

THE KURDISH QUESTION

by

Emir Kamuran Bedir-Khan.



1960

T H E K U R D I S H Q U E S T I O N .

by Emir KAMURAN BEDIR-KHAN

"A thousand friends are too few,
One enemy is many"
(Kurdish Proverb)

Lying in the heart of the Near and Middle East Kurdistan constitutes an ethnically homogenous territory of half a million square kilometers, inhabited by a compact mass of twelve million people. That is to say, the Kurds represent more than a quarter of the population of the three states in which they nearly all live.

The Kurdish question is essentially the struggle waged by the Kurdish people, for ever a century, to achieve its liberation.

The Kurdish question is the instinctive natural spirit of this people, which wishes to remain Kurdish, to speak its language freely, and to preserve its national heritage.

It wishes to have its own schools, its own publications and a healthy participation in the progress of humanity.

These rights cannot be denied to any people, no more to the Kurds than any other.

The Kurdish question consists of trying to convince those states which have divided Kurdistan between them, to act towards the Kurds in a manner consistent with the moral and legal principles universally recognised, and written into the United Nations Charter, and into the Charter of Human Rights, - Charters that these states have signed of their own free will.

Finally, on the international level, the Kurdish question is the right of the Kurdish people to be treated with justice, to have its dignity respected, and not to be sacrificed to this or that economic, political or strategic interest.

First of all, it is necessary to correct the somewhat arbitrary ideas about the Kurdish people that exist in many countries - in so far they have any ideas on this subject at all.

There is a tendency to think of the Kurdish people as a collection of nomadic, primitive and turbulent tribes, lacking all solidarity among themselves, and all aspirations towards progress.

Most often in the international press, news about Kurds appears under headlines such as "The Kurds-source of trouble" or "The Kurds-secret arms" (from this or that power) or "The Kurds, a people of herdsman and bandits", etc., etc..

Nevertheless, those who have actually visited Kurdistan, and have studied its history, its language, and who have lived among the inhabitants of this country, are of a somewhat different opinion.

This is what Mr. Charmoy, professor of the Asiatic Institute at St-Petersburg, a member of the Imperial Academy of Sciences said in 1868, in his foreword to "Cherefnami" (History of the Kurds):

"Among the people who have successfully appeared on the world scene, there are some whose memory has come down to posterity because of the remarkable buildings and monuments which attest to their former splendour. Amongst these are the ancient Egyptians, whose country at the same time is considered the birthplace of philosophy. Others, like the Greeks and Romans, have deserved our admiration because of their progress in the arts and sciences, because of the wisdom of their laws and their political institutions, and because their name is attached to all in history which is grand and heroic.

There are other nations who have only made themselves known by their destructive genius, and by the manner in which they have ravaged all the countries through which their bloodthirsty and plundering hordes have crossed. Amongst these were the Huns under the Attila, the Monguls and Tartars who, under the leadership of their famous conquerors Genghis Khan and Batou, left their bloody traces across vast reaches which they overran and conquered.

Other nations, finally, without this unfortunate notoriety, have distinguished themselves by their military genius and by the bravery of some of their greater leaders, which has entitled them to the honour of giving monarchs to several states in Africa and Asia. Such were the Kurds whose name was glorified in antiquity by the fabulous exploits of Rustum, considered with justice to be the Persian Hercules; and by the far more recent great deeds of Saledin and his worthy brother, el Malek-el- Adel, which are celebrated, together with those of the



European heroes of the second crusade, Phillip Augustus, Richard the Lion-Heart, Lusignan, and many other warriors whose glory is celebrated in Christendom. This same nation furthermore, has given birth to the General Querim-Khan, who in the later half of the 18th century was the founder of the Zen dynasty, and the Titus of Persia; as well as giving birth to many historians and writers, among whom are the erudite Ibn el Essir of Gezira, the famous Ebul Feda, Prince Ayoubi of Hama, equally famous as Historian and Geographer, and finally the elegant Historiographer Idris-i-Bitilissi. ”

Major Soane who lived a long time in Kurdistan, in his book "To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise" wrote about the Kurds: "As a representative type of human being, the Kurd is probably unsurpassed. The Kurds look what they are, the Medes of to-day, worthy if only they could unite themselves, to become once again a great military nation whose austere and tough character could hold the respect of the far more mediocre people among whom they live.

“ If we find, in the Kurdish character, traits which in Western eyes are considered virtues, the credit belongs to a natural and fundamental disposition; loyalty, respect for verbal undertakings, a generous affection for relatives and neighbours, an honourable attitude towards women, a literary sense and love of poetry, a readiness to sacrifice themselves for their clan, and a pride in their nation and their native land”.

Another friend of our country, M. Alexandre Jaba, in his collection of Kurdish stories published in 1860, referring to the time (at that period still fairly recent) when Kurdistan was still governed by its own princes wrote:

“At that time there were a number of schools in Kurdistan and a considerable interest in literature and in the sciences. In all the cities, in all the provinces, in all the towns and villages of Kurdistan, one could not fail to see one, two or three schools, and sometimes even more. It was with jealousy that the Governors and inhabitants protected their schools and their intellectuals. In Kurdistan, high and low alike valued the arts and sciences. One could find distinguished professors in the Gezira, at Imadi, at Soran, at Saard, and other places. To obtain a degree, one had to follow twelve different courses. The schools, the teachers, and the literature, have today almost entirely disappeared, or at any rate, are very rare”.

More recently still, Mr. Martin Hartmann wrote in his book "Fünf Vorträge über den Islam" (Leipzig 1912): "In naming the Kurds as a people capable of being won for European culture, I am well aware that I will meet with considerable opposition. Yet all the accounts of travellers are in agreement in discovering, under their rough exterior, a world of delicate and profound thoughts and feelings. The evidence of so many witnesses proves that they are endowed with a natural intelligence, a facility for rapid assimilation of ideas, and a straightforward honesty. Let this nation one day find its true guiding principals, and it will astound the world by its strength, and the energy it will show in adapting itself to the civilisation of the modern world".

Such quotations can be multiplied several times over, and I have deliberately limited my choice here to a period when there was, as yet, no controversy taking place around the Kurdish question.

o o o

Having said all this, let us add that Kurdistan covers, in the heart of Asia, a vast and mountainous region, which stretches in the form of a crescent from the neighbourhood of Alexandretta to the Persian Gulf, between the Pontic and Caucasian Mountains in the north, the Persian plateau in the east, and Mesopotamia in the south.

The Tigris and the Euphrates have their sources in the very heart of Kurdistan, which they irrigate before entering Arab territories.

It is a mountainous country, whose peaks are generally about ten to thirteen thousand feet-high, and often over sixteen thousand feet, as for example Mt. Ararat, the north-eastern rampart of the country, which is covered with eternal snows.

By contrast, in the south, in Iraqi Kurdistan, lemons oranges and palm trees grow together.

The mountains are partly covered by large forests, and all the climatic characteristics of the temperate zone are present.

In addition, herding, the principal industry of the Kurds, and agriculture, are favoured by the rich pastures and the fertile valleys. The valleys of Diarbekir, Passen, Moush, Kharpout, Gezira, Mahabad, Hawler, Gawanrud, Shahrizour, fertilised by a natural irrigation system,



assures the people of a substantial agricultural production and potential. Even in the present state of neglect in which the country finds itself, agricultural production is still substantial, both in quantity and variety, thanks to the work of the Kurdish peasant. Vine growing, (more than 40 different types of grapes) rice, tobacco and fruits are among the most important products of Kurdistan.

C Rome mo

Beneath the surface, are mineral resources of considerable importance, so far insufficiently exploited. Only the copper mines of Argana (Turkish Kurdistan), the petrol of Kirmanshah (Persian Kurdistan) Kirkurk. Mosoul, and Khanekin (Iraqi Kurdistan) are being exploited at the moment. In addition it possesses almost unlimited resources of water-power, with the Euphrates, the Tigris, the great and little Zab, and innumerable other waterways running through its territory.

In the traditional Kurdish economy, handicrafts used to occupy, and still do occupy, a major part: weaving, carpet-making, the manufacture of small arms, leather work, ceramics, ebony work and goldsmithing are particularly notable. Kurdish woollen cloths, silke and cottons, are justly prized for their quality and beauty, and the carpets of Sinah have a world wide reputation.

Kurdistan possesses about twenty different cities with more than 50.000 inhabitants. Hewler (Erbil) is considered to have one of the longest records of continuous habitations, and is to be found in Iraqi Kurdistan.

According to an analysis based on official statistics of the countries between which Kurdistan is divided, the number of Kurds is about:

Turkish Kurdistan	5,5 million
Iranien Kurdistan	4.0 "
Iraqi Kurdistan	1.8 "

In northern Syria along the frontier of the Tigris, up to Kurd Dag there is a Kurdish population of about 400.000, distributed among some two thousand villages and several small towns, of which the principal is Kamoushlia.

In the U.D.S.S.R. distributed among the Armenian, Georgian and Azerbaïdjanirepublics, live about 150.000 Kurds. The above figures do not take into account the numerous Kurdish colonies which exist in Turkish Anatolia, in the eastern parts of Iran (Khorassam and Belougistan) or in

cities like Istanbul, Bagdhad, Damascus, or Beirut.

The Kurds are a people of Indo-european origin, speaking an Iranian language. As for their history, it can be traced back to the dawn of civilization.

o o o

Recent archaeological discoveries allow us to believe that the ancestors of the Kurds played an important part in the development of civilisation in the Near East. The whole history of the Kurdish people is proof that the Kurds have never troubled themselves about conquests, and consequently have never been a destructiva element. All the struggles which the Kurdish people have conducted have taken place on their own land, and always with the same aim, - to defend their human dignity and natural heritage.

It is now 24 centuries since Xenophon, the first of the western strategists to venture into the Kurdish mountains and describe them, tested the courage of the Karduks, the ancestors of the present-day Kurds. He says that his solders "during the seven days they took to cross
)) this country, had been under arms without respite, and had suffered
)) more casualties than all the powers of the King of the Persians had
)) been able to inflict upon them".

In the tenth century of the Christian Era, the Kurds hat formed several states such as the Sheddadites, the Hassanweides, the Mervanides, and the Banou-annaz, who had a brilliant history and whose kings were veritable Maecenas, patrons of the arts and letters. It was a Kurdish prince, belonging to the Rewendelan who accomplished the task and the glory of saving Islam, doubly menaced by the weakness of the Abbassides and the agression of the Crusades.

The role of historical personages such as Abou-Mousslim, and Saladin, both of them Kurds, is too well known for it to be necessary to dwell on them any further.

Together with the other Kurdish dynasties, the Ayyoubides, inheritors of this glorious past fell under the Mongul avalanche.

Subsequently, the Kurdish princes cams to agreement sometimes with the



Persian and sometimes with the Ottoman empire, and tried with greater or less success, to safeguard the autonomy of their country. The pact of Chaldyran, signed between them and Selim I, guaranteed for the time being their independence.

A period of great expansion followed, the Persians on their side recognising the autonomy of the Kurdish princes who had rallied to the Shah's throne.

This period of political prosperity lasted until the middle of the 19th century. Then the centralising policy, which was adopted within the Ottoman empire by officials who were both incompetent and corrupt, provoked from the 19th century onwards a number of Kurdish movements which frequently developed into open revolts (1848, 1879, 1886, 1889, 1913, etc.. to quote only the most recent of them). During this same period, the situation in Persian Kurdistan was not much better. As far back as the 17th century, the great Kurdish national poet Ehmeda Khani had in his epic poems, launched a pathetic appeal for union, which the Kurdish singers still declaim to this day:

"These Kurds who by the sabre conquered glory
How is it they have been deprived
Of the empire of the world,
And subjugated by the foreigner ?
The Turks and Persians guard themselves
With Kurdish ramparts. When they move
It is we whose blood is shed.
Will we not one day awake ?
Will not a liberator rise ?
A king reveal himself among our ranks ?
If we had our king our silver
Would be real, minted coin,
And not, as now, pass without currency.
We would not be thus bound to bend the knee
To Turk or Persian.."

In spite of the efforts and struggles of the Kurds, one by one the Kurdish principalities disappeared. The last, after seven years struggle, was crushed by the Turkish armies in 1848.

The encroachments on the prerogatives of the Kurdish regions continued. The exactions of a corrupt beaurocracy exasperated the Kurds. The government of Constantinople evacuated certain regions of Kurdistan and decimated the population. The central government tried, by these forced emigrations, to suppress and annihilate the Kurdish people. During this same period the Turkish government massacred a million Armenians in order to "put an end to the Armenian question". "Honni soit qui mal y pense", but all this has in no way since prevented the Turks from becoming members of the NATO Pact, and the "Defenders of Human Liberty"

After the first World War, the allied victories and the Principles of Woodrow Wilson gave the Kurds the hop of a better future. Following the Turkish capitulation, the Kurdish people, through its representatives, claimed their right to independance. The Allies solely acknowledged the justice of the Kurdish claims. The Ottoman government conquered as it was, was obliged to negotiate on the basis of the Wilson principles. On the 10th of August 1920, the treaty of Sèvres gave to the Kurds, (Section III "Kurdistan", articles 62 and 64), the right to autonomy and independance.

The coup de force of Moustafa Kemal made the treaty of Sèvres a dead letter. This treaty was replaced by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923. While this treaty no longer talked of the creation of a Kurdish State, nevertheless, in articles 38-44 it recognised a minimum of cultural rights, of freedom of expression, and of publication in their native language to the non-Turkish groups, as well as the non-Moslem minorities.

Mr. Inonu, head of the Turkish delegation to the Lausanne conference, in the course of discussions on the Mosul question, and according to the official verbatim reports of that conference, declared that Turkey was a binational state, that Turk and Kurd had both earned the right to government and political power in absolute national equality.

This declaration was a confirmation of the promises made to the Kurds in Turkey by the Ankara Government during the war of liberation abainst the Greek armies. Promises that even went sofar as to allow the Kurds to see the possibility of a future autonomous Kurdish state within the Turkish frontiers. Hussein Awny Bey, deputy for Erzerum could justly declare, during a meeting of the Grand National Assembly, "This country belongs to Kurds and Turks. Two nations have the right to raise their voices from this platform - the Kurdish nation and the Turkish nation".



Nevertheless, if on the one hand the treaty of Sèvres created an independent Kurdistan and Turkey was prepared to recognise the Kurdish people as a national entity, on the other hand, in the Western Chancelleries, private discussions were already carving up Kurdistan. One part of the Kurdish territories were annexed by Iraq, another part by Syria.

After the 1914-18 war, allegedly fought for the liberation of peoples, oh irony of fate... the Kurds saw their country, hitherto divided in two, now cut up still further into four pieces...

One should note that, regarding the part of Kurdistan attached to Iraq (the oil bearing region), the British High Commissioner in Baghdad, in the face of Kurdish discontent and successive revolts, made the following declaration on the 24th of December, 1922:

"The Government of his Britannic Majesty and the Government of Iraq recognise the rights of the Kurds living within the frontiers of Iraq to establish a Kurdish Government within these frontiers. It hopes that the different Kurdish elements will manage as soon as possible to agree among themselves on the form which they desire this Government to take, and the areas which they wish it to embrace. They will then send responsible delegates to discuss their political and economical relations with his Britannic Majesty's Government and the Iraqi Government".

Even if they could not any longer envisage the possibility of a Kurdish state such as had been provided for in the Treaty of Sèvres, the Kurds still had the formal promise of both the Government of Ankara, on the one hand, and the British and Iraqi Governments on the other, that they would enjoy autonomy in Turkish and Iraqi Kurdistan respectively.

Hardly had the treaty of Lausanne been signed, however, then Moustafa Kemal, reversing the policy of collaboration and violating his promises, and even the contractual engagements of the Turkish Government regarding the rights of minorities (Treaty of Lausanne), threw off the mask and dissolved the National Assembly in which Kurdistan was represented by its own deputies.

In reply to the Kurds, who reminded him of his promises, he decreed the closing of all their schools, the suppression of all publications, the prohibition of the use of the Kurdish language, and ordered the arrest of patriots and influential personages.

The persecutions recommenced. As if the magic the new "elections" returned to the Chamber of Deputies Turks for the Kurdish regions. Many former Kurdish deputies were arrested, brought before court martials, and hanged. Draconian measures were applied throughout the whole of Kurdistan.

Faced with this crime, the Kurds reacted vehemently, and the first revolt broke out. It lasted from 1925-1926. The Turks tried to convince the world that the social reforms introduced by the Turkish Government were the reason for the Kurdish revolt. The truth is quite different.

Here is what the president of the court martial sitting at Diarbekir said to the Kurdish patriots responsible for the revolt of 1925-1926:

"Some amongst you guided by your egoism, and some others by your political convictions, but all of you united on one point, that is to say the constitution of an independant Kurdistan, went ahead. It is on the scaffold that you will pay the price of your crime".

Other uprisings followed, that of 1929-1930, and that of 1937-1938.

If the number of Kurds killed, arms in their hands, was never much more than a few thousand, nevertheless, the Turkish Army, Air Force and Gendarmerie, massacred more than a hundred thousand women, children and old men, and burnt more than two thousand villages. In the region of Dersim, the Turkish Army walled up the entrance to the caves in which the women and children had taken refuge. At Sassoun poison gas was used.

During this time the Turkish Government thought that it had found a final solution to the Kurdish question by declaring purely and simply to the world, that there were no Kurds in Turkey, but "mountain Turks" only.

The claims of the Kurds in Iraq did not receive a much better welcome. This is how Captain Phillip Mumford, who was for seven years an officer in the Intelligence Service in Iraq, reports an episode in the events which took place in that country:

"This agitation ended in a revolt when the Iraqi Army opened fire on a Kurdish crowd. We had hoped that the Government of Baghdad would have settled the situation on its own, but we soon saw that there was no question of this, in view of the depth of the Kurdish national feelings and the incompetence of the Baghdad Armies. The Royal Air force

had to undertake the greater part of the operations. The bombardment of Kurdish villages became inevitable. and even delayed action bombs had to be used. In one single region, 79 villages were destroyed".

The fate of the Kurds in Iran was no better and they had to submit to all the rigours of a military and centralist regime.

Despite the bloody and unequal battles which took place between the Kurdish people, and the Turkish, Iraqi, and Persian governments, discussions took place between these governments and Kurdish national organisations, beginning with contacts in Paris, in 1929, between the Kurds and the Persians, which were resumed in 1930 at Tehran. In 1931-32 such contact took place between the Iraqi governments, and the Kurds. In 1932-33 and later in 1937 between the Turkish government and the Kurds.

The Kurdish claims at this time could be summarised as follows: recognition of the existence of a Kurdish national community, the granting to it of cultural autonomy (schools and publications) and the right to develop normally within the framework of the territorial integrity of the interested states. Unfortunately, this demand was never accepted.

During the Second World War the Western Powers asked the Kurds to remain calm and not create any difficulties in a region so vital to the conduct of the war.

Not only did the Kurds respect their promises, but even more, they contributed, as much as they could to the Allied war effort. Kurdish parachutiste even took part, side by side with British troops, in military operations in Greece. Towards the end of the war Moustafa Barzani, in Iraq, and Ghazi Mohamed, in Iranian Kurdistan, tried to obtain the recognition by the governments of Baghdad and Tehran of the Kurds right to autonomy, within the framework of these two states. Ghazi Mohamed proclaimed a Kurdish Republic in Iranian Kurdistan on the 15th December 1945, within the framework of the Iranian empire. His brother Seif Ghazi, a Deputy in the Tehran parliament, was named chief of the Kurdish delegation which went several times to Tehran in order to normalise relations between the Kurdish Republic and the Central Government.

In the meantime Moustafa Barzani, driven out of Iraq, thanks to the intervention of the R.A.F. on the side of Baghdad, had passed over into Iran with two thousand of this men, and put himself at the disposition of the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad, which gave him the rank of General.



In 1947 the government of Tehran, under the pretext of assuring free elections throughout Persian territory, demanded permission of Ghazi Mohamed to send its troops into the Republic of Mahabad. It was the ardent desire of Ghazi Mohamed to smooth out all misunderstandings between the government of Tehéran and the Republic of Mohabad, in order subsequently to find an equitable solution to Kurdish problem without damaging the territorial integrity of Iran. Consequently Ghazi Mohamed, in all good faith but most unwisely, accepted this demand. Moustafa Barzani, more farseeing, refused to submit to this demand. Later events were to prove him right.

Once the Iranian Army had entered Mehabad its first act was to arrest Ghazi Mohamed with all his ministers and civil servants. A Persian military tribunal, formed on the spot, hastily, after a pretence of a trial which only lasted two hours, condemned him to death, and executed him on the night of the 31st of March 1947 with 28 of his colleagues.

General Moustafa Barzani, with his men and their families attempted to reach Iraq. In spite of the promise of the Baghdad government to grant them free passage, General Barzani was met near the Iraqi frontier by the conjoined fire of both Iraqi and Iranian troops.

After hard fighting General Barzani forced a passage for himself northwards, repulsing continuous attacks from the Turkish troops, who also tried to bar his way. Finally, having reached, by near miracle, the Soviet frontier, he demanded political asylum in the Soviet Union and was generously welcomed there.

Even while attempting to resist, by armed force, the tyranny of their oppressors, the Kurds still struggled to draw the attention of the Great Powers, and international organisations to their fate. Notes were addressed to the Great Powers on the following dates: the 30th April 1943; 30th March 1945; 31 March 1945; 21st July 1945; 10th September 1945; 26th November 1945; 9th December 1945; 24th December 1945; 26th June 1946; 10th March 1947, 31st March 1947 and to the United Nations Organisation on the 30th July 1947; 29th November 1948; 15th Jan. 1949; 13th September 1950; 27th September 1950; 18th November 1951; 30th November 1952, 5th August 1954; 7th September 1955; 3rd March 1956; 14th October 1958; and on 13th December 1958 to Mr. Dulles. While these appeals and memoranda were flooding the Chanceleries of the West and UNO, the states which enchained Kurdistan were renewing the agreement

formerly concluded at Saadabad, and laying the foundations for the ill-omened Baghdad Pact - an instrument destined, in the minds of its signatories, at least as much to surpress the desire for freedom of the Kurdish people, as to protect their countries from the danger of Soviet aggression.

In the face of e repeated rebuffs, and the indifference of the Great Powers and international organisations, the obstacles to the liberation of the Kurdish people appeared unsarmountable.

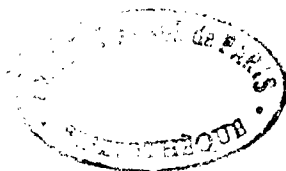
New factors however, intervned which showed the difficulties being encountered were due not to the hatred of the neighbouring people but to the general international situation.

In fact, even as far back as 1930, at the time of the Kurdish revolt of Ararat, several Turkish deputies demanded of Ismet Inonu (at that time Prime Minister) that the fraticidal struggle should end, and that satisfaction should be given to the Kurdish people. They underlined the fact that all the wars waged against non-Turkish elements in the Ottoman empire had never had any other effect that to alienate these communities from the empire.

In Iraq itself, despite the harshness of the regime, Arab deputies had, even well before the 14th July 1958, lifted their voices to demand that the Government recognise the national rights of the Kurds.

We know equally that Persian personalities intervned in 1946 to demand that the Mahbad republic should be spared.

The collaboration established since the end of the war between the intellectuals and the youth of the Kurdish, Arab, and Turkish peoples constitutes another important factor. The most outstanding example of this is the revolution of the 14th Juli 1958, in Iraq, which changed the whole face of the Near East. In effect the government which emerged from this revolution recognised spontaneously the national rights of the Kurdish people, and has given it a cultural autonomy. Iraqi Kurdi-
stan already enjoys effective democratie liberty. We honour the names of the promoters of this revolution, and above all that of General Kassem who, in his efforts to endow his country with institutions of a democratic type and to promote there the necessary social reforms, is in the process of revealing to the Orient its true self.



Without any doubt this region which, in antiquity was the cradle of revealed religion and of our modern civilisation, deserves a better fate than that which, at present, it enjoys. The people who inhabit it will have shown themselves worthy of their destiny when, guided by wisdom and generous ideals, they rid themselves of the vain ambition to dominate their neighbours, free themselves of all racial or religious prejudice and unite themselves in one great human family.

Provided it is not diverted from its ideals, the Iraqi Revolution can have for the Middle East the same healthy impact which formerly its elder sister, the French Revolution, had in the West. In fact, it is the first time a people of the Near East and its government have recognised, with a common accord, the national rights of another people - the Kurds. This recognition is all the more important because it is joined with the recognition of the rights of all other minorities, such as Turks, Jews, Assyrians and Armenians. The Arab, people in adopting this attitude, does honour to its glorious past and gives the best proof of its political maturity.

As for the Kurdish people, allegedly indisciplined, turbulent and ungovernable, it marches as one man, under the guidance of its glorious leader, General Moustafa Barzani, side by side with the Iraqi government. As for Iraqi unity, we understand quite clearly it is as dear to the Kurds and to other minority groups as to the Arabs themselves. If there had really existed any deep-rooted disagreements between our Arab brothers and us Kurds, it would certainly not have sufficed merely to remove the regime which we both detested, in order to establish a lasting peace between the two communities. We are convinced that, if the Iranian and Turkish leaders gave proof of the same understanding and tolerance towards their Kurdish subjects, they would contribute towards the establishment, in their countries, of the same peace, the same fraternity, the same collaboration.

We know that, since the revolution, the Kurds of Iraq, have put themselves loyally at the service of the Government to help it to smooth out any difficulties it may encounter. In Iraq, both Kurds and Arabs call themselves Iraqis first, and only after that Kurds or Arabs. We would like to see Tehran, and above all Ankara, meditate on this example.

Persia and Turkey, in recognising the national character of the Kurds, and in giving them cultural autonomy, can only gain by this, and increase their prestige. It would certainly be a contribution of the most constructive kind towards the stability of the Near East, torn at the moment between so many conflicting ideologies. The Kurds, contrary to the opinion which has been spread about by too much incorrect information, have no intention of becoming the instrument of any foreign power, or of any imperialist plots. Their aspirations are not a new thing, since they have been affirmed for over a century, and they are purely national.

They are at the same time sufficiently reasonable to adjust themselves to existing national sovereignties, but only on condition that these states, on their side, undertake to remedy the denial of justice of which our people (which, after all, has also the right to a place in the sun) is still a victim.

To refuse for much longer to recognise the existence of a political question which concerns the future of 12 million men, in a region vital to the world, would be, on the contrary, to create, little by little, a situation fraught with the greatest danger for our times.

-.-



