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THE KURDISTAN FILE

The Kurdish Institute at Brussels

Kurdish Foundation — Free University Brussels
(U.L.B.)

Institut kurde de Paris

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The KURDISH INSTITUTE AT BRUSSELS (formerly Têkoser), is a social and cultural organisation. It is independent from all political parties. It was founded in 1978 and is recognized and subsidized by the Ministry of the French Community in Belgium.

The Kurdish Institute pursues a double aim. On the one hand it helps Kurds living in Belgium to integrate themselves in the Belgian society, while honouring their cultural identity. On the other hand, it informs the Belgian and European public opinion amongst other about the Kurds' history and culture.

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**AT THE OCCASION OF THE 40th ANNIVERSARY
OF THE RIGHTS OF MAN**

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WHY THIS PUBLICATION?

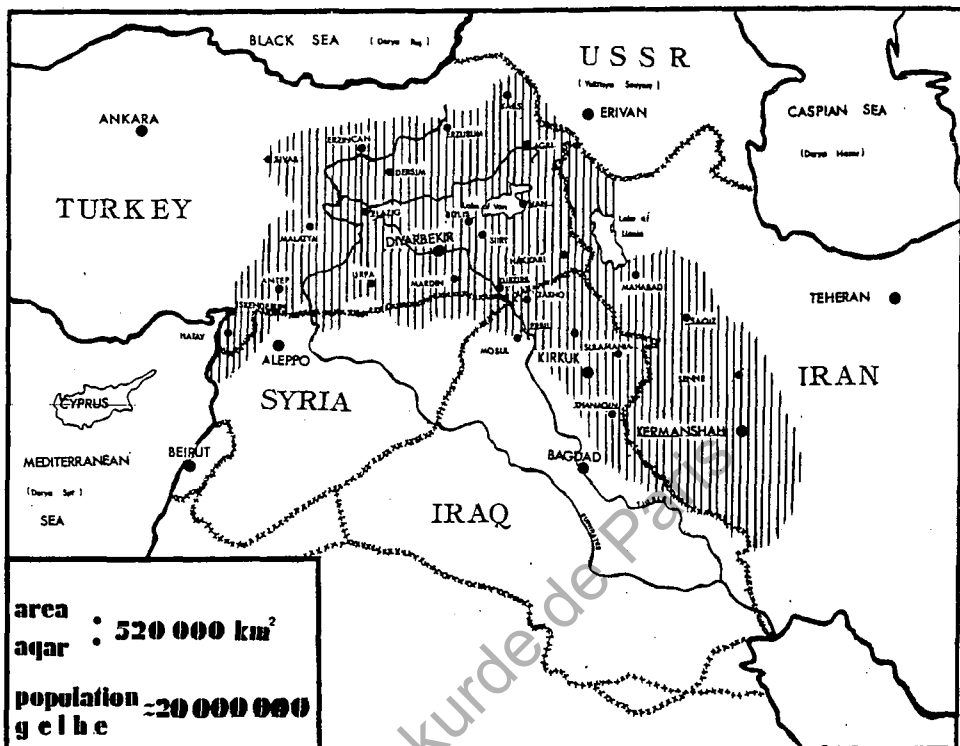
The goal of this publication is not to judge the Kurdish political parties, nor to analyze their actions and strategies, nor to propose a solution for the Kurdish problem.

It is simply to be considered as an instrument of information on the general plight of the Kurdish people and an appeal for solidarity to all democratic forces.

To obtain the maximum impact, this book is published in three languages: French, Dutch and English. We are convinced that only with objective information a just cause can be defended.

WHO ARE THE KURDS?

As the history and culture of the Kurds is little known in the West, we will first try to present all the elements which define the Kurds as a people: the geographical location of Kurdistan, the people, their language, their religion, ... Then we will present a historic overview and a brief outline of the present situation.



KURDISTAN

Area: 500,000 km² (10 times the size of Belgium)

Population: 25 million, of which 20 million live inside Kurdistan and 5 million in dispersion (in Europe: 500,000).

Language: Kurdish. Indo-European language, belonging to the group of north-western Iranian languages.

Religion: 95% are Sunnite Muslims.

KURDISTAN: GEOGRAPHY

Kurdistan (Land of the Kurds) is a vast mountainous territory with an area of 500,000 km². Shaped in the form of a crescent, it expands between the Black Sea and the steppes of Mesopotamia on the one hand and the Anti-Taurus and the Iranian tableland on the other:

From east to west:

From Lake Daryacheh ye Reza'iyeh in Iran right up to the regions around Maras and Malatya in Turkey down to the Kurdish Mountain in north-eastern Syria and the Gulf of Alexandrette in the Mediterranean Sea.

From north to south:

From the Transcaucasian border of the Soviet Union to the Persian Gulf.

Since the First World War, at the end of which the French and the British divided the Middle East amongst themselves, Kurdistan has been split up over four countries: Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria.

There are also several Kurdish settlements in the USSR, scattered over the republics Transcaucasia and Central Asia. The majority lives in Azerbaijan and Armenia. The rest lives in Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kirghiz and Turkmen. As such, there is no Kurdish territory - an extension of Kurdistan - in the USSR.

POPULATION

As there exist no official vital statistics on the exact number of Kurds, we can only advance an approximate number: 25 million, of which 20 million live in Kurdistan and 5 million in dispersion. Following is their partition:

In Kurdistan:

Turkish Kurdistan: 10 million (24% of the Turkish population)
Iranian Kurdistan: 6 million (16%)
Iraqi Kurdistan: 3 million (27%)
Syrian Kurdistan: 800,000 (9%)

In dispersion:

Capitals and their environment: Istanbul, Ankara, Teheran, Baghdad, Damascus, Aleppo: 4 million
USSR: 350,000
Israel: 150,000
Lebanon: 100,000
Jordan, U.A.E., Afghanistan, Somalia, ... several tens of thousand.
Western countries: Europe, United States, Canada, Australia, 600,000

In all Kurdish regions other peoples live: Armenians, Arameans, Assyrians, Arabs, Turks, Chaldeans, ...

LANGUAGE

Kurdish is an Indo-European language. It belongs to the north-western group of Iranian languages. According to the specialists N. Marr, O. Mann, V. Minorsky, Wikander, the Kurdish language retains its specific unity in spite of the existence of different dialects. According to Minorsky, it distinguishes itself clearly from Persian. J. Morgan specifies that the Kurdish language does not belong to the Persian dialects, but is "a special language, sister to Persian, and perhaps older than it". It is very different from Turkish Altaic and Semite Arabic.

RELIGION

95% of all Kurds are Sunni Muslims. There exists an Alawite minority (Shi'ite sect) and 50,000 Yezidis. The religion of the latter is a mixture of Zoroastrian and Muslim beliefs. The ancient Kurdish religion was Zoroastrianism.

Father Thomas Bois, who studied religious and cultural life in Kurdistan from nearby, wrote in the magazine "Proche-Orient Chrétien" from Amman, Jordan: "The Kurds are an important part (...) but little known in the Muslim world, in which they are embedded between Shi'ite Iran, more or less laicized Turkey, and the Sunni Arabs of Iraq and Syria. One can already expect that at this crossroads of Islam, the Kurds' religion risks to have some peculiar characteristics, which distinguish it from its neighbours and largely remain ignored".

Before Islam: Zoroastrianism

The Medes, the last ancestors of the Kurds, were Mazdeans. Their great god was called Ahura Muzd "The perfect creator" or "The wise lord". Next to this god, there were some lesser gods: Mithra, the god of the sun, of contracts, of redemption; and Anahita, goddess



Yezidi sanctuary in Iraqi Kurdistan.

of waters and procreation. The Medes worshipped all nature's forces. The magicians (in Kurdish: Pîr "elder or sage") made blood sacrifices to the gods and maintained the holy fire in a chamber on top of the temple. These magicians recognized two principles: the Good "Hurmuzd" and the Evil "Ehremen".

Zerdecht "Zoroaster" reformed this Mazdean religion. He was born in the country of Mukri, in the middle of Iranian Kurdistan, in 660 B.C. His preachings were lyrical works preserved in the holy book Zend-Avesta.

The importance of Zoroastrism resides in its principle of dualism (the Good and the Evil). This religion bloomed widely and spread even into India. The Jewish, Christian and Muslim religions were all three inspired by this dualism¹.

Zoroaster rejected several Mazdean principles, such as the blood sacrifices and the intoxicating beverage Haoma during religious ceremonies. However, he retained the principle of fire (in Kurdish: Agir) "symbol of justice and the battle against evil forces"². Even today, during the Kurdish national feast-day Newroz "the new day" - which is often celebrated clandestinely - the Kurds dance and sing around a fire. This celebration however is not religious. It symbolizes the people's struggle against oppression.

Zoroaster's basic principle was the active and eternal struggle against Evil, the choice of every human between light and darkness, the Good and the Evil (Hurmuzd and Ehremen) and an absolute respect for all forms of life, including animals and plants. His morals are summarized in the triad: "good thoughts, good words, good works"³.

¹ Paul du Breuil, *Zarathoustra et la transfiguration du monde*, Payot, 1978.

² Duchesne-Guillenin, *Religions de l'Orient Ancien*, collection Je sais, je crois, n°141, 1957, p. 103.

³ Ghirshman, R., *L'Iran des origines à l'Islam*, Payot 1951, p. 142.

Paul du Breuil

ZARATHOUSTRA

**et la
transfiguration du monde**



Payot

In his book "Appel aux Vivants", the chapter on Zarathustra (Zoroaster), Editions du Seuil, 1979, Roger Garaudy writes:

"Halfway the second millennium B.C., the Indo-Iranian nomadic tribes, after having been chased from the north and later from the Siberian steppes by succeeding cold waves, split up into two branches. The first entered India through the passages of Hindu Kush, where they blended with the ancient civilisations of the Indus, and more to the south, of the Dravidian. The second branch settled on the tablelands of Afghanistan and Iran.

For a long time both developed simultaneously in spite of their being diametrically opposite: Zarathustra established the lineage of prophetic religions, whilst Hinduism showed the path to all mystics... This more than 3,000 years old history still nurtures our lives. And first, what was to become the greatest revolution of all between the seventh and sixth century: man's transition from nomadism to agriculture and sedentary herding. History posed its problems. The prophets presented their answers.

The birth of agriculture was not only an economic phenomenon, but also a moral and religious event. For the first time man was no longer simply subjected to nature: if he was still largely subordinate to the forces of the elements, he nevertheless began to manipulate them. However, the dangerous forces no longer came from nature alone. Roving nomadic tribes plundered fields and herds.

Zarathustra, the revolutionary, the prophet - perhaps the greatest of all times - responded to this double anguish resulting from the newly found freedom and that posed by the plundering nomads.

He remains the pioneer of all new life when man acts as responsible for creation. His works evolve around four basic principles:



Zurrosier

- a new vision of God (monotheistic and a source of greatness);
- a new vision of the world, conceived as a battle-field between man and all that opposes his humanisation;
- a new way to communicate with God as this is no longer done through rites or blood sacrifices but through meeting God in man himself if he lives piously his life;
- a new relationship with nature, respecting life both from animals and plants.

Garaudy adds: "According to Zarathustra life is an indivisible combat, internally (against our dark impulses) and externally (against the proponents of dark acts). This doctrine brings action with all its dimensions of innerness and effectiveness to the fore. Every man is simultaneously a warrior and a mystic".

Later, from 224 B.C. onwards, Zoroastrism became and remained the official religion of the Persians until the muslim conquests in 642 A.D.

Under Islam.

Under the Muslim empire and in different regions, Kurdish personalities erected multiple theological schools and mosques, from which many celebrated men of learning were to arise.

Father Thomas Bois says the following in the already cited magazine "Proche-Orient Chrétien": "One could cite and cite lists of theologians or jurists, historians, scientists who left their name and whose works are authoritative... The famous Cairo University (El-Azhar) always comprised Kurds in its professorial corps".

About the masses, observers all agree to say that the Kurd is not particularly devout. A Turkish proverb says: "A Kurd is only a Muslim when compared to an infidel (Christian)"!

N A T U R A L R E S O U R C E S

One of the reasons for the Kurdish oppression are the riches of Kurdistan's soil and subsoil: oil, mostly in Iraqi Kurdistan (the regions around Kirkuk and Mosul), coal, copper, iron, silver-bearing lead, chrome, magnesium, ... Immense forests and pastures allow stock breeding. Two large rivers, Tigris and Euphrates, are sources of sulphuric and pure water. Agriculture: cereals, tobacco, cotton, vegetables, fruits ...

E C O N O M I C A N D S O C I A L S I T U A T I O N

Notwithstanding these riches, the population's economic standard is extremely low, for the oppressing governments do not develop industry or culture. They use Kurdistan as a colony that has to supply the capital with a stock of natural resources. For example: the iron mined at Divrigi in Turkish Kurdistan is taken to the Turkish metallurgic industries on the Black Sea coast. In Iraqi Kurdistan the petrol only benefits the government and the Arabian part of Iraq.

Clearly, this economic situation does not improve social progress. Although the Kurdish community has changed a lot since the second half of the 20th century, and its feudal structures have diminished, its troubles remain. The "aghas", i.e. the landowners, are still very powerful, even though they no longer own as much land as before and in spite of the evolution of the poor peasants' mentality. Governments - and the Turkish in particular - are to a greater extent responsible for these feudal lords maintaining their power. They have even managed to win over some of them to stamp out the Kurdish movement¹.

¹ Martin van Bruinessen: *Agha, Shaikh and State, on the Social and Political Organization of Kurdistan*. University of Utrecht, The Netherlands, 1978.

Illiteracy is widespread, especially in Turkish Kurdistan where it amounts to 70%. In the rest of Turkey the level only attains 40%.

T H E C U L T U R A L S I T U A T I O N

The Kurds are probably the only people of over 20 million who, at the end of the 20th century, have no right to speak, read or write their own language.

In fact, the Kurdish language is only taught in the USSR and in a very limited way in Iraqi Kurdistan. Kurdish books, publications and music tapes are prohibited. The cultural repression is the strongest in Turkish Kurdistan. Not only is the use of the language forbidden, the Turkish government, basing itself on a decree issued by Ata-Türk on March 3rd, 1924, also officially declares all inhabitants of Turkey to be Turks! Up to this date no Turkish party in power - whether they be social democrats, liberals or fascists - has ever demanded the suppression of this clause. Moreover, in Turkey the Kurds are officially called "Mountain Turks" or "East Turks".

To top it all, not only is the Kurdish culture forbidden, but it is being presented as Turkish, even on an international plane! All observers know that the Kurdish folklore is very rich, but many folklore groups present Kurdish dances as being Turkish. Some years ago, the illustrious troop of Diyarbekir (capital of Turkish Kurdistan) received an international dance prize, of course for "Turkish" dances! Many Kurdish songs undergo the same fate. Kurdish lyrics are systematically translated into Turkish to the sound of Kurdish music. Many well known popular "Turkish" singers, such as Ruhi Su, Nesimi, ..., writers and film producers, such as Yachar Kemal and Yilmaz Güney, are Kurds. Also many active union and political militants are Kurds. It truly is a cultural genocide!

HISTORICAL SUMMARY

The origins of the Kurds.

For all the abundance of research on this subject, especially since the 19th century, none of it has been systematic and thorough. The reasons are manifold: the lagging of the Kurdish community on a social-economic level, the destruction of the writings on the Kurds by invaders, the suppression of any reference to the Kurdish civilization by the present-day governments, which is being described as Persian, Arabian or Turkish.

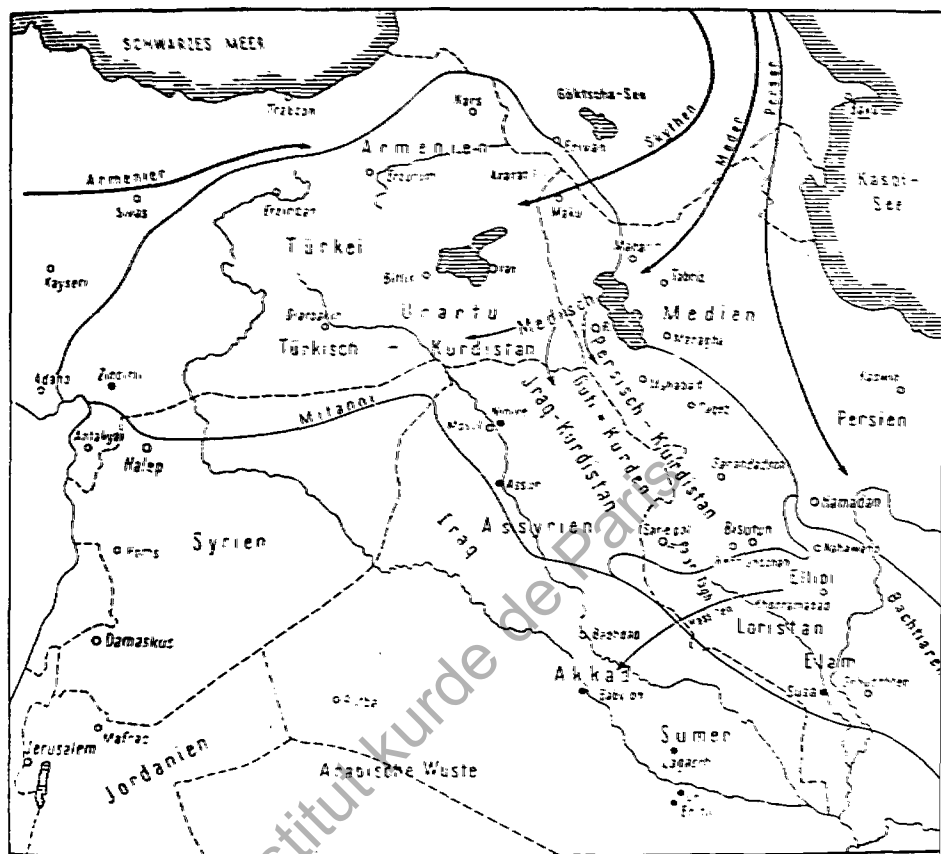
For many centuries B.C., the Kurds had different names: Kardaka, Corduennes, Gordiae, ... Xenophon, in the Anabasis (the retreat of the 10,000) called them "Kardoucs".

At the 20th International Convention of the Orientalists in Brussels in 1938, professor V. Minorsky expounded his theory on the origins of the Kurds: "In view of the historical and geographical facts, it is very likely that the Kurdish nation was formed by the amalgamation of two congeneric tribes, the Mardoï (Medes) and the Kyrtoï (Scythes), who spoke very similar Mede dialects. On the other hand, it is certain that in their expansion to the west, the Kurds incorporated several indigenous elements".

Antiquity: The Medes.

The last and best known ancestors are the Medes. They formed a very powerful and flourishing empire which lasted from the 7th until halfway the 6th century B.C.. They vanquished the powerful Assyrian empire and caused the fall of Ninive in 612 B.C.. The Persians succeeded them in 550 B.C..

After the fall of the Mede empire of which the centre was in Iranian Kurdistan, the Kurds failed to unite themselves. Under the different occupations their tribes lived an independent life in the mountains.



Egon von Eickstedt: Türken, Kurden und Iraner seit dem Altertum, Stuttgart, 1961.

The Middle-Ages: Different principalities.

In the Middle-Ages many tribes settled down under the influence of the Islam. Kurdistan became chequered with independent and flourishing principalities within the vast Moslem empire, which was unable to control them. The best known are:

10th century: the Cheddadites (founded in 951), the Hesenweyhides (959).

11th century: the Merwanides (990-1096).

11th - 12th centuries: the Eyyoubides, amongst whom was the famous Saladin, vanquisher of Richard Lionheart and the Crusades (1169-1250).

13th - 15th century: Conquests of the Mongolians, next the Turkomans. Once more the Kurds retreated into their mountains.

16th - 19th century: Under the Ottoman and Persian empires. The Turks occupied Kurdistan and Armenia from 1514 until 1536. From 1514 onwards most Kurdish principalities became protectorates of the Ottoman and Persian neighbours.

In 1639, after a series of ferocious wars, a Persian-Ottoman peace treaty divided Kurdistan into two large areas of influence.

The Kurdish national feeling deepened after this famous division. The separation led to a greater dependence on the exterior and the Kurds' discontent fermented their national movement during the 19th and 20th centuries.

Between the 16th and 19th century, the Kurdish princes could not assert themselves in the powerful Turkish and Persian empires. They were also hindered by the enclosures of the mountainous massifs and the rivalry between the Kurdish feudal lords.

Saladin Eyyoubide, Vanquisher of
the Crusades (1169-1250).



Under the three Muslim, Arab and Turkish empires, the Kurds often played a prominent political role. They produced princes, ministers, scientists, scholars, architects and musicologists.

19th century: The Kurdish Insurrections.

During the 19th century, the multinational empires were gradually being replaced by central states. The Kurds, like most peoples from the East and Europe, fought for their national rights.

Because of the incessant Turkish-Russian and Turkish-Persian wars on Kurdish soil and the awakening of the Kurdish national awareness, some fifty uprisings broke out all over Kurdistan between 1804 and 1878. Their most famous chiefs were Mohammed Pasha, the Princes Bedir Khan, Yezdan Cher, ... Between 1894 and 1896, the Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamid II, nicknamed "The Red Sultan", massacred tens of thousands Armenians using his Kurdish cavalry "Hamidiyyeh" and crushed their movement. These mercenaries were later used against the Kurds of Dersim and South Kurdistan, who revolted against the Sultan's tyranny, as well as against the Arab nationalists.

The Kurdish cultural movement flourished during the same period. In 1898 Bedir Kahn's princely family published the bilingual Kurdo-Turkish "Kurdistan". This newspaper emigrated first to Geneva, and later to Folkestone in Great Britain, to Constantinople (Istanbul) and to Cairo during the First World War.

20th Century: The Kurdish national movement until the First World War.

At the turn of the century, the Kurdish national movement gained greater prominence than in the previous century. It played an important role in the awakening of the national feeling amongst intellectuals and young Kurds. In 1908, Sheik Abdulkadir started the "Hetawî kurd" (The Kurdish Sun). However, in 1909 the Young

Turks banned all non-Turkish clubs, schools and publications. The directors were imprisoned or executed. In 1912 a group of Kurdish students founded the first well-structured Kurdish party "Hîvî" (Hope) and published the monthly "Roja Kurd" (The Kurdish Day). The founders were Omer, Kadri and Ekrem Djemil Pasha, Fuad Zade of Van, and Zeki Zade of Diyarbekir. The organisation had ramifications in several cities in Kurdistan. Its aim was to reform the Kurdish alphabet, to propagate nationalist ideas and education. Most of its members were mobilized for the First World War.

On the eve of the First World War, Turkey intended to use the Kurds to fight the Allies. The Khalif, Sultan Reshad, also wanted to absorb the Kurds in entirely Turkish regions through massive resettlements. Roughly 700.000 Kurds were massacred. They refused to support the Turkish government. Some of their leaders in Hama-wend and Sulaymaniyah invited the English to their territory, as they had decided to form a provisional Kurdish government, headed by Sheik Mehmed El-Berzendji.

During 1915-1916 the Turkish government massacred a million and a half Armenians.

In 1916, the Sykes-Picot agreement was concluded between France, Great Britain and Russia. It arranged the partitioning of the Middle East between England and France.

Several Kurdish political organisations arose after the First World War. The most important one, "Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti" (Organisation for the Reinstatement of Kurdistan) was founded by Ekrem Djemil Pasha, Djerdjis Zade and Fikri Gani Zade Reshad at Diyarbekir in 1918. They wanted the 14 Wilson principles on the rights of peoples to govern themselves applied. The organisation owned a printing office and published a newsletter called "Gazî" (The Call). It had more than 500 members at Diyarbekir and in several regions of Kurdistan. Eight or nine months later a section was started in Istanbul. Its founders were Molla Said Mikisli, Hamsa Motki and Halil Hayali. It published both "Jîn" (Life) and "Kurdistan".

On October 30, 1918, the Treaty of Moudros sealed the collapse of the Ottoman empire and confirmed the Allied victory. That same year the British Army occupied Kirkuk, the largest oil centre in Iraqi Kurdistan. However, they had to fall back to Sulaymaniyah under the pressure of the Turks. The British civil commissioner, Sir Arnold Wilson, saw to it that the Kurdish Sheik Mehmed El-Berzendji was appointed governor. Arab and Turkish civil servants were replaced by Kurds. British "counsellors" assisted them. The English favoured an "independent" Kurdistan under their control because of its petrol resources.

★ In 1919, as a result of Kurdish dissatisfaction, a British major was captured by Sheik Mehmed El-Berzendji. British reprisals followed and it took six weeks to restore order. Despite the gravity of the situation, Sir Arnold Wilson continued to believe in the necessity of giving the Kurds autonomy. However, according to him control should be stricter in the district of Sulaymaniyah, because of its geographical and strategic position and of the region's riches¹. The Kurds signed an agreement settling their differences with the Armenians that same year.

★ In 1920 at the Peace Conference, the Kurdish delegate, General Cherif Pasha defended the Kurds' cause. He had introduced two memorandums about the Kurdish claims, the first on 22 March 1919 and the second on 1 March 1920, together with a map of Kurdistan.

1920: The Sèvres Treaty, a historic date.

After the First World War the British and the French divided the Middle East among themselves. The former took Iraq, Jordan and Palestine, the latter Syria and Lebanon.

In 1920, the San Remo Conference confirmed the British mandate over Mesopotamia and Palestine. England

¹ Wilson, A., Mesopotamia, 1917-1920. Oxford 1931, p. 144.



General Cherif Pasha, Kurdish delegate at Sèvres, 1920.

kept Mosul, but guaranteed France 25% of its petrol production.

On 10 August 1920 The Sèvres (a Paris suburb) Treaty was signed by the League of Nations. It referred to the 14 points of the American President Wilson and to the "right of nations to dispose of themselves". The Ottoman Kurdistan was to become a national state. The regions under French rule, however, were to be excluded. And, obviously, there was not even a mention of the Kurdistan colonized by the Persian Empire (i.e. in Iran). This treaty, in spite of its imperfections and weak points and although it remained a dead letter, was a historic event for the Kurds. It was the only time that they were granted rights on the international scene.

1922: The Lausanne Treaty.

With the Lausanne Treaty from 1922, the Kurdish question was reduced to the rights of the Kurds in Turkey and the fate of Mosul. The Turkish representative, Ismet Pasha, claimed that "... the Kurds are in no way different from the Turks and while speaking different languages, these two nations form one entity from the point of view of race, religion and customs".

As to Mosul, the British included it in their mandate over Iraq. In 1922, sizable arab detachments commanded by Anglo-Hindu officers, transformed Mosul into an "Arabian" city.

It was therefore mainly because of the Turkish and British opposition that the Kurds received no rights, and not, as is often said, by their internal divisions. When the Arab, and later the African countries gained their independence, they were not ant better organized than the Kurds.

THE SITUATION IN EACH OF THE REGIONS IN KURDISTAN

TURKISH KURDISTAN

Mustapha Kemal, called Ata-Turk (Father of the Turks) and leader of the Young Turks, tried to win the Kurds' support to free Turkey of the crushing Allied occupation. He therefore held his first convention at Erzurum in Kurdistan in 1919. There it was decided to form a Turko-Kurdish army, led by Ata-Turk, to liberate the mainly Turkish territory from the Allied yoke. The fraternity between the Turks and Kurds was much publicized¹. The burden of this war fell mainly on the Kurdish forces, who also won the first decisive victories. However, as soon as Turkey gained its independence, the Turko-Kurdish alliance was cursed by the father-founder of Turkey. Slogans proclaimed the glory of the Turkish nation and were written everywhere, even in school books: "A Turk is worth the whole universe", "The Turkish nation is the most noble on Earth", ... Ata-Turk's Justice Minister, Mehmed Esat Bozkurt said: "All those who are not of pure Turkish origin have only one right in this country: to serve, to be a slave." The first Assembly which counted 72 Kurds was dissolved and in the next one, members were elected by cooptation.

On March 3, 1924 Ata-Turk issued a decree banning Kurdish schools, clubs and publications. The increased

¹ The Turkish magazine "Ikibin'e Dogru" (Towards the Year 2000) of August 30 - September 5, 1987 published for the first time the minutes of a meeting Ata-Turk had organized at the Izmit Palace in January 1923. He had invited the representatives of important Istanbul newspapers to explain the main propositions of the Republic. He declared that, according to the Constitution, autonomy would be granted to the provinces with Kurdish majorities. This document, which was kept secret for many years, was published by this magazine as it stood. It was also announced on the front page. But even before the edition was on sale, it was confiscated by the Turkish authorities.



Sheik Seïd, Revolt of 1925.

repression deepened the Kurds' discontent, resulting in several uprisings. The three bloodiest and most famous revolts were:

1925: The revolt of Sheik Seïd de Pîran. It spread to 14 provinces. Sheik Seïd was arrested in August 1925 and executed together with 48 nationalist chiefs.

1927-1930: The Agirî revolt (Mount Ararat), under the leadership of General Ihsan Nouri Pasha of Bitlis. After fierce fighting, the General escaped to Iran. In 1932 the Turkish government issued a law, whereby the Kurdistan territories in Turkey were divided into four zones. One of these was completely evacuated and out of bounds for sanitary, material, cultural, political, strategic and public order reasons.

This law also broke up the Kurds' social system. Furthermore, the authority of their leaders, their organisms and their institutions was abolished. All those spoke a native tongue different from Turkish were also forbidden to form new villages or districts and employee, artisan or other associations. The Minister of the Interior was empowered by the Council of Ministers to disperse these groups, even the existing ones.

The law was passed, notwithstanding international protests. From that day on, the Kurds were officially known as the "Mountain Turks" or the "East Turks".

1937-1938: The Dersim revolt, led by Seyid Riza. Dersim was the worst hit by a new law aimed at assimilating the Kurds. They took a tough stand against the deportation orders and an important movement was set up. The Turkish armed forces bombed the region in May 1937. A few months later the Minister of the Interior Djelal Bey, declared in Parliament that there was no longer a Kurdish problem and that the "bandits had been civilized by force...".

The Turkish government realized that alone it would be unable to control the Kurds. Therefore, it signed the Saadabad Treaty (suburbs of Teheran) with Iran and





Seyid Riza, Dersim revolt, 1937-1938

Iraq on 8 July 1937. The aim of this "good neighbour treaty" was to take concerted action against the Kurds.

The situation after the Second World War.

On 24 February 1955 Turkey signed the Baghdad Treaty with Iraq. It was to be the foundation of a regional military agreement (Middle East Treaty Organisation, METO) to which Great Britain, Pakistan and Iran acceded. The joint action against the Kurds by these governments was one of the principle reasons for signing these two treaties.

The widespread persecutions continued. In 1961 the armed conflict of the Iraqi Kurds began. They were actively supported by the Turkish Kurds, who organized the supply lines and provided shelter for women and children. This aid in turn strengthened the Kurdish movement in Turkey. The government, faced with the extent, was forced to change its position.

In the sixties the Kurdish movement was not only influenced by the Iraqi uprising, but also by the progressive wind blowing through the whole of Turkey and by the world-wide awakening of political conscience. Several organisations and parties were responsible for this new climate. The Turkish Workers' Party (T.I.P.) and the Confederation of Revolutionary Workers' Unions (D.I.S.K.) were amongst the most prominent.

In 1969 the D.D.K.O. (Cultural Revolutionary Centres of the East) was founded first in Istanbul and Ankara, and later in the Kurdish cities. It was the first Kurdish organisation of the new type. It played a capital role in awakening both class and national conscience. However, that same year American trained counter-insurgency commandos under the command of the Minister of the Interior started combing out the Kurdish countryside. Allegedly, they were searching for fire-arms. These operations were often conducted following a same pat-

tern¹. "The village is besieged by armoured cars under the cover of helicopters. The villagers are rounded up and taken to camps previously set up. There they are ordered to give up their weapons. If a peasant declares to have none, he is beaten and forced to crawl and run. The military order men and women to undress and more often than not rape the women. Suspects are hanged by their feet on the gallows. Sometimes ropes are attached to the men's genitals and the women are forced to walk them in the village. Often people succumb to these tortures."

In October 1970, the main leaders of the D.D.K.O. were arrested. On 12 March 1971 the Army overthrew the Demirel government and a state of siege was imposed. However, under heavy pressure from the masses and international protests, general elections were held in October 1973. The social-democrats under Bulent Ecevit came to power. A limited liberalisation allowed several Kurdish parties to develop semi-clandestine activities until the eighties. They were supported by a large part of the population. These parties were: Democratic Party of Kurdistan, Workers' Party of Kurdistan (D.D.K.D.), Socialist Party of Turkish Kurdistan and Workers' Party of Kurdistan (P.K.K.). There were also political and cultural organisations, such as National Liberation of Kurdistan (K.U.K.), Kawa, Têkochine, ...

12 September 1980: The fateful coup d'état.

Alas, on September 12, 1980, the infamous military fascist coup took place. It was set up by Turkish generals in collaboration with the C.I.A.. It was announced in Washington even before it was known in Ankara! All Kurdish organizations were immediately dismantled. Their militants were either savagely tortured or killed. Some of them were able to escape abroad. A manhunt began all over Turkey, but especially in Kurdistan. The most elementary liberties were suppressed.

¹ Les Kurdes et le Kurdistan, p. 132.



Because of the struggles of the Kurdish and Turkish peoples and under international pressure (Amnesty International, International Human Rights Federation, International Association of Democratic Lawyers, European Unions and European Council missions), the Turkish government was forced to concede some small liberties. A civil government was established in 1983 which was presided over by Turgut Özal, but it co-existed with the president of the republic, General Evren, and the military! Certain political parties were being tolerated, as well as some press freedom. Turkey, eager to become a member of the E.E.C., wants to project a democratic image. However, the real liberties of the population, the intellectuals and the politicians are continually being thwarted. Torture continues (cfr. Amnesty International's latest report) and the economic situation keeps deteriorating because of Turgut Özal's extreme liberal political course.

1983-1986: The Turkish army bombs Iraqi Kurdistan.

The Kurdish people, however, did not reap any of the benefits of these cosmetic reforms. Martial law, man-hunts, collective torture, deportations, poverty, the ban on wearing Kurdish dress or reading and writing Kurdish, continue.

The Workers' Party of Kurdistan (PKK) regularly harasses gendarme and military installations. The government has armed and pays several thousand recruits, called "village protectors", mostly in the remote areas where the tribal structures are still strong. In doing so, it wants to pitch Kurd against Kurd and avoids being directly implicated in the conflict! The majority of the Kurdish population, terrorised by the army and living in utmost poverty, does not dare to organize itself.

The Turkish army did not limit itself to harassing the Kurds in Turkey and penetrated four times into Iraqi Kurdistan. Some years earlier both countries had signed a co-operation agreement to "co-ordinate their

plans for controlling Kurdish minorities in the two countries".

The first time occurred on May 26, 1983. To pursue P.K.K. militants, who had fled into Iraqi Kurdistan, the special forces of the gendarmerie and the Turkish air force bombed the Kurdish villages in Iraq. 15,000 Turkish soldiers, strengthened by the Iraqi army, penetrated 40 kilometres into Iraq. This action resulted in 20 to 30,000 Kurdish victims, most of whom were women, children and old men.

The second time was in October 1984. To pursue the fighters of the PKK, Turkish commandos launched "Operation Sun". This time the army crossed the Kurdish border without bombing villages.

The third time, on August 15, 1986, the Turkish army bombed the Kurdish villages in Iraq once again and special forces penetrated Iraqi territory. The stated aim was to pursue the PKK people. Unstated, but admitted by the pro-government Turkish press, the real goal was recapturing the two Kurdish petrol cities of Mosul and Kirkuk inside Iraq. In fact, Turkey has never been able to digest the annexation of these two cities to Iraq by the British after the first world war. The area also counts important Turkish minorities. In expansionistic Turkish circles, there was even talk of establishing a Turkish Republic of Kirkuk if Iraq lost the war against Iran. Let us not forget the same happened in Cyprus! Iran, however, refused to co-operate with this plan and there was even loud protest from within Turkey itself.

The fourth bombardment occurred on March 4, 1987. Approximately 30 Turkish military planes penetrated 70 kilometres into the Kurdish airspace over Iraq, dropping napalm bombs and killing about 170 civilians.

Deportations.

In the first months of 1987, about 50,000 Kurds were deported from more than 234 villages in the Dersim region to Anatolia. Furthermore, the way was paved to

evacuate a further 275 villages in the Erzincan, Erzurum and Kars districts.

Hunger Strikes.

In May 1987 over 2,000 Kurdish and Turkish prisoners started a hunger strike to protest their inhuman treatment and torture in several prisons in Turkey. On August 17, the justice minister announced that since the coup of September 12, 1980 1244 prisoners died in jail.

Amnesty International stated in its report of June 15, 1987 that torture continued in Turkey.

A special governor for Kurdistan.

To please the European Community, the Turkish government lifted martial law on July 19, 1987 in all provinces of Turkey. This included the ones in Kurdistan. However, on the same day eight Kurdish provinces, namely Diyarbakir, Hekari, Mardin, Siirt, Tunceli (Dersim), Elazig, Bingol and Van, were placed under the authority of a "super-governor", Hayri Kozakcioglu. Since then, he has wielded all the arbitrary power of the commanders of martial law. On August 19, 1987 the government sent a special combat corps, led by a super-commander. In addition to these Kurdish provinces, Istanbul also remains under a state of emergency. The military courts continue to sentence political prisoners detained before martial law was lifted.

Anticipated elections.

Anticipated elections took place in Turkey on November 29, 1987. The prime winner was of course the Motherland Party (ANAP) of prime minister Turgut Özal. The two other largest parties were Erdal İnönü's Social



İsmail Beşikçi, Turkish sociologist, in his cell.

Democratic Popular Party (SHP) with 24.7% of the votes and Syleyman Demiral's Liberal Party of the Right Way (19% of the votes).

During the electoral campaign the two general-secretaries of the United Communist Party, Haydar Kutlu and Nigar Sargin, refugees in Europe for seven years, announced their intention to legalize the new party formed by the Turkish Communist Party and the Turkish Workers' Party. They also wanted to take part in the elections. They returned to Turkey on November 16, 1987, accompanied by 30 European Members of Parliament and journalists. The moment they arrived at the airport of Ankara, they were arrested and tortured! They are still in prison today.

The Besikçi case.

Born in 1939, İsmail Besikçi is a Turkish sociologist like no other. Because of a scientific paper presented in 1969 in which he proved the existence of the Kurdish people he was expelled from university and imprisoned in the Diyarbakir jail in June 1971. He was set free in 1974 and imprisoned again in 1978. He was condemned to 25 years of imprisonment and transported to about ten different Turkish jails. He was set free on May 25, 1987 under a recent law allowing the release of prisoners who have served 40% of their sentence. In all, Besikçi spent ten years and ten months in jail. He was not involved in politics. His only crime was his assertion on scientific grounds that the Kurdish people existed. However, his release would not have been possible without large scale international pressure. Amnesty International had named him "prisoner of the month" on several occasions. He was also made honorary member of the Kurdish Institute in Paris. Two Australian M.P.s and a German Member of the European Parliament nominated him for the next Nobel Peace Prize. As he left prison, he declared that he would never renounce his ideas and would always defend them.

Turkey's double game.

Since Ata-Turk, Turkey which calls itself laic and European, has been playing a dangerous double game. Bent on becoming a full member of the European Community at whatever price, it submitted its application to the EEC on April 14, 1987 and the next day to the West European Union (WEU). It already belongs to NATO, the European Council, to OECD and signed the European Convention on Human Rights and the Helsinki Accords. Europe hesitates in spite of Turkey being a strategically and militarily indispensable ally. Its disastrous economic situation does not encourage an alliance in this field. Furthermore, despite its apparent laic character, Turkey is profoundly Asian and Muslim. As such it flirts with its Muslim neighbours where oil abounds. It also stoutly supports the Islamic World League "Rabitat". The Turkish government is exposed by its own contradictions. It allows a little freedom to please Europe and the United States. However, it cannot go against its ingrained disease: the long militarist and fascist tradition.

As to the repression of the Kurdish population in whatever form and by whatever government, the area remains a military yard. Two thirds of the Turkish army, i.e. 300,000 men, are stationed there and are supported by NATO troops. Armed with the most sophisticated weapons, they lay down the law.

If one considers that even today the Turks in office deny the Armenian genocide, which the European Parliament recognized in Strasbourg on June, 18 1987 and that they rage against any parliamentarian who had the courage to denounce it (see addendum), one cannot be surprised by their denial of the Kurdish genocide, past and present.

An incident in the Turkish parliament.

On January 19, 1988 the social democrat representative for Istanbul, but of Kurdish origin, Mehmet Ali E-

ren, asked the Turkish parliament to solve the Kurdish issue. This question was not on the agenda.

This unexpected intervention dropped like a bomb-shell. Many rightwingers and members belonging to Eren's party cried out in protest and banged on their benches. The event was front page news for several days. The chair of the SHP party, Erdal İnönü tried to defend his member by "rectifying" Mr Eren's intervention the next day. He said that Eren had expressed himself badly and that instead of speaking of a national minority, he should have said that in Turkey there were "different native tongues".

The U.S. regards the Turkish Kurds as a national minority.

On February 11, 1988 the American State Department emphasized in its annual report on human rights in the world that it was imperative for Turkey to recognize the rights of the Kurdish national minority. this provoked the wrath of the Turkish government and press. Furthermore, the report affirms the use of torture in Turkey.

This proves that the repression of the Kurds is such that even the U.S., a staunch ally of the Turks, can no longer deny the repression. The European Parliament had already recognized the "Kurdish factor" in its report on the Armenian genocide of June 18, 1987.

The Diyarbekir prison: a historic strike.

On February 9, 1988, the inmates of the most sinister of Turkish prisons at Diyarbekir began a hunger strike to the finish after having made their 30 demands known. The most important were:

- to be allowed to speak Kurdish with their visitors;
- improvement of the living conditions in the prison;
- abolishment of prison uniforms;
- an end to military court verdicts and a revision of the trials;



- obtaining the status of political prisoner.

Outside, the "Support Committee for the strikers' families" organized a press conference in Kurdish plus a silent demonstration. Also two Kurdish M.P.s of the social democratic SHP, Adnan Ekmen, representative for Mardin, and Mehmed Alinak, representative for Kars, went on hunger strike. The party chair considered they went too far and summoned them back to Ankara.

This historic action forced prime minister Turgut Özal on February 18, 1988 to allow Kurdish to be spoken and to promise improvements in the prisons. However, as the Turkish government did not solve their real problems, the prisoners continued their hunger strike. They were supported by those in other prisons...

The establishment of a new front.

At a press conference held in the I.P.C. in Brussels on June 10, 1988 eight Kurdish organizations announced the establishment of a new front. Its name is Tevger, Liberation movement of Kurdistan. The organizers declared their intention to fight in Turkish Kurdistan itself. First they would politically educate the population and then organize armed resistance.

These organizations are:

- Ala Riegart (The liberation flag);
- KUK-SE (National Liberation of Kurdistan);
- Parhêz (Party of the National Power of Kurdistan);
- PDK-RN (Democratic Party of Kurdistan - National organization);
- PPKK (Progressive Workers' Party of Kurdistan);
- PSKT (Socialist Party of Turkish Kurdistan);
- SK (Kurdish Revolutionaries);
- YSK (Socialist Union of Kurdistan).

The end of August 1988: Kurdish refugees flee from Iraq to Turkish (and Iranian) Kurdistan.

After the cease-fire of August 20, 1988 with Iran, Iraq turned its military might against the Kurdish guerrillas. It once more massively used chemical weapons. This resulted in a refugee stream to Iran and mainly to Turkey. Most of them were women, children and elderly people. The Turkish government had no choice but to accept them. However, it stated that their reception was only temporary. Approximately 80,000 refugees were grouped into five camps near the borders with Iran, Iraq and Syria. The cold, the bad quality and the lack of food led to epidemics and a rising death toll, especially amongst children. The tent camps were surrounded by barbed wire, so the refugees were isolated from the outside world.

In fact, the Turkish authorities applied a policy of "repentance". Systematically they refused to grant them the refugee status and with it the special treatment it gives right to. At the same time many Iranian and Afghan refugees were allowed to establish themselves permanently in Turkey. Yet Turkey applies for international help, but only accepts money, which had to be transferred to the authorities. They refused the help offered by the Red Cross and other humanitarian organisations. Also a UN team was denied access to investigate traces of chemical weapons on some of the refugees. The Turks maintained they had seen no such traces. In reality, badly wounded people were sneaked away to military hospitals, far from prodding eyes. Why? Turkey is both an ally and an important economic partner of Iraq.

The final result is that by December 1988 only 35,000 people remained in the camps in Turkish Kurdistan. The others chose to leave. Most went to Iran and a couple of thousand back to Iraq.

IRANIAN KURDISTAN

Until the emergence of Islam, the Iranian peoples formed states where Kurds and Persians lived side by side. This peaceful co-habitation followed mainly from their ethnic and traditional resemblances. Besides a few attempts by the Shahs to tighten controls, the Kurds were left in peace.

In the 16th century Shi'ism became the official religious rite of the Safevides dynasty. The Sunni Kurds sided with the party of the Sunni Ottoman Sultan Selim against the Shi'ite Persian Shah Ismail. So, when Persian nationalism turned despotic, Kurdish nationalism woke up and resisted it.

In 1920, under influence of the Sèvres Treaty, the uprising of the Iraqi Kurds under Sheik Mehmed Al-Berzendi, and the weakness of the Teheran government, a large revolt erupted in the north of Iranian Kurdistan. It was led by Ismail Agha Simko, chief of the Shikak Tribe and Governor of Ushnu. Between 1920 and 1925 he was able to take control of the entire region west of Lake Urmiah. He proclaimed the independence of all of Kurdistan.

Retaliation in 1928 by Reza Khan - the later Reza Shah and father of the last Shah of Iran - was harsh. He deported dozens of tribal chiefs, put them under surveillance in Teheran and confiscated their property. In addition, he forbade all Kurdish organisations, whether social, cultural or economic.

In 1925, Reza Shah, having seized power with help of the British, quelled the Kurdish rebellion of Sharik. It was led by Simko, who was ambushed and assassinated by the police on June 21, 1930.

A year later, at the same time of the Mount Ararat revolt in Turkey, another uprising took place in the south of Iranian Kurdistan. This one was led by Jafar

Sultan and the Turkish Kurds and those of the Maku region in Iran supported it materially. The Turkish government reacted violently and sent an ultimatum to the Persian government. It wanted Teheran to close the border and to disarm the Turkish Kurds. The Persian government imposed a complete blackout on these border events. However, it was soon evident that the situation was far from settled. The Djelali and the Hayderani Kurds of the Maku region had created pockets of resistance under the leadership of a Turkish Kurd, Ferzen-dah. The Ararat uprising was crushed by both the Turkish and Persian armies.

Copying the example of the Turkish government, Teheran massively deported the Djelali Kurds, who live in the region which stretches out between the Ararat and the Soviet border. According to J. C. Edmonds (Kurdes, p. 307), early April 1931 a traveller passed a column of Kurds of about 10 km. long. They were being deported to the north and consisted mainly of women and children.

From March until July 1931, the Kurds inflicted heavy losses on the Persian forces. Faced with this resistance, the despotic regime of Reza Shah was unable to reply. He turned to scheming through negotiations with the rebels. The Kurds surrendered their arms in exchange for their safety, but on the same day, the Iranian air force bombed the village where the Kurds were!

In 1934, Reza Shah paid a visit to Ata-Turk and in 1937 the Pact of Saadabad was signed between Turkey, Iraq and Iran (See Turkish Kurdistan). Nevertheless, the conflict situation between the Kurds and the Iranians continued until the eve of the second world war.

1946: The Kurdish Republic of Mahabad.

In 1941 the Soviet and British forces invaded Iran and toppled the Reza Shah regime. The Soviets occupied the north and the British the south. The Iranian army abandoned their weapons, which fell into the hands of the Kurds living in the northern mountains. As to the

Kurdish tribes living in the south, they were controlled by the British armed forces.

Between those two occupation zones the Kurds managed to move freely. The national Kurdish movement had a long tradition there. The Iranian government accepted the two tribal chiefs, Mehmud Khan and Hama Rashid Khan as semi-official governors. Later, when the Iranian army was rebuilt, they were repulsed to Iraq.

The only important town of the region, Mahabad (formerly Saudj Bulak), saw the beginning of the Kurdish national movement.

In 1942, a dozen young Kurds, most of them traders and minor civil servants, founded the Komela Jiyani Kurd (The Kurdish Revival Committee). The Komela expanded rapidly to the other regions of Iranian Kurdistan. Sections were also set up in Iraqi and Turkish Kurdistan. The Kurds discovered that this new committee was much more effective than the traditional nationalist parties.

In April 1943, a new board was elected, but the Komela lacked a sound political programme.

A new party - the Democratic Party of Kurdistan (P.D.K.) - was founded in August 1945. All members of the Komela belonged to it. One of its principal founders was Qazi Muhammad, judge, intellectual and a respected political and religious personality. This party soon won the backing of the majority of the Kurds. On January 22, 1946, during a huge popular meeting, the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad was proclaimed and Qazi Muhammad elected president.

This ephemeral republic, which lasted less than a year, nevertheless achieved important objectives. Decrees regulated administration and finances. Social measures were taken and the land was registered. The Kurdish language became official and was used in administration and education. Upper administrative posts were filled by Kurds. Books were printed in the Kurdish



Qazi Muhammad
President of the Republic of Mahabad, 1946.

language, as well as magazines, of which one was for women and another for children. A radio station was opened. The Kurdish flag was raised and a well known song "Ey Reqib" (Oh, Enemy) became the national anthem.

On April 23, 1946, the Kurds signed a friendship treaty with Azerbaijan. In that country, parallel with national aspirations, important economic and social reforms were carried out. In Kurdistan, the aims were less radical, because the region was more backward.

Qazi Muhammad requested from Teheran the formation of a province comprising all the Kurdish territories in Iran. It would have administrative autonomy and a local military force. However, even before the talks had ended, the Iranian government massed military forces against Azerbaijan and the Kurdish Republic. At that moment, many Kurdish intellectuals - amongst which were press people and members of the Iranian parliament living outside the Kurdish Republic - submitted a memorandum to the Iranian government. In it they demanded the establishing of a Superior Council of Kurdistan, consisting of three Iranians and three Kurds.

In June 1946, the government of Teheran attacked the Azerbaijan democrats. On December 15 of the same year, on the eve of the elections, Sadr Qazi, brother of Qazi Muhammad and member of the Iranian Parliament informed the government that the Kurds were ready to receive the Iranian contingents peacefully. These were to guarantee the "freedom" of the coming elections. Mullah Mustapha Barzani's troops were ordered to evacuate Mahabad immediately and to leave Iranian territory.

Two days later, Qazi Muhammad, Sadr Qazi and members of the Mahabad government were arrested. At the end of March 1947 they were court martialled, sentenced to death and executed.

Immediately after the fall of the tiny Mahabad Republic, the Iranian government destroyed the printing house of Mahabad, the writings in the Kurdish language



The cultural council of the Mahabad government.

and forbade teaching in their language.

A period of political repression began. The majority of the militants and upper cadres of the Kurdish Democratic Party and the Mahabad Republic were either executed or imprisoned. Nevertheless, the Kurdish youth reacted and from 1948 underground Kurdish publications circulated in the Mahabad region.

On February 4, 1949, there was an attempt on the Shah's life at Teheran University. The government, encouraged by the Anglo-Iranian Company, crushed the democratic movement in the entire country. The Kurds, of course, were not spared. However, when Dr Mossadegh, a person respected by most of the Iranian population, came to power, the underground progressive parties were well pleased.

At the 1952 elections, the candidate of the Kurdish Democratic Party won between 80 and 99% of the votes in the city and the regions around Mahabad. These elections were declared void. The government appointed an ecclesiastic as member for Mahabad.

During the same year, the peasants of Bokan, led by the PDK, rebelled against the tyranny of the feudal lords and the gendarmes. The movement quickly spread to the region located between Bokan and Mahabad. However, by order of the Shah, the Iranian armed forces together with the Kurdish feudal lords crushed the rebellion.

During and after the governmental campaign for the nationalization of the petrol industry controlled by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, Iranian Kurdistan supported Mossadegh.

On August 3, 1953 the Kurdish people voted unanimously for curbs on the Shah's power. But on the 19th, a coup organized by the C.I.A. overthrew Mossadegh's government. Its aim was to reestablish a reactionary and pro-imperialist regime in Iran. The nationalization of the petroleum industry was repealed. All democratic organisations were banned. Thousands of democrats and

patriots were imprisoned. Hundreds of militants of all political opposition tendencies were executed.

On February 4, 1956, the Shah regime, encouraged by the crushing of the democratic movement and certain of the backing of the other Baghdad Pact signatories, attacked the last stronghold of free Iranian Kurdistan. This was north of Kermanshah, near the Iraqi border, and mainly occupied by the Djuarno tribe. It had retained a certain degree of local autonomy because the inaccessible mountains made it easy to defend. Thousands of soldiers, armoured cars and planes attacked the Kurdish villages. The Iraqi army hastened to assist the imperial army. In this unequal battle the encircled Djuarnos fled from their villages into the mountains. The famous fortress of the Djuarno, symbol of their liberty, was bombed and burned to ashes.

On July 14, 1958 the Iraqi revolution overthrew King Faysal's and his prime minister Nouri Seid's regime. It destroyed one of the safest bases of imperialism and paved the way for democratic forces and Kurdish organisations. It inevitably had immense repercussions in Iran and especially in Iranian Kurdistan.

In Iran, however, the political repression continued and grew worse throughout the Shah's reign. The PDKI announced a programme with clear political objectives at its congress in September 1973. Its main aim was to transform Iran into a non-aligned democratic and federal republic. All foreign bases would be closed and a breed of tycoons linked to the multinationals would be eliminated. This programme gradually won the approval of large layers of the Kurdish population, including the Kurdish clergy.

After the conclusion of the Algiers Agreement between Iran and Iraq on March 6, 1975, which led to the crumbling of the Kurdish revolt under Mustapha Barzani in Iraq, the Iranian borders along which Kurds lived were monitored by any means.

During the last years of the Shah's dictatorship, Iranian Kurdistan was militarized and all authority was

exerted by army officers, police, gendarmes and especially by members of the SAVAK, the notorious secret police force. A strict control of any move by the population was installed. Each Kurdish peasant going from his village to another had to report this to the mayors of both localities. They in turn had to inform the gendarmes of all strange visitors.

The integration policy also continued. Each request for even a minor national right was severely repressed. This policy of oppression was also more or less applied to the other Iranian peoples. Indeed, only the Persian culture and language was recognized, although the Persians only make up 40% of the entire population. The other five nationalities are: Azerbaijanis, Kurds, Baluches, Arabs and Turkmenians.

1979: The Islamic Revolution.

The Kurdish, the Mujahideen and the Fedayeen movements played an important part in the overthrow of the Shah's despotic regime. On February 10 and 11, 1979, the PDKI partisans (Peshmergas) occupied the Kermanshah, Urmiah and Sanandaj barracks. After the overthrow of the monarchy, the Kurds quickly installed home rule. In towns and in the country people elected revolutionary councils to conduct local economic, cultural and administrative matters. Popular militias, armed with weapons seized from the arsenals, took care of the defence. For the first time in 33 years, all sorts of publications appeared legally in the Kurdish language. In Mahabad, the poet Hêmin started a Kurdish language and literature course, which was attended by both children and their parents and grandparents. Kurdish, as well as Persian, was used as an official language in the administration. During this exceptional period more than a dozen political groups were formed without encountering any trouble.

On March 3, 1979 the PDKI announced its legal status after 33 years of clandestinity before 200,000 people in Mahabad. This seriously alarmed the new Islamic re-

gime. A few weeks later the Turkmenes and the Arabs also declared their autonomy.

Ayatollah Khomeini's attitude.

On March 18, 1979, planes and helicopters attacked the civil population of Sanandaj for resisting the requisitioning of food for the barracks. The confrontation lasted three days, leaving 400 dead. It led the Iranian authorities to send the Ayatollah Talaghani, who was known to be progressive, there. He concluded a cease-fire with the Kurds and publicly promised autonomy for the ethnic minorities and for the Kurds in particular.

On March 28, 1979 a Kurdish delegation went to Qom and presented Ayatollah Khomeini with a memorandum stipulating the Kurdish claims. His answer was negative. With regard to autonomy and democracy, he said "these two words do not figure in the Koran and were alien to Islam". According to him, "within the Islamic Republic, all Muslims have equal rights". The Kurdish delegation then decided to see the then prime minister, Bazargan. His government instituted a commission of three ministers to negotiate with the delegation. In the middle of these negotiations, some members of the Khomeini Committee fired on the people who were inaugurating a local PDKI office in the small town of Naghadah.

On April 22, 1979, the army entered Naghadah, bringing with them the Pasdarans. These Revolutionary Guards are Islamic recruits formed by Mustapha Tchamram. They executed many and plundered a lot ... The dead were counted by the hundreds. The whole population fled the town and took refuge in Mahabad. In the official Iranian press it was a question of punishing the "enemies of Islam and the Revolution". Khomeini called the Kurds all kinds of names: imperialist, communist and Zionist agents.... Henceforth, as soon as the Pasdarans approached a Kurdish town or village, the inhabitants left and asked the Peshmergas to defend their property. The Iranian authorities tried all means to implant the



Pasdarans in Kurdistan. During the summer of 1979, this led to a series of skirmishes and confrontations in Marivan, Serah and Pava. .

A referendum on the Islamic Republic was subsequently held. It provided no right to autonomy. It was largely boycotted in Kurdistan. The abstention rate reached 85-98%.

On August 3, 1979, 75 experts were elected to the mini-Constituent Assembly. Among them only two were non-religious. One of these was Dr Abdurrahman Ghassemlu, Secretary-general of the PDKI, who was candidate for the elections under his own name.

The PDKI tried to form a front with the Fedayeen, the Mujahideen, the Democratic Front, some sections of the Tudeh Iranian communist party and all those who demanded a laic, democratic and federal regime. The Kurdish movement contemplated a Convention of the Oppressed Peoples of Iran in Mahabad on August 25, to which delegates of the Arabs, Azerbaijanis, Balutches, Turkmenes would have been invited. However, ...

On August 17, 1979 Khomeini made his famous speech in which he qualified the Kurds as "children of satan", "the worst of infidels" and in which he asked the army to crush them as quickly as possible. On September 5, the army occupied the Kurdish urban districts. The whole available Iranian military potential was mobilized: columns of armoured cars, helicopters, Phantom bombers, ... The Pasdarans arrived from the remotest provinces of Iran.

To prevent a civilian massacre, the Kurds avoided a classic frontal war. They preferred the guerrilla warfare. The population evacuated towns and villages. The Peshmergas took to the mountains. The villages that suffered most of the bombing were located around Mahabad, Sandanaj and Sages.

On September 5, 1979, the entire population of Qarnah near Mahabad were massacred by the Pasdarans. Most of the 67 people were women, children and old men, who

could not take to the maquis. The army only occupied the barracks and the Islamic tribunals ordered 200 summary executions. A thousand young Kurds, most of whom did not belong to any party whatsoever, were detained. On October 16, 47 inhabitants of the village of Nefsan, near Sardacht, died in similar circumstances.

During that same October, the guerrilla activities intensified. The chief of police of Mahabad was executed. The special envoy of Mr Bazargan in Kurdistan was kidnapped. An ambush on the way to Sardacht cost the lives of 72 Pasdarans.

Early November 1979, after violent battles at Mahabad, the Iranian leaders proposed to negotiate. The Kurdish leaders proposed a cease-fire for the duration of the negotiations with the governmental delegation. On November 17, Khomeini addressed a message to the Kurds¹: "Those who accused you of plotting against the Islamic Republic are calumniators... I humbly offer you my hand and I beg you to safeguard our unity, any discord only benefits American imperialism." This was not so surprising for the whole of Iran was concerned with the hostage-taking by Islamic students at the American embassy in Teheran. Khomeini thus appealed to national unity against American imperialism!

Iraq went to war with Iran on September 22, 1980. It was detrimental to the population of both countries. On top of the human drama and the profound trauma it engendered, the two countries are economically ruined. In 1985 the war cost Iran 36 million dollars a day. Nevertheless neither side was inclined to end it, for both regimes are tyrannical and not popular. It was only by waging war that they could draw population's attention away from the real economic and social problems and hold on to power. For many years the PDKI had been trying to form a broad front with the democratic opposition forces of Iran. This, however, was very difficult because of the discord within the opposition.

¹ Le Monde, 22.11.1979.

The Iranian army stationed in Kurdistan is 200,000 strong. They face 12,000 Peshmergas of the PDKI and a couple of thousand of a small Kurdish party, the Kome-la! It cannot get the upper hand because on the one hand the Kurdish movement is supported by the entire Kurdish population and on the other the Peshmergas are masters at guerrilla warfare. In the beginning the Iranian troops were concentrated at certain points, but later, to crush the Kurdish struggle, they were divided over 3,000 military bases. They thus transformed the whole of Kurdistan into a military camp with small groups billeted in every village of 40 to 50 families. The small villages were destroyed or set on fire. The inhabitants were forced to leave with nowhere to go.

The Peshmergas quickly adapted themselves to the new tactics. Relentlessly, they harass these bases. In dispersing themselves, the Iranian army has weakened its effectiveness.

As to the civilian population, over 5,000 families numbering over 30,000 people were forced to flee from their homes. In October 1987, 800 families, i.e. about 4,000 people, living in 24 villages in the Bolfat region were ordered to leave. During the next two months ten villages of the Alan region were burned down.

Apart from some medical teams and journalists, not a single international organisation responds to the pleas by the Kurds to send an observation team.

On July 13, 1989 Dr Abdurrahman Ghassemlu and two other Kurds were murdered by the Iranian authorities in a flat in Vienna. These had invited them to sign peace agreements. This state conspiracy jolted the Kurdish community. It proves that the Iranian regime does not accept any form of dialogue or political solution to the problem.

IRAQI KURDISTAN

The annexation of South Kurdistan to Arabian Iraq only served British interests and was against the will of the Kurdish population. Indeed, the British partially occupied the town of Mosul, famous for its oilfields, after the conclusion of the Moudros Treaty between the Allies and the Turkish sultan on October 30, 1918. However, in 1919 they lost the Sulaymaniyah area to Sheik Mehmed Al-Berzendji. According to Sir Arnold Wilson¹, the Kurds did not want to return to Turkish government and neither did they want to be placed under the control of the Iraqi government. He recommended to his government to attach Mosul and the Northern Region up to Armenia to Arabian Iraq. However, the victorious Mustapha Kemal claimed in 1922 the reannexation of Mosul to Turkey on behalf of the Turko-Kurdish fraternity, which had become an official slogan. To avoid this danger, the English and the Iraqi government of King Faysal solemnly acknowledged the Iraqi Kurds the right to autonomy within the borders of Iraq. This declaration was communicated to the League of Nations on November 24, 1922.

British policy in Iraq limited itself to feeling its way around, advancing somewhat, backing down ... And as the Kurds demanded the implementation of the Sèvres Treaty, the English allowed Sheik Mehmed Al-Berzendji to return to the town of Sulaymaniyah after leaving prison. He proclaimed himself governor of Kurdistan, issued fiscal and postal stamps and published a newspaper, "Roja Kurdistan" (The Sun of Kurdistan). It was later replaced by "Bangê Heq" (The Voice of Justice).

¹ WILSON A., Mesopotamia 1917-1920, London 1931, pp. 103, 127, 129, 134, 137.



Sheik Mehmed Al-Berzendji

This independence, however, did not last long. On March 3, 1923, following clashes with Sheik Mehmed Al-Berzendji, the English bombed Sulaymaniyah. Sheik Mehmed was forced to escape to Persia. He returned to Sulaymaniyah in 1924. More raids to place. The British forced him to take refuge in Penjwin, where he stayed until 1930.

The Kurds then realised they would never obtain their rights in spite of governmental guarantees and assurances of the British, who had sent a "special report" to the League of Nations. On December 15, 1925 the League of Nations decided in its third session to reattach the "province" of Mosul to Iraq. The reason was that the whole country was under British rule. However, it added that the wishes of the Kurds should also be taken into account when appointing civil servants for the administration, justice and education departments. The Kurdish language also had to become an official language. In 1929, six Kurdish members of parliament handed over a petition to the Baghdad government to set up an administrative unit for the Kurdish provinces. The Prime Minister refused. This resulted in a series of uprisings from 1931 to 1933. In 1931, the prominent figures of Sulaymaniyah asked the League of Nations to protect a Kurdish state separated from Iraq. The Iraqi army replied by attacking the Berzan tribe. The men of the tribe fled the bombings and reached the Turkish borders, where they were hung!

At the eve of the second world war.

In 1936 Mullah Mustapha Barzani was transferred to Sulaymaniyah, where he was placed under house arrest for six years. In 1937 two Kurdish nationalist organisations were formed: Brayati (Brotherhood), founded by Sheik Latif, one of Sheik Mehmed Al-Berzendji's sons, and Azadi Kurd (Kurdish freedom) founded in 1938 by young Kurds of Sulaymaniyah. In 1938, Darker was formed by the young from Sulaymaniyah. Its members were recruited among the young intellectuals. Darker expanded outside Sulaymaniyah. From 1940 on underground cells of



Mustapha Barzani

this organisation were set up in Arbīl, Khánaqin, Baghdad and Mosul.

In 1941, the heads of different organisations decided during a conference to regroup into a single party, Hiwa (Hope). This new party assembled all the Kurdish nationalist militants, the intellectuals, the workers, especially those in the oil sector in Kirkuk and those of the railways, the peasants and officers, who played a very important part. It had its seat outside Kurdistan, with branches in the main towns of Kurdistan: Kirkuk, Arbīl, Sulaymaniyah, ... It published a periodical called Azadi.

Its main role was to assist Mullah Mustapha Barzani after his escape from Sulaymaniyah in 1943. It also played an important part in the foundation of the Kurdistan Komela Jiyani in Mahabad in Iranian Kurdistan.

Barzani's long march.

On July 13, 1943, Barzani escaped from Sulaymaniyah and rejoined his region Berzan, making a detour via Iran to escape the Iraqi police. In the beginning of his escape he tried to reach an agreement with the Iraqi authorities. He asked for reforms because Iraqi Kurdistan was in a pitiful state of poverty. All year Barzani together with only 200 partisans fought the Iraqi army, consisting of infantry, police, armoured cars and the air force. In December 1943 the English became alarmed by Barzani's successes. They sent armoured cars to Diyana, near Rawandiz, and asked the Iraqis to withdraw their troops. Barzani, however, took good care not to attack Diyana. On 6 December of the same year, the Hiwa party issued a "proclamation of the Kurdish headquarters to the generous Iraqi people" against the policies of the government. This, it qualified as a "dictatorship, flourishing in the shadow of the Atlantic Charter". This way, the mere rebellion took on a disquieting political aspect for the English.

Mid-December 1943, Cornwallis, Foreign Office Ambassador in Baghdad, had talks with the Regent and the

Prime Minister Nouri Seid. He expressed his anxiousness about the "serious menace" of the Kurdish movement. Cornwallis's main objective was to protect the oil-fields and lines of communication. He then wrote a menacing letter to Barzani and intimated him to surrender.

On December 27, 1943 Barzani replied to Cornwallis's "ultimatum" and requested an investigation into his "grievances". He also demanded the release of his partisans and to lift the control of the Berzan region.

The English asked the Iraqi government to give the Kurds certain rights. The Kurdish minister without Portfolio, Mejid Mustapha, demanded the establishment of a real civil administration in Kurdistan. But no reform of any importance was ever introduced. On April 14, 1944 Barzani wrote to Cornwallis, to the political officer of Mosul and to Mejid Mustapha. He complained about the non-application of the government's promises. He ended, saying that he and his people were ready to fight for their rights with their own hands as long as the British government did not object.

As a result of the crisis in Kurdistan, the government of Nouri Seid resigned on June 3, 1944. The English wanted to avoid any incident and allowed a tacit peace. The governmental forces withdrew from northern Kurdistan and the region was virtually self-governing. In April 1945, Cornwallis was replaced by a new ambassador, Stonehewer Bird. The Iraqi parliament voted an amnesty law, but it excluded all military, police and civil servants who had been active in the Kurdish movement.

Cornwallis's departure and the end of the hostilities in Europe meant the end of the "special relationship" between the British and Barzani. Fighting between the Kurds and the Iraqis started again. On August 8, 1945 the Iraqi Council of Ministers decided on a military occupation of the Berzan region. Ignoring British caution, the army launched its offensive. After different vicissitudes, an official communique on October 7 of that same year announced that Barzani had fled to Iran

with a few of his partisans. From Mahabad in Iranian Kurdistan, Barzani proposed to the representatives of all Kurdish organisations to reunite. The Hiwa had split up into four parties. They did this in secret in Baghdad on August 16, 1946 on the occasion of the Iraqi Kurdistan Democratic Party's (PDK) first convention. This party had a progressive programme. Besides purely nationalist issues - autonomy for Iraqi Kurdistan - it included social demands: agrarian, economic and social reform (nationalisation of natural resources, separation of church and state), ... The PDK also took part in the National Front, with the People's Party, the National Democratic Party and the Iraqi Communist Party.

After the collapse of the Mahabad Republic, in which Barzani had participated, he had to flee to the USSR with 500 men in April 1947. They remained there for eleven years! This "retreat of the 500" across the mountains of Kurdistan has remained legendary in the history of the modern Kurdish national movement.

1947-1956: The PDK without Barzani.

Starting in 1946, when the founders of the PDK met in Baghdad, a ruthless repression hit the whole of Iraq. The leftist parties were banned and their leaders arrested. The police fired on the people during massive demonstrations in Baghdad and Kirkuk. In January 1947, the former Prime Minister Nouri Said came back to power. The repression then became even more severe. The police arrested Yussef Selman, general secretary of the Iraqi communist party. He was sentenced to death with two other leaders. Others were condemned to prison sentences.

On June 19, 1947, four officers who had accompanied Barzani to Iranian Kurdistan were hanged in Baghdad. About 5,000 women, children and old men of the partizan families, who had returned to Iraq after the fall of the Republic of Mahabad were sent to a camp near Diyana. Some 1,000 able men who had not followed Barzani to the USSR were imprisoned in Sulaymaniyah and Kirkuk.

In 1948, the Portsmouth Treaty was signed. This treaty made provision for the creation of a Iraqi-Britannic Common Defence Council. Its purpose was to quench the progressive movement in Iraq. The clashes between leftist Iraq and the Iraqi government became very serious indeed. All during January, violent demonstrations in Baghdad succeeded one another. They often turned into riots. On January 28, 1948, the last of these demonstrations was savagely put down: 30 people were killed and 300 wounded. That same evening the government resigned. The next refused to sign the Portsmouth Treaty.

* Martial law was instituted during the first Arab-Israeli war and the repression grew worse. Certain leaders of the PDK were arrested and accused of communism. Some fled abroad, other went underground. During this period, the PDK fought alongside the progressive Iraqi parties.

After the 1947-1949 repression, the PDK practically remained without leadership. In September 1950, the party cadres still at large tried to reorganize. In March 1951 the second PDK convention took place. Ibrahim Ehmed became Secretary General two months after his release from prison.

In 1955, the PDK split into two branches. Since its establishment in 1946 it could not ignore one major dilemma: which priority took precedence; the national or the social one. A year later both tendencies joined forces again and formed the PDKU (Unified Kurdistan Democratic Party). Its General Secretary, Hamza Abdallah, published the Khebati Kurdistan (The Struggle of Kurdistan).

In 1958, after the foundation of the United Arab Republic between Egypt and Syria, the Kurds contemplated a revolt against the Iraqi monarchy. They contacted Nasser in Egypt to enlist his help and obtained transmissions in Kurdish on Cairo radio.

On July 14, 1958, the Iraqi monarchy was overthrown by general Abd Al-Kerim Kassem. The following day Sheik

Khaled Nakchbendi, a prominent Kurd, was appointed member of the Sovereign Council together with two Arab personalities, one Sunnite and one Shi'ite. Article 3 of the provisional constitution of July 20, 1958 stipulated: "The Iraqi community is founded on the co-operation of all citizens, on the respect for their liberties. The Arabs and the Kurds are united in this nation. The Iraqi constitution guarantees their national rights within the Iraqi entity."

For the first time in Iraq's history, the equality of Arabs and Kurds alike was officially recognized. It was symbolised by the coat of arms of the new republic: a Kurdish dagger crossed by an Arabian sword.

The new press freedom was beneficial to the Kurds. So far, the Kurdish publications had been purely literary or historical. Hetaw (The Sun) and Gelawêj (Pleiads) were replaced by Hîwa (Hope) and Jîn (Life). Other publications also appeared: Peshkewtin (progress), Shefeq (Dawn) in Sulaymaniyah; Beyan (The Manifest) and Roja Nû (The New Day) at Kirkuk. In 1959, the PDK started with Khebat (The Struggle).

In spite of the great expectations the Kurds had, the ambiguities of the new regime soon became apparent. Abd Al-Salem Aref, deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, of Nasser tendency, and the members of the Baath party ("Baath" means resurrection, therefore return to the great Arab empire) were pan-Arabians and fervent partisans of a union with the United Arab Republic. Article 2 of the provisional constitution stated that "the Iraqi state is an integral part of the Arab nation".

The showdown started between Kassem and Aref and ended in a victory for the former. He appointed Aref ambassador to Bonn on October 1, and allowed Barzani to return to Iraq.

October 7, 1958: The return of Barzani.

Barzani arrived at Baghdad airport after a stopover in Cairo, where he had met with Nasser. Only in April 1959 did his companions arrive by boat: 400 men, 108 women of Soviet origin, most Uzbeks, and 225 children.

At the end of November Barzani proposed to form one single party. During the 4th convention of the PDKU became once again the PDK. However, the years 1959 and 1960 proved to be extremely restless for all parties concerned. The antagonisms between the Iraqi leaders ended in Mosul in an armed conflict between the Arab army and between Arabs and Kurds. The differences between the two lines of the PDK - left and right - revealed their internal problems. The ambiguity between Barzani and the PDK, between the Kurds and Kassem and between the Kurds and the communists was complete.

In the beginning of 1960, the pro-government paper Al-Thawra (The Revolution) stated in an article entitled "The Arab Nationality and the Problem of the Minorities" that the destiny of the "Iraqi Kurdish minority" was linked with the destiny of the Arab nation and that "this minority must be incorporated". So for the Arabs of Iraq there was a big contradiction between the equality of the rights of the two Iraqi peoples and the return of Iraq to the Arabian sphere. The Kurds make up 27% of the Iraqi population.

No 18-20/10

The battle for liberation: 1961 - 1975.

The 1961 - 1975 war consisted of a series of mini wars, interspersed with truces of varying duration. In 14 years four different regimes succeeded one another after more or less bloody coups. After each one, the new regime took up contact with the Kurds. The latter were exhausted from the battles against the former leaders of Baghdad and accepted the cease-fire. This allowed the new regime to consolidate their power. As soon as they felt strong enough, they followed the same policy as their predecessors. The vicious circle started all over again.



Underground printer.

In the spring of 1974, the Iraqi army launched a vast offensive in Kurdistan. For two months, towns and villages were bombed. The arabization campaign continued in three crucial sectors: Sinjar, Kirkuk and Khánaqin, where villages were bulldozed. The commission for agrarian reform refused to allot owner's titles to Kurdish peasants, while allotting them systematically to Arabs.

As a result of this offensive, the Kurdish movement took a hitherto unknown upsurge. The vast majority of the Kurdish people - in particular Kurdish students and intellectuals living in large centres such as Baghdad, Mosul and Sulaymaniyah - rallied to Barzani, in spite of the fact they thought him to be a feudal lord. Those studying abroad suspended their studies to join the Kurdish movement.

Several hundreds of thousand politically banished people and Kurdish refugees, who had fled the war or were chased from the arabized regions, also joined the movement. By the end of April Barzani was forced to ask the Shah of Iran to accept Kurdish refugees in Iran as his administration was no longer able to cope with them. By the end of September 110,000 Kurdish refugees from Iraq had arrived in refugee camps inside Iran. They were, of course, a pawn in the hands of the Shah. Every day dozens of refugee families reached the border at Hady Omran. There they had to camp out in open air for several days, sometimes weeks, at 1,700 metres altitude, surrounded by their bundles of clothes.

In the autumn of 1974, after the historic battle on Mount Hendrin (2,875 metres), the Kurds succeeded in liberating 35,000 km² of Iraqi Kurdistan. It was the first time since the Republic of Mahabad that the Kurds obtained some autonomy. A whole administration was set up: a cabinet of nine ministers ran the daily affairs. The Kurdish government was led by Sami, who was also foreign minister. A military bureau took care of the defence post. The capital was Hady Omran, a small market town near the Iranian border and safe from the Iraqi air force.

The Kurdish administration was impressive: the ministries followed one another all along the famous Hamil-★ ton route to Iran. Most were modest buildings and tents ... The Ministry of Information and Education was the best equipped. It functioned thanks to Kurdish intellectuals who had joined the movement, professors or heads of administration in Iraqi ministries. A translation service edited a journal of foreign news. A special unit listened to radio stations abroad. The Voice of Kurdistan transmitted programmes both in Kurdish and in Arabic.

However, the situation in this restricted zone was far from reflecting the state in the whole of the liberated territory. In the autumn of 1974 some 500,000 to 700,000 people suffered a total blockade in Badistan ★ since August. In the south, the Iraqi army forbade all food transports to the North and the Turkish army blocked the frontier.

Faced with the gravity of the situation, the Kurdish leaders cleared a road by bulldozer through the mountains. However, they could only use it at night because of attacks by the Iraqi air force.

By the end of September 1974 the situation had become alarming. Food prices rocketed and the famine spectre lurked everywhere.

The refugees in Badinan numbered between 100,000 and 150,000. There were also unassessed ones, who lived anywhere, under trees, in dried up river beds, at the foot of cliffs, in caves. Others settled as near as possible to the Turkish border in order to avoid Iraqi air raids. On top of that there were 112,000 refugees in Iran.

In June 1974, the Iranian government had asked the International Red Cross and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees to send representatives to visit Kurdish refugee camps in Iran. After an inspection tour, those representatives asked the Iranian government if they needed any assistance. the answer was negative. They then requested permission to transit dele-

gates and help through Iran. The answer was yet again negative!

The 1974-1975 winter was very severe. Dr. Alexander, a Dutch doctor, was one rare witness of the tragedy. He was arrested by the Iraqi authorities after the debacle and hanged because of his Jewish origin.

March 6, 1975: the Algiers Agreement.

Taking advantage of the OPEC (Oil Producing and Exporting Countries) summit at Algiers, the Algerian president Huari Boumedienne reconciled the two secular enemies. Iran and Iraq both disputed territorial rights over the Arabian-Persian Gulf. Boumedienne sought to diminish the influence of both superpowers in the Gulf and in the Mediterranean. To achieve this aim, an end to the quickly escalating Kurdish conflict was imperative.

Both parties accepted Boumedienne's proposal. Iran immediately ceased all aid to the Iraqi Kurds. This Shah, while aiding the Iraqi Kurds, savagely repressed the Iranian Kurds.

Two days later, the Iraqi air force, no longer fearing the DCA and Iranian missiles, burst loose and systematically bombed the entire Shoman valley. On March 8, 1975 the Iraqi army started its general offensive. The peshmergas defended themselves fiercely.

A week after the Algiers Agreement, The Iraqi government announced a suspension of all operations in Kurdistan. The truce was requested by the Shah and was intended to enable the Kurds to choose between exile in Iran or surrender to the Iraqi authorities.

The Kurds wanted to fight to the finish and prepared a guerrilla campaign. However, the parties to the Algiers Agreement signed a protocol, setting up 3 commissions and about 50 Algerian officers on both sides of the border.

The PDK leaders held different views whether to continue or stop hostilities. After 40 years of struggle Barzani left for the US as political refugee. He died there of lung cancer at the age of 75.

The situation after the collapse of the movement.

After the collapse of the revolt under Barzani, the Kurds went through a period of utter consternation and discouragement in and outside Iraqi Kurdistan. However, little by little, they managed to reorganize themselves and tried to learn from past lessons. Since 1980, the Iraqi Kurdish parties have formed a front called DJOUD (Patriotic Democratic Front) with certain Arabian opposition forces, such as the Iraqi communist party. This front regroups the Kurdistan Democratic Party (PDKI) led by Barzani's son Messud, the Kurdistan Popular Democratic Party (PDKI) led by Sami, the Socialist Party of Iraqi Kurdistan (PSKI), the Kurdistan Socialist Party (PASOK), and the Iraqi Communist Party. Since the end of 1987, there is a Kurdistan front in which Djelal Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (YNK) has joined the other parties. Talabani had split from Barzani. *

Relations between the Kurdish parties have never been better. Because of this close collaboration, they were able to free several regions and to get reorganized. ?

As to the Iraqi government, it pursued an intensive arabization campaign from 1975 onwards. On the one hand it declared it gave the Kurds self-government, and on the other it started to evacuate territories to isolate the Iraqi Kurds from the others. 150.000 villagers were deported in this way to Arabian regions in the south. Arab tribes were implanted in the Kurdish regions, especially in those that are rich in oil such as Kirkuk. After the deportation from their villages, the Iraqi army destroyed all traces of human life: 1,150 villages were completely flattened, the cattle was destroyed on a massive scale, orchards and gardens were poisoned with acid, the wells systematically filled with concrete. In this way a fertile territory of 25,000 km² - 2.5 times the size of Lebanon - was made arid.

As to the executions, torture and assassinations, suffice it to consult the Amnesty International Report published on August 20, 1979. It underlined that Iraq still held a gruesome record of the "greatest number of capital punishment in the Middle East".

In the last few years, because of the refusal of the young Kurds to fight in the Iraqi-Iranian war and faced with the close collaboration between the Kurdish parties, the Iraqi government got into a frenzy of repression. Most victims were innocent civilians.

According to the humanitarian organisation Society for the Defence of Menaced Peoples, in September 1985 900 Kurdish children between the ages of 10 and 14 were interrogated by the Iraqi army in Sulaymaniyah. As a result, massive demonstrations were organized. One of these was followed by 160 executions in Sulaymaniyah in November.

According to a communique by Amnesty International, 300 children aged between 10 and 14 were interrogated at the detention centre of the Military Intelligence in Sulaymaniyah in September 1985. A few days later, the bodies of three children, bearing marks of torture, were found in the street. The others were transferred to prisons in Sulaymaniyah and Kirkuk. In January 1987, the police released the mutilated bodies of 29 children. The parents had to pay an exorbitant tax.

Recently, the European Parliament has condemned this barbaric act and has asked the member countries to exert all possible pressure on Iraq. In addition it declared that if the massacres continued, the member countries should review their relations with Iraq.

All this to punish the families of the deserters. At the end of 1985, all families living in the "autonomous regions" had to fill in an administrative form to justify the absence of the men. Those with deserters were arrested and deported to the Arabian south of Iraq. In the town of Arbīl, "capital of the autonomous region",

alone 85 families were deported to Nugrat-Salman, 250 km south of Baghdad.

The end of 1985 saw a recrudescence of violence in several regions of Kurdistan: executions, bombings, dynamiting houses, burying people alive, ...

The International Human Rights Federation announced in Paris on March 10, 1987 the disappearance of 8,000 Iraqi Kurds in the Barzani region since 1983. According to this federation, the Iraqi army encircled the camps of Ustapha and Diyana on July 30, 1983 and captured all men between 18 and 20 and took them to Baghdad. Afterwards they were first deported to the Shi'ite regions of Najaf and Karbala and then to the Jordanian border. Observers believe that they were assassinated.

Chemical bombs.

During April 1987, the Iraqi army dropped chemical bombs and toxic gases on Kurdish villages in several regions: Sulaymaniyah, Karadagh, Mawet, ... At that time, the provisional toll was 400 wounded, mostly women and children. 30 of them died. As a result, thousands of families left their villages and sought refuge with the Peshmergas in the liberated zones. The policy of deportation, begun in 1975, continued and was intensified. In the last ten years about 1500 Kurdish villages were evacuated and 500,000 people deported to the southern regions of Iraq near the Jordanian border.

In its press-release of April 28, 1987, *Agence France Presse* announced the use of chemical weapons, basing itself on the accusations made by the French Committee against Repression in Iraq. This committee asserted this was done in retaliation for the large operations jointly conducted by several Iraqi Kurdish parties.

On March 18, 1988 the Iraqi air force bombed Halabja, a Kurdish town with 80,000 inhabitants, with chemical bombs. Within a couple of hours 5,000 people died a terrible death and a further 10,000 were badly injured.



According to the Belgian toxicologist Dr. Heyndrickx, three quarters of them cannot be saved. Most of the survivors fled to Iran. Today, Halabja is a dead city. It is a disgraceful reminder of Hiroshima and Nagasaki!

This time the international public opinion reacted. The horrors were too bad! Most European countries condemned the chemical bombardments, however, without naming Iraq! The European Parliament on the other hand and many international organisations, as well as the press, energetically condemned Iraq. The Arab countries closed ranks with Iraq: they denied the use of chemical weapons by Iraq and described the accusations as a "zionist plot"!

Two weeks later, interest for the Kurdish plight diminished again. In fact, that interest was not for the Kurds, but for the chemical weapons to annihilate them.

After the cease-fire of August 20, 1988, Iraq continued using chemical weapons against the Kurds. Most Western governments have openly condemned Iraq for the first time.

SYRIAN KURDISTAN

Before the 1960s there was no fierce repression of the Kurds in Syria. This was due to the fact that the French were well-disposed towards them during their mandate over the country between the two world wars. Many books using the Kurdish alphabet circulated freely. The popular poet Djigerkhuine (Cigerxwîn) published his works in Kurdish. His poetry had a great influence on all Kurds. Kurdish intellectuals came together around the cultural publication Hawar (The Call), founded by Prince Djeladet Bedir Khan. 57 issues in Kurdish and in French appeared between 1932 and 1935, then between 1941 and 1943 in Damascus. Its illustrated supplement Ronahî (The Light) mainly brought news about the second world war.

The Syrian Kurds were also able to organize themselves politically. In 1957, a group of intellectuals, workers and peasants founded the Kurdistan Democratic Party in analogy with the Iraqi PDK. Its programme stood for the recognition of the Syrian Kurds as an ethnic entity entitled to its proper culture. In addition, it wanted to fight together with other Arab political groups for agrarian reform and the establishment of a democratic government in Damascus. However, two years later, several of its leaders were arrested. It was the dark period of Colonel Serraj, chief of the secret service. He stood under direct control of the Egyptian president Nasser after the fusion of Egypt and Syria into the United Arab Republic. Manhunts and savage torture had begun. All Kurdish activities, whether political or cultural, were paralysed.

September 1961 saw the failure of the United Arab Republic and the separation of Egypt and Syria. The landed gentry, who took power in Syria, accused the Kurds of revolt against Arabism and complicity with the Iraqi Kurds, who had begun their uprising.

SAL 1-4
HEJMAR 1-28
1 NISAN 1942
ADAR 1945

RONAHÎ

ANNEE 1-4
NUMÉRO 1-28
1 AVRIL 1942
MARS 1945

SUPPLÉMENT ILLUSTRÉ DE LA REVUE KURDE HAWAR



Mîr CELADET BEDÎRXAN
Xwedî û Berpirsiyarê Kovarê



ŞAM - 1942-1945
ÇAPXANA SEBATE
ÇAPXANA TEREQIYÊ

BERHEVOK : ÇAPXANA JINA NÛ

S A L : 2 - 11

HEJMAR : 24 - 57

YEKŞEMB -- YEKŞEMB

1 NÎSAN 1934 - 15 TEBAX 1943

HAWAR

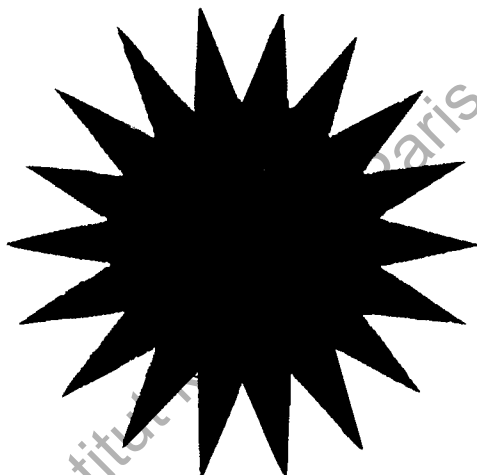
ANNÉE : 2 - 11

NUMÉRO : 24 - 57

DIMANCHE-- DIMANCHE

1 AVRIL 1934 - 15 AOÛT 1943

KOVARA KURDÎ ★ REVUE KURDE



ÇAPXANÊN : MINDIK-EL-MIBKÎ, TEREQÎ, SEBATÊ

Ş A M : 1934 - 1943

On August 23, 1962 decree-law n°33 authorized a special census of the Djezira population (Syrian Kurdistan) because it was alleged that the Kurds were illegally infiltrating Djezira from Turkish Kurdistan, to destroy "its arab character". After this census, 120,000 Kurds were labelled "foreigners". Their rights attached to Syrian citizenship were withdrawn.

That same year, to face up to the Kurdish "menace" and "to save the Arab character" of the region, the Syrian government concocted a plan called "The Arab Belt". It planned the expulsion of the entire Kurdish population living in Djezira along the Turkish border, gradually replacing them by Arabs. The banished Kurds would be taken to South Arabia and preferably dispersed. The discovery of oil in Karatchok, north of Djezira, reinforced this policy.

March 1963 saw the worsening of the Kurdish situation. The Baath Party, mainly built on Arab nationalism, came to power. In November of that same year, the chief of the political police of Djezira, Muhammad Taleb Hilal, published a "Study on the Djezira Province, seen from a national, social and political point of view". In it he wanted to prove "scientifically" and "anthropologically" that the Kurds did not "constitute a nation". He ended: "So, there you have the Kurdish people, a people which, in fact, does not have a history, no civilisation, no language, no ethnic origins. It only has the qualities of force, of destructive power, of violence, qualities, for that matter, inherent to mountain people." Moreover, "the Kurds live on the civilisation and heritage of other nations. They have no part in these civilisations, nor in the history of these nations."

M. Hilal proposed a 12 point plan to solve the Kurdish question, first in the Djezira region and later in the other Kurdish areas:

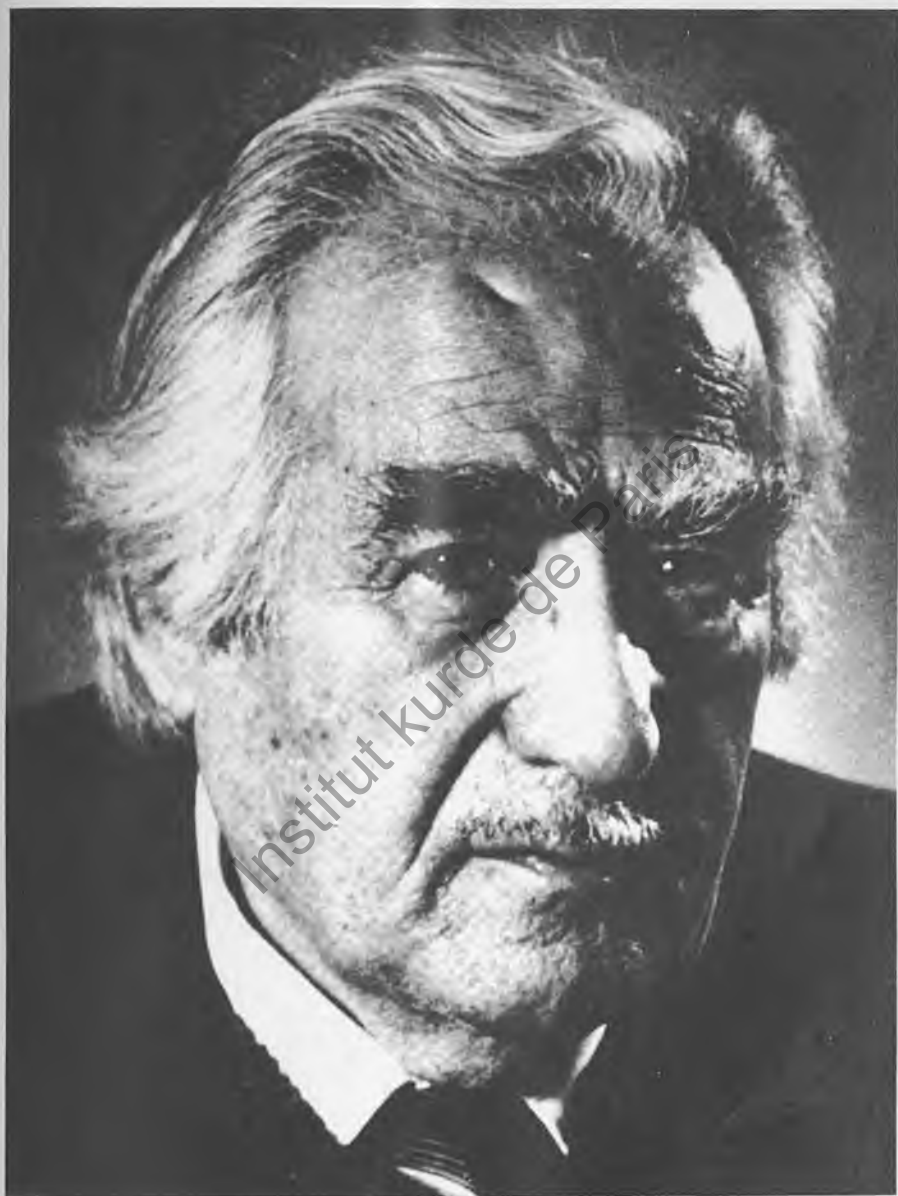
1. Policy of "betr" (removal): deportation of the Kurdish population and their dispersion.
2. Policy of "tedjhîl" (illiteracy): deprive the Kurds of all education, even in Arabic.

3. Policy of "tedjwî" (starvation): deprive the Kurds of all possibilities of finding work.
4. Policy of extradition: hand all survivors of the uprisings in Turkish Kurdistan over to the Turkish authorities.
5. Divide and rule policy: set up the Kurds against one another.
6. Policy of "hizâm": the same as conceived in 1962.
7. Policy of "iskân": implantation of "pure and nationalist Arabs" in the Kurdish regions "to keep an eye on them before their dispersion".
8. Military policy: stationing divisions in the belt zone which have to "see to the dispersion of the Kurds and to the establishment of the Arabs, according to the plans adopted by the state".
9. Policy of "socialization": creation of "collective farms" for the Arabs housed in the region and "their armament".
10. Interdiction "to anybody who does not know the Arab language in the said Kurdish regions, to exert his civil rights to be elected or to be eligible".
11. Deport the Kurdish ulenas (the religious) to the south, and send Arab ulenas in their stead.
12. Start a vast anti-Kurdish campaign amongst the Arabs.

With the exception of the forced transfer, many of the measures proposed by Hilal were carried out. 120,000 Kurds were classified as non-Syrian after the "census". They nevertheless had to do military service and fought in the Golan. Without identity papers they could not and still cannot marry legally, nor go to hospital, nor enrol their children in schools.

Later, the Arab Belt Plan was modestly called "Plan for the establishment of State Model Farms in the Djezira Province". Under the disguise of socialism and agrarian reform, it aimed at expelling Kurdish peasants from the region and replacing them by Arabs.

In 1966, Damascus seriously considered implementing that plan. It even wanted to extend it to the Kurd-Dagh



Cigerxwîn (1903-1984), the greatest of popular poets.

(Mountain of the Kurds) region. Selective orders to leave were given to the peasants. However, they refused and the war with Israel forced the government to abandon this project.

After the construction of the great Tabqa dam on the Euphrates, the government considered implanting Arab peasants, whose villages were flooded, in the Kurdish region of Djezira. During 1970, 40 "modern villages" were constructed by the government in the Belt Zone. 7,000 Arab peasant families were implanted and armed.

The plan was executed at a slow pace, so as not to draw the attention of the outside world. The measures against the Kurds included: spoliation, administrative harassment, police raids, loss of work, confiscation of literary works and records, prohibition of performing Kurdish folklore music in public places, changing the names of Kurdish towns, villages and districts. The leaders of the Syrian PDK were imprisoned for a lengthy period. Amnesty International adopted some of them.

During the seventies, 30,000 Kurds from Djezira were forced to leave. They sought refuge in Lebanon and in Syrian towns.

Since Hafez Al-Assad has come to power, the repression of the Kurds is less severe. Knowing that his authority is unpopular and fragile, Assad prefers to pacify the Kurds and the Christians to avoid too many turbulent enemies. This does not mean that the Kurds have acquired any rights in Syria, but as long as they do not go into politics, they are free to listen to Kurdish music and a blind eye is turned to the semi-clandestine sale of certain strictly literary Kurdish publications. Since a couple of years, the government tolerates the celebration of the Kurdish national day, Newroz, under the supervision of the military authorities. Nevertheless, in 1986, there were grave disturbances and several dead during the preparations for this celebration in Damascus. In 1987, the military forbade the Kurds of one region to celebrate Newroz in another region.

THE KURDS IN THE USSR.

There is no Kurdish territory in the USSR. However, compact Kurdish communities are scattered over the Transcaucasian and Central Asian Republics. A vast majority lives in Azerbaijan and Armenia. The rest live in Georgia, Kazakh, Kirghiz and Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republics.

The dispersion of the Soviet Kurds has historic and religious reasons. In the second half of the 18th century, certain Kurdish tribes first spread into the Eri-van plain and later into Azerbaijan. Because of this slow and progressive expansion, Kurdish villages developed. The tsarist authorities welcomed this implantation, because of their usefulness as reputed warriors against the Ottoman and Persian empires.

In the 19th century the Kurdish immigration increased because of the Russo-Turkish wars and the Kurdish uprisings in the Ottoman and Persian empires. Many among the refugees were Yezidis, Kurds with a specific religion derived from a mixture of Zoroastrism and Islam. They were persecuted by both the Ottoman authorities and the traditional Kurdish Muslim chiefs. After having sustained pogroms for a long time, they finally settled in Christian Armenia and Georgia, which were less hostile to their particular religion. The Muslim Kurds preferred to settle in Muslim Azerbaijan and to a lesser extent in the Armenian Azerbaijani colonies.

Even under the Soviet regime, religious affinities continued to play a prime role in the behaviour and further evolution of both the Muslim and Yezidi Kurdish colonies. The Yezidis, in spite of their inferior numbers, were and still are the best defenders of the Kurdish identity. They jealously preserve their national particularities. They resist assimilation into the Georgian and Armenian entities. In spite of their numbers, the Muslim Kurds only play a secondary role in the development of the Soviet cultural life.



Qenatê Kurdo (1909–1985), one of the greatest
Kurdish authors in the USSR.

From 1915 onwards, the immigration stream dried up for several reasons: the first world war, the terror of the nationalist Dashnak government in Erivan, the civil war, the propaganda of the Turkish sultans and the Kemalists against Bolshevism, which they depicted as the destroyer of family, religion and ethics.

When the Soviets came to power, the Kurds broke with their old ways of life. The nomads settled down and were gradually turned into agricultural wage earners. The children were sent to school. From within the more or less scattered colonies, a national way of life emerged.

In 1923, an autonomous Kurdistan was founded in the region between Karabakh and Armenia. It was repressed by the end of 1929.

In 1988, after the painful confrontations between the Armenians and the Azerbaijanis of Karabakh, the Kurdish intellectuals in the USSR expressed their solidarity with the Armenians. In a letter to Mikhail Gorbachev and other members of government, they referred to the "white genocide" to which the Azerbaijani Kurds fell victim. The letter was published in the Armenian monthly Hayta of February 1988:

"In 1923, an autonomous Kurdish region was created within the boundaries of the Azerbaijani Socialist Soviet Republic, which had Lachin as administrative capital. This region encompassed the districts of Kelbacar, Gubatli, Kurt-Aci, Murad-Khalil and Karaishlakh. Because of considerate and precise directives by Lenin, Kurdish schools were founded and school manuals, other books and a journal, called The Soviet Kurdistan, were published. A pedagogic institution and other cultural organisms for the Kurds were created in the town of Shusha. As such, the Kurds received a cultural and social promotion during the first years of Soviet rule. However, it did not last long. From 1929 onwards, attitudes towards the Kurdish population changed. The autonomous Kurdish region was suppressed. An important part of the Kurdish population was forcibly deported to Kazakhstan and Turkmenia. The Kurds active in the arts

and culture, their progressive, leading or intellectual members were declared enemies of the people and exterminated, shot. After Stalin, in 1957, the decrees on deportations were annulled and the Kurds were allowed to return to their former areas of residence. However, it was impossible to recreate the Kurdish region. And all rights were lost in history. Pan-Turkism, which arose during Stalin's reign, continued to flourish under the guise of Marxist-Leninism. Even today, the existence of a Kurdish population is still officially denied in Azerbaijan. Statistics are forged; the importance of the Kurds is systematically reduced. In the entire district of Azerbaijan, not a single Kurdish writer, artist, painter exists, nor does a Kurd occupy any post within the party hierarchy. If a Kurd wants to apply for whatever official post, he has to enter the Azerbaijani nationality on his identity card."

At the end of their letter, the Kurdish intellectuals demanded the reattachment of this region to Armenia, where the Kurdish situation is the best in the USSR.

Between 1930-1937, it was the "Battle for Education". The Kurdish language was used for alphabetization purposes in Armenia, Georgia and to some extent in Azerbaijan.

Cultural life until 1935.

Neither in Azerbaijan, nor in Turkmen, does a Kurdish book ever see the light. In Armenia, there were no publications in Kurdish between 1937-1946. The cultural production of non-Russians was very low. Later a moderate impulse was given to a policy of nationalities. In 1957, 12 titles, among which a Russian-Kurdish dictionary with 30,000 words compiled by I. O. Farizov, were published in the Kurdish language.

Between 1921 and 1960, 238 Kurdish works, totalling 370,000 copies were published in all Soviet republics.



Cemfla Celîl, musician.

The present-day situation.

The Armenian, Georgian and to a certain extent the Kazakh and Kirghiz Kurds enjoy cultural privileges. In the schools of the Kurdish villages, the Kurdish language and literature are taught. In mixed villages, the parents may request and obtain the teaching of the Kurdish language and literature in all classes numbering at least five Kurdish pupils.

All school books come from Armenian publishers. These firms also publish the works of poets and authors affiliated to the Kurdish branches of the Union of Armenian and Georgian Writers. Many Kurdish writers, researchers and scientists together with Armenian and Soviet Kurdo-logists work on the Kurdish language, history and literature at the universities of Erivan, Leningrad and Moscow. Since 1956, Radio Moscow has been transmitting daily in the Kurdish language.

THE KURDS IN EUROPE

The Kurds arrived in Europe during the seventies. Most of them are from Turkey. They arrived with their families as labourers in the framework of bilateral agreements between European countries and Turkey. Roughly half of them live in the Federal Republic of Germany, where they constitute an important community of at least 250,000 people. A small number are refugees who fled from Iraq in 1975 after the collapse of the Kurdish movement, and from Turkey in 1980 after the military coup. Others have fled from the Irano-Iraqi war. There is also a small number of students.

On top of all the hardships encountered by all immigrants, the Kurds encounter additional difficulties. In Europe they are considered as Turks, Armenians or Persians. This follows from the fact they are not recognised as Kurds in their home countries. Because of the freedom of speech they were gradually able to establish socio-cultural institutions all over the United States, Australia, Canada ... However, they are still unable to acquire the same cultural privileges as other nationalities such as regular radio and television transmissions, sufficient funds to enable them to expand their activities... Moreover, Turkey exerts great pressure on the European governments, especially on the German, to create difficulties for the Kurdish organisations. Recently, the cultural magazine, Mizgîn, which is published in Bonn in both the German and Kurdish language by the Red Cross and the Kurdish Institute in Bonn and which mainly prints articles on health problems, was banned by the German government. They acted under Turkish pressure. The magazine was seen as an "incitement to segregation". German and some Belgian townships refuse to register newborn babies if the parents insist on giving them a Kurdish name! In Sweden, where the Kurds enjoy the most privileges, a Kurdish nursery had to close its doors not because the township gave in to blackmail from the Turkish authorities, but because the parents panicked when members of the Turkish embassy started house checks. On February 8, 1987, the popular



Yilmaz Güney (1937-1984), Golden Palm in Cannes.

Kurdish singer Ibrahim Tatlisles had to appear before the State Security Court in Istanbul for having sung a single Kurdish song in Stockholm, Sweden during a European tour!

In spite of all these difficulties, the cultural activities of the Kurds gradually increase: newspapers, magazines, books, research work, cine and video productions, exhibitions of paintings and sculptures ... In the archives of the Kurdish Institute in Paris alone, close to 4,000 volumes on Kurdish history, language and literature are to be found in about 20 different languages.

The famous Kurdish film-producer and author Yilmaz Güney, also director of "Herd" and "Yol" for which he won the Golden Palm at the Cannes Festival acquainted the whole world with the Kurdish people. He died on September 9, 1984. The wellknown singer with a magnificent voice, Sivan, since many years in exile in Europe, gives hundreds of concerts with Kurdish songs in Europe, Australia and the United States. His tapes are listened to with fervour in the four corners of Kurdistan. The Kurdish writer Memet Emin Bozarslan, refugee in Sweden, has been a member of the Union of Scandinavian authors for many years. In 1987, two Kurdish writers obtained a grant. In West Germany, the Heinrich Böll Foundation allotted a grant for six months to Mahmut Baksi to write a book on the Kurds living in Germany. In Sweden, the Kurdish poet Shêrgo Bêkes received the Tucholsky grant from the Union of Swedish Writers (Pen Club). The Swedish Prime Minister, Ingvar Karlsson, presented him with the grant himself at an official reception in Stockholm.

The Kurdish language is being taught in several European universities. In Sweden there is a Kurdish teacher training college attached to the University of Stockholm since 1985.

Thanks to the massive presence of Kurds and their organisations in Europe, several internationally famous artists have admitted to their Kurdish origins. Maurice

HOZANÊ WELAT ŞIVAN PERWER



Enstîtuya Kurdî

Şivan, national singer.

Béjart, creator of the famous "Ballet of the 20th Century", declared in the January 7, 1987 edition of the magazine "Jeune Afrique" that he is of Kurdish origin! Following that, he became honorary member of the Kurdish Institute in Paris. Luigi Colani, a well-known designer, admitted in the Paris "Création Magazine" of May 1987 that he is a Kurd!

Institut kurde de Paris

SOME REFLECTIONS

After this quick survey of the situation past and present of the Kurdish people, we would like to add a few reflections to draw the attention of the reader to the particular difficulty of the Kurdish problem.

We have often been told that if the Kurds to this day have no rights, it is because of the lack of unity within their movement. It is certainly a major reason, but not the only one. If one only sees this reason, it is placing the responsibility too much with the Kurds and involuntarily reducing the importance of those who systematically hush up the problem and have no wish to solve it.

Internal obstructions first. We know of no oppressed people that is united. All liberation movements suffer the painful problem of political divergences. Moreover, colonists have always played the game of "divide and rule" in a myriad of ways. Also, the Kurdish people is not dependent on a single government like most of the other peoples, but on four. As such, the Kurds undergo different events in each country in a different social and political context. And finally, if the Kurds succeed to co-ordinate their actions across the borders, as they have done on several occasions, they have to face four armies at the same time.

To all this, the discord between all other forces opposing the dictatorships has to be added. The Kurds have always been willing to collaborate with these democratic forces, however, without ever really succeeding. This shows how much easier it is to fight an outside colonizer than an inside enemy.

As to the external obstructions, it is the Kurds' misfortune to inhabit a region which has been internationally sensitive and explosive for centuries. The Middle East is also a strategically vital area and they are a menace to vested interests. On the border of the

USSR, near the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean, and being rich in oil and other natural resources and a passage between East and West, Kurdistan is an abscess that the entire world wishes to burst gently.

Not a single government, not a single international institution wishes to support the Kurds officially for fear of vexing other governments, allies or "friends" of one or other block.

Mass-media follow the trend of the governments and rarely give information on Kurdistan, and then never in depth. Public opinion, not being informed, is naturally not interested in this problem.

We do not want to play the role of scapegoat. We want to highlight the different factors which often escape the notice of people who are not familiar with the Kurdish problem. The complexity is understandably beyond their comprehension.

Institut kurde de paris

Supplément à Hebdo 76/58 du 15 au 21 déc. 76

Déclaration Universelle des Droits des Peuples



Alger, juillet 1976

Edité par la section belge
de la Ligue internationale pour les droits et la libération des peuples

SOME HISTORIC DATES

- 1916: The Sykes-Picot Treaty, signed by France, Great Britain and Russia, which prepares the division of the Middle East between France and Great Britain.
- 1918: The cease-fire of Moudros: The fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Allied victory.
- 1920: The Peace Conference in Paris. The Kurdish delegate Sherif Pasha present two memorandums with the Kurdish demands together with a map of Kurdistan.
- 1920: The conference of San Remo. It confirms the British mandate over Mesopotamia and Palestine.
- 1920: The Sèvres Treaty, signed by the League of Nations. It refers to the 14 points of the American President Wilson and to "the right of nations to govern themselves". Promise of independence for a large part of the Ottoman Kurdistan and for Armenia.
- 1922: The Lausanne Treaty. Abolition of the Sèvres Treaty because of Ata-Turk's and Britain's opposition, the latter having interests in the oil found in Iraqi Kurdistan.
- 1937: The Saadabad Pact, between Turkey, Iran and Iraq. One of the aims of this pact of "good neighbours" is to solve the Kurdish problem in those countries.
- 1946: The foundation of the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad in Iran.
- 1955: The Baghdad Pact, between Turkey, Iraq, Great Britain, Pakistan and Iran. It forms the basis of

a regional military alliance, The Middle East Treaty Organisation (M.E.T.O.).

1975: The Algiers Accord. Algeria reconciles Iran and Iraq, causing the crumbling of the Kurdish movement against Iraq since 1961.

1980: Military coup in Turkey. Prohibition of all Kurdish organisations and a Hitler-like repression of the entire Kurdish population in Turkey.

1983-1986: The Turkish army penetrates three times into Iraqi Kurdistan and bombs the civil population.

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APPENDICES

Institut kurde de Paris

Exposed: Iraq's gas war

Seized documents reveal terror plan

DESPITE strenuous denials by the Iraqis that they have used chemical weapons, *The Observer* has gained copies of Iraqi army documents specifically ordering their deployment. The documents were seized by the Kurdish Democratic Party, one of the main guerrilla organisations in northern Iraq, when they successfully attacked the important Iraqi military base of Deeralok at the end of January.

They confirm Kurdish and Iranian charges that Iraq has been pursuing a persistent policy of chemical warfare, climaxing in a cyanide gas attack this month on the city of Halabja in which around 4,000 civilians were killed. The use of chemical weapons is, according to the Kurds, still continuing today.

The official documents are now in London. There are two of them. One is a telegram, marked 'urgent' and the second a letter from the Iraqi artillery command. It is headed, ironically, 'In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful'.

The letter was sent by General Du'ah Abdul Waham Ezzat at the headquarters of Arbil district in Kurdistan to all units of the 24th Battalion. The subject, stated at the top of the letter, is 'Control over distribution of biological and chemical weapons'.

Referring to a series of letters, all 'personal and highly confidential', of the Interior Ministry, Defence Ministry, the special bureau of the Army Chief of Staff and National Defence Forces, the commander requires a half-yearly stock-taking of all chemical and

EXCLUSIVE

by HELGA GRAHAM

biological weapons 'at the disposal of the units'.

The telegram is from Major Sa'di Mahmoud Hussein, Commander of the Zakho district of Kurdistan to 'Commander A'. The purpose is to inform him that the KDP have acquired 4,000 gas masks. 'Saboteurs (ie guerrillas) will wear them when we use chemical weapons to attack their concentrations'.

In the meantime, the chemical attacks against civilians are apparently continuing. The Kurds say that the Iraqi Army has, within the last few days, again resorted to chemical attacks in a drive to clear the Kurdish insurgents from the Karadagh mountains.

Iraqi chemical attacks on the Kurds, denied but surely now undeniable, constitute a cold-blooded, desperate last-ditch strategy to mask the Iraqi Government's military weakness in the northern Kurdish area of the country. In its war with Iran, Kurdistan is widely seen as Iraq's Achilles heel.

On the flat land of the southern and middle sectors of the Gulf war, meticulously mined by the French and Iraq's other foreign allies, a combination of geography and modern technology have so far helped the Iraqi Army in their war with the Iranians. But the northern Kurdish mountains are not so easily tamed by technology.

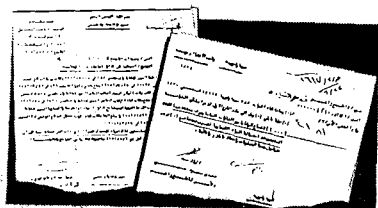
It has taken the Iranians an astonishingly long time to exploit fully Iraq's weakness here — as they are now trying to do. Mesmerised by the Shia holy cities of Kerbala and Najaf in the south

of Iraq and believing that Iraqi Shia in those areas would rise up against the Iraqi Government, the Iranians half-ignored the Kurds who had long been fighting for autonomy and democracy against what they consider to be the ruthless and despotic Ba'ath regime in Baghdad.

But eventually, Iran realised that the Kurds were gaining more land by themselves than they were, with all their razzamatazz, on the war front. So over the past year or two, they have begun to arm and aid the Kurds more effectively.

Now, with spring at hand, the battle for Kurdistan is being waged more savagely than at any time since the Gulf war began.

For the Iraqi Army, the strategy must be to establish two lines of defence — at the chain of mountains at Chermanand and from Derbendihkan to Sulemanniya. The Kurds and Iranians will try to break through here, as well as capture the dams of Dokan and Derbendihkan.



Rules of terror: Part of the seized documents.

The Observer, 27.3.1988

Iraq Stands Accused

Again, Iraq stands credibly accused of resorting to chemical weapons in its war with Iran. More than 100 Kurds — women, children and elderly people — were killed on March 16 in the Iranian-occupied city of Halabja. The instrument of their death arrived in a single warplane, almost certainly Iraqi, whose bombs dispersed a yellow-white cloud through the Kurdish Iraqi city.

The deed is in every sense a war crime. It is compounded by Iraq's lame official denials and unofficial alibis for using a dastardly weapon. The U.S. State Department properly denounced Iraq for its "particularly grave violation" of the 1925 Geneva protocol outlawing use of gas weapons.

Americans have no wish to see Iran prevail in the Gulf war, but it was not the ayatollahs who started it, bombed the U.S.S. Stark and escalated the "war of the cities," firing missiles into the center of civilian areas.

Iran bears the responsibility for prolonging this senseless war. If it now retaliates with its own gas weapons, the mullahs will have thrown away their moral advantage and edged the world closer to barbarism.

Churchill called mustard gas "hellish poison" when it was introduced by the Germans, then used by all sides routinely and hideously in World War I. So great was the loathing aroused by chemical warfare that

former belligerents joined in signing the 1925 protocol against use of a weapon "justly condemned by the general opinion of the civilized world." Iraq signed in 1931, and now it violates both the letter and the spirit of the treaty. The victims are not even Iranian soldiers but Iraq's own Kurdish citizens. The attack appears to be a grisly warning against an ethnic group that Baghdad accuses of collaborating with Iran.

Long before the Gulf war, sporadic violations were alleged against the Italians in Ethiopia in 1935-36 and Egypt in Yemen in 1963. But Iraq's violation has been repeated and flagrant, beginning in 1984. Baghdad's culpability was established by a United Nations inquiry, resulting in condemnation by the Security Council.

The United States and the Soviet Union have been negotiating a new Geneva agreement that would reaffirm the ban on use, outlaw production and call for destruction of stockpiles of chemical weapons. Agreement has been stalled in arguments over verification and what to do about proliferation of these weapons to states like Iraq.

In the meantime, Washington and Moscow have to get an urgent message to Baghdad now: Stop using these weapons or forfeit outside support.

— THE NEW YORK TIMES.

Baghdad 'using truce to pound Kurdish rebels'

Adrian Foreman in Ankara

REPORTS from south-eastern Turkey appear to support suggestions that Iraq is taking advantage of the Gulf war ceasefire to eradicate its Kurdish separatism problem.

For the last two weeks, reports from the Turkish border region around Semdinli, in Hakkari province, have spoken of fighting between the Iraqi Fifth Army and Kurdish separatists, who have been supported by Iran as an extra fighting force in the Gulf conflict.

The fighting at first mostly involved members of the Kurd-

ish Democratic Party (KDP), based near the Turkish border. But it is now reported to have spread south into Iraq's Suleymaniya border province with Iran, and to be also involving the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK).

It remains unclear how many have died in the fighting which, despite persistent Iraqi denials, is said to involve the use of mustard gas and other chemical weapons by Iraqi forces.

Witnesses say up to 1,000 Kurdish refugees have crossed into Turkey to escape the fighting.

But official Turkish sources say the number of refugees is

much smaller — a few groups of 10 or 20. The sources confirmed reports that the refugees had been escorted by members of Iran's Revolutionary Guard, into Iran.

The sources said long-range Iraqi artillery shelled the Turkish border on Sunday, apparently by accident, but that no damage was caused. Reports from the region, however, said at least three Turkish villages have been evacuated.

The Iraqi ambassador in Ankara, Mr Tariq Abduljabbar Jawad, confirmed action in the region, but said the army was involved only in "anti-terrorist action."

Peace deal signals slaughter of Kurds

AS THE guns fall silent between Iran and Iraq, there are fears that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has taken off the gloves in readiness to deal a knockout blow to the Kurds.

The Kurdish Democratic Party is issuing desperate warnings that a massacre of 150,000 Kurdish civilians, mainly refugees, may be at hand. Saddam, they fear, will not hesitate to use chemical weapons against them. Meanwhile, the Iraqi army is massing near the northern Iraqi border with Turkey and Syria. The Defence Minister and the Chief of Staff are in Mosul nearby. A military onslaught against the remaining Kurdish 'liberated' zone — an area along 210 miles of the Iraqi border with Turkey which is in the hands of Kurdish guerrillas — is in preparation. The UN Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group, according to reports, has been refused access to the Kurdish areas by Baghdad.

The Iraqi army has already bombed guerrilla positions with chemical weapons. Turkish MPs report large areas of vegetation devastated on their side of the border and the hives of honey farms wiped out by the nerve and mustard gas blowing in from Iraq.

Small wonder that the shadow of Halabja — where 4,000 Kurdish civilians were killed by toxic gases, hundreds more sustained agonising injuries and birds dropped from trees in mid-song — now haunts the area.

Saddam Hussein has given notice of his intentions. According to informed reports, Saudi Arabia's King Fahd suggested about a year ago to the Iraqi President that they go easy on the Kurds. Saddam icily replied that once the war was over he would deal with them 'for once and for all'.

The 150,000 Kurdish civilians immenently at risk are only the tip of the genocidal iceberg. The massive deportation of Kurds away from their own areas in the north is expected soon.

There are two dimensions to the problem. One is that the Kurds are a people and a nation artificially divided between several countries. They are no more a minority than an oak sapling planted in a suburban garden is a shrub. In total, Kurds number at least 20 million.

In Iraq, there are between four and five million Kurds — a quarter of the population. If they had been given a satisfactory share of the spoils in the early days of the State, they might have integrated fully. But this was not the case. The Kurds' response was to demand autonomy within Iraq.

The second problem is that the Iraqi



Viewpoint

revolution of 1958 was a democratic revolution hijacked by the Baath Socialist Party. The Baath bought off the Arabs with bread and circuses: a wide distribution of the new oil wealth and a violently rhetorical and at times hysterically overblown Arab nationalism that *ipso facto* excluded the Kurds.

The Kurds thus became the core of the democratic opposition in Iraq. Kurds are democrats not out of political virtue but rather by virtue of their minority status: only in democratic States can their political and economic rights be obtained.

Thus the so-called Kurdish problem is more properly an Iraqi problem. It remains intractable for as long as there is no democracy in Iraq. The democratic autonomous Kurdistan for which the guerrilla organisations are fighting within Saddam's military dictatorship is like an elephant inside a boa constrictor — plain indigestible.

Now suddenly this old impasse has been sinistinely unblocked. Kurds are no longer safe in their mountains. The dire element is Saddam's readiness to use atrocious chemical substances against civilians. 'It's the first time in history a Government has used chemical weapons against its own citizens who are not on the battlefield,' says Talabani, one of the Kurdish leaders.

Muted outcry

It is true that the use of chemical weapons, constant over the past year against Kurdish villagers, has been condemned — by the UN, by the European Parliament, unanimously by the US Senate foreign relations committee, by the British Government even. But the outcry has been less than deafening.

The truth is that unless Saddam is now forcibly restrained by the Western and Arab countries who are sustaining him militarily, technically and economically — us, in other words — the possibility that a terrible human tragedy may be imminent must be seriously considered. We are forewarned by Kurdish history and Saddam's character and current ambitions.

Let us not delude ourselves either, as we pack for the Tehran or Baghdad trade fairs, that this is some distant, dismal tribal quarrel we can dodge. There are now hundreds of thousands of Kurds in Europe — mainly Turkish Kurds working in Germany. In the event of another Halabja, the 'West's complicity' will not be forgiven.

Indeed, would we not be responsible?

HELGA GRAHAM

Observer Sunday, 28.8.1988

The Gasing of the Kurds

Iran and Iraq, though far from peace, are no longer shooting at each other in the Gulf. But behind the lines both are taking grim and quiet vengeance against those of their citizens who worked with the other side during the war. Iran is evidently finishing off the mujahidin movement sponsored and deployed by Iraq. Iraq is moving against its Kurds, whose rebellion was supported by Iran.

There is a sense of inevitability to this settling of scores by governments finally in a position to punish what both describe as traitors. The mujahidin and the Kurds took a fateful gamble and lost. The governments they challenged are not much of a mind to be told that patient reconciliation with the challengers is the wisest course now.

The ways in which Iraq is treating the Kurds, however, are especially brutal, disproportionate and unjustified. Some three million of the 20 million ethnic Kurds dispersed across the region are Iraqis. They used the Gulf war to renew their historical bid to move from begrudged local rule to full autonomy and on to "self-determination." Now Baghdad is using the cease-fire less to crush the Kurdish rebellion, it seems, than to crush the Kurds and the very idea of

a future "Kurdistan." That involves not just rooting out the now-isolated resistance but intensifying a campaign that has seen destruction of 1,000 Kurdish villages, relocating ("reorganizing"), perhaps a million Kurds of the mountainous north and driving tens of thousands of Kurds into Turkey.

The most barbaric specific thing Iraq is doing is using poison gas — using it despite repeated international condemnations for its past conduct of this horrifying and outlawed practice, using it when the Kurdish resistance is already broken, using it on civilians as well as combatants. It is a policy measurably more extreme and loathsome than other steps that the regime of Saddam Hussein is taking against the Kurds.

Perhaps Iraq cannot see that the gas is going to add yet another element of bitterness and unforgiveness to the passion of the Kurds in years to come. In any event, the use of gas makes it out of the question for the United States and any other country with a pretense of respect for basic decencies to accept the ostensibly newly "moderate" Iraqi government as a partner in the post-Gulf-war world.

— THE WASHINGTON POST.



Testimony to genocide: Kurdish families flee their homes, under chemical siege by Saddam Hussein's army.

US sanctions blow to Iraq

THE UNITED STATES Congress this weekend voted for an unprecedented range of sanctions against Iraq for its 'genocide against the Kurdish population in Iraq'.

Under the bill, which passed through both Senate and House of Representatives early yesterday, the US could enact 'military, economic, oil purchasing and credit sanctions' against Baghdad unless it ceased immediately its chemical attacks and civilian assaults against the Kurds.

President Reagan still has to sign the measure into law. But it would be surprising if he were to resist, particularly since support for the bill in Congress has been bipartisan and since the Administration has strongly condemned Iraq's 'totally unjustifiable and unacceptable' use of chemical weapons against the Kurds.

Since Iraq is heavily dependent on US food imports and receives a loan of about \$1.2 billion a year, Congressional action will come as a stunning blow both to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's pride and to Iraq's purse.

In recent weeks Saddam has been scattering international laws like skittles while the voice of the international community has seemed stuck in a groove, intoning 'grave concern' as Kurdish civilians have been gassed daily. No

independent body, including the United Nations, would move to verify the Kurds' allegations, so nothing could be done to protect them. This dismal spectacle was denounced by Senator Claiborne Pell, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, who moved the Bill. 'Silence is complicity,' he said.

There are two motives for Congress's tough stance: the fear that, if unchecked, Saddam will have legitimised chemical warfare, as well as a new concern with human rights within the US foreign policy establishment. The struggle to move the Kurdish issue in the UN, although pre-empted, will presumably continue and complement such US action as may be taken.

Britain's role so far has been a little more active than statements issued by the Foreign Office might suggest. Early in the week the Government had hoped to announce a British-sponsored initiative in the UN Security Council to dispatch an investigative team. But the initiative failed.

China was a major obstacle. But Russia's decision to co-operate on the Kurdish issue will make it easier for the US and the UN to act decisively against Iraq.

In the meantime, the Iraqi President has 'amnestied' Kurdish guerrillas and asked them to return - a move some regard as akin to throwing a live lobster into

by HELGA GRAHAM

boiling water, pulling it out half-scalded, then inviting it to join the dinner party. The Kurds have dismissed the offer as a political ploy.

Pockets of resistance are continuing in northern Iraq as Kurdish leaders try to hold up the Iraqi army to allow civilians to escape. But the leaders have lost contact with tens of thousands of civilians. Kurds allege that unless Western government, humanitarian or church agencies take up their cases these women and children are unlikely to survive.

Internally, the situation is moving faster than might be expected. Guerrillas, both Shia and Kurd, are being deployed in Iraq's major cities to attack military, police and government targets - how effectively, it is hard to say. Backing, in the form of arms and money, is coming from Iran and Syria. Saddam's chemical weapons have induced a serious spasm of the jitter in the region and several Arab regimes are intervening for the Kurds behind the scenes.

Iraq has retaliated against Syria by moving troops to the Syrian border. With extra troops also dispatched

to Kurdish areas, the army is uncomfortably stretched and vulnerable to guerrilla hit-and-run tactics. Saddam's message is clear: abandon the Kurds and we will not interfere with you in Lebanon.

He is seen to be attacking the Kurds for the same reasons used against them for two decades - not 'punishment' for their tactical alliance with Iran, but to eradicate their opposition to his authoritarian rule.

Even if the international community finally halts the use of chemical weapons, the genocide is unlikely to abate in the coming weeks.

The Observer, 11.9.1988

UN Is Asked to Check Reports on Kurds

By Paul Lewis

New York Times Service

WASHINGTON — The United States and several of its allies have asked the secretary-general of the United Nations to send an investigative team to Iraq to determine whether the armed forces there used poison gas against Kurdish guerrillas, diplomats said.

The request on Monday to Javier Pérez de Cuéllar — from the United States, Britain, West Germany and Japan — seeks to have a UN team travel to northern Iraq to look for evidence of chemical warfare in the mountainous Kurdish regions and to Turkey, where thousands of Kurdish refugees have fled the fighting.

Interviews with the refugees indicate that something unusual took place to cause the exodus of the Kurds, who have long resisted conventional military pressure. But although suspicion is strong, evidence of actual use of poison gas does not appear conclusive.

Nor is it clear whether Iraq, which denies the accusations, would allow such investigators to enter its territory. But the United Nations hopes to have a team ready by week's end that could be sent to the Kurdish camps in Turkey if Iraq refuses it entry.

Iraq's acting foreign minister, Saadoun Hammadi, was careful on his visit to Washington last week not to reject some kind of outside investigation, though he said that military operations there must first be completed.

Western diplomats argue that it would be tantamount to an admission of guilt for Iraq to deny UN inspectors full access to its territory after it had dismissed the accusa-

tions as untrue. They point out, though, that Iraq might conceal evidence of gas use.

Such evidence usually consists of skin and lung burns, as well as fragments of shell and bomb casings contaminated by the chemicals they contained.

Since the cease-fire last month in its war against Iran, the Iraqi Army has reportedly mounted a major push against dissident Kurds in the north.

The Kurdish struggle for autonomy or independence from Iraq is decades old, and in recent years, the Iraqi Kurds have received help from the Iranians, who have used them as a surrogate force against Iraq.

Thousands of Kurds have fled across the border into Turkey and Iran.

The Reagan administration, endorsing the Kurds' accusations of Iraqi use of chemical warfare, has said it has evidence of its own that Baghdad has been using poison gas in this latest attempt to crush the Kurdish rebels.

UN investigators have already concluded three times this year that Iraq used mustard gas and other chemical agents against Iran before the cease-fire agreement. The most recent report described Iraq's use of such weapons as "intense and frequent."

The use of chemical and biological weapons in warfare was outlawed by the Geneva Protocol of 1925, although countries are still allowed to manufacture and store them as deterrents against attack.

Experts say that international law is unclear whether the prohibition also applies to military action within a country directed against dissident elements of its own population.

But the Reagan administration has made clear that it condemns the use of poison gas and other chemical weapons against the Kurds on moral and human-rights grounds.

Congress has also moved to impose economic sanctions against Iraq as a result of the allegations. A Senate bill approved last week would cut off trade credits worth about \$800 million, halt American exports of military and other sensitive equipment to Iraq, and require U.S. representatives to vote against new loans to Baghdad by the World Bank and other international lending agencies.

The House is expected to debate similar legislation later this week. Staffers say it is uncertain whether Congress will have time to enact any measure before it adjourns, probably early next month.

Supporters of sanctions say they would have a crippling effect on the economic life of a country that is desperately struggling to pay a huge foreign debt incurred as a result of the Gulf War. Some estimates put it at \$60 billion.

In addition to American, British, West German and Japanese support for an investigation, Italy favored the initiative but was not represented at the meeting with the secretary-general, diplomats say, because its new UN representative has not yet been accredited.

France, a permanent member of the Security Council, said it supports the investigation, though it was one of Iraq's principal arms suppliers during the Gulf War.

Who Will Stop Iraq From Torturing Children?

By Jonathan Power

LONDON — Brutal treatment of children has become routine practice in the prisons of Iraq, Amnesty International reported last night. Young people have been tortured, often to force them to reveal information about their relatives. Infants have been ill-treated to compel members of their families to confess to alleged political offenses.

Who can influence Iraq? It fought a nonsensical war with Iran for eight years. Contrary to a solemn international treaty that it had signed voluntarily, it used chemical weapons, first against Iran and then to kill 5,000 residents of Halabja in an attempt to destroy a Kurdish stronghold.

Amnesty says it is asking the United Nations Commission for Human Rights, now meeting in Geneva, to investigate and find a way to protect these children. But this comes a few days after the commission published a spineless report on abuses in Cuba. Will Iraq's Islamic friends veto any action, just as Cuba's Communist friends did? Can they close their eyes to stories like these?

Mirza Rasho was 6 years old when he was imprisoned in 1985. He is currently held in Mosul.

Lami Khan 'Abd al-Baqi Taha was 12 when she was imprisoned in 1985. She is now held in Duhok.

Ladhin Sabri Hussain was 10 when imprisoned in 1985. He is in Mosul.

Muhammad 'Omar Najm was 11 when sent to jail in 1985. He is held in Tikrit.

Jum'a 'Abd al-Baqi Taha was 11 when imprisoned in 1985. He is in Duhok.

Amnesty has evidence of the torture of whole groups of children. According to the testimony of a former detainee released from Fudailiyya Security headquarters at the end of 1985 and regarded by Amnesty as an honest source, some of the 300

children and youths from Sulaimaniya held in the prison were beaten, whipped, sexually abused and given electric shocks.

Another former political prisoner, also considered very reliable, tells about the fate of his own family brought in front of him and tortured to make him reveal his political affiliation. He said: "My mother, three sisters and three brothers with five children aged between 5 and 13 were arrested and brought in front of me. They were subjected to the *falaga* (beaten on the soles of the feet) and electric shocks." He says he saw a 5-month-old baby screaming after being deliberately deprived of milk to force his parents to confess.

Iraq is not alone in abusing children to intimidate parents. The regime of Alfredo Stroessner, recently overthrown in Paraguay, was a notorious practitioner of this black art. I will never forget two photographs of the 17-year-old son of the Paraguayan doctor, painter and philanthropist, Joel Holden Filartiga, who was well known for the help he gave to the rural poor and his constant opposition to the dictatorship. In one photo is young Joel, a bright, attractive boy. In the other is the picture, taken during his autopsy, of a face distorted by pain. In an effort to intimidate his father, the boy was abducted and tortured to death.

The Soviet Union used to separate children from their parents to bring pressure to bear on families who belonged to religious communities.

In Ethiopia the chief of state, Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, in an effort to consolidate his power in the early days of his revolution, un-

leashed in 1977 what he called the "Red Terror." During the peak period, at least 100 young people aged between 12 and 25 were killed. Executions often took place in public, and then the bodies were sold back to the parents for burial. "Paying for the bullet," the revolutionaries called it.

The worst of all the atrocities I have come across was the massacre of 100 children in the Central African Republic by Emperor Bokassa in 1979. Some were murdered by suffocation in the central prison in the capital, Bangui. Some of the survivors claimed that they saw the emperor inside the prison personally directing and participating in the killings. Another survivor described how a group of 20 boys were taken outside Bangui and killed when stones were dumped on top of them.

Wherever these atrocities occur, it is civilization at its lowest level. The Soviet Union and the Central African Republic have now outlawed such behavior, but in other countries it still persists. Iraq is the worst current case but not the only one. Last year there were well substantiated reports of the torture of children in South African prisons, and more recently there have been similar reports coming out of Turkey.

Without Amnesty International there would have been no exposure of Emperor Bokassa, and he probably would not have been toppled. The French had protected their protégé with a wall of silence, but once the press gave front-page coverage to the Amnesty report they felt compelled to send in the paratroopers to depose him. No one protested against their blatant intervention. Iraq is a harder nut to crack, but we should never give up.

International Herald Tribune.

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'We Have No Friends'

"Here they remain," wrote Clyde Haberman of The New York Times from a refugee camp in Turkey, "yesterday's headline and tomorrow's uncertainty." That poignantly renders the unchanging plight of the all but forgotten Kurdish people, who probably total 20 million.

When their villages in Iraq were gassed last summer, some 50,000 Kurds fled into Turkey, which denies basic rights to its own Kurds. Of these refugees, 14,000 were encouraged by the Turks to move on to Iran, another country which slaughters its Kurds.

Iraq's murderous poison gas attack on Kurdish villages aroused protest last year, although not enough to move the United Nations to vote a human rights investigation of Iraq. Third World solidarity runs thicker than blood. And Iran's crimes against Kurds get even less outside attention. An exception comes in a devastating account in the British magazine *New Statesman & Society* by Hazhir Teimourian of The Times of London,

with grisly photographs showing summary executions of Iranian Kurds.

Before 1979, the shah of Iran praised Kurds as "the purest of the Aryans" but forbade any publications in their language. Then the ayatollahs executed as many as 15,000 Kurds and sent 200,000 troops to occupy the province of Kurdistan. Ayatollah Khomeini's threats against Salman Rushdie rightly stirred global protest. The unseen clerical war against these stateless people in the Middle East warrants equivalent horror.

After World War I, the allies broke their promise of statehood for the Kurds and instead divided about five million of them among Iran, Iraq and Turkey. Kurdish nationalists abroad have learned to conceal their identity to avoid reprisals against relatives back home. They are an invisible diaspora and know the meaning of the Kurdish motto "We have no friends." At the least, an indifferent world owes them a tear.

—THE NEW YORK TIMES

DANIELLE: Unofficial Envoy

(Continued from page 1)

arouse public opinion, and perhaps eventually affect policy in France and other countries.

"I have no power," she added. "I have only my power of indignation, my power of conviction. These are my only powers. Sometimes they are convincing. Sometimes there are other reasons, economics for example, that predominate."

The president has been "very respectful" of her right to speak out even on sensitive issues, Mrs. Mitterrand said. In any case, she added, most of the time there is no conflict between her human rights appeals and her husband's official work in the Elysée Palace.

"François is a man who defends human rights," she said.

Immediately on her arrival at the Elysée after her husband's election in 1981, Mrs. Mitterrand demonstrated reluctance to limit herself to the role of hostess, decorator and good-will ambassador that France traditionally assigns its first ladies.

A Mitterrand Who Rankles Diplomats

By Edward Cody

Washington Post Service

PARIS — Here she goes again.

Danielle Mitterrand, the French first lady, is speaking her mind on human rights once more, venting indignation and sending ripples across the pond of Parisian diplomacy.

The cause this time is Kurds. After Mrs. Mitterrand visited Kurdish refugee camps in Turkey, she warned in public that trouble could erupt unless the Ankara government granted official refugee status to the Kurds who fled Iraq last year and have been living in makeshift camps on Turkish soil.

Piqued by her unofficial and distinctly unquiet diplomacy, the Turkish ambassador to France pointed out that his government had asked European countries, including France, to take in some Kurds or help meet the expenses of caring for them in Turkey.

In a statement, Ambassador İler Turkmén said the president's wife made what he termed a "private visit" April 29 to May 2, during which she visited the refugee camps. "Frankly," he added, "we did not expect political appeals, criticisms or statistics on the Turkish population" on her return.

The ambassador clearly has a lot to learn about Mrs. Mitterrand. To a degree that France has never seen before, she has exercised the right to declare her opinions and push her causes, even when officials who work for her husband are sticking to the velvet diplomacy that is more in line with French tradition.

"I am the wife of François Mitterrand," she said in an interview, "and he happens to be



Danielle Mitterrand

president of the republic. So I have a broader tribute." But, she added, that fact does not rob her of the right to express herself.

So while Foreign Ministry officials have dealt with the Turkish ambassador, she has been renewing her appeals and criticisms concerning the 36,000 Kurds confined to three camps in eastern Turkey.

"Since I've been back," she said, "I have been bearing witness to what I saw. I put all my emotion into what I do, because it is a tense situation." The refugee population, she added, "is not going to put up with living in those

camps all summer. Something is going to happen."

Not content with pointing a finger at Turkey, Mrs. Mitterrand provided a specific explanation of why the Kurds fled Iraq, a country to which France sells billions of dollars in arms and other goods, as part of a long-standing relationship that the president has been careful to preserve.

"In some places, where their Kurdishness is not recognized, they are massacred — I am speaking of Iraq," she said, "and in the countries where they flee, they are treated in conditions that are intolerable."

The Turkish ambassador has not been the only irritated diplomat in Paris. In April it was the Chinese envoy's turn. He was disturbed because Mrs. Mitterrand received the visiting Dalai Lama, the spiritual and temporal Tibetan leader who fled his country when it was absorbed by China and who has been a frequent critic of Chinese rule from his refuge in India.

"I am very honored to have met the Dalai Lama," she declared.

The Algerian Embassy also has had some problems with Mrs. Mitterrand. When soldiers in Algiers shot rioting youths in November, she expressed her indignation forcefully.

Similarly, Argentina objected some time ago when Mrs. Mitterrand voiced her feelings about torture. "No one will make me accept that one can institute torture and amnesty for the people who tortured," she said.

Mrs. Mitterrand, 64, said her appeals and condemnations were not intended to represent official French policy or the views of her husband. Instead, she said, they are designed to

See DANIELLE, Page 6

2 Jailed Kurdish Insurgents Die in Turkey Hunger Strike

Reuters

ANKARA — Two Kurdish rebels have died in a Turkish prison, the first casualties of a 35-day hunger strike by 282 inmates for better conditions, an official said Thursday.

"The two men died because of dehydration despite all medical help," Nural Ucurum, prosecutor for the western city of Aydin, told the Anatolian News Agency.

They were the first reported deaths from a hunger strike by inmates, many of them Kurds, to protest cutbacks on rations and visits by relatives at the Eskisehir prison west of Ankara.

Mr. Ucurum said six other protesters were in critical condition.

The news agency said Mehmet Yalcinkaya, 28, and Husnu Eroglu, 31, died Wednesday night only

hours after all 319 inmates at Eskisehir were moved to two other prisons.

Mr. Yalcinkaya had been sentenced to death and Mr. Eroglu was serving a life term after convictions stemming from a Kurdish insurgency for autonomy in southeastern Turkey.

The purpose of moving the inmates from Eskisehir, where two escape tunnels have been discovered, was apparently an attempt to break the hunger strike.

The two deaths could hurt Turkey's efforts to improve its human rights image in support of its application for full membership of the European Community.

Human rights activists say nearly 500 prisoners, many jailed for political offenses, are on hunger strikes in Turkish jails,

Le mouvement autonomiste kurde iranien décapité

Le mouvement autonomiste kurde iranien décapité, la question se pose de savoir qui a commandité l'assassinat de l'animateur principal de ce mouvement, Abdel Rahman Ghassemlou, tué, jeudi soir 13 juillet, de deux balles dans la tête dans un appartement viennois en compagnie de deux autres personnes (le Monde du 15 juillet). Secrétaire général du Parti démocratique du Kurdistan d'Iran (PDKI), la plus importante formation kurde en lutte contre le régime islamique dès l'accession au pouvoir de l'imam Khomeiny, en 1979, Abdel Rahman Ghassemlou ne manquait pas d'ennemis, jusqu'au sein de son parti.

Contesté par certains dirigeants du PDKI - qui ont finalement fait scission - pour la façon autoritaire dont, selon eux, il menait ses *peshmergas* (combattants kurdes), Ghassemlou a toujours affiché publiquement sa préférence pour une solution négociée de la question kurde, y compris au plus fort des combats qui opposaient ses hommes aux gardiens de la révolution islamique ou à l'armée régulière iranienne. Tout au long de ces dix années de lutte pour l'*autonomie dans la démocratie*, et malgré la dureté des affrontements ainsi que la sauvagerie avec laquelle Téhéran a souvent traité les *peshmergas*, le numéro un de la rébellion kurde n'a cessé de tendre la perche au régime islamique. Il y a eu de nombreux contacts entre Téhéran et le PDKI, et ce dès le début de la révolte de 1979. Mais, dans le même temps, le pouvoir central a toujours refusé l'idée d'une autonomie du Kurdistan (comme des autres provinces iraniennes d'ailleurs).

Tout récemment encore, Ghassemlou se déclarait persuadé qu'il n'existait pas de « solution militaire » au problème kurde (le

Monde du 15 juin). Il est vrai que, depuis ces dernières années et après avoir un temps remporté des succès qui leur avaient permis de « libérer » une bonne partie du Kurdistan iranien, les *peshmergas* avaient dû abandonner la plupart de leurs positions pour se réfugier en territoire irakien. Cette volonté de garder constamment la porte ouverte aux négociations a déjà valu au PDKI une rupture retentissante avec les Moudjahidines du peuple de M. Massoud Radjavi (lui aussi basé en Irak), qui ont accusé Ghassemlou de « trahison ». Or dès l'annonce de la mort du dirigeant kurde, Radio Téhéran a annoncé qu'au moment de son assassinat il négociait avec un émissaire iranien un sauf-conduit pour rentrer en Iran. La radio iranienne a également fait état d'une dégradation des relations entre le PDKI et Bagdad.

Si la présence d'un émissaire iranien a été confirmée par la police autrichienne, selon laquelle un homme présent dans l'appartement et blessé lors de la fusillade était porteur d'un passeport diplomatique iranien au nom de Mohamed Djafari Sahraroudi, la référence à une demande de sauf-conduit paraît extrêmement douteuse.

M. Radjavi a, quant à lui, rejeté la responsabilité du meurtre de Ghassemlou sur Téhéran, affirmant, sans toutefois préciser sa pensée ni étayer son hypothèse, que le responsable kurde avait été « victime des négociations » engagées avec le régime islamique. « La signification de ce crime pour le peuple, les *peshmergas* et les groupes politiques du Kurdistan d'Iran est qu'aucun compromis n'est possible », déclare M. Radjavi. Des propos qui pourraient passer pour un avertissement.

La disparition d'Abdel Rahman Ghassemlou porte un coup très dur au mouvement autonomiste kurde d'Iran. Avec lui, une autre personnalité importante du PDKI a été assassinée, son adjoint, Abdullah Ghaderi Azar.

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