the supply line from the Persian gulf along which were delivered American tanks and trucks. The British needed to protect their oil installations in Persia and Iraq, shipping in the Persian Gulf and the British position as a whole in West Asia.

The Persian army disintegrated in Kurdistan. The tribes were able to obtain weapons and the chiefs to return from exile to their people. Some of them took up the old tradition of pillaging. Other lords sought to expand their power.

The events of the war years in Persian Kurdistan have been set down by William Eagleton Jr. in his admirable book *The Kurdish Republic of 1946*. Eagleton tells how the Russians allowed the Persian army to return to the Soviet zone to suppress the anarchy prevailing among the Kurdish tribes in the Rezaieh district. One place in this area that had kept free of disorder was the town of Sauj Bulaq, now Mahabad. The religious and civil leaders of the town, particularly the Qazi Muhammed, enjoyed a personal authority which was respected by the tribal leaders, who refrained from disturbing Mahabad.

Throughout their occupation the Soviet maintained a very correct attitude towards the trappings of Persian authority. At the same time they pursued the old Russian policy of encouraging the hopes of those people who felt themselves treated unjustly by the central Government.

Within six months of the Russian invasion a group of Kurdish feudal leaders was invited to the Soviet Union. The Soviets promised nothing nor did they then or later

advocate Marxism. But the Kurds returned with modest presents and a definite feeling that the Russians would support Kurdish claims to self-rule.

The autumn of 1942 saw the formation of the *Komala i-Zhian i-Kurdistan*, or Committee of the Life (or Resurrection) of Kurdistan. It was formed initially by a group of middle-class urban Kurds, and instructed by a member of the Iraqi Kurdish nationalists in the organisation of secret cells; next year a central committee was elected. The main expansion of membership occurred north of Saqqiz. By 1945 nearly all the tribal chiefs and many commoners were members.

Denunciation of 'imperialism' and its 'lackeys' entered Kurdish nationalist rhetoric through *Razgar i Kurd*, Kurdish Deliverance, an Iraqi nationalist association dominated by leftists. After April 1944, *Razgar i Kurd* meant the Iraqi association taken together with the *Komala*.

In the meantime, Persian authority had entirely vanished in the Urmiyeh region. The last vestige had collapsed a year before when the police station in Mahabad was attacked and seven Turki policemen killed. They were not replaced and nothing further was done about the system of sugar distribution round which the trouble had arisen. The Kurds were living with no one governing them but themselves. Determination to remain self-ruling grew and the nationalist cause increased. However, Russian forces continued to honour in word Persian sovereignty while keeping the Persian army at a distance, nor did they intervene very much in local affairs. The Russians insinuated to the Kurds that the Soviet Union would support Kurdish aspirations in the post-war settlement.

In October 1944 Qazi Muhammed was invited to join the *Komala* and accepted immediately. His membership had been delayed because although he was a universally respected man, the other members feared that power would soon be drawn into his paternalistic hands. Soon Qazi was indeed the authoritative figure in the *Komala*.

In March 1945 the young members of the *Komala* performed a patriotic opera, *Motherland*, personifying Kurdistan as an abused woman rescued by her sons. It brought nationalist fervour to an unprecedented intensity. In September Soviet plans moved ahead by two small steps. The Tudeh (Communist) Party in Azarbayjan changed its name to the Democratic Party and Qazi Muhammed and other Kurds were once more summoned to the Soviet Union. Once again they were seen by the Prime Minister of the Azarbayjani Soviet Socialist Republic, Jafar Baghirov. The Kurds told Baghirov that they wished to set up a Kurdish State and hoped for Russian aid in money and arms. Baghirov told the Kurds there was no hurry, that Kurdish freedom must be based on the triumph of popular forces not in Iran alone but also in Iraq and Turkey. He assured the Kurds that their interests lay with Soviet support, and made many vague promises of financial and military support. He also warned the visitors against Kurds from Iraq and in particularly against Mulla Mustafa Barzani, then in revolt, who, he assured Qazi Muhammed and the others, was a British agent.

During the autumn the Russians secretly delivered to the *Komala* 1,200 rifles taken from the Persian gendarmerie. The *Komala* had a meeting at which Qazi told it of the Russian promises and called on it to change its name, as Baghirov asked, to the Democratic Party of Kurdistan, and to come out into the open under the banner of democracy. It did not however change its organisation or become Communist-dominated: Qazi remained sole arbiter. The party adopted a seven-point programme aimed at autonomy, not full independence:

1. The Kurds in Persia were to have self-government in the administration of their local affairs.
2. Kurdish was to be the official language and education was to be in it.
3. A provincial council was to be elected immediately in accordance with Persian constitutional law.

4. The officials of the Kurdish Government were to be Kurds.
5. Revenues collected in Kurdistan were to be spent there.
6. The DPK was to make every effort to establish complete fraternity with the people of Azerbayjan and minority elements living in Kurdistan.
7. The party was to work for the improvement of the moral standards, health and economic condition of the Kurdish people by developing education, public health, commerce and agriculture.

In October the Russians strengthened their forces in Azarbayjan. By mid-November armed Communist partisans including Azarbayjanis from across the frontier between Soviet and Persian Azarbayjan, had driven out the Persian military and police forces and ended the influence of Teheran in Tabriz. On 12 December the Azarbayjani Autonomous Republic National Assembly met in Tabriz with five Kurd members out of a total of 101. It quickly became clear to the Kurdish members that the Azarbayjani régime intended to deny to the Kurdish nationalists any real power, and the Kurds returned to Mahabad. On 17 December the people of Mahabad shot the Persian national device from the front of the Department of Justice and raised the Kurdish flag. On the second day of the Kurdish month of Rebandan or 22 January 1946, Qazi Muhammed, wearing a Russian-style uniform and his distinctive head-dress as a religious man, proclaimed a Kurdish republic before an assembly of leading figures of the town and the chiefs of many tribes. The essence of Qazi's speech was that the Kurds were a people apart with a right to self-determination. They had awakened and had powerful friends. The scene was witnessed at a discreet distance by a Soviet officer. He took no part in the proclamation which was against the preference of the Russians.

The Government established in Mahabad was made of conservative town and tribal leaders. It was a Government of the Kurdish upper classes. Its most progressive aspect

was its educational and social welfare programme which by the standard then current in West Asia was liberal. Power within the Government centred in Qazi Muhammed and passed from him along lines of personal confidence through the various departments which were established. Authority in the tribal areas was left in the hands of the tribal lords. Behind the Government was the psychological prop of Russian promises.

In February 5,000 Bren and Colt machine guns, rifles, pistols and ammunition were delivered by the Russians who also gave a quantity of 'tank destroyers'—Molotov Cocktails consisting of bottles of petrol with rag wicks in the necks. But when a party of Kurds visited Tabriz, the Russians demanded to know why a Kurdish republic had been established. Qazi Muhammed was summoned to Tabriz and explained that the Russian Yermakov who had witnessed the proclamation had cleared the matter. The Russians repeated that the path to Kurdish national fulfilment lay in union with the Azarbayjani republic until Turkey and Iraq were 'liberated'. From the beginning until the end of the republic, Qazi was painfully conscious of the nationalists' dependence on Russian support. He felt that the Mahabad Government could only endure the hostility of Teheran and perhaps other states with the support of a strong power. In the circumstances that power could only be Russia. His fear of offending the Russians prompted Qazi to concede to their plans for subordinating the Kurdish Government to the Azarbayjani régime. But the Kurds who had accompanied him to Tabriz did not weaken under the Soviet browbeating. Their resistance led to a telephone call by the Russians to Baku which obtained acceptance of the Kurdish régime. The Republic later received ten Russian trucks, ten old American trucks and ten jeeps. A Soviet officer was sent to assist with military training, most of which was conducted by the four Iraqi army officers who had arrived in Mahabad with Mulla Mustafa. The Kurdish Government set out to create a military force idependent of

tribal support. Recruiting from Mahabad and the vicinity the Republic organised a total force of about 1,300 officers and men. But this 'army' never became an impressive force as has the army raised by the DPK in the present war. The real military strength of the régime lay in the tribal warriors ready to fight for it and especially with those under the command of Mulla Mustafa who was made a general in the Republic's army.

The types of government in the Kurdish republic and in the Azarbayjani were far apart. The government in Tabriz was a Stalinist régime with all the horrors that went with it. In Kurdistan there were no secret police, no Soviet-trained cadres, no indoctrination in Marxism. Nor were there any moves towards land reform or social revolution. Relations between the two régimes quickly deteriorated. The common border between the Azarbayjani and Kurdish areas became a matter of dispute adding to the acrimony the Kurds felt towards the Tabriz attempts to assert sovereignty over the Kurdish republic. In April 1946 the Soviets sought to bring the two régimes closer by negotiation. A treaty of Friendship and Alliance was signed on 23 April leaving undetermined the essential territorial conflicts. These were to be settled permanently after the 'liberation' of Turkey and Iraq. In the same month sixty Kurdish youths were sent to Baku for the education the Russians had promised. After the collapse of the Mahabad government all but a very few insisted on returning home.

Repeated requests for heavy weapons were never met by the Russians. There was no financial aid. A radio transmitter was delivered which was hardly strong enough to carry from Mahabad to the frontiers of the Kurdish régime and could not reach the Kurds of Iraq or Turkey. The Soviets refused to supply a more powerful broadcasting unit.

At the end of April the Persian army set out to give a show of force. A column of 600 troops marched north out of Saquiz into the Republic's territory. While they stopped

for a picnic lunch Mulla Mustafa's forces attacked and routed the column which hastily retreated to Saqqiz.

While the Kurds in Mahabad prospered under the sound administration of a Kurdish Government the fate of that Government was being determined in the conflict between the Soviet Union and the Western powers, led by the United States. As the second World War ended Stalin began to try to get back the areas in West Asia which were Russian at the time of the first World War and were surrendered by the Bolsheviks in 1917. At the same time, while pressure was being put on Ankara, the Russians were trying to extract from Teheran oil concessions in the north of Persia. The Stalinist Tudeh régime in Tabriz looked very like the prelude to Russian annexation of Persian territory. As in Turkey, the Russian army had occupied the area in the years before the first World War. In regard to Persia, too, the Western powers resisted the attempt by Russia. The matter was fought out in the diplomatic forum of the United Nations.

Russian military forces were out of Persia by early May. However, the Russians and Persians had not yet finished negotiating, the Persian army was not ready to restore the Shah's authority in the western marches and the Russian presence remained, if only residually, in the person of Soviet consuls and commercial representatives in Azarbayjan and Kurdistan.

During May and June the Tabriz régime negotiated a settlement with the pro-Communist Muzaffir Firuz, acting for the Persian Prime Minister. The agreement provided for the reunion of Azarbayjan with Persia. The Azarbayjani parliament was recognised as a provincial council and the Tabriz régime was left intact, but the Mahabad Government was ignored. Thus the Stalinists secured a legal basis for continuing their Government while leaving the non-Communist Kurdish régime well out in the cold. The Kurds decided to meet the increasing threat of the Persian army by mounting an attack on Sanandaj. The taking of this

town would have been a serious check to Persian pressure on the Mahabad régime but the Kurds bowed to Russian insistence that the attack be called off. Instead a truce with Teheran was arranged.

In August the Soviets advised Qazi Muhammed to go to Teheran to seek a legal basis within the Persian State for his régime. Qazi did this and the Prime Minister offered to make all Persian Kurdistan into a province (*ostan*) under a governor general. Such an arrangement would have given the Kurds legal parity with the Azarbayjan Government. Qazi felt he could not accept the proposal unless the Russians approved. But the Soviet embassy refused 'to betray' the Tabriz régime. So Qazi returned to Mahabad with nothing changed.

The summer of 1946 was a time of increasing pressure from the Communists and their sympathisers in Persia, with Communist-organised strikes and demonstrations and Tudeh (Communist) members included for the first time in the Cabinet.

This situation provoked the conservative Bakhtiari and Quashquai tribes, in the mountains south of Kurdistan, to revolt. Qavam as-Saltaneh changed his Government again on 19 October, dropping the Tudeh members and so ending the revolt. A crackdown on the Tudeh party then began.

On 27 November Qavam ordered the Persian army to occupy Azarbayjan. In September the Kurds had refused a Persian proposal that they lay down their arms, return Persian war material and accept the return of the Kurdish republic to the Persian state. The policy of Mahabad was to trust for its own survival to continued Russian support for the Tabriz régime. Much as they might dislike their northern neighbour, the Kurds saw their fate as inextricably tied to the survival of the Azarbayjan republic. So, at the end of November, the Kurds were dismayed to hear the Russians assure them that the Persian army would withdraw after elections were held. Qazi Muhammed still did not believe

the Russians would abandon Tabriz and on 5 December the Kurds decided to resist the Persian army.

But on 13 December the Persians occupied Tabriz with no Soviet effort to prevent it. The day before the army arrived the people rose against the Communist Government, killing many Stalinists. The Tudeh governor-general Javid was dragged to his death tied behind a jeep. Qazi Muhammed gave up any idea of resistance and on 16 December surrendered to General Homayuni in Miandoab.

After submitting, Qazi did everything he could to avoid bloodshed. Mulla Mustafa had pleaded with him to get away but the President of the Republic did not believe the Persians would kill him. Mahabad was occupied quietly and Persian authority installed without incident. There was no popular reaction against the Government. Qazi Muhammed was isolated in his house and the central committee of the Democratic Party was arrested. Early in 1947 Qazi was tried by a military court. At three in the morning of 31 March he, his brother and a cousin were hanged in the square in which the republic had been proclaimed. Five more Kurdish leaders were hanged in April. Thirty-one others were imprisoned.

Mulla Mustafa had begun his withdrawal from Mahabad a week before Qazi surrendered. After the surrender Mulla Mustafa visited General Hoymayuni and proposed that he and his followers would return to Barzan if the British Government would guarantee their safety. He took this proposal to Teheran where he spent a month living in the Officers' Club. When the British said they were unable to give such a guarantee, the Persians suggested that the Barzanis settle in the region of Mount Alvand near Hamadan to the west of the Kurdish region. Mulla Mustafa agreed but Shaikh Ahmad turned down the suggestion. General Homayuni visited Ahmad who told him the Barzanis would return to their homelands by force in the spring. Homayuni told Ahmad the Barzanis had three choices: they could leave immediately for Iraq, surrender their arms

or fight. The General left Naqadeh warning that he would return in two days to occupy the village. He did so but the Kurds were gone.

In the severe Kurdish winter, when most of the mountain passes are blocked, the fugitive Kurds began their trek homewards. A fortnight after they left Naqadeh the Persian Government ordered the Harki tribe to attack the Barzanis. On 14 March the Persian army launched its offensive against them and in clashes, nearly every day, suffered greater losses than they inflicted. The Persian air force did what it could to destroy the Barzanis as they clung to the Persian side of the mountain frontier with Iraq. But the desire to cross into Iraq and their homeland grew stronger among them. Shaikh Ahmad received a written guarantee from the Iraqi Government and led the bulk of his people across the frontier early in April. Despite Mulla Mustafa's warning three ex-officers of the Iraqi army crossed with the Shaikh. They were tried and hanged. Mulla Mustafa and a party of followers returned to Barzan by another route by the middle of April.

By May Mulla Mustafa had decided he could not safely remain in Iraq. Unable to expect kind treatment in Persia or Turkey he decided to make his way to Russia. Something between 500 and 800 followers elected to go with him. They covered the 220 miles between Barzan and the Soviet frontier in fourteen days, travelling, except for sick and wounded, on foot. Soon after Barzani entered Persia on his way north the Persian army ordered the Shikak tribe to attack him. They evaded the order. Two Persian battalions were sent to block the Barzanis' path in the Qotur valley. All the Barzanis slipped through unnoticed. Shah Muhammed Reza ordered the army to do battle and threatened commanders who did not attack with court martial. But the Persian army lost track of the Barzanis. When they were found and the army attacked, army casualties were heavy. On 10 June a vanguard of twenty-three Barzanis crossed the Araxes which forms the frontier between Persia and the Soviet Union. When, on 18 June, Persian units reached the

river, all the Kurds had successfully crossed into refuge. They did not return until 1958 after Abd al-Karim Qasim had proclaimed an Iraqi republic of Arabs and Kurds.

The Mahabad Republic demonstrated that a Kurdish Government could rule effectively. Qazi Muhammad's régime, although not enthusiastically supported by every Kurd, was nevertheless respected and obeyed. Unlike the Tabriz régime it came to its end by the statesmanly decision of its leader acting in response to pressure from outside, not within, his State.

The nationalist spirit is still alive in Persian Kurdistan but has gone underground. So it is extremely difficult to estimate how well organised it now is. The last publicised trouble between Teheran and Kurds was in 1950 when the Persian army and air force attacked the Javanrudi tribe near the Iraq frontier some twenty-five miles north-west of Kermanshah. The attack followed the refusal of the Javanrudi to surrender arms they had acquired, probably from venal Persian army officials.

The Kurds are seen from Teheran as part of the larger problem of the tribes stretching from the far north to the Persian Gulf. The enthusiasm and expectations of the Iraqi Kurds in the early days of the Qasim régime prompted the Persian Government to begin a series of flattering gestures to the Kurds in Persia. A Pan-Iranian Kurdish Party was set up under the nominal leadership of Ihsan Nuri, the leader of the 1927–30 fight against the Turks. This party, devoted to the protection of the Iranian heritage from Semitic and Turkic threats, is an unconvincing propaganda device for strengthening Kurdish support for Teheran by appealing to the Kurds' sense of cultural heritage.

Certainly much goodwill does exist towards Persia among authentic Kurdish nationalists. There is a feeling that the Persians are less hostile towards the Kurdish identity than are the Turks or Arabs. The Kurds are glad to acknowledge their cousinage with the Persians.

IX. THE PRESENT WAR IN IRAQ

THE sources of the present struggle in Iraq can be traced to the failure to establish a Kurdish Government in the Mosul *vilayet* after the first World War. But the immediate causes date from the Iraqi revolution of 14 July 1958 when a group of army officers overthrew the Hashemite monarchy and the Government of Nuri Said. Abd al-Kerim Qasim quickly emerged as the dominant figure among the revolutionary leaders, eclipsing, among others, Abd-as-Salam Arif who soon found himself in prison.

The monarchy was replaced by a 'republic of Arabs and Kurds' and Iraq withdrew from the Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO), the American-inspired defence pact. Its full members were thus reduced to Turkey, Persia and Pakistan, besides Great Britain. The former Baghdad Pact had been feared by Kurdish nationalists who saw in it the threat of anti-Kurdish co-operation between Baghdad, Ankara and Teheran. So Iraq's departure from it encouraged Kurdish enthusiasm for the new régime.

Indeed the first months of the revolution were a time of unparalleled amity between Kurds and Arabs and Baghdad and the Kurdish north of Iraq. Iraqis, with only a few exceptions, were caught up in a flood of expectation: the revolution was felt to be the dawn of a wonderful new day. In this heady atmosphere Mulla Mustafa Barzani and those hundreds of Kurds who had followed him into exile returned from Russia at Qasim's invitation. Barzani had lived comfortably in Russia with the rank of a general in the Soviet army, educating himself, among other places, at the Moscow Institute of Languages. But neither he nor his followers, some of whom had married Russian girls, had become in Soviet eyes reliable friends of Russia. The twelve years away from Kurdistan, living as guests of a great world power, technically far in advance of their own poor country,

did not weaken their loyalty to their Kurdish identity and cause.

Barzani was well received by Qasim. He was given a large state-owned motor car and a comfortable cash allowance was begun. Barzani declared his loyalty to the régime. He decried 'imperialism' and praised the 'anti-colonial struggle'. He called for the Kurds of Turkey and Persia to receive the same rights enjoyed by their fellow nationals in Iraq. The year moved to its end with the Kurds expecting great things from life under the republic. The Arabs also expected much from the Sole Leader, as Qasim had come to be known.

But the Sole Leader was without a political party and soon had to subordinate good intentions for Iraq to efforts to keep himself in power, between the two great factions of Arab nationalists and Communist; the Baath were not yet important. Qasim played the other two against one another, and sought to insure army loyalty by lavishing governmental money and power.

Under the monarchy Communist ideals and promises had made a wide appeal among educated young Kurds, who saw in it the hope of an end to Kurdish social and economic backwardness. Russia alone, despite disappointments, showed some sympathy for Kurdish aspirations, though always subordinating them to Soviet interests and Iraqi Communism. From 1956 until the 14 July revolution the Communists supported specifically Kurdish 'progressive' organisations for youth, students and women.

At the time of the revolution, then, a sizeable part of the Kurdish intelligentsia were Communists or Communist sympathisers. These Leftists were, however, divided between supporters of the regular Iraqi Communist party and Kurdish nationalist Communists. As the regular Communists withdrew support for the separate Kurdish 'progressive' bodies, the nationalist Leftists began to look less and less happily on their revolutionary comrades.

In March 1959 the Leftists with Qasim's support organised a major rally to take place in Mosul. The military

commander of the province, Brigadier Abd al-Wahab Shawwaf, an Arab nationalist with Egyptian support, demanded that the meeting should not be held. When Qasim insisted Shawwaf revolted. The revolt was swiftly put down and Qasim introduced a National Resistance Force to destroy the anti-Left, nationalist opposition. This militia, armed by the Government, was licensed to massacre political opponents. Mulla Mustafa did not take part in the Mosul or Kirkuk massacres and appears to have felt sympathetic to Shawwaf. But other, Leftist, Kurds did take part.

The Qasim régime did little or nothing substantially to improve economic and social conditions among the Kurds or Arabs. Those projects which were completed under Qasim, such as the Darband-i Khan dam near Sulaimani, had been planned by Nuri Said's Government. But Qasim did allow the Kurdish nationalists to voice their expectations through a Kurdish Press with a liberty unknown in previous Iraqi régimes or at any time in any of the other countries where the Kurds live. The chief voice of the nationalists was *Khebat*, the organ of the Kurdistan Democratic Party in Iraq. By the end of 1959 Qasim had decided to license political parties and the KDP was to be one of them.

The urban nationalists in Baghdad, Mosul, Kirkuk and Sulaimani had long thought in terms of a 'democratic' future and looked for the collapse of the tribal and feudal order which they feared and despised. The degree and kind of 'democracy' varied but the influence of 'Marxist' thought among the intelligentsia was assisted by their knowing how little influence they had among the great rural body of the Kurdish people. The country people were and still are conservative and largely attached to the feudal order by their social and economic condition, their view of the world and their emotional loyalties. In the towns the 'progressive' intelligentsia could expect support from the middle class and part of the lower artisan class. A Kurdish proletariat scarcely exists. The Kurds working in the oil industry and

the Lur porters of Baghdad do not make up a politically formidable working class.

So the urban 'progressive' could best expect to come to power through the State, in Government administration, the army and State-controlled industry. The dearth of Kurdish capitalists of any great resources meant inevitably that the State was to be the source of economic development. Iraq's principal source of income, the oil revenues, already went to the State.

Few of the Kurdish nationalists had the grounding in economic and social studies which characterise the leadership of Marxist or other socialist parties in the West. The fine points of Marxist theory were little understood and had slight relevance to society in Iraq. But revolutionary drive and the sense of an opposition between 'progressives', concerned with social justice tied to economic development, and 'feudalists' concerned with preserving their vested interests was expressed through formulae derived from Marxism which seemed to illuminate the circumstances in which the Kurdish intelligentsia struggled.

The opportunism of the Communists, benefiting from Qasim's favours, combined with the brutal excesses of the terror they practised in 1959, caused many Leftist Kurds to turn away from them. At the same time another element began to be influential in the KDP, pragmatic nationalists, moderate in their political intentions if confused in their social plans. They brought to the party the expectation of precious military support which the detribalised intelligentsia could not supply. Mulla Mustafa was the greatest member of this faction. Others included Saiyid Jalal Talabani who has since served as the chief Kurdish emissary in Baghdad, Cairo and Europe as well as the successful military commander of the rebel front around Sulaimani. The voice of such people as this became more powerful as bitterness towards the regular Communists and their fellow-travellers increased. The depth of disillusionment among some Kurds was great; a former Communist told

me in 1960 that he would like to see those to whom he had looked for leadership tied up, soaked in petrol and set afire. for their treachery. But a 'Marxist' stamp remained firmly on the KDP platform when it came up for licensing. At first the party described itself as Marxist-Leninist. But this description was dropped before Qasim would allow the party recognition in January 1960.

The fight in the party between the fellow-travellers and the anti-Communists ended with the latter in control. While these events were taking place in Baghdad and the cities of Iraqi Kurdistan, life in the countryside went on much as before. In May 1959 Mulla Mustafa once again clashed with the Zibari and Baradost tribes and as usual won, capturing many rifles and other light weapons. Although Barzani was president of the KDP its actual leader in Baghdad was Ibrahim Ahmad, a middle-aged lawyer, who was secretary-general and editor of *Khebat*. From the beginning of 1960 until October the party continued to declare publicly its loyalty to Qasim; the private thoughts of the membership were something else. By October the KDP had fallen out of favour and Salih Yusufi, a member of the central committee, was arrested.

In January 1961 another lawyer and central committee member, Omar Mustafa, known as The Tank (Dababa) because of his enormous physical strength, was arrested. In February Ibrahim Ahmad criticised in *Khebat* a speech by Qasim slanted in favour of Arab nationalism at the expense of the Kurds. A warrant was soon out for his arrest and he went underground. By the middle of March five members of the central committee were under arrest. On 21 March, the Kurdish national feast, Nauruz, Jalal Talabani gave a nationalist speech at a celebration in Baghdad. The speech was published in *Khebat* the following day and the military governor of Baghdad, General Abdi, closed down the paper. At the end of May the party had ceased to function publicly. Those leaders who were not in jail were keeping the apparatus going underground.

In October 1960 Mulla Mustafa had gone to Russia. What exactly he hoped to get and what he may have been promised is still not known outside the KDP. In February he had returned and in Beirut told the newspaper *An-Nahdah* that he wanted the realisation of legitimate Kurdish aspirations without effecting the existence and integrity of the Iraqi republic. The Iraqi Kurdish nationalists have always insisted on this point. During Mulla Mustafa's absence General Abdi took back the house and car the Government had provided and stopped the monthly allowance. Barzani went to Barzan.

By the spring of 1961 Qasim was hated and scorned throughout Iraq. Although some people felt he still meant well he was universally cursed for wasting time and money, achieving nothing more than his continuance in power. Since the previous autumn the régime had turned against the Communists without increasing its popularity with the Arab nationalists. In June Qasim rallied Arab support somewhat by declaring Iraq's militant intention of asserting her claim to the territory of Kuwait which had just received independence from Britain. Shaikh Ahmad Barzani was one of the hundreds of leaders who declared loyalty to Qasim and the republic on this occasion. He was to do so again many times.

In his homeland, Mulla Mustafa had become aware of a growing threat from the surrounding tribes, the old enemies of the Barzanis. In June a delegation of Kurdish nationalist sought to petition Qasim for an end to many grievances including attempts to settle Arabs on land used by Kurdish tribes and the Government price for the tobacco crop. Qasim refused to see the delegation. Following this rebuff Abbas Mahmand Agha formed a military coalition among tribes centred in Sulaimani. This provoked the sending of an army column from Kirkuk. The column was stopped at Darband-i Khan by Abbas Mahmand's forces. This appears to have been the first major military confrontation

between the Government and the Kurds in what became the war which still continues.

Qasim, occupied with the Kuwait crisis, left the situation in Sulaimani to cool down. But elsewhere fighting broke out in early July between Kurds and Government forces. Some two thousand Goyan tribesmen from Syria were later reported to have joined the fight led by Jamil Rashid near Zakho in the north-west of Iraqi Kurdistan. The same source for this report, General Mahmud Razzaq of the Iraqi army, also reported that 1,500 Mangur Kurds from Persia crossed the frontier to fight alongside their Iraqi brethren. Mulla Mustafa joined the fighting in the middle of July by attacking the Zibari and Baradost as they were preparing to strike with Government support against the Barzanis. Mulla Mustafa repeated his numerous victories over these enemies and the survivors fled to Turkey. Barzani is reported to have killed 350, wounded 1,000 and captured 600 weapons. At this stage the revolt was still in the old style of tribal risings against the Government. In August the populations of Halabja and Chamchemal turned out the gendarmerie. In the north, Aqrah, Amadiyah, Dohuk and Zakho were seized by the rebels who included the Assyrians.

At the end of August, Mulla Mustafa, having driven his tribal enemies from the field and much strengthened his position, sent an ultimatum to Qasim demanding an end to the 'period of transition' (that is, to Qasim's exclusive rule), recognition of Kurdish autonomy and the restoration of democratic liberties. Qasim's reply came at the end of the first week in September when the Iraqi army began its first major offensive in the present war by attacking Barzan.

At this time the Kurdistan Democratic Party did not actively participate in the war. The tribal rebels in the north were attacked by the Iraqi air force which assaulted Amadiyah, Dohuk and Aqrah with rockets. The first public admission in Baghdad that there was trouble in Kurdistan came on 15 September when the Press and radio

referred to the grave situation in the north. Both media repeated that Qasim had received thousands of telegrams and letters of support from Arab, Kurdish and Turcoman leaders. The trouble was described as a movement of imperialists and their agents. Air attacks, continuing in the north-west, spread to Puzhdar, Sharizur and Darband-i Khan to the south and east.

On 23 September Qasim gave a Press conference which lasted five hours. He blamed the British and Americans for the Kurdish rebellion and threatened to close the British embassy which he alleged had spent £400,000 to incite the rebels. But he declared that within a day or two the remnants of the revolt would be completely destroyed. The KDP had been dissolved, he said, because it failed to comply with the law requiring an annual meeting. He denounced the party as a tool of the British. As for Mulla Mustafa, he was either dead or had fled outside Iraq. None of this was in fact true.

In October officials of the city administration in Arbil were forbidden to wear Kurdish dress. In the same month the Khoshnaw tribe from the Arbil area and the Hamavand, who live in the mountains between Kirkuk and Sulaimani, joined the Government attack on the Barzanis. Again Mulla Mustafa defeated his opponents and captured more weapons.

By 23 November the Iraqi army had strengthened its position in Sulaimani province sufficiently to permit Qasim to open in person the dam at Darband-i Khan. By that time the overall pattern of warfare had disclosed itself. The struggle has been a partisan war. The Kurds have not attempted to hold any important towns although they have raided many. Instead they have sought to isolate Government garrisons while protecting their own bases. From the first month of the war a steady stream of Kurds deserted the Iraqi army and gendarmerie taking their weapons with them. Baghdad could only rely on its Arab units and these have proved inferior fighters to the Kurds. The

Arabs are at several disadvantages including the unfamiliarity of the mountainous country and weather. Except in a very few engagements, the army has come off worse in its encounters with the Kurds.

Many of the tribes which at first were neutral or sympathetic to the Government have now sided with the rebels. Nationalists estimate that by the end of 1963 the number of Kurds fighting on the Government side was three to four thousand. These anti-nationalist tribal forces were subsidised with money, arms and supplies by the Baghdad Government.

The Government inflicted its heaviest casualties by air attacks. The Iraqi air force is equipped with British and Soviet jet bombers and fighters. In the first year of war some 500 villages were destroyed by air attack. The number was more recently reported by nationalists to have risen to about one thousand. The air force has lost a few planes and helicopters by rebel fire but the nationalists had no aircraft or anti-aircraft weapons. Like the ground forces, the air force has been unable to strike against rebel military targets with any great success. Instead planes have been used to destroy crops, villages and flocks and to terrorise non-combatant populations including women and children. The rebels reported that already in the first winter 80,000 people had been made homeless.

Efforts to have the International Red Cross assist the victims of these attacks have been frustrated. The International Red Cross can only act upon the invitation of the society in the country concerned. The Iraqi Red Crescent Society refused to make such an invitation. Ilyushin bombers continued to rain napalm bombs while Mig and Hunter fighters strafed and bombarded with rockets.

In November 1961 relations between Qasim and the Soviet Union improved when Russia vetoed Kuwait's admission to the United Nations. The Baghdad Government ordered that no unfavourable mention was to be made of the Soviet Union in the Iraqi press. The Russians stopped

attacking Qasim in propaganda and the Communists moderated their call for a peaceful settlement of the unpopular war against the Kurds.

Sporadic encounters took place throughout the winter but both sides had to wait to resume full-scale fighting until the spring thaw when mountain passes were again passable. Early in the new year tentative truce talks began between the Qasim régime and the Kurds. By the middle of March the talks had collapsed, and early in April heavy fighting began again. By the middle of the month a rebel battalion led by Isa Suwar had attacked an Iraqi army column killing eighty-one, wounding 133 and taking 221 prisoners. The rebel policy towards prisoners was calculated to contribute to the Iraqi soldiers' lack of enthusiasm for the war. Common soldiers were quickly released with a warning not to come back. Officers, however, were held. By the spring of 1962 Communist tactics had again changed and were taking advantage of the unsuccessful and expensive war, costing about twenty million pounds a year, to undermine Qasim. In the first week of May the Communists organised a huge demonstration in Baghdad demanding a peaceful settlement. A crowd of thousands gathered in the main street utside the Baghdad Hotel and were fired on by security forces. In the same week the rebels claimed they prevented 2,000 gendarmerie from relieving army troops in Penjwin near the Persian frontier, thus forcing the surrender of 1,300 soldiers.

Late in April the Assyrians in their villages north of Mosul city were attacked by Kurdish tribesmen in the government's pay. Led by Zubair Mahmud Agha, some 700 Zibari, each receiving eighteen pounds a month from Baghdad, established a reign of terror in villages between Mosul and Amadiya. The Iraqi air force bombed out the church and episcopal library at Amadiya which, were then looted by the Zibaris. The orphanage next to the church was also attacked.

Then in the spring of 1962 the most important new factor entered the pattern of Kurdish resistance. The Kurdistan

Democratic Party actively joined the fight and took over military direction of the Sulaimani front. The party created a military and political organisation which it extended throughout the southern Kurdish area. The KDP set out to become in the Kurdish war what the FLN had been in the Algerian revolt against France.

Like all the Kurds fighting Baghdad, the party regards Mulla Mustafa as the senior and presiding Kurdish leader. But there are disagreements between Barzani and the party which he nominally heads. They have not so far become grave or violent. Their danger lies more in the future. Mulla Mustafa sees no need for a highly organised political party as the vehicle of government in Kurdistan. He seems to favour government by an enlightened oligarchy, the feudal order reformed, as it were by a kind of Kurdish Whig party. Ibrahim Ahmad, the KDP secretary-general, believes in a pattern of government, now familiar in the emergent nations, of one-party rule, neutralist in foreign affairs and 'progressive' rather than 'socialist'. David Adamson reported in the *Sunday Telegraph*, 29 December 1962, that Ibrahim Ahmad said in regard to one party rule in Kurdistan, 'The only other party here is the Communist party and they are fighting with Qasim against us.'

Jalal Talabani has explained the differences between the party and Mulla Mustafa this way: 'Of course Mulla Mustafa is our great leader. We cannot do without him and he cannot do without us. It is very like the differences between Gandhi and the Indian Congress Party.' The confidence in the party's future role implicit in this statement is representative of the party's mood and expectations.

Between the spring and autumn of 1962 the KDP organised itself with thoroughness in the rebel area. Even the smallest unit of the Kurdish Liberation Army has its political instructor. If food is scarce for civilians, the KDP troops are well fed. The party has executed fifty alleged traitors and police spies in Sulaimani city and smaller

numbers in Kirkuk and Arbil. The influence of the party has grown as military reorganisation of the tribal forces, has become more and more widespread. The officer cadre of the Liberation Army is well supplied by former officers of the Iraqi army. But Barzani remains the supreme commander and all rebels claim that his orders are given prompt obedience.

Throughout the summer and autumn of 1962 fighting went on. The Iraqi air force continued to blast houses, flocks, crops and travellers by road, and the rebels to ambush supply columns and raid military posts. The nationalists remained masters of the mountainous areas where motor transport and tanks could not go. They were also effective in the lowlands, striking as far west as the Tigris and terrorising garrisons in the cities of Sulaimani, Arbil and Kirkuk with night commando raids. Many of the civilian country population had found temporary homes, like the rebel army, in the mountain caves in which Kurdistan abounds.

Barzani and the KDP levied taxes in money and kind which, when not given freely from patriotism, were rendered promptly from fear. Supplies were smuggled in from Turkey and Persia where the Kurds included many sympathetic to the struggle in Iraq. But the rebels avoided any action or statement which would provoke the Ankara or Teheran régimes to act against them. Instead they have insisted that their fight is only concerned with the fate of the Iraqi Kurds in relation to the Government in Baghdad. Fortunately for the Kurds neither Turkey nor Persia had much love of the Qasim régime and showed a perfectly 'correct' attitude towards the problem, acknowledging that it was solely a matter of internal concern to the Iraqi republic. When Kurds, mostly Baradost and Zibari, fled from Iraq to Turkey they were allowed refuge. Persian policy was much the same. Despite advances in transport and communications the rigour of the long mountain frontier Persia and Turkey have with Iraq makes impossible its close control and Kurds have continued to cross it in and out of Iraq.

By the autumn of 1962 the war had congealed. The Iraqi army gave up trying to conquer the rebels and was content to hold what it had—the principal towns. At the end of August the Kurds had blown up an Iraqi Petroleum Company pipeline to show they could make trouble for the oil interests if they wished. In fact the rebels have refrained from any serious attacks on either I.P.C. installations or personnel. But two English members of the I.P.C. staff in the north were kidnapped by Barzanis and held for several weeks. This was a publicity effort and the two Englishmen were very well treated and presented with gifts of valuable carpets when they were released. The war had by now attracted sufficient attention in the news-rooms of the West to start a trickle of journalists travelling discreetly to and from Kurdistan by various routes. In New York the nationalists applied for permission to open an office from which to lobby for their cause. When the Governments of Iraq, Persia and Turkey complained, the State Department explained that New York, because of the United Nations, was in a special position. The American Government could no more properly refuse the Kurds than it had the Algerians during their struggle against France.

By December morale was very low in the Iraqi army and civilian discontent with the unsuccessful war had also increased. Qasim's gesture toward Kuwait had produced no solid result. The Baath party, despite hundreds of arrests, had vastly increased in influence. There were anti-Qasim demonstrations in Baghdad that ended with more blood spilling. At the very end of the year the Baghdad Press reported for the sixth time that Mulla Mustafa was dead. The rebels, now much more confident, had changed their policy towards prisoners and were not releasing the 2,000 they held. On 10 January Qasim announced a new ultimatum calling on the rebels to surrender and at the same time ordering the army to desist from anything more than holding its positions. On 18 January Shaikh Ahmad once more declared his loyalty to Qasim.

Three Fridays later, on 8 February, Abd as-Salam Arif led a *coup d'état* which ended the régime established by the 1958 revolution. On Saturday Qasim was shot. The new Government was dominated by the Baath party, a pan-Arab nationalist movement, secular and 'socialist' in outlook, whose National Guard took savage measures against Communists and other 'Leftists'.

A truce had in effect been declared by Qasim in January and was continued by the Baath régime. The new Government and the Kurds began to negotiate, prisoners were exchanged and the economic blockade Qasim imposed on the North was lifted. The chief Kurdish emissary in Baghdad, Jalal Talabani, told the Press on 1 March that he was optimistic about the outcome of the talks. He said that he did not consider the Kurdish revolution ended although the Government had promised verbally to recognise Kurdish demands for autonomy. The Kurds now wanted a written guarantee. On 5 March negotiations resumed at a village near Sulaimani. Talabani again represented the rebels. On 10 March the secret National Council of the Revolution announced that it had agreed to Kurdish rights on the basis of decentralisation. The next day the Iraqi vice-president, Salih as-Saadi, the now exiled leader of the radical wing of the Baath in Iraq, stated that the Kurdish provinces would receive their own administration in conformity with the rights of people to choose their future and as a result of an objective analysis of the situation in Iraq.

But the talks went on without reaching final agreement. On 8 March the Baath party in Syria had seized power and, with Qasim gone in Iraq, a mood of inter-Arab reconciliation swept through Baghdad and Damascus. Egypt, Iraq and Syria met in Cairo and made a tripartite agreement in April to form a federation.

Jalal Talabani went to Egypt and saw President Nasir, who told Talabani that if the Arabs believed in the justice of their own national aspirations, then morally they must also admit the Kurdish right to self-rule. Talabani on his side

assures Nasir that an autonomous Kurdistan in some future enlarged United Arab Republic would support the UAR. Talabani returned to Iraq without any practical support from Nasir and the Egyptian leader appeared to feel that the Kurds were equally limited in any advantages they might offer him.

At the end of April the Kurds presented to the Baghdad Government their latest terms for a settlement. These were that Iraq was to be a unified state comprised of two nationalities, Arabs and Kurds, with equal rights; the vice-president of Iraq was to be a Kurd elected by the Kurds, the assistant Chief of Staff was to be a Kurd. Kurdistan was to be an area comprising the provinces of Sulaimani, Kirkuk, Arbil and the Kurdish districts of Mosul and Diyala provinces, administered by its own executive council and with its own legislative council. Kurds were to belong to the National Council of the Revolution (then the Government of Iraq) in proportion to the percentage of Kurds in the Iraqi population. Oil revenues and customs dues were to be shared on the same proportional basis, and Kurds were to be appointed in this ratio to portfolios in the central Government, the civil service and places for students. More precisely, the Kurds have demanded 30 per cent of oil revenues, but this figure does not necessarily apply to the other demands.

The authority of the Kurdish administration in the proposed region would cover justice, internal affairs, education, health, agriculture, tobacco, municipalities, rural affairs, labour and social affairs, development and tourism. Military movement in the region by the Iraqi army would be made only with the consent of the Kurdish administration. Election to the legislative council, from which the administrative council would derive, would be direct, free and secret.

The Kurds proposed that the central Government would retain control over foreign affairs, defence, oil affairs,

customs, coining, communications, transport, questions of citizenship, the national budget and atomic energy.

Early in June Talabani and some other members of the Kurdish delegation in Baghdad returned in a discouraged mood to the north for consultations with Mulla Mustafa. It has been reported that on 9 June the remaining delegates in Baghdad were told by Baath officials that the Government had agreed to the Kurdish terms and that the delegates were now going to be taken to Baghdad airport to be flown to Kurdistan. Instead they were taken to Camp Rashid, the major military base near Baghdad, and imprisoned. That day the National Council of the Revolutionary Command issued a proclamation putting all Kurdistan under military rule. A full army and air force offensive was launched at the same time.

Neither side had made a great effort to improve its position during the negotiations but there had been continuous jockeying for advantage. The Kurds went on strengthening their position by collecting taxes and arms, firing on Iraqi army units intruding in rebel-held areas and intimidating those Kurds who did not actively support the rebellion. In the first week in June a series of skirmishes took place in which Iraqi army soldiers and members of the pro-Baghdad Kurdish 'Sala ad-Din Cavalry' were killed and wounded.

During the truce a rebel court had tried and executed four people in Khanaqin, the site of an important oil pipeline installation. Elsewhere Omar Mustafa Dababa had set up court and was trying political cases. The rebels instructed the population to deal only with rebel officials and not with those of the Baghdad Government. All of this was the pretext given by the Baath régime for renewing the war.,

In fact the Government in Baghdad, like previous Arab nationalists, could not afford to grant the Kurdish demands. To do so would have been dangerously to compromise itself. The Baath were committed to advancing Arab interests, not moderating them. And, though the war was

now in its second year, the Baath and the Iraqi army felt that a campaign more vigorously prosecuted than Qasim's could impose a military solution.

Barzani's followers, tribal and party, were characterised as feudalists, reactionaries and allies of 'imperialism' and Zionism. They were also accused of harbouring Communists who had fled from 'justice' at the hands of the National Guard. In fact the KDP imprisoned a number of Communists including a member of the CP central committee who had fled to the North.

The Baath offered a £100,000 reward for Mulla Mustafa —dead or alive—and launched an offensive that far surpassed any of Qasim's in ferocity and thoroughness. Iraqi air and ground forces were co-ordinated in the systematic reduction of Kurdish villages and encampments. Christian missionaries later reported in London that Baghdad forces had surrounded a number of villages, penning the populations inside, and then destroyed the villages house by house using artillery and aircraft. It was also reported that on 13 June an Iraqi unit used a shield of Kurdish women and children to cover its advance. When rebels opened fire after the non-combatants had passed, Iraqi tanks ran down the women and children. Many thousands of Kurds were transported from their homes in the Kirkuk area to farther south in Iraq.

The Baath Government in Syria announced its support of the Iraqi Government and sent five thousand Syrian troops to join the fight. The Republican Government of Yemen also declared its readiness to help in the war against the Kurds.

Ten days after the resumption of the war four ministers resigned from the Iraqi cabinet in protest. They included two Kurds, the Minister for Religious Trusts, Brigadier Fuad Arif, and the Minister of Agriculture, Baba Ali, as well as the Minister of Industry, Major General Najib Taleb, and the Minister for Municipalities, Major General Mahmud Khattah.

The Baath massacre of the Communists and destruction of their organisation in Iraq alienated Soviet goodwill towards Iraq and at the end of June the Mongolian People's Republic requested the Secretary General of the United Nations, U Thant, to include 'The policy of genocide carried out by the Iraqi Government against the Kurdish people' in the agenda of the coming session of the General Assembly. On 9 July the Soviet Foreign Minister, Andrei Gromyko, handed the Iraqi ambassador in Moscow an official protest against the conduct of the war. Two days later the Soviet delegate to the United Nations Economic Social and Cultural Council proposed the inclusion of 'Iraqi genocide' on the council's agenda. The proposal was voted down by the Western members. The American delegate, Jonathan Bingham, explained that his vote against the proposal was not based on the matter's merit but on the unsuitability of the council to deal with the question at that time.

On 30 June the rebels announced that in the first two weeks of the renewed war 167 villages were bombed or strafed, 634 civilians killed and 1,309 wounded. Among the casualties 137 were children under the age of three. On 2 July the Iraqi Defence Minister, Lieutenant General Saleh Mahdi Ammash said in a Press interview: 'I do not consider this a war. It is a national picnic by the Army assisted by civilians to put an end to these gangs.'

The next day the Kurds kidnapped German Iraqi Petroleum Company technicians and released them a fortnight later in Persia. Throughout the summer the Baath Government spoke of plans for the development of the Kurdish area when the insurgents were no longer a problem. On 14 July Premier Ahmad Hassan al Bakr said ten million pounds had been allocated to rehabilitate the area 'destroyed by Barzani'.

In Israel a group of Jews from Kurdistan appealed to the Government to raise its voice against the war on the Kurds. The Israeli Foreign Ministry replied that the matter had not come up for discussion at the ministry. Despite the

apparent mutual advantages in some kind of Israeli–Kurdish alliance none appears to have been sought by the Kurds. Like the Persians and the Turks the Kurds regard the Palestine question as an Arab affair which does not directly concern them. They have been careful not to antagonise the Arab world further by seeking help from the Israelis. Such a connection has nevertheless been alleged by the Baghdad Government.

During July the chief military concern of the Iraqi forces was to seize the mountain pass near Rawandiz which forms a natural frontier between the northern and southern Kurdish fronts. After intense fighting the Iraqi forces succeeded in gaining control of the Rawandiz Gorge but this was apparently the only significant strategic victory by Iraqi forces in the summer of 1963. The Kurds insist that the other victories claimed by Baghdad meant little as the rebels did not choose to commit themselves to the defence of these strategically unimportant places. Certainly the Kurds did lose considerable ground which, however, they recovered before the end of the year.

During the early summer Jalal Talabani went to Europe as Mulla Mustafa's emissary to organise nationalist activities among Kurdish students and *émigrés* and to win support for the Kurdish cause. At the same time the Mongolian delegation to the UN had sounded out the Afro-Asian bloc and decided that the resolution condemning the Iraqi Government for its treatment of the Kurds would not succeed in the General Assembly. On 26 July the Mongolians had made known that they would not press for the inclusion of their resolution on the agenda of the Assembly in September. The Kurdish representatives in Europe were informed indirectly of this but persisted in their preparations for the UN and sent a delegation to New York when the Assembly opened in September.

Kurdish diplomacy was no more successful in its protest to the British Government against the sale of military aircraft to the Baath Government. Indeed the British made

plain their hostility to the Kurdish movement when they refused Talabani a visa for the United Kingdom. This action was part of a British-sponsored 'gentlemen's agreement' among the CENTO powers to check the Kurdish nationalist activities. After the Baath revolution of February 1963 relations had much improved between Baghdad and the CENTO powers. By the autumn of 1963 Turkish army officers were once more in Mosul, this time as observers of the Baghdad campaign against the Kurds. Persian army officers were also reported in Northern Iraq and on 8 October the Cairo newspaper *Al-Ahram* said that Turkish and Persian aircraft were being permitted by the Iraqi Government to reconnoitre Kurdish positions inside Iraq.

When the United States granted Talabani a visa to go to New York the Foreign Office reversed its position and made available to him a visa for the United Kingdom which he did not use. Towards the end of the year the British refused a visa to Ibrahim Ahmad, Secretary General of the KDP. Ibrahim Ahmad had no difficulty travelling elsewhere in Europe on his mission to organise support for the nationalist movement.

In Kurdistan the war went on, with the fighting as bitter as ever. Western military observers were reported to estimate that between June and October the total number of casualties was about 1,500 with much the greater part among Government forces. Late in the year certain army officers, disaffected from the Baath régime, made approaches to the rebels. The nationalists refused to deal with anyone but the Government.

Contact between the rebels and Baghdad had not wholly broken off and the Iraqi Government was reported ready to grant much of the rebel demands. But the Baath were not prepared to recognise as a Kurdish autonomous area the actual area of Iraqi Kurdistan. The Government proposed that the Kurdish area comprise the provinces of Sulaimani and Arbil with Chamchemal and Dohuk but without Khanaqin and the oil rich province of Kirkuk. Negotiations

languished while fighting continued into the winter. The Kurds won back much of what they had lost during the summer and by the New Year had occupied towns they had not held since the first weeks of the war in 1961.

On 28 October the International League for the Rights of Man, a body recognised by the United Nations, condemned the Iraqi Government for its 'mass slaughter' and 'virtual genocide'. In particular the League attacked the Government's refusal to allow the International Red Cross to aid the Kurds. This refusal also prevented the Red Cross from inspecting conditions in the camps where the Kurds kept their prisoners. David Adamson reported at the end of the year that these prisoners were unable to send messages to their families because the Iraqi Government would not acknowledge that the Kurds held prisoners of war.

The army had grown increasingly discontented with the Baath Government. The National Guard had been allowed to grow into a paramilitary body of wide-ranging powers. The radical wing of the Baath, under Salih as-Saadi, threatened to push the Government into a doctrinaire socialism, while the economy of the country was even more unhealthy than usual. And the military attempt to reduce the Kurds was still unsuccessful. So on 18 November the army overthrew the Government under circumstances strange even by the standards of recent history. The international leadership of the Baath party, including its founder Michel Aflaq, were in Baghdad in effect directing the Government of Iraq. The army placed this leadership, Syrian in nationality, in 'protective custody' and installed their military Government while 5,000 Syrian troops in the Mosul area did nothing.

Fighting in Kurdistan fell off after the *coup* but did not stop entirely. The Kurds continued to push their advantages and as late as the first week in January occupied the town of Halabja near the Persian frontier. By the end of that month serious negotiations were once more under way at Rania in Kurdistan. Those attending the talks included Shaukat

Akrawi, a Kurd who had just returned from Cairo and brought with him Nasir's views on achieving a peaceful settlement. Any success the Egyptian leader might have in bringing about such a settlement would enhance his position in Iraq which had already been strengthened by the anti-Baath revolt.

On 10 February 1964 Barzani and President Arif announced a cease-fire. Arif recognised the national right of 'our Kurdish brethren within the framework of the Iraqi nation'. All prisoners on both sides were to be released as quickly as possible. All army units returned to their bases. Those Kurds who had been imprisoned or dismissed were to be released and restored to their positions in Government service. Brigadier Abd al-Kerim Farhan, the Minister of Guidance, announced plans for television and radio services in the Kurdish language.

A week after the cease-fire the Military Governor General of Iraq, General Rashid Muslih, announced that a committee had been set up to rehabilitate the North and unlimited amounts of money would be available to do this.

In these first days of the cease-fire no mention was made in official statements of the Kurdistan Democratic Party or its best-known officers, Ibrahim Ahmad and Jalal Talabani. The only Kurdish leader mentioned was the party's nominal president, Mulla Mustafa, and he was not referred to in this capacity. But by the time of the cease-fire the KDP had gone far towards effecting a revolution in Iraqi Kurdistan.

From the start of its whole-hearted particiption in the rebellion in the summer of 1962, the KDP had combined organising resistance to Baghdad with revolutionising the Kurdish political and social order. This process was accelerated in 1963 after the cease-fire following Qasim's downfall. A number of Kurds who had more or less lain low in Baghdad went to the North at that time, bringing with them the skills and outlook of the Iraqi governmental *élite*. Among them were some seventy army officers including a

brigadier. If they did not actually join the party they served it.

The rebel forces were systematically transformed from tribal groupings into five military battalions. Military ranks and shoulder flashes were introduced. A military 'academy' was set up under a former commander of King Faisal's Royal Guard. All the cadets were members of the party.

In civil organisation as well the KDP proceeded to establish itself as the *de facto* authority. A party-run civil administration was begun with village councils and larger local authorities, a judicial system dealing with criminal and civil cases, several small hospitals and everywhere agencies for political indoctrination. With or without the consent of Baghdad the party was intent on creating a modern Kurdish Government.

The policy of this Government is to be that of the KDP. Although determined on a one-party centralised Government with a Leftist ideology, the party is not Communist. The Communists are its proven enemies. In practical intentions the party appears to be no more radical than the Shah of Persia with his reforms. The revolution in Iraqi Kurdistan is concerned not so much with the creations of 'Socialism' but with the final transfer of political and social power from the feudal and tribal leaders to an urbanised leadership grounded in the middle class.

The strongest resistance this revolution has met comes from Mulla Mustafa. At the end of 1963 his 3,000 to 5,000 warriors were the only sizeable part of the resistance forces, totalling about 20,000, still organised in tribal units. He has also denied certain assistance to the KDP to prevent it spreading its authority in his area of influence. But at the time of the cease-fire no break was known to have taken place between Barzani and the party.

POSTSCRIPT

In the weeks following the cease-fire Baghdad issued communiqués announcing the release of prisoners, the desequestration of property and in general suggesting a return to peace and the rehabilitation of the rebels. Barzani continued to be the only leader mentioned and the Kurdistan Democratic Party was totally ignored.

The Government's determination to suppress knowledge of the actual conditions in the North was illustrated at the end of February when a party of foreign correspondents were taken by the Government to Barzani's headquarters at Rania. Whatever the régime may have expected, Barzani's interview was embarrassing to it. He said the rebels had not laid down their arms and were ready to resume the war. He added that there were secret written agreements with the Government as well as the publicly known cease-fire terms. Jalal Talabani was also present and talked about the aims and organisation of the KDP.

One correspondent accurately reported what Barzani and Talabani had said and was thereupon expelled from Iraq. In the week following the interview Baghdad radio broadcast that Barzani had instructed the rebels to lay down their arms and return home. It quoted him as saying he had been mistranslated or misunderstood and there were no secret agreements. The rebels denounced the broadcasts. The Kurdish delegation which had gone to Baghdad to negotiate remained idle. In the North there were minor incidents.

At the end of April a new provisional constitution was promulgated replacing that of 1958 which had described Iraq as a republic of Arabs and Kurds. The new constitution specified that the Iraqi people, by implication including the Kurds, were part of the Arab nation.

Meanwhile the KDP underwent a crisis. It was caused at least in part by Barzani's new political position as the

Kurdish leader exclusively recognised by the Government. It was reported that Ibrahim Ahmad had resigned as Party Secretary in a move to conciliate Barzani and the KDP. Jalal Talabani was offered that position but declined and suggested, as a way of widening support for the office, that it be shared among three members.

Barzani emerged from the crisis much strengthened politically among the Kurds. In consultation with the KDP Political Bureau he sent six notes to the Government demanding that negotiations for autonomy begin and a parliamentary Government be instituted in Iraq.

The notes were left unanswered and the Government proceeded to turn Iraq into a one-party state. On 18 June, following a reshuffle of the cabinet, Prime Minister Taher Yehia announced that henceforth only one political party would be licensed in Iraq. This party had been earlier described by the Minister of the Interior, Rashid Musleh, as a unified Arab political movement.

In the meantime the position of the Government, if not of Marshal Arif personally, was greatly strengthened after the meetings at the opening of the Aswan dam project to which he and Nikita Krushchev, among other heads of government, were invited. In Egypt the Iraqi Government was reconciled to the Soviet Union, which promised extensive assistance, including unconditional military aid. The Russian presence in Iraq promised soon to be as large as it had been under Qasim. The Egyptians, as part of planned gradual unification, also promised military help and began training personnel for the Iraqi airforce.

Nasir and Khrushchev told the Iraqi President they regarded the Kurdish problem as an internal matter for Iraq to deal with without foreign intervention. But they both urged that the Kurds be given some kind of autonomy. The hopes inspired among the rebels by Nasir were reflected in the remarks of the rebel delegate in Cairo, Shawkat Akrawi. He told Eric Rouleau of *Le Monde* (24 May) 'We believe that the Arab nation has given birth to two

outstanding personalities: the Prophet Muhammad, fourteen centuries ago, and today, President Nasir'.

Akrawi said that the terms of the cease-fire had not been met—prisoners were still held by the Government, the *josh* had not been disbanded and Arab nationalist officials were still in office in the North. He expected the Baghdad Government to start a new military campaign soon.

Marshal Arif put his Government's attitude decisively to Rouleau three weeks later (*Le Monde* 13 June). The President of Iraq said: 'The Iraqi Kurds are Muslims like their Arab fellow citizens. We respect their right to speak their own language. The majority of Government officials in the North are of Kurdish origin. What more do they want? . . . Their leader is wholly in agreement with me. Here, read these letters sent to me by Mulla Mustafa Barzani, who continually assures us of his loyalty. As to the members of the Kurdistan Democratic Party around Barzani, they are warmongers, spies and agents of imperialism. Barzani is seeking, like us, to suppress the party.'

Such were the circumstances of the Kurds in Iraq when this account went to press.

Marshal Arif has so far avoided a renewal of war while conceding nothing to the Kurdish nationalists. The inclusion of one Kurd in the new cabinet, Massud Muhammad as Minister of State, was an empty gesture.

It is apparent that Mulla Mustafa expects more than he has obtained as yet from the Government. But what he expects is not known. To retain his position of pre-eminence among the Kurds he must continue the struggle for Kurdish aspiration, if necessary by a return to war.

The KDP, too, cannot long accept the present armed truce. The Party's revolutionary ardour may have been eclipsed by Barzani but it certainly has not been extinguished. More powerful, more widely supported and better organised than any previous nationalist association, the Party will not easily give up the authority it has won in large parts of Kurdistan. On its side, the Government in

Baghdad cannot allow its rule in the North to be seriously questioned by the still-armed rebels.

One thing might make the present situation acceptable among the rebels, a belief that it was a stage on the way to the realisation of a grand political solution, and that by avoiding further conflict now the Kurds would facilitate the absorption of Iraq into a larger Arab entity, in which Nasir's influence would secure for them the status of an autonomous province. But this is mere speculation. All that can be said for certain is that after three years of war the Kurdish nationalists remain as far as ever from the constitutional position in Iraq for which they have fought.

22 June, 1964

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The bitter war which began in 1961 between the Kurds of northern Iraq and the Iraqi army is only the latest in a series of struggles for autonomy by this ancient people. There are Kurds also in Turkey, Syria, Iran and the U.S.S.R.; they number upwards of six million in all, and like many minorities their sense of nationhood has only been strengthened by centuries of division and alien rule. Should the remarkable effectiveness of the Iraqi Kurds' guerilla tactics win them even limited autonomy, it would be a clear incitement to Kurdish nationalist wars in the surrounding countries. This probability, and the significance of Arab reaction when faced with the dilemma of a rival nationalism, give great interest and international importance to the problem of the Kurds in Kurdistan.

Derk Kinnane first encountered the Kurdish question while in Iraq as a lecturer at Baghdad University. He has visited Iraqi Kurdistan and keeps in close touch with events there and among Kurds elsewhere.

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