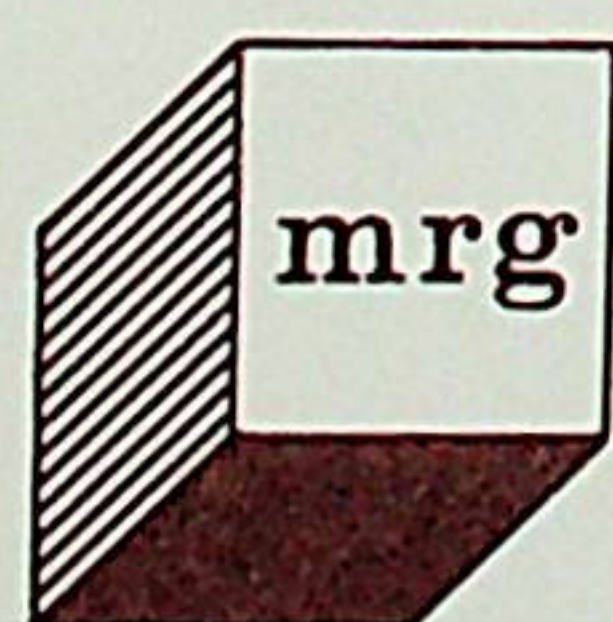


THE KURDS



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GROUP**

The **MINORITY RIGHTS GROUP LTD.** is an international research and information unit registered in Britain as an educational trust under the Charities Act of 1960. Its principal aims are —

- To secure justice for minority or majority groups suffering discrimination, by investigating their situation and publicising the facts as widely as possible, to educate and alert public opinion throughout the world.
- To help prevent, through publicity about violations of human rights, such problems from developing into dangerous and destructive conflicts which, when polarised, are very difficult to resolve; and
- To foster, by its research findings, international understanding of the factors which create prejudiced treatment and group tensions, thus helping to promote the growth of a world conscience regarding human rights.

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Benjamin Franklin House
36 Craven Street
London WC2N 5NG
01-930 6659

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THE KURDS

By Martin Short
and Anthony McDermott

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**From the Universal Declaration
of Human Rights,
adopted by the General Assembly
of the United Nations
on 10th December 1948:**

Article 1

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 10

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

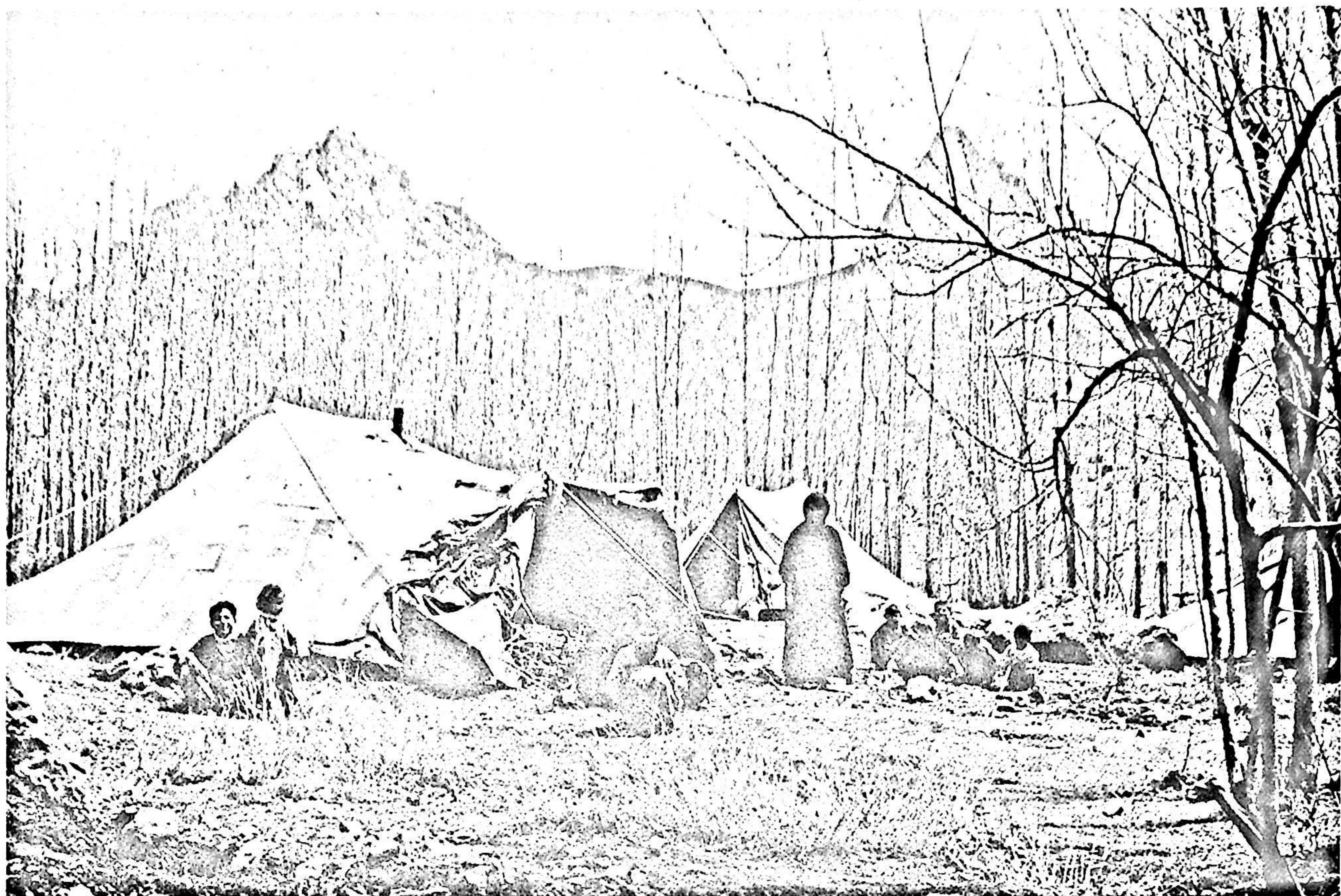
Article 19

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

(2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.



Kurdish refugees in the mountains of northern Iraq.

[Lord Kilbracken/Camera Press]



Pesh Merga at the Rawanduz front in October 1974.

[Colin Smith]

Part One: THE KURDISH PEOPLE by Martin Short

INTRODUCTION

The Kurds are the fourth most numerous people in the Middle East. They constitute one of the largest races, indeed nations, in the world today to have been denied an independent state. Whatever the yardstick for national identity the Kurds measure up to it. Kurdish nationalist thinking has been summed up as follows: "The Kurds constitute a single nation which has occupied its present habitat for at least three thousand years. They have outlived the rise and fall of many imperial races: Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Mongols, Turks. They have their own history, language and culture. Their country has been unjustly partitioned. But they are the original owners, not strangers to be tolerated as minorities with limited concessions granted at the whim of usurpers."¹*

In the division of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War the Kurds were offered the prospect of independence under the Treaty of Sèvres of 1920 but, mainly because of the rise of Kemal Ataturk, this was never implemented. For the Kurds the Treaty of Sèvres has remained a crucial reference point for subsequent appeals to the conscience of the world, but their demand is a contemporary one: "everywhere, in Bahrain, Grenada, the Seychelles, people are winning their rights. Why shouldn't we?"²

Today the homeland of the Kurdish people lies in five different independent states: mainly in Turkey, Iraq and Iran, with enclaves in Syria and the U.S.S.R. In these states racial minorities, such as the Kurds, do not expect protective treatment, but they have had to put up with an increasing barrage of state nationalism, whether it be revolutionary or reactionary, monarchist or socialist, Iranian, Turkish or Arab. Emphasis on national, ethnic or linguistic unity has only served to re-awaken parallel feelings among the Kurds. In these states many public avowals may be made about equality of opportunity and development for all citizens and races, but the Kurds have inevitably felt ignored, neglected and oppressed by those who rule them far away in the respective state capitals. With no central government of their own, and mostly living in inaccessible mountain areas, the Kurds have suffered from the worst forms of administrative indolence, and often the malice, of governments who despise their claims for autonomy and fear their future economic development.

Kurdish nationalism, in its prevailing form, has not been revolutionary, in the way that most contemporary liberation movements would use the word. It is social democratic, practical and free from dogma. Its assertion of a national identity evokes the same vision as nineteenth century European nationalisms, for Kurdistan today has much in common with, say, Italy before unification.

After the 1975 Algiers accord, there were rumours that the traditional leadership of Iraq's Kurds had been replaced as soon as the cease-fire was arranged, but previously a revolutionary ideology had not been needed to convince simple villagers of their hostility to central government. The political debate had been put aside to maintain a united front of widely differing convictions, ages, classes and tribes. The Kurds of Iraq, however, have gone through a far more profound political experience than the Kurds of other states. The Kurds may be one nation but the nationalist movements within each state have functioned largely independent of each other. Their freedom of action, their maturity and indeed their aspirations have been so different that even today co-ordination across frontiers is minimal, and totally dependent on the whim of each state.

Today it is only in Iraq that the Kurdish movement calls for "autonomy", meaning a wide degree of self-government within the framework of the Iraqi state. The conflict between the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Government of Iraq is about precisely how wide that degree of self-government should be. In Turkey, Iran and Syria Kurds call mainly for "national rights", in terms of language and culture. Kurdish nationalism is an answer to the denial of such rights, but in turn it provokes a hostile response. Allowing Kurdish to be taught in schools may seem harmless enough but each of these states can see it as the first concession along the road to the sort of troubles that Iraq has been facing.

The war in Iraqi Kurdistan naturally concentrated almost all recent western press coverage on the predicament of the Kurds of Iraq. But ironically Iraq is the state which has been prepared to offer the greatest concessions to the Kurds. Successive regimes have made

promises of future co-operation, some of which may have been well-intentioned, but chronic political instability in Baghdad has disrupted their fulfilment. Today Iraq continues to be subject to the Kurds' greatest demands because it is the state least able to suppress them. In their mountain strongholds in Northern Iraq the Kurds have been so elusive and so ethnically dominant that they have been able to keep pressing militarily for an autonomy which is beyond their reach elsewhere.

The Kurds have no country as a reliable ally on the international scene. Today's great powers, as those of yesterday, profit from a status quo which keeps the Kurds in their miserable, divided place. The importance of Turkey in NATO and the general sensitivity of the area following the collapse of the Shah and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan mean that the detachment or autonomy of the Kurdish regions is not viewed with sympathy by the USA or its allies. Similarly, an autonomous Kurdistan in Iraq is now opposed by Iraq's major arms supplier, the Soviet Union. Moscow would have preferred a political settlement to a military solution, but was reluctant to withhold its public support for Baghdad, for fear of losing a very valuable, oil-rich client. Iraq could be Russia's key to the Gulf and worth sticking with for the Middle East as a whole. The Kurdish cause has no such attraction, although it is ironic that the Iraqi Kurdish leader, Mullah Mustafa Barzani, was once notorious as the "Red Mullah". He had taken refuge in the Soviet Union between 1947 and 1958 and he was backed by Moscow against Iraq in the early sixties. Today with the Soviet role reversed, Barzani can be abused as an "agent of imperialism".

In June 1973, the *Washington Post* reported an interview with Barzani in which he said he was opposed to Iraq's nationalisation of the Iraq Petroleum Company. Barzani would hand the exploitation of the Kirkuk oil-fields over to an American company, provided the Kurds were given American military assistance, through other states. No wonder that the Iraqi Government fulminated about "American colonialism" and Barzani's foreign links. The Iraqis forcefully alleged that the USA, along with Iran, had been backing the Kurdish Revolt. The Iranian involvement has since been admitted but an American role has never been proved. Indeed, western governments maintained a discreet silence on the conflict in Iraq. They have kept their distance, preferring to consider it as an internal affair of Iraq alone, as Iraq's Northern Ireland. But such conventional diplomatic reticence has perhaps been reinforced by an over-riding concern not to offend Iraq as a major oil producer, a growing export market and a key member of the Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries. The oil and market calculations have proved valid. The pan-Arab dimension, however, may have been quite ill-judged, for other Arab states do not have any great sympathy for the Iraqi government, in this or any other aspects of its policies.³ They have been seeking only a rapid end to the war, to free Iraqi troops and air power for the more central Arab conflict with Israel. For their part, the Kurds say that Iraq would be strengthened immeasurably if it were to grant real autonomy to the Kurds and rid the state of the financial and military burdens of a recurring civil war.

The Kurds do not gain any long-term benefit from the animosity which exists between the states of the region. For instance well before the 1980 war Iran was giving considerable material and moral support to the Kurdish national movement in Iraq.⁴ But Iran's motives were to divert Iraq's military energies away from Iran and to exhaust them on the Kurds. Then, having stretched the Iraqi Government to the point where a prolonged and unsuppressed rebellion was threatening its already thin following at home, the Shah was able to extract concessions on crucial, long-standing border issues. He appears to have had no altruistic motive, for he did not believe in autonomy for the Kurds of Iraq any more than for his own Kurds. Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria all appear to share the view that the success of any Kurdish autonomy movement could be contagious. Without any actual agreement, states with Kurdish minorities have been practising collective repression. "Whenever our neighbour's house is on fire, it cannot be amiss for the engines to play a little on our own."⁵

Where is Kurdistan?

There is no independent state known as Kurdistan. It is a "geographical expression", but even this is used in two differing

*for footnotes, see page 14

ways. On most maps of the Middle East Kurdistan is marked as a mountainous region stretching from south-east Turkey across the northernmost areas of Iraq into Iran's mid-western region. But this covers less than half the area which Kurdish sources claim as their Kurdistan. This land stretches from the Taurus Mountains in the west to the Iranian plateau in the east, and from Mount Ararat in the north to the plains of Mesopotamia in the south. In addition it spills over into Soviet Armenia and Azerbaijan. This area totals some 500,000 sq km – as large as France. To complicate matters further, there is also an administrative province of Iran named Kordestan, which has a predominantly Kurdish population.

The Economy of Kurdistan

Kurdistan is believed to be very rich in natural resources, although these have not been fully explored. Reports on such explorations as have been carried out are not usually published, for commercial as well as political reasons. Apart from the immense and bitterly controversial oil reserves of the Kirkuk region – which Iraqi authorities assert does not form part of Kurdistan – there is oil in Kurdish parts of Turkey, Iran and Syria. Iraq also exploits iron ore from Sulaymaniyeh and natural gas from Kirkuk. However, much of the region's mineral wealth is not exploited at all: coal, copper, even gold and silver, and allegedly uranium. Very poor road and rail communications, unimproved because of political factors, as well as the natural obstacles of its mountainous terrain, have kept Kurdistan economically under-developed. Apart from oil, little wealth is extracted and even less is put back. There are very few industrial jobs, except in the oil industry, and few of them are filled by Kurds.

Kurdish agriculture, despite primitive knowledge and equipment, is very productive. Though there are still a few nomadic tribes, most Kurdish farmers are now settled, and three quarters of the population make their living from the land. They produce wheat, barley, rice, tobacco, and many fruits. Cattle and sheep yield meat, dairy products and wool, and the valonia oak and poplar forests of Kurdistan are a source of timber, ink and tanning materials.

Water is plentiful – both the Tigris and Euphrates rise in these mountains – and the region is spectacularly beautiful. Some archaeological and biblical sites – from Nineveh in the South to Mount Ararat in the North – add to the region's tourist potential, which might one day raise substantial revenue, should a future peace bring with it major investments in communications and services.

How many Kurds?

Immense variations in the estimates of the numbers of Kurds living in the various states make it very difficult, indeed impossible, to arrive at any figure in which one can have confidence. Confusion is total because of woefully inadequate census information. Censuses are rarely carried out, and their statistical accuracy is doubtful. Ethnic breakdowns of census statistics are rarely published. In some regions, the ethnic origins of certain tribes are obscure. For instance, in Iran are the Luri and Bakhtiari tribes Kurds or not?

The worst variations in population estimates are, however, caused by the deliberate under-estimates of governments hostile to Kurdish nationalism and the exaggerations of some Kurdish nationalists.⁶ Here, nevertheless, are highest and lowest recent figures, country by country:

	Minimum	Maximum	Total Population of Country
Turkey	3,200,000	8,000,000	35,666,500
Iran	1,800,000	5,000,000	28,448,000
Iraq	1,550,000	2,500,000	9,498,000
Syria	320,000	600,000	6,294,000
USSR (Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan)	80,000	300,000	13,132,000
Lebanon	(40,000)	70,000	2,645,000
	6,990,000	16,470,000	

[Sources:

Minimum – 1967 *Encyclopaedia Britannica* estimates; quoted again in 1974 Edition without updating. Lebanese minimum is a local, unofficial estimate. (There has been no official census in the Lebanon since the Second World War.)

Maximum – *BAHOZ* No.2. Kurdish magazine published in Sweden in 1972.

Total populations – Turkey: 1970 Census. Iran: UN estimate at March, 1970 Iraq: 1970 estimate (quoted in Whitaker, 1975). Syria: 1970 census. USSR, Republics of Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan: total estimate at January 1st, 1974 (quoted in Whitaker, 1975). Lebanon: UN estimate 1969.]

The unreliability of statistical information is, unfortunately paralleled by the unverifiable nature of much of the material available to us about the contemporary condition of the Kurds in these countries.

Who are the Kurds?

It is probable that the Kurds are descendants of Indo-European tribes which settled in the region up to four thousand years ago. They have been identified with the mountain people who warred with the Mesopotamian Empires of Sumer, Babylon and Assyria. The Kurds consider themselves to be the direct descendants of the Medes, who conquered Nineveh in 612 BC, only to be conquered themselves by the Persians in 550 BC.

The Kurdish language is Indo-European, and is closely related to Persian, in much the same way that French is to Spanish or Italian. Nevertheless, the Kurds have long asserted that they have a distinct and independent nationality, despite one interpretation of the consequences of the 550 BC defeat: that the Medes were not just conquered by, but fused with, the Persians. Certainly, the Kurds have no ethnic relationship with the Turks or the Arabs.

Though they have nearly always been a subject people, Kurds have often risen to high office in the states which have ruled them. The most famous Kurd of all time was Saladin (Salah-ed-din) who was born at Tikrit near Baghdad in 1137. Saladin, the chivalrous opponent of Richard the Lionheart and the Crusaders, regained Jerusalem for all Islam in 1187. Saladin became Sultan of Egypt in 1169 and founded the Ayyubi dynasty which ruled Egypt and Syria until 1252. At a time when faith counted for so much, Saladin must have considered his prime loyalty was to Islam, and that his ethnic origins were relatively unimportant.⁷

Religion

Most Kurds have followed Islam since the region was conquered by the Arabs in the seventh century AD. Today almost all Kurds are Muslims, mostly belonging to the Sunni sect which predominates in the Muslim world. But in Iraq and particularly Iran, the two states which lead the World Shi'a community, some Kurds are Shi'a Muslims. A very few Kurdish villages form heretic Dervish communities.

A small percentage of the population of Iraqi and Iranian Kurdistan is Christian, mostly Assyrians, whose relations with the Kurds in the past have been bitter and tragic. In the 1830s and at the end of the First World War there were reciprocal massacres. The Assyrians allegedly came off worst, losing some 10,000 dead in each of these two encounters.⁸ Today, however, Kurdish sources claim that the Christians of northern Iraq have developed solidarity with their Kurdish neighbours in the face of the Iraqi onslaught on the region since 1961. Before, they did not back Kurdish demands for autonomy.

There are some 50,000 Yesidis living in northern Iraq, near Mosul and in the Sinjar Hills, with a few thousand more in the Kurdish areas of Iran. These Yesidis, in Iraq a mixture of Kurd and Arab, follow a form of Zoroastrianism, the official religion of both Kurds and Iranians until the Islamic conquest. This is usually described, misleadingly perhaps, as a form of Satan worship. In 1970 the Yesidis' leader in Iraq pledged his support for the present Iraqi Government, but their attitude concerning the recent conflict is unclear.

Social Structure, Education and Health

Much of Kurdish life still revolves around the tribe. Living in remote mountain communities, mostly in villages with a few hundred inhabitants, Kurdish peasants have had neither economic development nor improving communications to change their traditional patterns of work or social allegiance.

Their lives are usually still controlled by feudal landowners or "aghas", and land distribution is grossly unequal. For instance, in the Kurdish areas of Iran, prior to the implementation of the 1962 Land Reform Law, 0.3% of the population owned 64% of the land, while 72% were peasants who owned no land at all.⁹ Today in Iran, government reports indicate that most peasant families, Kurd and non-Kurd, now own the land they till.¹⁰

Land reform has been a fundamental demand of Kurdish political movements, though this has embarrassed some nationalist leaders who are themselves major landowners. In the past the Turkish authorities, in particular, used to dispossess rebellious Kurdish princes or tribal leaders. However, their estates were not then broken up. They were bought intact by other Kurds who merely usurped the feudal role of their predecessors. Where nationalism has not permeated the landowning classes, for instance in Iran and Turkey, Kurdish leftists accuse their richer countrymen – including religious dignitaries, merchants and tribal leaders – of being merely the agents of central government oppression. In taking positions of administrative power in regional or local government, they are securing their own feudal position while betraying their poorer Kurdish brethren.¹¹

There are few major towns in Kurdistan. The largest is Diyarbakir, in Turkish Kurdistan, which has a population of 150,000.¹² Real educational and economic opportunities have to be sought in the distant capital cities of the respective states. During the last few decades a Kurdish intelligentsia has been building up, in mostly voluntary exile: graduates from universities in the Middle East, western Europe and North America. They have played an increasing role in Kurdish national movements, particularly during the recent conflict in Iraq. Some highly qualified Kurds have been faced with a predictable dilemma: whether to return home and help their countrymen or to seek greater financial rewards where their qualifications are in more commercial demand. In the past, Turkish Kurds in particular, as they have achieved commercial or professional success in the cities of western Turkey, have preferred to forget their ethnic origins and merge into the majority race.

The women of Kurdistan are generally less restricted than the women of many communities in the Middle East. They work the farms alongside their menfolk and they do not wear veils. There are active and prominent women members of the Kurdish movement in Iraq, and some are in the Pesh Merga, the Kurdish army.

There is little statistical information on education. In 1965 eight of the Kurdish provinces of Turkey had a 77% rate of illiteracy, whereas the overall figure for Turkey was 51%.¹³ In Iraq Kurdish illiteracy is believed to be even higher than the 73% which, according to the UNESCO Statistical Yearbook, prevailed in all Arab states in 1970.¹⁴ The same source indicates that in Iraq, Iran and Turkey no more than a quarter of all children – Kurd and non-Kurd – go to school above the age of 12. The teaching of Kurdish is forbidden in both Turkey and Iran, and the combination of illiteracy and governmental cultural oppression has meant that the rich literary heritage of the Kurdish language is little studied.

Medical care is equally inadequate. In Turkish Kurdistan there is only one doctor for every 10,000 people, one-third of the national average. Iraqi government statistics indicate that Kurdish areas have rather fewer doctors than the national average,¹⁵ while Kurdish sources assert that the situation is very much worse. Infant mortality is believed to run at some 30 to 40% in Iraqi Kurdistan where, again, Iraqi statistics rate "infant deaths" at less than 1% of total births. This is too low to be credible. In any case, such statistics have been overtaken by the high death rate of children in ay's Kurdish refugee camps. For the whole of Iran, government statistics show that in 1968 infant mortality was running at 16%.¹⁶

There is no doubt that the economic, educational and medical condition of all Kurdistan is lamentable, but this must be seen in the context of deprived conditions throughout many parts of the Middle East.

Historical Background

Throughout their history, the Kurds have never enjoyed political independence, except for short-lived tribal dynasties or, in recent times, ill-fated attempts at setting up a kingdom or a republic. From the fall of the Median Empire in 550 BC until World War One, Kurdistan was a distant and obscure province of other people's empires. By the Middle Ages Kurdistan was a buffer region between Turks and Persians, its forty principalities bitterly fought over, while they themselves attempted to play off one empire against the other. But in 1514 the Turkish-Persian frontiers were stabilised, and by 1639 finalised. The Kurds were divided, three-quarters falling under Ottoman rule, and the rest under the Safavid dynasty of Persia.

As a frontier people, the Kurds remained a turbulent political factor between Turkey and Persia, but in turn the Kurdish tribes were themselves manipulated into exhausting rivalries which prevented cohesion or the rise of any individual leader capable of uniting them all. There were repeated uprisings, particularly against Turkey in 1826, 1834 and during the Russo-Turkish War of 1853-56. Not until the 1880s did a Kurdish leader arise who had the vision of uniting the whole Kurdish people of both empires in one state. But then the revolt of Obeidullah of Shamdinan was crushed, perhaps predictably, by the coming together of both Turkey and Persia to eliminate this common menace.

Nationalism was thus a recurring theme of Kurdish politics and literature throughout these centuries, but it took its modern form with the rise of European nationalism in the nineteenth century. The subject peoples of the Ottoman Empire – Greek, Slav, Arab, Armenian, Kurd – or at least their intelligentsias, looked to the concept of nationality as the key to independence. With the defeat of Turkey in World War One, each subject nation expected to achieve statehood. In 1918 Point 12 of Woodrow Wilson's "Programme of the World's Peace" stated that the non-Turkish minorities of the Ottoman Empire should be "assured of an absolute unmolested opportunity of autonomous development". The Treaty of Sèvres, signed in August 1920 by representatives of both the Allies and the Sultan, provided for the creation of a Kurdistan and an Armenia, as well as the three Arab states of Hejaz (later Saudi-Arabia), Syria and Iraq. Article 64 stipulated that the setting up of a Kurdish state would depend on the majority wish of Kurds living in the specified areas, provided the Council of the League of Nations considered them capable of exercising independence. This was the greatest fulfilment of Kurdish aspirations so far.

But the Treaty was never ratified by the Turkish National Assembly. In November, 1922, the Sultanate was abolished. The subsequent military campaigns of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk brutally put down the Armenian Republic which had already been established. He then set about the Kurdish revolt of Sheikh Said and effectively ended hopes of an independent Kurdistan. The 1923 Treaty of Lausanne which was ratified by the Turks, confirmed the creation of the three Arab states, but made no mention of either Kurdistan or Armenia. The international community has not seriously re-opened either question with Turkey. At least the Armenians did gain some compensation through the establishment in November 1920 of the Armenian SSR within the USSR. The Kurds received nothing.

Not all of Ottoman Kurdistan remained with Turkey after the First World War. Small Enclaves were incorporated into Syria, which was then placed under French mandate. "Southern Kurdistan" – the Ottoman province of Mosul – had been occupied by Britain as the War ended, and came under British mandate, along with old Mesopotamia, to form the modern state of Iraq. In 1925 the League of Nations officially recognised the province's incorporation into Iraq, for at least 25 years, and no international body has considered it since as the basis for a Kurdish independent state. In Iran the Kurds did attempt to set up a self-governing community, the Mahabad Republic of 1946. But this lasted only one year, and Iranian Kurds had less and less hope of autonomy, as the rule of the late Shah became evermore centralised.

THE KURDS IN TURKEY

There may be anything from three to eight million Kurds in Turkey, although the Turkish census of 1965 put the number as low as

2,180,000, according to "mother tongue".¹⁷ The startling disparity in these estimates was explained above. The true figure may be well above five million. Even the lowest estimate makes this by far the largest Kurdish population of any state. Ever since the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres, concluded between the Sultanate and the Allies, offered the Kurds the chance of independence, but was not ratified by the Kemalist Turkish National Assembly, the Kurds have been subjected to a steady policy of "Turkification". The future President of Turkey, Ismet İnönü, was his country's Chief Delegate to the Lausanne Conference where he said: "For centuries the Turks and the Kurds have been parts of a united whole. In the World War, as well as in the liberation war, the Kurds fought to their utmost". Kemal Atatürk's drive to secularise and modernise Turkish society upset traditionalists, including the Kurds, many of whom revolted in 1925. Their protest was primarily religious, against the abolition of the Caliphate and the laicisation of the state. They were ruthlessly crushed by Atatürk who thus ill-rewarded the military support that the Kurds had previously given him. Kurdish sources claim that the Turks massacred 250,000 Kurds during the campaigns of 1925-26,¹⁸ among them Shaikh Said, the revolt's leader, who with 45 supporters was executed after a military trial. In 1930 a more overtly nationalist revolt took place in the north-east region of Mount Ararat. In 1937 there was a rising in Dersim against the central government's policy of confiscations and deportations.

This was the traditional Turkish answer to a revolt: martial law, severe repression and the exile or deportation of Kurdish leaders and their followers. Military garrisons were built up in troublesome areas, and road or rail links were created for the sole purpose of smashing uprisings as soon as they started. But from 1946 a multi-party electoral system allowed for some Kurdish expression, because the parties needed Kurdish votes. However, in 1960, the new military, neo-Kemalist, regime reverted to traditional methods, deporting 55 Kurdish tribal chiefs and thousands of their followers, who were opposed to its anti-Islamic policies. Kurdish discontent increased, often taking the form of violent opposition. Only when the exiles were repatriated did the Kurdish areas calm down.

In 1967 a Kurdish Democratic Party was set up illegally in Turkey. It had a strong socialist element and was allied to the Turkish Labour party, which was legal at that time. However, the main effect of this left-wing alliance was not greater strength but increased military repression in Kurdish areas. The army could tolerate the Kurds even less if they were both socialist and nationalist. By 1970 the authorities had organised a militia which raided Kurdish villages and sometimes destroyed them. There were many reports of murder and torture.¹⁹ But in 1970 there was another cause for Turkish government anxiety: the apparent concessions which Iraq had made to its Kurds. Would their guarantee of self-government stir up the Kurds of Turkey? The Ankara Government believed that a Kurdish revolt was imminent. When the army again seized power in 1971 this fear was used as the excuse for including the Kurdish oil-producing provinces of Siirt and Diyarbakir in its total of eleven provinces placed under martial law. Between April and December one thousand Kurds were arrested.²⁰ In 1972 the military had yet another excuse to step up its activities in those areas under martial law, as extreme left-wing Turkish groups were carrying out spectacular guerrilla attacks.²¹

The widespread use of torture in Turkey under military rule from 1971 to 1973 has been well-documented by, among others, Amnesty International.²² Torture was applied as much against the Kurds as against the army's opponents in western Turkey. But the return of parliamentary rule in November, 1973 under Bülent Ecevit brought the abolition of both martial law and, it seems, torture. However the years that followed saw increasing economic difficulties and political instability, with a precarious parliamentary democracy menaced by political terrorism and incipient military takeover. Kurdish areas saw the growth of a series of political groups, dedicated both to Kurdish autonomy and greater democratic freedoms. By 1978 there were over 15 of these groups, large and small, many allied with left-wing Turkish groups. However, the Kurdish movement was hopelessly split and factionalist as well as politically unsophisticated. The Army again took full control on September 12th, 1980. Army leaders have made clear their belief that the takeover was necessary to crush any sign of a united Kurdish nationalist movement. To date information is scarce from the Kurdish regions, but it seems clear that a pattern of severe repression, including mass arrests, imprisonment, killings and torture has been instituted (Information from Amnesty International).

The continuing repressive attitude of the Turkish government towards its Kurdish minority was revealed in its response to a massive earthquake on November 24th, 1976 in the eastern provinces where the majority of Kurds live. "Let these people die. After all they are only Kurds", a military commander of Diyarbakir was quoted as saying.²³ Emergency supplies were not distributed efficiently by the government; indeed, the most efficient distribution came from members of illegal Kurdish organisations. The fact that the population of the stricken area was predominantly Kurdish was not mentioned in the local press. Given the experience of deported Kurds in Iraq, the offer by the Turkish government to move earthquake victims away to the Mediterranean and Aegean areas, was refused. The Kurds' sufferings in eastern Turkey were followed closely by their compatriots in other countries.

The Kurds and Turkish Law²⁴

In 1924 a law was passed which prohibited the use of the Kurdish language. Since then it has been an offence to publish anything in Kurdish or to teach Kurdish in schools. Kurdish national costume is banned. In recent years an organisation was formed to combat this cultural repression: the Progressive Cultural Organisation of Eastern Anatolia, known as the DDKO. It prepared reports on military repression and torture but also mounted a campaign to eliminate illiteracy. Not surprisingly, it was banned on April 27th, 1971, the first day of martial law. Twenty-six of its leaders were prosecuted by a military tribunal for allegedly "following separatist activities", and were sentenced to between ten and twenty-five years for being affiliated to the KDP, which is prohibited under the 1964 Political Parties Act. This bans parties from acknowledging the existence of different races or languages within Turkey. The mere singing of a Kurdish folk-song and the possession of a record of such a song were both used as the basis for prosecution in August 1971.²⁵

On July 20th, 1971 the Constitutional Court closed down the Turkish Labour Party for adopting a resolution on the democratic rights of the Kurdish people. Its leaders were later sentenced for up to 15 years' imprisonment for their support of Kurdish nationalism, as well as for their socialist policies.²⁶

Turkey is a signatory to the European Commission of Human Rights. It also agreed in articles 38 and 39 of the Treaty of Lausanne to respect the rights of minorities. The Turkish Constitution has several references to human rights, freedom of thought and publication. On the other hand, Article 57 forbids any activity judged harmful to the "national unity and the territorial integrity of the Turkish Republic". This is used against people accused of "Kurdish separatist activity", such as the DDKO. Sections of other laws forbid activities that aim at destroying the "ethnic unity of the Turkish nation" or developing "a culture other than a Turkish culture in Turkey".

Turkish authorities have tended to deny that the Kurds have a separate ethnic identity. They are not Kurds but "Mountain Turks". The 1925 Kurdish insurrection is known as the "eastern revolt". In May 1971 the official attitude was well summed up in a speech by the then Prime Minister, Nihat Erim: "We accept no other nation as living in Turkey, only the Turks. As we see it, there is only one nation in Turkey: the Turkish nation. All citizens living in different parts of the country are content to be Turkish." Erim even denied the existence of the Kurdish language: "a mixture of Persian, Turkish and Arabic, with only 3,000 complete Kurdish words".

Economic Condition of Kurdish Areas

Eastern Turkey is much less developed economically than the western provinces. Turkish government statistics reveal that in the Kurdish provinces the illiteracy rate runs at some 77% - 64% of men and 91% of women cannot read. In Kurdish provinces there are far fewer tractors, motor vehicles, roads and banks than in the rest of Turkey.²⁷ There is almost no industrialisation. Schools are poor and few, and most Kurds do not even speak Turkish, let alone write Kurdish.

THE KURDS IN IRAN

The Kurds in Iran were not encouraged directly to think of an independent state, as were the Kurds of the Ottoman Empire by the Treaty of Sèvres. But their proximity to Russia gave them early contact with Soviet ideology. Indeed, short-lived soviets were set up in parts of Kurdish Iran in both 1905 and 1918.

The Mahabad Republic

It was during World War Two that a political situation existed which allowed the Kurds to build up a movement which was to lead to the only independent Kurdish state anywhere in modern times.²⁸ In 1941 Britain and the Soviet Union, on behalf of the Allies, invaded Iran to dislodge Shah Reza and put an end to the possibility that his sympathy for Germany might turn into a military alliance with the Axis powers. Most of the Kurdish region formed part of the Russian zone of occupation. In August 1941 there were risings throughout Iran against the central government. In Britain's southern zone of occupation Iranian troops were free to regain control, but the Russians prohibited them from moving into the north. Under Soviet influence the Kurds, and also the Azerbaijanis further north, were able to develop their taste for an independence which would cater for their cultural diversity. For over four years they effectively ruled themselves until in December 1945 they established two republics: the Democratic Republic of (Iranian) Azerbaijan, and the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad. National, if not democratic, liberty was established in the Mahabad Republic under the Presidency of Qazi Mohammed who had headed the committee that ruled the district since the 1941 rising. Kurds from Iraq, Turkey and Syria came to Mahabad to offer their services. The commander of the armed forces was Mullah Mustafa Barzani, fresh from a campaign against the Iraqis.

Soon after the invasion in 1941, the Allies had signed a treaty with Iran, under which all their troops would have to be withdrawn by the beginning of March, 1946. The Russians eventually moved out in May. They had done much to bring the two republics into being and to keep them going, but perhaps Moscow thought they were not worth defending. There was little reason to support the Mahabad Republic. It was not a Soviet, and its leaders were middle-class townsmen and tribal chiefs who had refused to allow the infant Kurdish state to be incorporated into its more defensible Azerbaijani neighbour. By December 13th, 1946 the Iranian army reached and occupied Tabriz, the capital of Azerbaijan. The Russians made no attempt to intervene. Attacked by land and air, the two republics rapidly collapsed. Iranian guide books informed the reader that the Shah, as "Supreme Commander of the Imperial Armed Forces, ordered the army to liberate Azerbaijan and personally supervised the military operations".²⁹ Thus ended a unique experiment in modern Kurdish history that had lasted "officially" for twelve months but in reality for over five years. On March 31st, 1947, the Republic's leaders, with the exception of the fugitive Barzani, were executed. Although the area of the Republic had contained only some thirty per cent of Iran's Kurds, the lessons of its existence, and its brutal suppression, are well remembered by the Kurds.

After Algiers

After the Mahabad Republic, the ever more centralised rule of the Shah prevented any sustained revival of a movement for Kurdish autonomy. The ruthlessly effective secret police (SAVAK), at work throughout Iran, maintained a fierce security network in Kurdish areas. Many hundreds of Kurds were imprisoned on charges of expressing nationalist aspirations. These clashed with the nationalistic nature of Iranian government propaganda with its emphasis on the historic achievements of the Aryan nation through the millenia.³⁰ This effectively precludes any more modest expression of a parallel, independent, Kurdish pride. Besides, strict Iranian nationalism might interpret the victory of the Persians over the ancestors of the Kurds, the Medes, in 550 BC as signalling the absorption of the Medes into the Persian nation and empire forever. The Kurds, too, are Aryans, but only part of the greater Aryan nation, Iran. Teheran's cultural embrace is similarly double-edged. The Kurdish language is freely spoken in Iran, and there are regular daily radio and television programmes in Kurdish, but the teaching of Kurdish is not allowed.³¹

The Iraqi-Iranian conflict (the "Gulf War") which erupted in 1980 gave the Kurds an opportunity to renew the armed struggle for autonomy which in Iraq had been brought to an end by the cease fire of March 13th, 1975 that followed the Algiers accord (see below).

The new Iranian revolutionary government is reported to have offered the Kurds in Iran a greater measure of autonomy in return for Kurdish support in the war against Iraq. The offer is said to have been turned down by Kurdish leaders. In renewed fighting Kurdish guerillas claim to have captured the much fought over stronghold of Mahabad (*Times*, February 3rd, 1981). Some of the present Iranian leaders appear to be bidding for popular support by taking a hard line against the Kurdish minority. There is no sign that the Iranian Kurds are receiving any help from outside, from Iraq or elsewhere, though a recent report alleges that during the struggle with Iraq, Israel provided some help to the guerillas (*International Herald Tribune*, October 2nd, 1980).

At the present moment it is impossible to foresee the future facing the Teheran government. A Muslim group in opposition to the present government in Teheran, calling itself "The Democratic Front", is said to have been joined by Kurdish leaders. One of the objectives of the "Democratic Front" will be to end the oppression of non-Persian minorities. The draft programme of the Front will propose that the four predominantly Kurdish provinces form a single autonomous region with a Kurdish elected assembly provided with control over regional affairs, including police and local militia (*Times*, February 3rd, 1981).

An insight into current Kurdish aims in Iran was given during an interview (reported in *Newsweek* March 2nd, 1981) when Abdurman Ghassemlou, leader of the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan confirmed that the Kurds in Iran did not aim at a separate Kurdish State but hoped to see Iran hold together, on the Yugoslavian model as a federation in which non-Persian minorities, including the Kurds, would exercise provincial autonomy and in which Kurdish would be recognised as one of the official languages of the Federation. Ghassemlou claimed that 6 million Kurds control over 70,000 square miles of territory in Northern Iran. He is confident that the Kurds can hold out for a long time; the guerillas are well equipped with small arms captured from armouries, (they receive funds from shopkeepers in the bazaars) and they enjoy the support of 95% of the population. Ghassemlou is at present (March, 1981) in Europe seeking support for the Kurdish movement. He would like to obtain for the Kurdish movement. He would like to obtain advanced modern weapons such as missiles which he is confident his guerillas could use effectively.

The future of the Kurds in Iran remains uncertain. The end of the present Iran-Iraq conflict might release the Iranian army to turn on the Kurds and crush them. (Ghassemlou himself, whose capture or death has been ordered by the government of Iran, might be eliminated – though probably not while he is in his homeland.) The death of Khomeini could release civil war in Iran, the outcome of which is not predictable. Among all these uncertainties there is reason to hope that when the dust of the present turmoil in Iran subsides it will find the Kurds with a greater degree of autonomy within a re-formed Iran State than they have ever enjoyed before.

Iran and the 1974-75 War in Iraq

A major additional limitation on the Iranian KDP in 1974-75 was the essential military support which Iran was giving the Kurdish forces in neighbouring Iraq. Until this support was withdrawn on March 6th, 1975 with the announcement of the Algiers accord and the Kurdish rebellion in Iraq collapsed, any act of rebellion by the Kurds of Iran might well have brought about the same result sooner. "The Shah's favours have a price: the Kurds must stay within the framework of his centralised state".³⁴

On a humanitarian plane, all credit is due to the Iranian Red Lion and Sun Society for the organisation of the Kurdish refugee camps in western Iran. But neither this nor the military support could have been motivated by any affection for Barzani on the part of the Shah. Memories of Mahabad meant that their alliance would only last as long as it suited both parties. The Shah had much to gain from an Iraqi Government paralysed by a Kurdish war. In recent years there had been a number of border incidents in which soldiers of both the Iranian and Iraqi armies were killed. The area of Iran known as Arabistan by Arab states, and as Khuzistan by Iran, has a

substantially Arab population. It has never been conceded by Arabs as truly Iranian territory. With the Algiers accord, however, the Shah secured from Iraq the surrender of this age-old claim. Another source of continuing dispute was the Shatt-el-Arab waterway, part of which forms the border between the two states on the Gulf. On this issue too the Iraqis yielded completely to Iran's delineation of the water frontier, which they resisted for so long. In return, the Shah agreed to withdraw immediately and completely all Iranian military support for the Kurdish revolt and to close Iran's borders to all Kurdish activity.

THE KURDS IN IRAQ

The Creation of Iraq

At the end of the First World War British troops were occupying Southern Kurdistan – the Province or Vilayet of Mosul. In the final plunder of the Ottoman Empire the province was entrusted to Britain as the Mandatory Power. Neither the Sèvres Treaty nor the Treaty of Lausanne resolved its future, but from 1920 to 1923 Britain had an obligation to the Kurds of the province to keep open the possibility that they might join the Kurds of Turkey in a future Kurdish state. As such a state was never formed, the League of Nations in 1925 awarded the province to the new Arab state of Iraq, on condition that "regard should be had to the desires expressed by the Kurds that officials of Kurdish race should be appointed for the administration of their country, the dispensation of justice and teaching in the schools, and that Kurdish should be the official language of all these services".³⁵ The award was temporary, for 25 years, but it became permanent.

This Iraq, like so many other states created after the First World War out of the defeated empires, was an almost ungovernable ethnic patchwork. In its central and southern provinces the population was predominantly Arab, but in the North the Kurds were in the majority, far outnumbering Arabs, Assyrians, Turkomans and the Arab-Kurdish Yesidis added together. How had this state been created?

British foreign policy had not been actively hostile to Kurdish aspirations at the end of the First World War, but there were certain over-riding considerations which worked against any positive British support for an independent Kurdistan. Britain had given Arab leaders, most notably the Hashemite ruler of Mecca, Sherif-Hussein and his son, the Emir Feisal, the promise of Arab independence, in return for Arab military support against the Ottoman Empire during the First World War.³⁶ In November 1918, a joint Anglo-French declaration proclaimed that the liberated, predominantly Arab territories of Syria, Iraq, Palestine and the Arabian Peninsula, would be able to choose their own rulers. But true Anglo-French intentions were the very reverse. Britain secured mandate rule over Palestine, Transjordan, and the provinces of Baghdad and Basra. The French took the Lebanon and Syria, despite the fact that it was the Emir Feisal who had conquered Damascus and, certainly in Arab eyes, deserved the monarchy of Greater Syria. France, deprived of much-coveted Palestine, took Syria, with British connivance, for Britain aspired to some other territory which had been destined for the French. According to the Sykes-Picot Treaty of 1916, France was to take half the province of Mosul, and Britain was to take the half which contained Kirkuk. But Britain wanted the other half as well, partly because of oil.³⁷

Before 1914 the only known commercial oilfields in the region had been discovered by a British concern in the south of Iran. Drilling was subsequently carried out at Khanaqin in Iraq, and there was every expectation of large reserves further north. In 1914 the Ottoman administration had given a substantially British consortium the promise of a lease of "the petroleum resources discovered and to be discovered in the vilayets of Mosul and Baghdad".³⁸ After the War the French were given a forfeited German share of the concession, while Britain took the entire province of Mosul with Baghdad and Basra into a British-mandated, British-dominated Iraq.

In 1921 there was a referendum on a monarchy for Iraq. The Emir Feisal, deprived of Syria by these Anglo-French deals, was the candidate for King. The Kurdish area of Sulaymaniyeh, which had

revolted in 1919, only to be suppressed by British forces, refused to participate in the voting. The areas of Kirkuk and Arbil, predominantly Kurdish, cast most of the votes against the monarchy recorded in the state as a whole. But the Kingdom of Iraq was duly formed, with an Arab centre and south and a predominantly Kurdish north.

Sure enough, in 1927, oil was struck near Kirkuk. It was the richest deposit discovered anywhere in the world at that time. The concession was dominated by British, American, French and Dutch oil interests. Henceforth no Kurdish movement could expect any material western sympathy. In the sordid haggling between Britain and France over which parts of the Ottoman Empire they should each control, the Arabs had been betrayed and the Kurds had been forgotten. Ironically, neither Feisal nor his supporters had particularly sought to incorporate Southern Kurdistan into an Arab state. The Arabs were deprived of an independent Palestine, but were given the Kurds.

The Kurds and the Monarchy³⁹

Meanwhile, a series of Kurdish revolts was continuing, setting the tone of Iraqi-Kurd relations which has existed until the present day. In 1923 Sheikh Mahmud, who had led the 1919 Sulaymaniyeh rebellion, rose again to proclaim himself King of Southern Kurdistan. Honourably defeated, the only concession he secured was that the Kurdish language could be taught in the local schools. This was incorporated in the terms of the 1925 League of Nations' award. In 1930 Britain's official responsibility as the Mandatory Power ended. Iraq became independent, but Britain was able to keep its air bases and maintained a military mission to advise the Iraqi armed forces. In 1932 Iraq applied for membership of the League of Nations. The League required some constitutional safeguards for the Kurdish population, and these were embodied in the Local Languages Law. But once again Sulaymaniyeh was in revolt over demands for a separate administration and an assembly for Kurdistan within Iraq. In 1932 the newly independent government decided to establish some firmer central control over the far northern region of Barzan which until then had been left to itself. The Barzanis, led militarily by Mullah Mustafa Barzani, rebelled but, after British air bombardment, they were driven over the border into Turkey. In 1943 the Barzanis again revolted and were not suppressed until 1945. Kurdish sources allege that this also was achieved only with the substantial assistance of the British Royal Air Force, although this is apparently refuted by British Ministry of Defence Records.⁴⁰

Again the revolt's leader was Mullah Mustafa Barzani who this time fled to Iran where he took command of the forces of the ill-fated Mahabad Republic. Thereafter, Kurdish nationalism, deprived of its star general, went underground until the severe rule of the Iraqi monarchy was ended by the bloody coup of 1958.

The Kurds and the Republic

The Kurds warmly welcomed the coup d'état led by General Kassem on July 14th, 1958. Kassem set up a republic and destroyed the last vestiges of British domination, with the notable exception of the oil interests. The new Iraqi constitution stated that "Arabs and Kurds are partners in this homeland", and implied a Kurdish right to autonomy. Mullah Mustafa Barzani returned to Iraq after eleven years' exile in the Soviet Union, and the Kurdistan Democratic Party, which he has led to this day, was officially recognised. A Kurdish cultural renaissance took place, with the prolific publication of books and newspapers. But the military dictatorship of Kassem failed to fulfil Kurdish aspirations. Relations steadily worsened for nearly three years, during which Kassem attempted to deport Kurds away from the oil-producing Kirkuk region. On September 11th, 1961, the Iraqi army launched a full-scale attack on Kurdistan. The war was to go on, almost continuously, for nine years. Kassem fell, regimes came and went in Baghdad, but they all failed to defeat the Kurdish forces. A U.N. mission later reported that 40,000 houses were destroyed in some 700 villages, and 300,000 people had been displaced or made homeless.⁴¹ There were several civilian massacres. However, Iraqi military losses were also heavy, and the continuing war helped to bring down each regime.

In 1970 the Ba'ath Government sought to bring a rapid end to the Kurdish war. In March 1970 the two sides signed a fifteen article

Peace Agreement (see Appendix I). This recognised the bi-national character of Iraq. Within it, the Kurds were once more to be free and equal partners with the Arabs. In addition to reaffirming Kurdish linguistic and cultural rights, the Agreement established that a full programme of post-war rehabilitation and economic development was to be carried out in the devastated regions. But, most important for Kurdish aspirations, was the establishment of a self-governing region of Kurdistan. This was to be demarcated on the basis of an official census, whose results would define those areas where the Kurds were in the majority, and which henceforth would be self-governing.

This Agreement was to be carried out within four years. In March, 1974 the Iraqi Government announced its Law of Autonomy in the Area of Kurdistan (see Appendix II). The Kurdistan Democratic Party rejected this as failing to fulfil the terms of the Peace Agreement. As a result, the KDP and the Iraqi authorities went to war once again. Only after the cease-fire of March 13th, 1975, following the Algiers accord, did the fighting stop.

The KDP

The Kurdish Democratic Party was formed in August, 1946 with Mullah Mustafa Barzani as its chairman. Despite his long, enforced absence from Kurdistan, Barzani has remained the movement's leader and its spectacular figurehead, the focus for the loyalty of most Iraqi Kurds, and a legendary symbol for the Kurds of other states. It was Barzani who led the revolt of his native Barzan region in 1932, and then led his troops into Turkey, only to be forced back by the Turks into Iraq to make submission to the Iraqi authorities. He was then exiled south, first to the lower Euphrates and then to Sulaymaniyeh in the south of Iraqi Kurdistan, for a total of seven years. In 1943 he escaped to lead the Barzan revolt of that year. Again defeated, he fled to Mahabad to lead the fledgling republic's army. As this too was crushed, Barzani led his supporters on a now legendary long march into the USSR, where he was to remain in exile until 1958. He has since survived the ravages of assassination attempts, almost incessant war, and now old age, to lead the Kurds of Iraq through the fiercest Kurdish war of modern times. It remains to be seen whether the collapse of the Kurdish war effort and Barzani's flight to Iran will bring about his removal as the KDP's effective leader or a change in its ideological direction.

In 1959 the KDP changed the "Kurdish" in its title to "Kurdistan", to show that it stands for democracy for all the people who live in Kurdistan, be they Kurds or Arabs, Assyrians, Chaldeans or Turkomans. Extracts from the programme of the KDP are to be found in Appendix III. It calls for a free, social democratic form of government, a massive expansion of the economy, for land reform, for an intense growth of education at all levels, and for the liberation of Kurdish culture in all its forms. The Party claims, particularly in times of open conflict, to be fighting not just for the autonomy of Kurdistan but for freedom and democracy throughout Iraq. Kurds form some 30% of Iraq's total population, and the KDP regards the Kurds not as a minority but as one of the two nations that make up the state of Iraq.

The Party's military wing is the Pesh Merga, meaning "those who face death". It has been the Kurds' fighting force throughout the military campaigns of recent years, and, prior to the outbreak of the current war, the KDP estimated Pesh Merga's strength at some 20,000 regulars and 40,000 reservists. Its alleged strength before the cease-fire was some 45,000 men and 60,000 lightly armed militia.

From time to time the KDP has been officially recognised in Iraq, but there was a split in the Party in 1964, after which Baghdad governments often favoured the anti-Barzani faction, known as the Kurdish Revolutionary Party. In 1970 most of this faction rejoined the KDP, and its leaders have since declared their support for Barzani. There remains the Kurdish Revolutionary Party which is totally bound to the present Iraqi Government and had no following in the areas controlled by the KDP during the recent war.

The Governing of Iraq 1958-1975

Iraq's sole unifying factor, and a weak one, was the monarchy. When this was overthrown in 1958 the essentially ungovernable nature of Iraq became glaringly apparent.⁴² Formed without any

geographical, ethnic or religious cohesiveness, this artificially created state has ever since been prey to violent political upheaval. Since 1958 there have been six coups, with nine changes of government. This instability has usually been coupled with a military severity that has made the survival of any liberal or democratic elements extremely difficult and dangerous. The KDP has been one of many organisations which have been frustrated, pressured, oppressed and persecuted by a succession of regimes, most of which have not felt bound by any conventional code of government. Racial and religious minorities, political opponents, even the ordinary citizen, all have been subject to the unfathomable actions of regimes whose prime concern has been the maintenance of their own power. Each coup brought new purges, trials and political executions. Often the Kurds have been promised autonomy within a certain period, only to find that the date is indefinitely postponed, or that war has begun again, or that there is a new regime with which new negotiations have to be conducted. The 1970 Agreement was not therefore blessed with too much faith or hope by either side.

In common with the other inhabitants of Iraq, the Kurds have not participated in an election since 1958, because no election has been held. The present Ba'ath (Arab National Revival) Government came to power through a coup d'état in July 1968. Today the sole Iraqi state policy decision-making body is the Revolution Command Council (RCC), which is endowed with all executive, legislative, administrative and judicial powers. It has six to fourteen members, who all belong to the Ba'ath Party or its close ally, the Communist Party. The RCC forms, in effect, a military dictatorship. Most of its leaders come from one small town, Tikrit (ironically, the birth-place of Saladin), and all are Sunni Muslims. Most of Iraq's population is Shi'a. The RCC's foreign policy has been volatile, to the point where some cynics say that, at different times, Iraq has been fighting seven wars: against Iran, Kuwait, the rest of the Arab League, Israel, the USA, the Kurds and its own Arab population.

The Iraqi Government's View of the 1974-75 Conflict⁴³

The Iraqi Government made the following allegations against Barzani and the KDP:

1) On March 11th, 1974 the President of Iraq, General Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr, announced the "Law for Autonomy in the Area of Kurdistan". His Government regards this as the true fulfilment of the 1970 Agreement (see Appendices I and II). It says that Barzani had to reject this because acceptance would have brought peace, and peace would have destroyed Barzani's role as the Kurds' heroic military defender.

2) Barzani represented no more than 25% of Iraq's Kurds. His own son, Obeidullah, now a minister of state in the Iraqi Government, accused him of leading a dictatorship of tribal leaders who had no desire for democracy. The KDP eliminated groups opposed to it, including Kurdish Communists.

3) The 1970 Agreement stated that there would be a new census (Appendix I, Article 14). Barzani later agreed to the use of the 1957 Census results as the basis for demarcating those areas where the Kurds were in the majority and which henceforth would be self-governing. Later still, he changed his mind. He also rejected another plan under which the key Kirkuk region would have been placed under joint Arab-Kurd control. Meantime, Barzani supporters were intimidating the Arab populations of the oil regions, so that they would migrate, leaving the Kurds in the majority. The present population of the city of Kirkuk is only 30 per cent Kurdish, while in the whole province of Kirkuk the Kurds form no more than 40 per cent of the total population. It is therefore ridiculous for the Kurds to claim that this region is part of "Kurdistan".

4) Contrary to the 1970 Agreement, Barzani maintained and expanded the "Pesh Merga" as his private army. He had them trained in Iran. The Agreement stated that they were to be placed under Iraqi control. Barzani also sabotaged land reform and economic development in Kurdistan, because he and his leading supporters are themselves landowners, whose ascendancy has depended on the primitive allegiance of backward and deprived peasants.

5) Until the Algiers accord, Barzani was allied with the Shah of Iran, and the United States through CENTO. He was being exploited by the Shah in order to bring down the Iraqi Government,

because it was hostile to the Shah's reactionary rule. In return for the Shah's support, and an open frontier for arms and supplies, Barzani agreed not to stir up the Kurds in Iran. Thus he betrayed his people for personal ascendancy. He also employed military advisers from Iran and Israel on Iraqi soil.

6) In the recent war, the Pesh Merga practised a scorched earth policy, destroying crops and villages as they retreated before the Iraqi army. The coerced many young men into joining them. Even so, Pesh Merga estimates of their own strength were wildly exaggerated. They were never more than 10,000 strong. Now many Kurdish refugees are returning to their homes, despite the renewal of real Iraqi rule. The Government regrets the loss of civilian life during the war, but its aim all along has been only to persuade the rebels to lay down their arms and take part in the building up of a peaceful and united Iraq.

The KDP's Case against the Government of Iraq⁴⁴

The KDP made the following further allegations against the Government of Iraq concerning the period from March, 1970 to March, 1974, during which the terms of the Peace Agreement (see Appendix I) were to have been carried out:

1) No census was conducted. One of the secret clauses of the Agreement was that the census was to have been taken within one year. The Government did not fulfil this because it knew the census would have revealed a strong Kurdish majority in the oil-producing regions of Kirkuk, Khanaqin and Sinjar. The KDP rejected the 1957 census as the basis for demarcating the area of Kurdish autonomy because this numbered the Kurds in this region at 800,000 which the KDP regards as a substantial underestimate. Iraq will not voluntarily give up rule over a region which provides two-thirds of its oil production revenues, now worth a total of at least 8,000 million dollars a year.

2) A policy of "Arabisation" has been pursued by the Revolution Command Council. This involves the eviction of Kurds from key, predominantly oil-producing, areas and their replacement by Arab tribes in the name of land reform. The worst example of this policy was the expulsion of 40,000 Faily Kurds across the Iranian border, in the winter of 1971, but many smaller incidents have taken place. Within a month of the 1970 Peace Agreement Kurds were already being forcibly moved out of the Kirkuk region. Arabisation is designed to secure the oil-producing areas forever as predominantly Arab in population. The KDP demands that all these Kurds be allowed to go back to their homes.⁴⁵

3) There was insufficient economic rehabilitation of those areas devastated by the 1961-70 war as laid down in the Peace Agreement. There has been no investment, either in new industry – for instance, to exploit the substantial reserves of iron ore, marble, nickel, and possibly uranium, in Kurdistan – or in communications by road or rail. The KDP is not claiming a right to the entire oil revenue of the Kurdish majority areas, but it is demanding that 20 to 25 per cent of Iraq's national budget is spent on these areas. At present their share is only 7 to 12 per cent.

4) There is discrimination against Kurds in the following major areas:

A: Employment. Oil refineries have been built outside Kurdish areas, even though they refine oil that has come from these same areas. Iron and steel plants have been built in Basra, although the raw material comes from Kurdistan. Only 3% of Iraqi industries are located in Kurdish areas. Only one of the 25 members of the Economic Planning Board is a Kurd. Very few Kurds are employed in the extraction of oil in the Kurdish areas of Kirkuk, Khanaqin and Zimar. For the past ten years no Kurds have been allowed to enter the Air Force College, and Kurds form only 2% of the students in the Military and Police colleges. Medical, dentistry, agricultural and engineering colleges discriminate in a similar way.

B: Education. In addition to the discrimination against Kurds in professional, vocational and military institutions, Kurdish education generally is starved of finance. The percentage of Kurds in secondary schools is half that of Arabs. Less than 7% of all university students in Iraq come from the Kurdish areas. The study of Kurdish itself is discriminated against. Schoolchildren are sometimes forced to transfer from Kurdish to Arabic language schools. Illiteracy is far higher in Kurdish areas than in the rest of Iraq. In the region of Arbil 80% of men and children cannot read,

while the figure for women is 99.5%. (This compares with UNESCO's estimate for the population of all the Arab states in 1970 of 60.5% illiteracy among men and 85.7% among women⁴⁶)

The Ministry of Information published over 100 books in 1972, but not one of them was in Kurdish, or about the Kurds or Kurdistan. There are few television programmes in Kurdish and there are no plans to build new TV or radio stations in Kurdish areas.

C: Health. There are very few hospitals in the Kurdish areas. Infant mortality is extremely high, and there is only one doctor for every 250,000 inhabitants. (Iraqi Government statistics do not confirm this. However, they do show that there are fewer doctors in Kurdish areas than in the rest of Iraq, per head of population⁴⁷)

D: Citizenship. The laws regarding citizenship exempt Arabs from any state from the category of aliens, whereas many Iraqi Kurds have been deprived of citizenship, including those expelled as a result of the Arabisation policy. If an Iraqi Kurd marries a Kurd from another state, the spouse is treated as a foreigner in terms of the laws regulating employment, but Arabs from other countries who marry Iraqi citizens are subject to no such restrictions, in that they may work in the public sector.

5) The Revolution Command Council was behind the assassination attempts on Barzani in September, 1971 and July, 1972. This was subsequently admitted by the Iraqi authorities, but they blamed Nazem Kizar, the Chief of Iraqi Security, after he had been executed for treason in July, 1973, following his abortive coup. The RCC also backed an attempt on Barzani's son, Idris in December, 1970. In 1973 Iraqi forces in Kurdish villages summarily executed members of the KDP, and elsewhere terrorised and killed civilians.

6) The Government accuses the KDP and Barzani of being pro-West. It is ironic that in 1963, when the Ba'ath Party was last in power, it accused the KDP of being pro-Moscow. That allegation can no longer be made, because the Iraqi Government itself is dependent on Moscow for its survival.

(In the early sixties Moscow was certainly sympathetic to the Kurds, as the Tass statement of June 15th, 1963 indicates: "In Kurdistan the Iraqi government is pursuing a policy of mass extermination – a policy of genocide, which is contrary to elementary human rights and to the United Nations Charter... No honest person in the world and no state that stands for respect for UN principles can fail to raise their voices in resolute protest against the brutal policy and actions of the present Iraqi leaders with regard to the Kurdish people. The bloody massacre of Iraqi patriots and annihilation of the peaceful Kurdish population arouse the anger and indignation of the peoples of the Soviet Union.")

7) On the March 1974, so-called, "Law of Autonomy for the Kurdish Regions" (see Appendix II):

A) This was announced unilaterally by the RCC, without the knowledge of the KDP, with which it had concluded the 1970 Peace Agreement.

B) This Law does not define the area of Kurdistan. In negotiations the KDP claimed the areas of Kirkuk, Khanaqin, Sinjar, Mandali Shaikhan and parts of Hamdanya, but the Ba'ath Government was unwilling to recognise these as forming part of the autonomous area. Thus the Law would force the Kurds to abandon one-third of their total land claim. Without the census the Government can still dispute the Kurdish claim to these areas, which contain the bulk of Iraq's massive oil reserves.

C) There was no mention of Kurdish participation in the Central Government, nor was there any mention of an Iraqi National Assembly.

D) No real power of autonomy was granted to the Kurdish administration. The Central Government was to choose the 80-man Legislative Council for Kurdistan, without an election. Kurdistan would have no power over justice, regional planning, irrigation, industry, local security or the police. The Council would thus have no real autonomy at all.

The true nature of the Government's intentions were made clear on October 5th, 1974 when the Legislative Council for Kurdistan was opened in Arbil. Only 68 Kurds were present as members. They were not elected and were in no way representative of the Kurdish people. The ceremony took place with 4,000 Iraqi troops present, but without any crowd of spectators. The Council's members did not stay in Arbil, but returned to Baghdad the following day.⁴⁸

E) In these circumstances the KDP had no alternative but to reject the Autonomy Law as a flagrant violation of the 1970 Peace Agreement.

The KDP on the 1974-75 War⁴⁹

The KDP made the following allegations against the Iraqi Government and army, concerning the period since the outbreak of fighting in March, 1974:

1) The deployment of the Iraqi Army and Air Force prior to the outbreak of fighting showed that the Central Government had been planning war against the Kurds throughout 1973. The bulk of the Iraqi Army was already in southern Kurdistan when the Autonomy Law was announced. The most modern Soviet arms had been purchased for this purpose, including airplanes stationed at Kirkuk, Mosul and Arbil. The Government had also obtained poison gas and laser ray equipment for use against Kurdish civilian populations (see Part II by A. McDermott).

2) The Iraqi Air Force bombed indiscriminately, killing some 500 civilians and wounding a further 1,000 by mid-October, 1974. This figure was the result of some 3,400 sorties on civilian centres, villages and towns, many of which have been substantially destroyed. Some Kurdish civilians have been killed by artillery bombardment. The worst losses in an individual air raid were at Qwala Diza on May 2nd, 1971 when 130 Kurds died, including 80 children.⁵⁰

3) There were massacres of civilians in communities occupied by Iraqi troops, for example, in the town of Zakho during May, when they killed over 60 people.⁵¹

4) The Iraqi army and air force burnt crops and destroyed agricultural machinery as part of the economic blockade officially declared by the Government. An intensive system of road blocks and security checks was imposed to prevent food, fuel and other essential commodities getting through to the KDP-controlled or Kurdish liberated areas. As part of this blockade Iraq persuaded Turkey to close its border with these areas.

5) The war provided the Government with an opportunity to continue its policy of "Arabisation". As a result of the fighting or of direct expulsion, there are now over 200,000 Kurdish refugees in Iran and a further three to four hundred thousand Kurds displaced from their homes. Kurdish organisations have precise details of hundreds of individual cases of expulsion and confiscation in the crucial areas of Dihok, Nineveh, Kirkuk, Khanaqin and Sulaymaniyeh. Many Kurds who remained in Baghdad after the outbreak of war were also deported, often because they were related to Kurdish notables who declared against the Government.

6) By May, 1974 the Revolutionary Tribunal in Baghdad had sentenced 22 Kurds to death and had them executed. These were not military prisoners of war. 11 were political prisoners, some of whom had been in government custody for two years, and 11 were university students, including one girl. Some of them had been tortured and mutilated before being hanged. By mid-September, 1974 the total number of Kurds executed or tortured to death had risen to over 125, most of those names are known.⁵²

7) In the course of the war the Iraqi authorities violated the principles of the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights in many ways through the actions listed above.

The KDP claimed at the start of 1975 to control a liberated area of some 25,000 square miles, which was independent of the Iraqi Government. There were over one and a half million Kurds in this area, including the native inhabitants, displaced persons and many thousands of Kurds from the rest of Iraq who had travelled to the area to contribute to the war effort.⁵³ On the withdrawal of Iranian military support, following the Algiers accord, the liberated area rapidly fell once again under Iraqi control.

The Effects of the Gulf War

In Iraq as in Iran the future for the Kurdish community now (1981) looks more hopeful. The 1974 Law of Autonomy (see page 11) appears to be at least partially implemented. As a result of the law, educational opportunities for Iraqi Kurds have increased. Some economic improvements have also been reported by an independent

British observer (Mick Ashley) arising from the distribution of land to 100,000 formerly landless peasants and the gradual introduction of some industry. The traditional Kurd Spring Holiday, once banned, has become a national holiday for all Iraqis (*Sunday Times*, April 12th, 1980).

Conclusion

"It is not surprising that British correspondents who visit Iraqi Kurdistan usually come back brimming with enthusiasm for the Kurdish cause. In so many ways the Kurdish war is British schoolboy fiction come true. The scenery is just like those films about the North-West Frontier. The people really do wear turbans, baggy trousers and brightly coloured sashes round their waists. Every man from the age of 15 upwards has a Kalashnikov rifle slung from his left shoulder, with a spare magazine and a pistol stuck in his belt. Some of them also wear traditional shepherd's waistcoats, with horns on the shoulders to frighten wolves. It is not just physically picturesque. The military situation itself has an adventure-story quality. A small mountain people, organized as a voluntary defence force with neither tanks nor aircraft, is holding at bay the overwhelmingly superior forces of an oil-rich state, generously supported, advised and equipped by Moscow." (- Edward Mortimer, *The Times*, November 11th, 1974)

Who could resist such a cause? Indeed, if most western correspondents had their way there would have been an independent Kurdistan long ago. Not that the men who rule in Baghdad have done much to win the propaganda war. They have been unwilling to allow foreign correspondents or impartial observers into the areas in dispute, except for very restricted special occasions, such as the opening of their version of the "National Council of Kurdistan".⁵⁴ So, there has been no way of disproving Kurdish allegations of torture, discrimination and Arabisation. Until this changes, Iraq is bound to appear the villain of the piece. Naturally the Government is hostile to foreign interference in its internal affairs, but it should seek to show world opinion that its approach to the Kurdish problem will indeed, in peacetime, "alleviate the injustice caused to the sons of our Kurdish people and the fraternal minorities during the dictatorial and reactionary regimes and under chauvinistic and tyrant policies". For that is how President Al Bakr introduced the Law for Autonomy on March 11th, 1974.⁵⁵

The two versions of what has been happening in Iraq are, of course, irreconcilable. Most Kurdish allegations are not so much denied by the Baghdad Government; they are not answered at all. Will there ever be a census? What is the truth about "Arabisation"? Can the often very precise details of individual expulsions and confiscations be refuted by Baghdad? Or what was their justification? With so much increased oil revenue flowing into the Iraqi treasury, will a higher proportion of state spending go to the Kurdish areas?

Baghdad has said very little on these points. For the Iraqi leaders the 1974 Law of Autonomy stands as their fulfilment of the 1970 Peace Agreement. But, as the KDP resisted the Law's implementation, conflict was inevitable. The Iraqi intention appeared to be "The final suppression of the outlaw hireling faction". Now this has been achieved the Autonomy Law will be implemented.

What about the Law: what sort of autonomy does it offer? Were the Kurds right to reject it? The area for Kurdish autonomy is indeed not defined. The census promised by the RCC in Article 14 of the 1970 Peace Agreement has still not been taken, so the crucial districts in which the RCC disputes KDP claims of a Kurdish majority would have been excluded from the autonomous area. Autonomy itself is so defined as to be little more than an unspectacular form of local government. Each crucial area of decision-making falls under the authority of the State: education (according to Article 2, E), finance (Article 5), police and security (Article 17, A), and justice (Article 19). Autonomy is to be exercised by two bodies: the Legislative Council (or assembly) and the Executive Council or council of ministers.

According to Article 10 the Legislative Council is to be elected, although the Law does not say by whom. Under Article 20 the President of the Republic may dissolve the Legislative Council, according to a number of circumstances which could occur at any time. It is the President who chooses a member of the Legislative to be the chairman of the Executive Council (13, C) and again it is the President who may dismiss him (13, F), "in which case the Council shall be considered as dissolved". It does not seem that the

President has to give any reasons. Local offices of central state ministries are answerable to those ministries in Baghdad, not to the autonomous bodies in Kurdistan (18,A), and the central authority shall appoint a minister of state who may attend all meetings of the autonomous bodies (18,C). All their decisions have to be conveyed to the minister "as soon as they are taken" (18,D) and he may object to them on the grounds that they violate the Iraqi Constitution, as indeed may the Iraqi Minister of Justice (19,B). It is not clear from the Autonomy Law whether this Minister of State will be a Kurd. Article 19 makes it clear that the Legislative and Executive Councils of Kurdistan are totally subject to the supervision of the Cassation Court of Iraq. If this Court rules that any decision of the Councils are illegal, then those decisions are null and void. It is difficult to see how this Law of Autonomy can be interpreted as fulfilling the spirit of the 1970 Peace Agreement.

The Kurds in Iraq have suffered severely since 1961, but it is not easy to prove that this present government has acted with a specifically genocidal intent. The definition given in the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 1948 is so bad that it makes either side in any war guilty of genocide. The dictionary definition of genocide is more rigorous: "deliberate extermination of a race or people".⁵⁶ The Iraqi Government is not guilty of this.

Many questions remain open. Will Marxist splinter-groups in the KDP, opposed to Barzani, continue the Kurdish struggle perhaps with Palestinian-style guerrilla warfare as open war has failed? Might discord between Iraq and Syria provide the Kurds in Iraq with new foreign support? Will the Kurds ever again be unwise enough to entrust their military effectiveness to a foreign power whose long-term aims are probably inimical to their own? The leaders of the Iraqi KDP and the Pesh Merga will go through an agonising analysis of the events and consequences of the fruitless warfare. Was there any way of taking Iranian aid without becoming totally dependent on it? Or was it ideological vagueness that let the Revolution down: could Marxism, or some social democratic leadership other than that provided by the Barzanis, have better withstood the cruel turn that events have taken?

Or might it be possible, after all, to live with Baghdad? Can something be salvaged from the Law of Autonomy? Is the Revolution Command Council totally without humanity; and if it is, could not close co-operation be reached with those many Iraqi Arabs who are themselves opposed to the Ba'ath regime? The pacific Shi'a plainsmen, so many of whom died as apparently unwilling soldiers against the Kurds, could well move against the Ba'ath, especially since five of their most prominent religious leaders have recently been executed.⁵⁷ Many Sunni Arabs might welcome a change of regime.

But whatever the nature of Iraqi government in the future, the Kurds are liable to find themselves, as ever, the victims of other people's empty promises, manipulated as a temporary ally and dropped as soon as their usefulness, as an irritant, is over. The cycle of betrayal could go on for many more generations.

THE KURDS IN SYRIA

[compiled with assistance from David Hirst]

There are between 320,000 and 600,000 Kurds in Syria, although there have been even higher estimates. Most Kurds are clustered in three northern frontier areas, next to the Kurdish populations of Turkey and Iraq, from whom they were divided when the Ottoman Empire was dismantled.

In 1957 a KDP was established, aiming at linguistic and cultural freedom of expression, land reform and a democratic government for Syria as a whole. But by 1962, according to Kurdish sources,⁵⁸ the Syrian authorities of the day had decided on a plan to establish an "Arab Belt". This involved clearing the north-eastern border area, known as Djezirah, of its Kurdish population. The belt was to be 350 km long and 10 to 15 km deep. It would displace 140,000 peasant-farmers and smallholders who would then be replaced by Arabs. The name, Arab Belt, was subsequently changed to a "plan for the establishment of model state farms" and was later extended to the two other Kurdish areas in Syria.

It seems that the plan has been partially carried out. Many Kurdish peasants have left the northern areas of Syria, for Damascus,

Turkey and the Lebanon where 60,000 of them – not to be confused with the "Lebanese Kurds" – work in the building boom. Recently some 20 villages have been established, mainly for Arabs displaced by the waters of the Euphrates Dam. Kurdish sources allege that, before the 1962 census the authorities denied the citizenship of 40% of Syrian Kurds, accusing them of being infiltrators from Turkey and Iraq. Some 120,000 Kurds were thus rendered stateless. It is also said that there is no cultural, linguistic or educational freedom for Kurds, and that the KDP is illegal. There are repeated allegations of torture and imprisonment without trial.

In the past the Syrians have felt the Arab Belt policy was justified because the Kurds of Turkey and Iraq were, allegedly, intending to incorporate the Kurdish areas of Syria into an independent Kurdistan. The authorities also alleged that the local Arab population was being intimidated and driven out, so that their land could be taken over by Kurds.

Today the Syrian Government publicly proclaims that Kurds should be enabled to participate wholly and wholeheartedly in the development of the state. This is best achieved by stepping up Arabic education in Kurdish areas. President Asad, the leader of Syria, is known to be sympathetic to Kurdish aspirations, but this did not prevent the imprisonment in 1974 of seven Syrian KDP leaders who had protested against Arabisation.

THE KURDS IN THE LEBANON

contributed by David Hirst

There are some 70,000 Kurds living in the Lebanon. The overwhelming majority hail from Mardin in eastern Turkey. The earliest arrivals, during the French Mandate, have secured Lebanese citizenship – about ten to fifteen thousand of them. Since 1961 a few thousand more have had residence permits which indicate that the question of their citizenship is "under study". The majority of the Kurds, however, have no permit at all. They are liable to expulsion at any time.

Most Kurds are right at the bottom of the social pile, working as porters in the vegetable market or the port, living in slums and unable to press hard for better conditions from their employers, owing to the permanent fear of deportation.

Leaders of the Kurdish community express their gratitude to the Lebanon as the only country throughout the entire Middle East where they can organise themselves, politically, socially and culturally, without persecution. There are a number of Kurdish political, cultural and sporting institutions, and there are Kurdish newspapers and magazines, but the Kurdish Democratic Party, which is highly sympathetic to Barzani, does not have an official licence. That is still held by a Ba'ath-sponsored KDP, dating from the brief post-1970 honeymoon days, which has no popular following whatever.

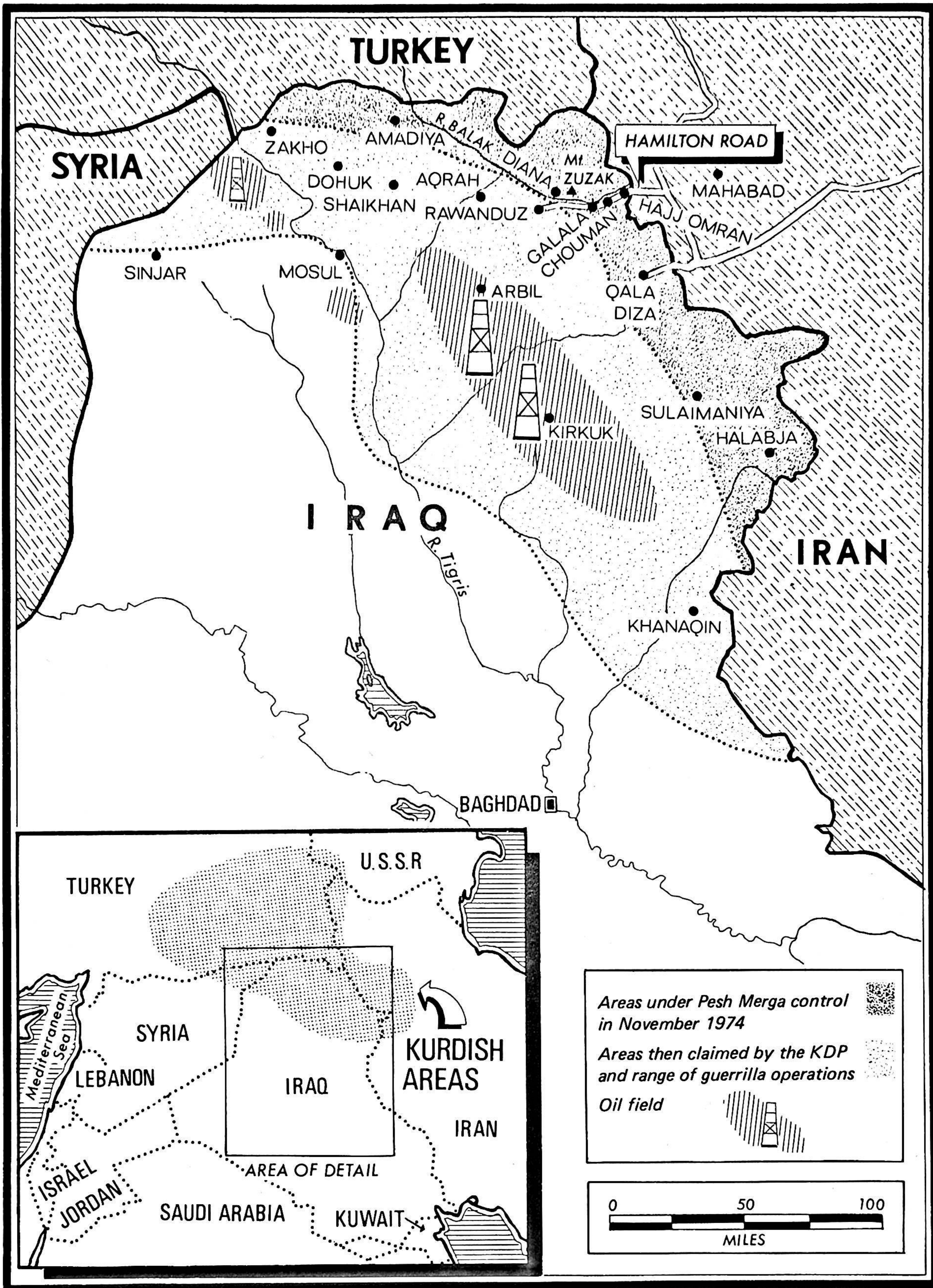
THE KURDS IN THE U.S.S.R.

There are between 80,000 and 300,000 Kurds in the USSR spread between the Republics of Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan. The Kurds are recognised as one of the hundred nationalities in the USSR. They are allowed cultural expression, through schools, universities, newspapers and radio programmes. National pride is encouraged, but it may be assumed that there is little room for questioning the Soviet system of government. In any case, the Kurds in the USSR do not live in areas contiguous with the Kurdish areas of Iran and Turkey, and they have little communication with Kurds outside the USSR.

Very little information is available about the contemporary condition of Russia's Kurds. For instance, it is not known if there was any protest by Kurds against the Soviet backing for Iraq in the 1974-75 fighting. However, the dissident Soviet physicist, Andrei Sakharov, has appealed for international protection for the Kurds in the face of Baghdad's "cruel war".⁵⁹

Notes (Part One)

- ¹ C.J. Edmonds, *Journal of Contemporary History* 1971
- ² Dr Mahmud Othman, quoted by David Hirst, *Guardian* 7.5.74.
- ³ There have been reports of support for the Kurds from Arab states in dispute with Iraq, eg *Guardian* 7.5.74.
- ⁴ eg *Guardian* 12.10.74; *International Herald Tribune* 31.10.74/16-17.11.74; *The Times* 14.11.74/6.1.75.
- ⁵ Edmund Burke: "Reflections on the French Revolution".
- ⁶ Highest total estimate is 18-20 million Kurds, given by KDP Information Department in June 1973 ("Know the Kurds" No.1).
- ⁷ For a lively account of Saladin's career see "The Arabs" by Anthony Nutting (Hollis & Carter, 1964).
- ⁸ Hassan Arfa "The Kurds" (Oxford, 1966)
- ⁹ Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou "Kurdistan and the Kurds" (Prague, 1965).
- ¹⁰ Iran Almanac 1972.
- ¹¹ *BAHOZ* No.2, 1972. (Kurdish magazine published in Sweden).
- ¹² 1973 Statistical Year Book of Turkey.
- ¹³ Ditto.
- ¹⁴ 1972 UNESCO Statistical Yearbook (Paris, 1973).
- ¹⁵ 1971 Annual Abstract of Statistics, Ministry of Planning, Iraq.
- ¹⁶ Iran Almanac 1972.
- ¹⁷ Quoted in Statesman's Year Book 1974-75.
- ¹⁸ *BAHOZ* op.cit.
- ¹⁹ Jane Cousins "Turkey - Torture and Political Persecution", Pluto Press, 1973.
- ²⁰ Ditto.
- ²¹ eg the March 27th, 1972 Abduction of 3 British technicians. NB the guerrillas were not Kurds.
- ²² Amnesty International: "Report on Torture", London, 1973. Granada Television Book of World in Action Programmes on "Torture and Persecution" 1973.
- ²³ *The Times* 10.12.76.
- ²⁴ Cousins op. cit.
- ²⁵ *Cumhuriyet* 22. and 29.8.71.
- ²⁶ Cousins op. cit.
- ²⁷ 1964 official Turkish statistics.
- ²⁸ This account owes much to C.J. Edmonds (*Journal of Contemporary History* 1971) and William Eagleton "The Kurdish Republic of 1946" (Oxford, 1963).
- ²⁹ Iran Almanac 1971.
- ³⁰ eg Iran Almanac 1971.
- ³¹ Hirst, *Guardian* 12.10.74.
- ³² Iran Research: Bulletin of March, 1974 (London).
- ³³ Oriana Fallaci: interview with the Shah in *New Republic* 1.12.73.
- ³⁴ Hirst in *Guardian* 12.10.74.
- ³⁵ C.J. Edmonds (J.C.H. 1971).
- ³⁶ Nutting op. cit.
- ³⁷ In his book, "Turks, Kurds and Arabs" (O.U.P., 1957) C.J. Edmonds states that oil figured very little.
- ³⁸ Quoted in Majid Khadduri "Independent Iraq 1932-1958" (O.U.P. in association with R.I.I.A. 1960).
- ³⁹ Edmonds (J.C.H.)
- ⁴⁰ Edmonds in letter to the *Observer* 10.11.74.
- ⁴¹ U.N. Development Programme Exploratory Mission to Northern Iraq (October 1970).
- ⁴² See the account by Riggan Er-Rumi in "The Middle East - a Handbook" (Blond, 1971).
- ⁴³ Some of these views were reported in "Rebellion and Self Rule in Iraqi Kurdistan" W.I.L.P.F. Fact Finding Committee (July 1974).
- ⁴⁴ This chapter has been drawn largely from Kurdish publications including the "Know the Kurds" series.
- ⁴⁵ Many such incidents are detailed in "Know the Kurds".
- ⁴⁶ UNESCO op. cit.
- ⁴⁷ 1971 Annual Abstract of Statistics, Ministry of Planning, Iraq.
- ⁴⁸ "Pesh Merga" No.1 November 1974 (published in Helsinki). Reports in the British press by Gwynne Roberts (*Financial Times* 25.10.74) and Ian Colvin (*Daily Telegraph*).
- ⁴⁹ From "Know the Kurds"; KDP Foreign Representation papers; "Pesh Merga"; "Kurdistan Review" are published in Helsinki (P.O. Box 129, 00170 Helsinki 17, Finland). Additional material from the Kurdish Students' Society in Europe (c/o 44 Earls Court Road, London W8) which publishes "Kurdistan News".
- ⁵⁰ Hirst, *Guardian* 7.5.74.
- ⁵¹ For an account see "Know the Kurds" No. 2.
- ⁵² Names given in KDP Foreign Representation No. 6 and "Pesh Merga" November, 1974.
- ⁵³ "Pesh Merga" November, 1974.
- ⁵⁴ Two journalists from Britain were in the 120 strong press party: Gwynne Roberts reporting for the *Financial Times* and Ian Colvin of the *Daily Telegraph*.
- ⁵⁵ Preamble to the Autonomy Law (translation from the Iraqi Embassy, London).
- ⁵⁶ Chambers's Dictionary.
- ⁵⁶ Chambers's Dictionary.
- ⁵⁷ *Guardian* 16.12.74.
- ⁵⁸ Ismet Cheriff Vanly "The Kurdish Problem in Syria" (London, 1968) and "The Persecution of the Kurdish People" (Amsterdam 1968) which gives extended extracts from a book written in 1963 by Mohamed Talab Hilal, a Syrian official in Kurdish areas, and subsequently a minister. Hilal denies the existence of a genuine Kurdish nation and advocates complete Arabisation of the Kurdish areas of Syria. He writes "Such then is the Kurdish people, a people which has neither history, nor civilisation, nor language, nor ethnic origin, nothing but the qualities of force, of destructive power and violence, qualities inherent, moreover, in all mountain populations".
- ⁵⁹ *Christian Science Monitor* 4.10.74.



Part Two: THE 1975 CRISIS by Anthony McDermott

The toughest round of fighting between the Iraqi armed forces and General Barzani's Pesh Merga broke out in 1974 almost as soon as the Iraqi government announced unilaterally the autonomy law on March 11th. This was a tightened-up version of the settlement concluded exactly four years earlier (see Appendices I and II). A totally balanced account of developments has always been handicapped by the fact that reports from the Kurdish side and Kurdish sources in Europe were far more detailed than those provided by Baghdad. Indeed it was, while the fighting continued, the policy of Iraqi officials to attempt to portray the conflict as little more than some local trouble which would soon be finished off. The reverse was the case. The fighting was on a larger scale than anything experienced between the protagonists in the history of the conflict. The government forces used more sophisticated equipment than before. In return, the Pesh Mergas were better equipped and fought in greater numbers and with more determination and unity than ever. By a tragic irony, the Kurds' fiercest fight for their limited objective of regional autonomy ended in defeat. The unexpected agreement reached between Iraq and Iran in Algiers on March 6th, 1975 made it impossible for the Kurds to continue fighting. Iran deprived them of all military support, Kurdish civilians in both countries became hostages to governmental action, poverty and charity. But since early in 1976, there have been persistent reports which suggest that the Kurds have restarted guerrilla operations in the north of Iraq.

Barzani was given 15 days in which to accept the new law, but he rejected it from the start. It was to be applied in all regions of the Iraqi Republic the majority of whose population is Kurdish. In essence, the law stipulated that both Arabic and Kurdish would be the official languages of the area, which would have its own legislative executive and administrative bodies separate from Baghdad. This semi-autonomous region would also have departments for the police, and public education. It was clear however that the central government would retain control and supervision of the administration of the departments and of the Kurdish Legislative Council.

This was unacceptable to the Kurds, as was the proposal for the Pesh Mergas to hand in their arms before being re-engaged in the national guard, for which the Interior Minister had ultimate responsibility. However the main reason for Barzani's rejection of the law was that the province of Kirkuk was to be excluded from the region, though it remained predominantly Kurdish despite extensive "Arabisation"; this had discouraged the government from carrying out the census promised in 1970. Kirkuk is of vital importance to both sides, since it was producing 1.2m. barrels of oil per day out of the total national production of 2.1m. in 1973, but the Kurdish demand had been eminently reasonable: whilst insisting that the province should be made part of the semi-autonomous region, they agreed that the oilfields should continue to be exploited by the central government and that their share of the national oil revenue should be no more than their share of the total population.

There must have been some foreboding about the chances of war (and planning by Baghdad) because 15 days before the promulgation of the law the Iraqi army was put on alert. A new division, commanded by General Taha Shakarji, was created.^{1*} At the same time all senior Kurdish officials had left Baghdad for the north. The first gains in the fighting were made by the Pesh Mergas. As a result of the March, 1970 accord they had been integrated into the army as border guards, and they had little difficulty in driving the government forces from the important town of Rawanduz and surrounding seven garrisons, including those at Zakho and Sulaimaniya besides controlling the entire border with Turkey. The government responded by attacking both civilian and military targets. This was a feature of Iraqi raids up to the end of June, 1974. In a bombing raid on Qala Diza on April 24th, 1974, 131 civilians were killed and more than 300 wounded. Four days later at Halabja 42 civilians were killed and more than 100 wounded. In May an Iraqi counter-offensive regained some territory for the government. July was devoted to preparing troops and armour for the main attack which began on August 20th, and was led by T-54 and T-55 tanks, supported by TU-22 bombers and Sukhoi-20 ground attack fighters.² The central objective was to cut Kurdistan in two by a thrust towards Rawanduz which was to join up with another to the east towards Ranya. The plan seemed to be a final advance along

the upper valley of the river Balak, besides which runs the Hamilton road. This climbs steeply eastwards from Rawanduz to the pass of Hajj Omran near the Iranian frontier. As the border with Syria and Turkey had been closed, this was the sole exit for refugees and the only entry point for supplies and assistance.

The fighting was in the main a classical confrontation between regular and guerrilla forces. Iraq was reported to have mustered 6 divisions³ or 84,000 men⁴ and 20,000 Kurdish and Arab mercenaries.⁵ Apart from the tanks mentioned above, the T-62 was also used, and totalled 600 in all. The artillery used 152 mm and 180 mm guns, Iraqi's forces were also equipped with Frog ground-to-ground missiles with a range of 50 miles⁶ and some 200 aircraft were employed.⁷ Figures given by the Institute of Strategic Studies in London, which were only approximate and made no allowance for either losses in the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, or for subsequent arms deliveries from the Soviet Union, indicate how much the war against the Kurds tied down Iraq's armed forces. The *Military Balance 1974-75* states that the army consisted of 100,000 men and possessed 1,390 tanks and 700 heavy artillery pieces. The air force had 218 combat aircraft. There were reports that the Soviet Union had been providing personnel – for flying the TU-22s,⁸ and also the MiG-23⁹ as well as leadership and advice. The Kurds alleged that the attacks in August, 1974 were made under the supervision of Colonel Alexander Vasiliev and the Iraqi Chief-of-Staff Major-General Ismail al-Naiemy.¹⁰

Against this General Barzani had a hard core of about 45,000 Pesh Merga regulars and could call on some 60,000 reservists. Their weapons were limited mainly to small arms and light anti-aircraft guns, but in November there were reports of Iran supplying wire-guided anti-tank missiles and 122 mm artillery.¹¹ The Kurds sometimes undertook regular defensive actions against the Iraqi forces but they mostly harassed the government troops in the plains and valleys from mountain-top artillery positions. By the end of November, 1974 the Kurds had been confined to a strip stretching along the northern and eastern frontiers from Zakho to Khanaqin (both of which are in Iraqi hands) and, according to *The Times* of January 13th, 1975, to a thin strip 50 miles long on the Iranian border. The Iraqi advance had been marking time at Aqrah and Dohuk in the north, and at Rawanduz, Ranya and Qala Diza in the east. Kurdish guerrillas were able to carry out numerous raids in the whole shaded area of the map, with concentration on the Kirkuk oilfields, Arbil and Mosul. The snow and rain, promised for November, came later than usual in 1974; and the Iraqi forces seemed to have chosen to dig in. But fighting, which had cost Iraq in the ten months to December an estimated \$3,000m,¹² continued until the final engagements after the Algiers accord, particularly around Rawanduz and Mount Zuzak. Previously Obeidullah Barzani, the renegade eldest of the General's sons and one of five Kurds who have been persuaded to join the Iraqi government as ministers of state, told the Kuwaiti newspaper *al-Watan* in October, 1974, "We don't regard this as a war of liberation. It's just a mopping up operation".¹³ The late Foreign Minister, Shazel Taqa, said on October 3rd: "The action ... is not genocide, it is a political act like a police action". In November, 1974, Iraq ordered 150,000 winter uniforms from India; they are a necessity during the hard winter which extends till the middle of March and on high ground till mid-April. Only the Kurds have at regular intervals given casualty figures, which may be somewhat exaggerated. According to the Kurdistan Democratic party (KDP) Iraq forces lost 10,820 killed and 17,400 wounded between March 11th and the end of 1974, while the Pesh Mergas lost 876 killed and 2,238 wounded. Civilian casualties on the Kurdish side were put at 608 killed and 1,146 wounded. The Kurds claimed also to have destroyed 471 tanks and armoured vehicles in this period, and to have shot down 46 aircraft; and that in this period 3,978 raids had been carried out over 569 villages. An Iraqi military spokesman said on May 4th that the Iraqi army had suffered 1,640 troops killed and 7,903 wounded between March 28th, 1974 and March 13th, 1975.

The Algiers agreement was made public on March 6th. Early on March 7th the Iranians withdrew 42 155 mm artillery pieces, anti-aircraft guns (manned by about 1,000 troops) and supplies of ammunition. Simultaneously, the Iraqi forces began a four-point attack, concentrating on Rawanduz and Sulaimaniya, with the aim of advancing along the Hamilton Road to the headquarters at

*for footnotes to Part II, please see p. 20

Galala, but with additional thrusts in the Ranya-Qala Diza and Shaikhan-Dohuk directions. Some progress was made, but with morale higher than ever before and only light defences, the Pesh Mergas almost succeeded in the impossible – halting this tank-led assault. The cost of one week's fighting was reported to be 600 Iraqi soldiers and 140 Kurds.¹⁴ Panic was induced among the Kurdish civilians when they heard that their forces were fighting without artillery support, and between 50 and 75 per cent of the civilian administration fled to Iran. At the time of the cease-fire on March 13th, Iraqi forces controlled the Zuzak and Hassan Beg mountains and the lower slopes of Hendrin and a large sector of Sartees. But no thought was being given to surrender until March 18th, when Barzani gave the order to his forces to halt the fighting. This caused dismay and bewilderment amongst his supporters. Since then, in broad terms for the terrain is difficult, Iraqi forces have complete control of the 25,000 sq. miles of the former Kurdish liberated areas, having entered Galala on April 2nd.

One reason for the lack of success by the Iraqi forces had been the extraordinary feeling of solidarity that their assaults had created among the Kurds. Visitors to Kurdish-held areas asserted that traditional divisions were sub-ordinated to nationalism. As Edward Mortimer wrote in *The Times* of November 28th, 1974: "In 1961 when the war began it was very largely an affair between different Kurdish tribes. The handful of urban intellectuals who formed the Politburo of the KDP were at first clearly out of place in the mountains, and there was much tension between them and General Barzani. In the late 1960s, indeed, several of them broke openly with him and even fought against him on the government side. By contrast the atmosphere of national unity prevailing in Kurdistan today is something amazing. Tribal distinctions have virtually vanished, and even the Assyrian Christians, bitter enemies of the Muslim Kurds earlier in the century, have now more or less merged with them under the impact of government bombing and devastation. The same applies to the Yazidis, or 'Devil-worshippers', from the Syrian border, many of whom are now to be found in the refugee camps in Iran."

Certainly the resumption of fighting in 1974 produced for the first time a large exodus to the liberated area of urban, educated Kurds from Kurdish areas under government control, including – claimed the KDP – 100 lawyers, 100 doctors, 300 engineers, 600 high school teachers, 5,000 primary school teachers, 5,000 government employees, 4,000 soldiers and policemen, 10,000 students and the entire staff of the university of Sulaimaniya, the Kurds only seat of higher learning.¹⁵ Including workers, peasants, women and children, the total inflow to the liberated area in the spring of 1974 is believed to have numbered about 150,000.

The defeat, of course, changed the position of Barzani. Such was his control over the KDP and the policy of dependance on Iran that he was held responsible for the remarkable collapse of a resistance carefully built up over the years, disappearing within a few days. Barzani stayed in Kurdistan until just before the expiry of the amnesty offered by Baghdad (until April 1st, and then finally extended to May 20th). He crossed the border with his sons Idris and Masoud on March 30th. Although he remains a revered historical figure, power essentially passed from him to a revolutionary command council formed on March 20th,¹⁶ whose leading figures were Ibrahim Ahmed, a Marxist, Jalal Talabani, and Ali Askari, commander of the Kandil division in the fighting. Barzani's role has become differently presented and somewhat pathetic. For a while he lived under house arrest in the outskirts of Tehran. He spent September and most of October, 1975 in the USA, and was reported one year later to be undergoing treatment for cancer there.¹⁷ His whole dependance on the USA has undermined his standing. The USA through CIA contacts and the Shah of Iran¹⁸ had responded to a plea for support dating back to 1972, but in the final days after the Algiers agreement the Kurds were ruthlessly abandoned. The KDP has reorganised its structure and assumed a more radical political posture, with a Provisional Leadership emerging in November, 1975. However, the Kurds are politically split between the KDP and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), a Marxist-Socialist group led by Talabani, founded on June 1st, 1975 and drawing initially on support from Syria. In the middle of August, 1976 the KDP held a secret conference 'somewhere in Europe' at which it emphasised the 'socialist character' of its programme and criticised Barzani for links with the US and Iran. It praised the Soviet Union for its attitudes towards the Kurdish revolt up to 1973.

The human cost of the fighting

The human effects of the fighting have been grim. Up to 250,000 Kurds fled across the border to Iran, which had at one time opened up some 12 refugee camps and allocated \$100m. for looking after them. Writing in *The Times* of November 28th, 1974 Mortimer said: "of all the refugees in Iran 80% are children, and 15% women. The 5% who are men comprise only the old and infirm and a few camp guards". One third of the children at Hajj Omran transit camp suffer from malnutrition. In *The Times* on January 6th, 1975 Mortimer described the situation of the Kurdish civilian population as

"worse than ever, especially in Badinan (north-western Kurdistan), where food was scarce because of the closure of the Turkish frontier and the difficulty of communication with the area nearer Iran. The road from Chouman to Badinan was no longer usable by motor vehicles because of the snow. There was also an acute shortage of housing in Badinan. ... Many people were living three or four families to a room. Medical facilities were pitifully inadequate. There was no anaesthesia, and 'if anyone gets appendicitis he will die', since it would take too long to get him to Iran on muleback; also it was not possible to approach the Turkish side since the Turks had laid the frontier with mines. Refugees were still coming from Badinan through the snow towards the Iranian frontier, and some of them were obliged to stay in tents at high altitudes. More tents, blankets and clothing were needed. Some 50% of the refugees had broken shoes and no stockings. Out of a sample of 45-children up to the age of two, 60 were suffering from marasmus, 24 from rickets, 65 from retarded development, 178 from diarrhoea, and 175 were not growing well".

The total number of displaced persons was estimated at between 600,000 and 750,000. There were serious worries that famine and disease, and the extreme cold in the mountains during the winter would take a heavy toll amongst those living in caves and tents. The Badinan region close to the Turkish border was particularly harsh and contained up to 100,000 families, beset by disease and further exposed to death (as were others in more accessible regions) as they tried to reach Iran in frightful winter conditions along inadequate roads made almost impassable by snow and ice. Within free Kurdistan there were only 600 hospital beds; anything worse than a simple fracture had to be treated in Iran. (See Appendix IV)

Reuter reported from Teheran on March 29th, quoting an official of the Iranian Red Lion and Sun Society, that Kurdish refugees were crossing the border into Iran at the rate of 3,000 a day. Since the 1975 agreement a number of amnesties have been announced. The first was in March and was extended until October. A second amnesty – taken as tacit admission of increased hostile Kurdish activity – was declared on August 26th, 1976 until October 15th, and subsequently extended for one month. These were aimed at both luring back refugees from Iran and the guerrillas in Iraqi Kurdistan who had refused to lay down arms. In September, 1976 it was estimated that about 40,000 refugees were left in Iran. However, the Iranian authorities¹⁹ had already decided to close the last refugee camp near Shiraz, to press the Kurds to accept the amnesty and return. At about the same time another source reported disturbingly that the Iranian authorities were dispersing the remaining Iraqi Kurds all over Iran after closing this last camp.

Economic activity was curtailed by fighting, and the Kurds accuse the Iraqis of having systematically destroyed crops. In normal times, Iraqi Kurdistan is nearly, if not quite, self-sufficient in wheat, barley, oats, vegetables, timber, dairy products, meat and poultry. Some agriculture, especially on the high ground, was not affected, and most of the tobacco crop was exported to Iran, the only neighbouring country with which an open border existed. Wartime supplies of such commodities as tea, sugar, and cooking oil, not to mention guns and ammunition, had always come through the lines from Arab traders and dissident army officers. From Iran came (apart from arms), clothing, tinned food, cigarettes, winter fruits, medical supplies, utensils and petrol. The blockade imposed by the Baghdad government drove prices upwards. According to the KDP²⁰, a 100 kg sack of sugar cost 15,000 fils in Badinan before the war and between 40,000 and 50,000 fils in Badinan, and 13,500 fils in Chouman in mid-November; an 80 kg sack of flour 5,500 fils (compared with 16,000 fils in Badinan and 6,000 in Chouman in mid-November), an 18-litre tin of kerosene 350 fils (3,000–4,000 fils in Badinan and 350 in Chouman), and a kilo of tea 1,000 fils (2,500 fils in Badinan and 1,000 in Chouman). Education was also disrupted by air raids. The university of Sulaimaniya moved at an early stage to Qala Diza, and most of its students joined the Kurdish armed forces. On Paris Radio on April 1st 1974, the KDP leader,

Dr Mahmoud Othman, summed up the Kurds' feeling of exclusion by saying they had never had positions of responsibility in the Revolutionary Command Council, the army, the intelligence and security services, and the ministries of oil, the interior and foreign affairs.

Within the rest of Iraq, the fighting in the north worsened relations between the government and the Kurds who did not flee northwards. The KDP alleged on October 4th, 1974 that 65 Kurds had been executed between April and the beginning of September, 1974 by the Iraqi authorities. On October 21st, the KDP said that 171 Kurds had been recently executed, and that another 168 had been sentenced to death for being KDP sympathisers.

The effects on Iraq

From the Iraqi side, glimpses of how the war was going were occasional. The commander of the specially created division, General Shakarji, was dismissed because of the high casualty rate.²¹ Others to lose their posts were: the commander of the air force, Hussein al-Hayawi, the commander of the presidential guard, Daoud al-Janabi, and the head of the Kirkuk air base.²² Of the country's 300,000 reservists, initially those aged up to 27 were called up. On November 9th, this was extended to the age of 30. Five Shiite leaders were to be executed on November 22nd for opposition to the war. The main reason was that the Shiites had been bearing the brunt of the fighting by supplying up to 80% of the soldiery in an army largely dominated by Sunnis. Moslems form over 90% of Iraq's population, and of these two-thirds are Shiites.

The war was clearly a major gamble for the Ba'ath Party, and in particular for Saddam Hussein, the regime's key man. He is both Vice-President and Vice-Regional Secretary General of the Ba'ath Party. The policy carried out in the north was probably a half-digested version of a plan worked out by Major-General Abdel-Aziz Uqaili, the Minister of Defence in 1965-66, and since 1969 under detention. This was based on British tactics in Malaya and envisages the establishment of civilian rule – under military domination – in areas of occupation once insurgents had been defeated. On October 5th, 1974, the so-called Kurdish Legislative Council was opened in Arbil, as if execution of the autonomy law was proceeding as intended. But it is little more than a farce, since it lacks recognition by the vast majority of Kurds. A small scale cabinet reshuffle in Baghdad, which included the removal of the Interior Minister, General Saadoun Ghaidan on November 11th, 1974, was taken by one observer²³ as representing a softening of the government position towards the Kurdish problem, as the Interior Ministry carried part of the responsibility for the war. Significantly no Minister for Northern Development was appointed. But on December 8th it was reported that Hamid al-Jebouri had been appointed Minister of State for co-ordinating the activities of the central and Kurdish regional governments – the very “watchdog” position in the 1974 accord to which the Kurds object. But, given the rigid and authoritarian nature of the Ba'athist regime, it is hard to believe that this was anything more than exploiting the opportunity of the death of Shazel Taqa, the Foreign Minister, to introduce some minor changes. Indeed, when the cabinet was reshuffled on May 10th, 1976 the position of Minister for National Unity was left vacant. The government has been pressing on with enacting portions of its 1974 law. On January 18th, 1975, a “system of administrative appointments for self-rule in the Kurdistan area” was announced “in implementation of the March 11th Manifesto”. Baghdad Radio said on January 20th the self-administration would be based in Arbil province. The chairman of the Executive Council would hold supreme administrative authority and (as Kurds have always feared) “the central authority will give general guidance to the administration in the area”. For Saddam Hussein, the position was probably one of all or nothing. He has lasted longer than any Iraqi leader since the monarchy was overthrown in 1958, and is tough and ruthless. During the winter months of comparative military inactivity he faced the possibility of damaging reassessment in view of the apparent lack of success against the Kurds and the large cost of lives. In fact this gamble, pulled off by the Algiers agreement, was the climax of his career. It has installed him more firmly than ever in power, so that he could afford some measure of relaxation towards the problem which he conquered. In essence, he defeated a rebellion which had brought down many Iraqi regimes. He had avoided the increasing chances of a major clash with Iran, and drastically reduced Iraq's dependence on the Soviet Union.

After Algiers

The Kurds had hoped that if the military solution to the Kurdish problem had become bogged down, there could have been a change of government in Baghdad on a drastic and fundamental level. They maintain that the Ba'athist regime is detested, not only by every Kurd, but also by a great majority of the Arabs in Iraq. Their main hope was that it would be overthrown by a popular uprising, stimulated by losses in the north, less easily put down with so much manpower tied up there. And, in the event of a new conflict between Israel and the Arabs, the army would be even more dispersed. But if a democratic regime were to replace it, there would have been every hope of a settlement, as there is no antipathy towards Arabs as such.

The Ba'athist and Kurdish sides were and remain far apart. The Kurds mistrust the Ba'athists deeply. Barzani was disappointed by the results of accepting the 1970 truce. The Kurds felt that the Ba'athists offered peace because they were weak. When they had greatly-increased oil revenues and new military equipment from the Soviet Union, the Kurds argue, they favoured a military solution, which they obtained only when their opponents had been virtually disarmed, “continuing the genocidal war, conducted by previous Iraqi regimes since 1961”.²⁴ The official Iraqi view of Barzani left little room for manoeuvre, and was distorted. On October 3rd, 1974, Shazel Taqa compared him to Al Capone. According to one pro-Baghdad account,²⁵ the Ba'athists felt that Barzani had violated agreements negotiated within the 1970 accord on such issues as the disarming of the Pesh Merga, laws affecting economic development and agrarian reform in Kurdistan, and on the demographic distribution around Kirkuk.

Iraqi fears extend to the external allies Barzani had built up. His dependence on Iran was seen as linking the Kurds directly to CENTO powers. The nationalisation of the Iraq Petroleum Company (operating in the Kirkuk region) in June 1972, was taken by the Kurds as a device by the Ba'athists to link the region more closely to the central government. Nevertheless, it was rash of Barzani to have said in an interview: “we are ready to do what goes with American policy in this area if America will protect us ... if support were strong enough, we could control the Kirkuk field and give it to an American company to operate”.²⁶ At the heart of Baghdad's desire to control Kirkuk was the fear that the local oil in Kurdish hands would give the Kurds the power to be really independent.

The Algiers agreement postponed a fair arrangement for the autonomy of the Kurds in Iraq. But in theory and outline, a practical start would still be a census to establish the area of Kurdish minority, which would ultimately form semi-autonomous Kurdistan within Iraq. There is a precedent in the Arab world which bears consideration for the Iraqi-Kurdistan problem: the agreement for regional self-government of the Southern Provinces of Sudan which President Numeiry concluded in March, 1972. The regional assembly and government for the non-Moslem and non-Arab South has legislative powers for all matters except national defence, foreign affairs, currency and coinage, and some of the broader aspects of transport, trade, and economic, social, and development planning. Southerners are represented in the national assembly and cabinet. The Kurds use the word “autonomy” for their goal, but this in fact takes it a good deal further than what they are actually seeking. They desire something akin to the autonomy enjoyed by one of the states within the United States – ie with some “federal” laws and always within the framework of Iraq. The March, 1970 accord offered the basis for these aspirations (see Appendix I) with broad definitions of propositions for the Kurdish language, culture and nationality, and for economic reconstruction, and plans for the appointment of local officials, and for the balance between national and regional government. The 1974 “autonomy” law is by contrast a far more precise and limiting document. Leaving aside the contentious issues of the 1957 census and of Arbil as the regional capital, the emphasis comes across less on the provisions for the autonomous power of the Legislative and Executive Councils and more on the central government's control over these councils. Thus the President of the Republic can both nominate (Article 13 C) and dismiss (13 F) the EC's chairman, who in turn selects its members (13 D). Baghdad also appoints a minister (18 C) officially to liaise between the central and regional governments. But under the current authoritarian Iraqi regime he would vet and control every decision. It is only from the earlier agreement as a starting point that progress towards a settlement could conceivably be made.

The International Implications of Algiers

Iran was happy to help the Kurds as long as this enabled them to put pressure on Baghdad, by tying down most of their armed forces and even causing the downfall of the regime through widespread internal resentment exacerbated by high casualties; but the Shah's aid might always have evaporated if an outright Kurdish victory seemed imminent, since this would have aroused the Kurdish minority in Iran. It was significant that Iran started to increase arms supplies to the Pesh Mergas after the Soviet-instructed breakthrough in August 1974. There were incidents on the border between Iran and Iraq throughout 1974. The most dangerous were the bombing of an Iranian village in September, and the shooting down – admitted by Iran – in mid-December, 1974 of an Iraqi TU-16 and Sukhoi-7 by missiles. In January, 1975 Hugo Anson (Reuter) reported that the Iraqi General Sayed Hammo stated Iranian 175 mm artillery units were bombarding Iraqi positions near Rawanduz from across the border, and had alleged that two regiments of uniformed Iranian troops were fighting 10 miles inside Iraq. Cross border exchanges of fire were still being reported in February. Whatever Iran's motives may have been for supporting the Kurds, it at least provided some humanitarian aid by establishing refugee camps and keeping its borders open for international relief work. But attitudes have changed since the Algiers agreement (see above). All contacts between Iraqi Kurdish refugees and Kurdish political organisations have been forbidden.²⁷ Rations were cut back to refugees from August, 1975, and in the same month 75 Iraqis were handed over to the Iraqi authorities. By contrast, Turkey, a cosignatory of the European Charter on Human Rights, is refusing to allow refugees food and medicine to cross its borders into Kurdistan. Also, in the final days, it had troops stationed along the 210-mile border with Iraq to keep Kurds out.

The Kurdish rebellion collapsed because of international events not directly connected with Kurdistan. In the end, the pressure came from the least expected direction – the agreement reached by Saddam Hussein and the Shah of Iran at an OPEC conference in Algiers on March 5th, and made public one day later. It caught even Parastin, the Kurdish intelligence service, unawares. *Al-Ahram* had reported on December 22nd that President Sadat of Egypt had been mediating to check the deterioration in relations between Iraq and Iran. Between 16th and 19th January, the foreign ministers of the two countries had unsuccessful talks in Istanbul. The Kurdish problem was a bargaining factor not the central issue of the agreement (see Appendix IV), which did not even mention them specifically. The main consideration was the evolution of a rapprochement between the states of the Persian Gulf and on the Arabian Peninsula. The intent had been twofold: first, to lessen the possibility of war between Iran and Iraq, which would have weakened the bargaining capacity of oil-producers; second, to move towards developing a regional security system dependent on local, not outside, powers. The damaging point in the agreement for the Kurds was the third: "the establishment of mutual security and confidence along their joint borders and an undertaking to conduct strict and effective control along the joint borders to put a final end to all subversive infiltration from either side".

Chronology gives a useful insight into why Barzani decided to end the rebellion and how the Kurds were given no chance to make alternative arrangements. At the time of the agreement, Barzani was already in Teheran, having arrived at the end of February. He was waiting to see the Shah to negotiate an increase in Iranian support. The hijacking of an Iraqi airliner on March 1st by three Kurdish sympathisers demanding the release of 85 Kurdish political prisoners was used by the Shah as a pretext to postpone a meeting with Barzani. Immediately after the agreement, Iran withdrew its military support. As we have seen, this did not prevent the Pesh Mergas from resisting the simultaneous offensive by the Iraqi armed forces. The turning point was a meeting on March 10th between the Shah and Barzani. The Shah is reported to have offered three alternatives: Barzani could bring his people to Iran; surrender to the Iraqis; or continue resistance without Iran's support. Barzani decided initially to give up, but was persuaded to continue. The Kurds fell foul too of an additional regional factor. No country with a Kurdish minority, and this applies most of all to Iran, was happy to see the Kurds in Iraq fight too effectively and obtain too much independence, for fear of this proving infectious. In addition with the agreement concluded, the Shah found himself in an awkward position. Iraq had made territorial concessions both along Shatt al-

Arab estuary and through border rectifications and demarcation, and the revolt in Iraq was still continuing. The Shah sent Barzani a message in which he is reported to have threatened either to intervene directly or to assist the Iraqis in putting down the rebellion. Barzani feared fighting against hopeless odds on three fronts (if Turkish manoeuvres are included) and that Kurdish minority groups would be cut off from supplies and victimised. A ceasefire was declared by Iraq on March 13th. Barzani ordered all military operations to halt on March 18th. The following day, the Iraqi government rejected a Kurdish offer to negotiate a settlement, saying that the best prospect for the Kurds would be to take advantage of the amnesty.

All parties made gains but the Kurds, who realised with bitterness that Iran's support was predicated solely to its hostility towards Iraq and its ambitions in the Persian Gulf. The only standby was an offer of some support from Syria, which was again in conflict with Iraq. The agreement ended for Iraq a troublesome and draining war. It lessened the country's dependence on the Soviet Union, opened the possibilities of a new range of relationships in the Gulf area, and would permit more time and money to be spent on internal, economic development. Iran got its way over Shatt al-Arab waterway, which leads to the important refinery at Abadan, and the border with Iraq tidied up. It too benefited from a reduced Soviet presence in Iraq, and gave the Shah more time to run Iran's economy and political scene, in which a new single party had just been instituted. The agreement received formal assent in Teheran on March 17th after two days of talks between the foreign ministers. The new relationship was sealed by a visit of the Iranian Prime Minister, Abbas Hoveyda, to Baghdad between 26th and 29th March, and by Saddam Hussein to Teheran from 29th April to 1st May.

The tragedy for the Kurds is that they were perhaps closer than at any time to obtaining what they wanted. They do not want total independence. As Barzani said in an interview with *Newsweek* of July 22nd, 1974: "If there were a legitimate regime in Baghdad, one wise enough to solve our problems peaceably, then I am sure our people would be ready to accept autonomy within Iraq". This would apply to all areas – including Kirkuk – with a Kurdish majority. They recognise too that, given the interests of the other countries in the region, this is the most realistic request to make. In objective terms, the agreement of March, 1970 still provides the best basis for a solution. But the Ba'athists, the front-runners of Arab nationalism, could not permit the existence of a solid non-Arab enclave in Iraq. And indeed this makes uncertain the sincerity with which the 1970 agreement was proposed. In addition, they would never permit free elections in one part of the country alone, especially when a crucial oil-producing area is involved. The Kurds have a point when they say that the democracy they require is for Iraq as a whole as well. It is possible that if the Middle East had not been so concerned with the Arab-Israel conflict and oil, the Kurds might have received more constructive attention. As it is the Arab world is guilty of double standards in their attitudes towards minorities. The revolt of the Eritreans in Ethiopia is seen as an extension of Arab power, but the Kurdish uprising as a diminution of this power.

After the Algiers agreement, the Iraqi government made efforts to consolidate the military victory with economic subsidies. The Iraqi Chargé d'Affaires in London in a letter to *The Times* of June 17th, 1976 claimed that over £17.3 million had been spent in a single week on building and other projects to benefit the Kurds. The Iraqi News Agency on March 11th, 1976 said that since the end of the war 200 million dinars had been spent on economic projects in the north. "Iraq Today" of 1st to 15th October, 1976 said that 195 schools had been built; 221 animal breeding stations were under construction and 160 agricultural co-operatives completed.

However, the other side to economic development is more sinister. It is reckoned that as many as 300,000 Kurds have been forcibly transferred southwards to Diwaniya and Nasiriya, to desert regions. Saddam Hussein issued a directive in the Baghdad daily *al-Iraq* of July 5th, 1976 saying that "the responsible authorities have taken several measures, such as changing the residence of some individuals such as civil servants, workers and others. Some other people have been transferred to other parts of the republic. The contingents of refugees latterly returned from Iran have also been resettled in the southern and central areas of Iraq". The Information Minister, Tariq Aziz²⁸ has admitted to the resettlement of only between 30,000 and 40,000 Kurds. At the same time Iraqi Arabs

have been encouraged to resettle in the northern, oil-rich areas, such as Kirkuk and Khanaqin in an attempt to alter the ethnic balance and ensure that whatever happens to the Kurdish bid for autonomy, income from oil will remain in Iraqi hands. Other policies have been enacted to back the government's attitude. The equivalent of £750 has been offered to any Arab who marries a Kurd; towns and cities have been renamed with Arab names – Kirkuk Province was renamed, for example, the Province of al-Ta'mim under a republican decree of February 7th, 1976; references to Kurdistan have been banned in government publications; the Kurdish weeklies *Beeri Niwe*, *Birayati* and *Bayan* were closed and the daily *al-Ta'akhi* stopped in February, 1976;²⁹ Kurdish is no longer the official second language, despite the fact that 30% of Iraq's population is Kurdish; the teaching of Kurdish in primary schools in three Kurdish districts has been forbidden; Kurdish land has been confiscated and handed to immigrant Arabs, and the KDP maintains that in certain areas land registration certificates have been refused to Kurds, and a ban has been imposed on the maintenance and repair of Kurdish-owned property. In addition the KDP reports that Kurds are being forced to join the Ba'ath Party and Kurds from the remoter northern areas of Iraq have been transferred to the more populated central regions where they are undergoing indoctrination programmes organised by the government. Fifty villages in Zakho and Amadiya districts were evacuated to Dotruk and destroyed by fire.³⁰ Abroad an attempt to assassinate Dr Ismet Cherif Vanly, one of the leading members of the KDP in Europe was made in Lausanne on October 7th, 1976.

The Iraqi government has, according to KDP communiqués and Amnesty International³¹ been taking stern revenge on Kurds. Since the Algiers agreement, 227 Kurds have been executed (the most recent, a group of three on December 1st, 1976), and large numbers of refugees who have returned under the amnesties – and also some

of those who had remained in Iraq – have been arrested and in many cases severely tortured.

The Kurdish organisations have reported since March, 1976 that clashes between their fighters and the Iraqi government forces have begun again. PUK officials have stated that they are settling down to a long-term guerrilla warfare with the aim of gaining either Kurdish autonomy or a Kurdish state within federated Iraq. KDP officials have reportedly trained guerrilla units of between 20 and 50 men operating in the northern areas of Iraq. Kurdish claims latterly seem more unrealistic than during the previous round of fighting. The first clashes were mentioned in March, 1976, and between then and the beginning of November at least 250 deaths amongst Iraqi troops and police were claimed, while no mention was made of Kurdish losses. The central government has been predictably tardy in admitting to any revolt. However Tariq Aziz was reported by Reuter on December 13th, 1976 as saying that minor shooting incidents were still troubling the peace in districts close to the north-west frontier with Syria.

However, at the time this revised edition of this Report went to press, the outlook for the Kurds remained grim, as in Turkey and Iraq they continued to be subjected to oppressive measures. At a trial under martial law held in South-Eastern Turkey in April 1981, the prosecution was pressing for the execution of 97 Kurdish separatist leaders (*Times*, April 14th, and *Economist*, April 4th 1981) In Iraq, President Saddam, confident of the outcome of the Gulf War, seemed poised to turn against the threat created by the reported alliance between the Kurdish Democratic Party and the Shia opposition (*Observer*, April 5th 1981). Only in Iran, where the armed forces of the state were heavily committed to the Gulf War, did there appear to be a temporary lull in the oppression of the Kurds.

Notes (Part two)

¹ *Le Monde* March 13th, 1974

² AP 27 August, 1974

³ *Daily Telegraph* November 13th, 1974

⁴ *Le Monde* July 10th, 1974

⁵ Reuter November 18th, 1974

⁶ As³

⁷ *New York Times Review* 1 June 1974

⁸ *Financial Times* 11 September 1974

⁹ *International Herald Tribune* October 7th, 1974

¹⁰ *The Times* November 16th, 1974

¹¹ *Washington Post* November 14th, 1974

¹² As¹¹

¹³ *The Times* October 12th, 1974

¹⁴ *The Observer* March 30th, 1975

¹⁵ *Guardian* May 7th, 1974

¹⁶ As¹³

¹⁷ *Sunday Times* October 10th, 1976

¹⁸ *Evening Standard* November 16th, 1975; *New York Times* February 5th, 1976

¹⁹ *Financial Times* August 25th, 1976

²⁰ *Pesh Merga No.3* January, 1975

²¹ *Financial Times* August 12th, 1974

²² As¹⁸

²³ *Financial Times* November 13th, 1974

²⁴ "Kurdistan Review" No.1 November, 1974

²⁵ "Rebellion and self-rule in Iraq Kurdistan" – a report submitted to the Lebanese section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. July, 1974

²⁶ *Washington Post* June 22nd, 1973

²⁷ *Pesh Merga No.5* April, 1976

²⁸ Reuter December 14th, 1976

²⁹ *Guardian* March 23rd, 1976

³⁰ News release October 28th, 1976

THE PEACE AGREEMENT OF MARCH 11TH, 1970

[Extracts taken from the translation provided by the Ministry of Culture and Information of Iraq]

The Revolutionary Council, in a statement issued on March 11th, 1970, announced a complete and constitutional settlement of the Kurdish issue. The historic announcement was made by the President of the Republic and Chairman of the RCC over Baghdad television and radio networks. The following are extracts from the statement:

The Revolutionary Command Council affirms its determination to deepen and broaden all effective measures for achieving the full means of cultural and economic resurgence and general development in the Kurdish area, seeking in the first place to enable the Kurdish masses to exercise their legitimate rights and assure their actual participation in earnest endeavours to build a homeland and struggle for the fulfilment of its major nationalist goals. Thereupon, the Revolutionary Command Council has resolved on the following:

1. The Kurdish language shall be, alongside with the Arabic language, the official language in areas populated by a Kurdish majority. The Kurdish language shall be the language of instruction in these areas. Arabic language shall be taught in all schools, where the Kurdish language is the language of instruction while the Kurdish language shall be taught in schools throughout Iraq as a second language within the limits stipulated by law.

2. The sharing of our Kurdish brothers in Government and non-discrimination between the Kurds and others in the assumption of public offices including sensitive and important posts in the state such as cabinet portfolios, army command, etc., have been and still remain among the important objectives which the Revolutionary Government seeks to achieve. The Revolutionary Government, in approving this principle, stresses the necessity of working for its fulfilment in an equitable ratio with due regard to the principle of efficiency the proportionate distribution of inhabitants and the inequities which had befallen our Kurdish brothers in the past.

3. In view of the state of backwardness which in the past afflicted the Kurdish nationality from the cultural and educational standpoints, a plan shall be worked out to make good that backwardness. This is to be achieved by:

A. Speeding up the implementation of the resolution of the Revolutionary Command Council concerning the language and the cultural right of the Kurdish people and placing under the jurisdiction of the Directorate General of Kurdish Culture and Information the task of preparing and steering radio and television programmes concerning Kurdish national issues.

B. Reinstating all students who were dismissed or were compelled to leave the school on account of the circumstances of violence in the area regardless of their ages or producing a convenient remedy for their problem.

C. Building more schools in the Kurdish area, elevating the standards of schooling and education and admitting in just proportions Kurdish students to universities, military colleges, educational missions and fellowship.

4. In the administrative units, populated by a Kurdish majority, officials shall be from among Kurds or from among persons well-versed in the Kurdish language provided the required number is available. Appointment shall be made of the principal officials – Governor, Qaimaqam, Police Commandant, Security Director, etc. Work will promptly commence to develop state machineries in the area in consultation with the High Committee supervising the implementation of this statement in a manner assuring such implementation and cementing national unity and stability in the area.

5. The Government concedes to the Kurdish people its right to set up student, youth, women and teachers organisation of its own – such organisations to become affiliated in the corresponding national Iraqi organisations.

A. The operative period of paras (1) and (2) of the RCC's resolution No.59 dated August 5th, 1968, shall be extended right up to the date of the issuance of this statement and shall extend to all of those who took part in the acts of violence in the Kurdish area.

B. Workers, officials and employees – both civilian and military, shall return to service without this being affected by cadre restrictions. The civilians among them shall be put to use in the Kurdish area within the limits of its requirements.

C. A body of specialists shall be constituted to work for uplifting the Kurdish area in all spheres as quickly as possible and for compensating it for what has descended upon it in the past number of years. An adequate budget is to be set aside for this purpose. The body in question shall operate under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Northern Affairs.

D. The economic plan shall be drawn up in such a way as to assure equal development to various parts of Iraq with due attention to the Kurdish area.

E. Pension salaries shall be made for the families of those who met with martyrdom in the regrettable circumstances of hostilities from among the members of the Kurdish armed movement and others as well as to the persons who became disabled or deformed as a result of those conditions. This is to be enacted by a special legislation on the pattern of other legislations in force.

F. Speedy efforts shall be made to provide relief to stricken and needy persons through the accomplishment of housing projects and others assuring work to the unemployed. Appropriate in kind and cash subsidies shall also be made available and reasonable compensation offered to those stricken persons who need help. This all is to be entrusted to the High Committee. Excluded from this shall be the persons covered by the above paras.

8. The inhabitants of Arab and Kurdish villages shall be restored to their former places of habitation. As to the villagers of areas where housing units cannot be set up and which are taken over by the Government for public utility purposes under law, they shall be resettled in neighbouring areas and duly compensated.

9. Speedy measures shall be taken to implement the Agrarian Reform law in the Kurdish area and amending it in such a manner as guarantees the liquidation of feudal relations and the acquisition of appropriate plots of land side by side with waiving for them agricultural taxes accumulating over the years of unfortunate hostilities.

10. It has been agreed to amend the Interim Constitution as follows:

A. The people of Iraq is made up of two principal nationalities; the Arab nationality and the Kurdish nationality. This Constitution confirms the national rights of the Kurdish people and the rights of all minorities within the framework of Iraqi unity.

B. The following para shall be added to Article (4) of the Constitution: the Kurdish language, alongside with the Arabic language, shall be an official language in the Kurdish area.

C. The above shall be confirmed in the Permanent Constitution.

11. The broadcasting station and heavy weapons shall be returned to the Government – this being tied up to the implementation of the final stages of the agreement.

12. A Kurd shall be one of the vice-presidents.

13. The Governorates Law shall be amended in a manner conforming with the substance of this statement.

14. Following the announcement of the statement, necessary measures shall be taken, in consultation with the High Committee supervising its implementation to unify the governorates and administrative units populated by a Kurdish majority in accordance with official census operations yet to be made. The state shall endeavour to develop this administrative unity and deepen and broaden the exercising by the Kurdish people therein of the sum of its national rights as a guarantee to its enjoyment of self-rule. Until this administrative unity is achieved, the Kurdish national affairs shall be coordinated through periodical meetings between the High Committee and the governors of the northern area. As the self-rule is to be achieved within the framework of the Iraqi Republic, the exploitation of national riches in the area will naturally be under the jurisdiction of the authorities of this Republic.

15. The Kurdish people shall share in the legislative power in a manner proportionate to its population ration in Iraq.

“Kurdish countrymen, these gains scored by the Revolution will be nothing more than a step for the full achievement of your national goals in the shade of this beloved homeland and the unity of its great people. History will bear witness that you did not have and never will have a sincere brother and dependable ally as the Arab people...”

APPENDIX II

Extracts from the March 11th, 1974:

LAW FOR AUTONOMY IN THE AREA OF KURDISTAN

[from the translation provided by the Iraqi Embassy, London]

Part one: FOUNDATION OF AUTONOMY

Chapter one: GENERAL PRINCIPLES

ARTICLE ONE

- A) The area of Kurdistan shall enjoy autonomy and be called the area whenever it is mentioned hereinafter.
- B) The area shall be so defined as to be populated by a majority of Kurds and the general census shall specify the demarcation of the area in accordance with the provisions of March 11th Manifesto and the general census records of 1957 shall be the foundation for defining the national nature of the absolute population majority in the places where general census is to be conducted.
- C) The area shall be considered an integral administrative unit, enjoying a juridical personality and autonomy within the framework of the legal, political and economic integrity of the Republic of Iraq, and the administrative divisions therein shall be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the governorates' law, with due consideration to the provisions of this law.
- D) The area is an integral part of the Iraqi territory and its people an integral part of the Iraqi people.
- E) The city of Arbil shall be the metropolitan centre for the administration of autonomy.
- F) The administrative bodies of autonomy shall be part of the administrative bodies in the Republic of Iraq.

ARTICLE TWO

- A) The Kurdish language shall be the official language, besides the Arabic language, in the area.
- B) The Kurdish language shall be the language of education for Kurds in the area, and the teaching of Arabic shall be compulsory in all stages and institutions of education.
- C) Educational institutions shall be established in the area for members of the Arab nationality, wherein education shall be in Arabic and the Kurdish language shall be taught in a compulsory manner.
- D) All citizens in the area shall enjoy the option to join the schools for their education, regardless of their mother tongue.
- E) Education shall be subject, in all stages in the area, to the general educational policy of the state.

ARTICLE THREE

- A) The rights and liberties of members of the Arab nationality and minorities in the area shall be guaranteed in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, laws and resolutions promulgated in that connection, and the autonomous administration shall be bound to guarantee their exercise.
- B) Members of the Arab nationality and minorities in the area shall be represented on all autonomous bodies, in proportion of their ratio to the population of the area, and shall participate in assuming public civil service posts, in accordance with laws and regulations governing them.

ARTICLE FOUR

Legislature shall be independent and void of any other control than the law, and the legal formations in the area shall constitute an integral part of the legal system in the Republic of Iraq.

Chapter two: FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

ARTICLE FIVE

The area shall constitute an autonomous financial unit, within the financial integrity of the state.

ARTICLE SIX

- A) The area shall have a special budget within the consolidated budget of the state.
- B) For the preparation and compilation of the budget of the area the same rules and principles of compiling the consolidated budget of the state shall be adopted.

ARTICLE NINE

Accounts of the area shall be under the supervision of the Board of Supreme Auditing and Financial Inspection.

Part two: AUTONOMOUS BODIES

Chapter one: LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

ARTICLE TEN

The Legislative Council is the legislative body elected for the area, and its formation, organisation and progress of work therein shall be defined by law.

ARTICLE ELEVEN

- A) The Legislative Council shall elect a chairman, vice-chairman and secretary from amongst its members.
- B) Meetings of the Legislative Council shall be convened by the presence of the majority of its members, and its decisions shall be adopted by the majority of the present members, unless otherwise provided for in this law or the law for the legislative council.

ARTICLE TWELVE

The Legislative Council shall exercise, within the definition of the Constitution and laws, the following powers:

- A) The formulation of its articles of association.
- B) The adoption of legislative decision required for the development of the area and promotion of its social, cultural, constructional and economic aspects of local character within the framework of the general policy of the state.
- C) The adoption of legislative decision connected with the development of culture and nationalist characteristics and traditions of citizens in the area.
- D) The adoption of legislative decisions related to semi-official departments, institutions and administrations of local character after consultation with the competent central authorities.
- E) The ratification of projects covered by detailed plans drawn up by the Executive Council on the economic, social and developmental affairs, as well as the educational and health affairs, and the discharge of activity in accordance with the requirements of the general central planning of the state and prerequisites of its implementation.
- F) The proposition of the special budget of the area.
- G) The adoption of final statements of accounts, following their auditing by the Board of the Supreme Auditing and submitting them to the legislative power for ratification.
- H) The introduction of amendments to the special budget of the area after their ratification, within the scope of amounts allotted thereto and purposes allotted therefor, provided that such measures shall not contravene the laws and development plans of the state.
- I) Discussion with and questioning of the Executive Council members on the affairs covered by their fields of competence.
- J) Withdrawal of confidence from the Executive Council, or one or more of its members. The confidence withdrawal decision shall be adopted by the majority number of the Legislative Council's members.

Chapter two: EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

ARTICLE THIRTEEN

- A) The Executive Council is the executive body for the administration of autonomy in the area...
- C) The President of the Republic shall entrust one of the Legislative Council's members to preside over it and form the Executive Council.
- D) The chairman-designate shall select the vice-chairman and the Executive Council's members from among the members of the Legislative Council or from among those who enjoy the qualifications of membership therein, and shall submit to the Legislative Council, for confidence. Upon realisation of confidence by the majority of the Council's members, a Republican ordinance shall be promulgated to the effect of calling the Executive Council.
- E) The chairman and members of the Executive Council shall hold a grade of minister.
- F) The President of the Republic may dismiss the chairman of the Executive Council from his position, in which case the Council shall be considered as dissolved.
- G) In the case of dissolving the Executive Council, or withdrawing confidence therefrom, the Council shall carry on with the discharge of current affairs only, pending the formation of a new council provided that this shall take place within a maximum period of fifteen days...

ARTICLE FIFTEEN

The Executive Council shall exercise the following powers:

- A) Securing the implementation of laws and regulations.
- B) Abiding by the provisions of the legislature.
- C) Realisation of justice, security and public order, and protection of national and local public amenities and the public and private properties.
- D) Promulgating decisions on all that is required for the implementation of provisions of the resolutions adopted by the local Legislative Council.
- E) Drawing up projects under the detailed plans for the economic, social and developmental affairs, as well as the educational, health and labour affairs, in accordance with the requirements of the general central planning of the state and prerequisites of its implementation, and submitting the same to the Legislative Council for ratification.
- F) Supervising the local public amenities and institutions in the area.
- G) Appointing officials for the autonomous administration whose appoint-

ment does not require the promulgation of a Republican ordinance or approval of the President of the Republic.

- H) Implementing the budget of the area in accordance with the laws and principles adopted in the accounting system of the state.
- I) Preparing an annual report on the conditions of the area, to be submitted to the President of the Republic and Legislative Council.

Part Three: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CENTRAL AUTHORITY AND THE AUTONOMOUS ADMINISTRATION

ARTICLE SIXTEEN

With the exception of the powers exercised by the autonomous bodies in accordance with the provisions of this law, the exercise of authority in the entire part of the Republic of Iraq shall revert to the central bodies or their representatives.

ARTICLE SEVENTEEN

Police, security and nationality formations in the area shall be attached to their directorates general at the Ministry of Interior and their staff shall be subject to the provisions of the laws, regulations and instructions applied in the Republic of Iraq.

ARTICLE EIGHTEEN

- A) The offices of the central authority in the area shall fall under the ministries they are attached to and shall discharge their duties within their jurisdictions, the autonomous bodies may submit reports on them to the respective ministries they are attached to.
- B) The central authority may within the scope of their jurisdiction make general guidance to the local administrations...
- C) The central authority shall appoint a Minister of State who will coordinate between the authority and the autonomous bodies. He may attend all meetings of such bodies. The central authority may delegate any other minister to carry out such a mission.
- D) The decisions of the autonomous bodies shall be conveyed to the Minister of State as soon as they are taken.
- E) The head of the Executive Council shall attend the [Iraqi State] cabinet meeting.

ARTICLE NINETEEN

- A) Supervision over the legality of the decisions of the autonomous bodies shall be exercised by the Cassation Court of Iraq through a special committee made of the chief judge of the court and other four members selected by the members of the cassation court from among themselves for a period of three years renewable for one time only.
- B) The Minister of Justice or the Minister of State may object to the decision of the autonomous bodies before the supervisory committee mentioned under the previous paragraph in case they violate the Constitution, laws or regulations within 30 days from the date the Minister of State is notified of them.
- E) The decisions of the autonomous bodies which the supervisory committee rules as non-legal, shall be considered as wholly or partly abrogated from the date of their issue and all legal consequences resulting therefrom shall be null and void.

ARTICLE TWENTY

- A) The President may dissolve the Legislative Council in case it is not possible for the Council to exercise its authority due to the resignation of half of its members or due to failure of securing the legal quorum within 30 days from the date it is called for a session or due to failure in getting the confidence stipulated under para. D of Article 13 of this law for two successive times or due to its failure to comply with the supervision committee stipulated under Article Nineteen of this law.
- B) In case the Legislative Council is dissolved, the Executive Council shall continue exercising its authority until the elections of a new Legislative Council in a maximum period of 19 days from the date the Republican ordinance has been issued to dissolve it.

APPENDIX III

Extracts from the

PROGRAMME OF THE KURDISTAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF IRAQ [as published by the KDP Information Department, June 1973 ("Know the Kurds" No. 1)]

Article 3. "We struggle for freedom and for the implementation of the March 11th Agreement in both letter and spirit and to enable the people of Kurdistan to achieve autonomy and to project, consolidate and develop that autonomy in Kurdistan and within the Iraqi Republic."

Article 6. "We struggle for the sake of establishing a popularly elected, revolutionary and democratic form of government. We also struggle to achieve far-reaching social and economic changes within all aspects of the society and to guarantee for all the citizens the freedoms of worship, belief, press, and political association."

Article 7. "We struggle: a) for the strengthening of brotherly relations between the Arab and Kurdish nations, b) for the consolidation of brotherhood among the Arabs, the Kurds and the minorities within Iraq and for the strengthening of national unity, c) for the strengthening of bonds of friendship between our Kurdish people and all peoples of the world."

Article 8. "a) We struggle for peace in the world and for the lessening of international tensions and we are guided by the principles of the United Nations, the Bandung Conference resolutions, the principles of peaceful co-existence, peaceful solution of international disputes, the banning of nuclear weapons and tests on them, b) We pursue a nationalist anti-imperialist policy and we strive to strengthen friendly relations with all peoples of the world based upon the principle of mutual benefit and the support of national liberation movements waged by people for the sake of independence and the right of self-determination."

Article 9. "We endeavour to strengthen bonds of friendship and cooperation between our party and all other Iraqi parties and organizations which believe in the justice of the Kurdish question and which support the common struggle of our party and the other democratic organizations in all parts of Kurdistan. We also endeavour to strengthen ties of friendship with the democratic parties and organizations throughout the world."

Article 12. "We struggle to develop our national economy and to raise the standard of living of the people by following the principle of comprehensive economic and social planning, taking into consideration the human and natural resources of the land and hoping to make available the basic needs for development and encouraging both the public and private sectors of the economy while insuring the leading role of the former."

Article 16. "We support the new Land Reform Law No.37 of 1970 in the hope that all farmers of Kurdistan will be able to own some land and so that feudalism in Kurdistan will be uprooted..."

Article 17. "We believe in the regulating of domestic and foreign trade while assisting and stimulating the business community, all this will be taking into consideration the interests of both the public and private sectors based upon the national interest of the country and on the principle of combating monopoly and price speculation. We also believe in establishing commercial ties with other countries based upon the principle of reciprocity and the encouragement of exports and the limiting of imports to the basic and necessary commodities."

Article 22. "We support women's political, economic, social and cultural rights and we work to see the necessary laws passed which will guarantee all rights of women prior, during and after childbirth as well as the rights of mothers and children."

Article 23. "We struggle to a) guarantee the rights of the Kurdish student and in order to wipe out illiteracy and to give education a nationalist and democratic content while fighting reactionary, fascist and racist tendencies; b) revitalize Kurdish history, literature and art and to enrich them with the humanist elements from other cultures and to protect and preserve historic sites in Kurdistan and to build museums for them; c) to develop the University of Sulaimaniya, protect its independence and to turn it into a center for academic research and for the revitalization of the Kurdish national culture; d) emphasize the teaching of Kurdish language, history and culture during all stages of education, promote the teaching of Kurdish throughout Iraq, establish a Kurdish academy of science, a press and publishing house, and a separate radio and television station in Kurdistan; e) make primary school education compulsory for both sexes, open night schools for workers, farmers and others, and to increase the number of libraries, laboratories and literary clubs in order to raise the cultural and educational standards of the people, f) promote Kurdish art and culture and to use their potentials to serve humanity in general and the objectives and interests of the Kurdish people in particular, and to encourage the literary and artistic movement by increasing the number of assistantships and scholarships, the building of theatres and opening of clubs, g) guarantee the rights of teachers in Kurdistan and to raise their standard in various aspects of their profession."

from 'THE BAGHDAD OBSERVER' of March 7th, 1975

Sayid Saddam Hussein, RCC Vice-Chairman, and the Emperor Mohammed Riza Pahlavi, the Shah of Iran, signed in Algiers yesterday at 6.35 pm (local time) an agreement to settle disputes between Iraq and Iran. The signing of the agreement, which took place at the Nations Palace in Algiers, was attended by President Houari Boumédiène. The joint communiqué issued following the talks between the two parties was read out by Sayid Abdul Aziz Bouteflika, the Algerian Foreign Minister. Following is an unofficial text of the joint communiqué:

"During the convocation of the summit conference of OPEC member countries in the Algerian capital and upon the initiative of President Houari Boumedienne HM the Shah of Iran and Sayid Saddam Hussein, RCC Vice-Chairman, met twice and conducted lengthy talks concerning Iraqi-Iranian relations. These talks, which were conducted in the presence of President Houari Boumedienne were characterised by outright frankness and sincere willingness on the part of the two nations to reaching a permanent and final settlement of all problems existing between the two countries and in implementation of the principles of the safety of the soil, border sanctity and non-interference in the internal affairs.

"The two contracting parties have decided the following:

1 - "Definite demarcation of their land frontiers on the basis of the Constantinople Protocol of 1913 and minutes of the Frontier Demarcation Commission of 1914.

2 - "Demarcation of river frontier according to Thalweg line.

3 - "The re-establishment of mutual security and confidence along their joint borders and an undertaking to conduct strict and effective control along the joint borders to put a final end to all subversive infiltration from either side.

4 - "The two parties also agreed on considering the aforementioned arrangements as indivisible elements for a comprehensive settlement and consequently the violation of any of the provisions will naturally contradict the spirit of Algiers Agreement; the two parties will remain in constant contact with President Houari boumedienne who will, when necessary, offer Algeria's brotherly assistance for the implementation of these decisions.

"The two parties decided to restore the traditional ties of good neighbourly relations and friendship and particularly eliminating all passive factors affecting their relations by continuously exchanging viewpoints on issues of mutual interest and developing mutual cooperation. The two parties officially announce that the region should be secure from any foreign intervention. The Foreign Ministers of Iraq and Iran, in the presence of the Algerian Foreign Minister, will meet on March 15th, 1975, in Teheran to put down the work arrangements of the Mixed Iraqi-Iranian Commission which was established for the implementation of the decisions taken in a joint accord and stipulated above in accordance with the wishes of the two parties. Algeria will be invited to the meeting of the Iraqi-Iranian Mixed commission which will define its agenda and method of work in Baghdad and Teheran alternatively whenever the necessity arises.

"His Majesty the Shah of Iran has accepted with pleasure the invitation extended to him by His Excellency President Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr to pay an official visit to Iraq the date of which will be mutually agreed upon.

"On the other side, Sayid Saddam Hussein has accepted an invitation to officially visit Iran on a date to be fixed later by the two parties. His Majesty the Shahenshah and Sayid Saddam Hussein expressed warm gratitude to President Boumedienne who worked sincerely and out of brotherly sentiments to effect such a direct contact between the leaders of the two countries and consequently participated in establishing a new era of relations between Iraq and Iran for the attainment of high interest in the said region."

The Algerian President at the public concluding session of the OPEC Summit Conference announced last night the comprehensive agreement between Iraq and Iran on settling all the existing problems between the two countries. Following the announcement of President Boumedienne to this news the conference hall roared with claps which lasted several minutes expressing the welcome over this agreement.

Later Sayid Saddam Hussein and the Shah of Iran met each other at the middle of the hall where they shook hands and embraced each other. President Boumedienne went up to Sayid Hussein and the Shah and shook hands and embraced them. In a short speech President Boumedienne greeted the Emperor and Sayid Hussein and President Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr.

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MARTIN SHORT has worked in Independent Television since 1969 for its leading current affairs programmes. Over the last eight years he has been a frequent visitor to the Middle East on film documentary and newspaper work. He is an occasional contributor to *The Spectator* and is also co-author of a Penguin special.

ANTHONY McDERMOTT now writes for the *Financial Times*; previously he worked for the *Middle East Economic Digest*, and wrote on Middle Eastern affairs for *The Guardian* from 1970 to 1976.

Revised by MURRAY DICKSON.



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¹The Internationalist; ²New Society; ³Times Lit. Supplement; ⁴Belfast Newsletter; ⁵Irish Post; ⁶International Affairs; ⁷Sunday Independent; ⁸S. Asian Review; ⁹The Friend; ¹⁰Afro-Asian Affairs; ¹¹E. African Standard; ¹²Sunday Times; ¹³New Community; ¹⁴The Times; ¹⁵Information; ¹⁶The Observer; ¹⁷Irving Horowitz; ¹⁸The Guardian; ¹⁹Peace News; ²⁰The Freethinker; ²¹The Spectator; ²²The Geographical Magazine; ²³New World; ²⁴Melbourne Age; ²⁵The Economist; ²⁶Neue Zürcher Zeitung; ²⁷Resurgence; ²⁸Feedback; ²⁹Time Out; ³⁰Evening Standard; ³¹Tribune of Australia; ³²The Scotsman; ³³The Financial Times; ³⁴New Statesman; ³⁵The Nation; ³⁶Bernard Levin.

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