MIDDLE EASTERN MONOGRAPHS: 5

THE KURDISH REPUBLIC OF 1946

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The Kurdish Republic of 1946

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PREFACE

THE time has perhaps come when a history of the Kurdish Republic of 1946 can usefully be compiled. Not that any particular moment is ideal, for it might still be too early to assess dispassionately all aspects of that controversial era, or already too late to capture accurately the essence of events now beginning to fade in human memories. Because the complete story of the Mahabad Republic cannot be pieced together from published sources, the pages that follow must be based on imperfect memories; for when the Republic collapsed the Kurds who took part in it set about destroying all written evidence of their involvement. Nor have official Iranian sources been inclined to perpetuate the bitter memories of events that deviated from the main stream of Iranian national consolidation and progress.

One of the most elusive tasks is to uncover the exact dates of events or even their order in time. In addition to any errors due to these causes, I have perhaps been too kind to some of the characters of this story and too severe with others; while the contributions of some, for good or bad, have no doubt been overlooked altogether.

The standard English-language source of information on the Mahabad Republic has been an article that appeared in the *Middle East Journal* in July 1947, written by Archie Roosevelt, Jr, one of the few foreigners to visit Mahabad during the Republic. The fact that several dates were misplaced in that account does not detract from its remarkable insight into conditions at Mahabad at the time.

I must acknowledge my gratitude to Cyrus Habibi of Mahabad, now with the American Consulate in Tabriz, who accompanied me and contributed his linguistic skill and balanced judgement on many field trips and interviews in quest of the story of his native town. Nor can I forget the holidays devoted by Mrs Oscar Reynolds of the U.S. Foreign Service to the transcription and typing of the first draft of this history. Of those who read the manuscript and made useful suggestions, Sir Reader Bullard deserves special mention, as does Miss Hermia Oliver, on the

editorial staff of Chatham House. Mr Archie Roosevelt was kind enough to read me excerpts from notes of his visit to Mahabad and to let me use two photographs from his collection. I should also like to acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr C. J. Edmonds and his book on Iraqi Kurdistan, *Kurds, Turks and Arabs*; and to Pierre Rondot for encouragement and indirect inspiration of my study.

I must also remain in debt to all those Persians, Arabs, Turks, and Kurds whose confidence in my fair use of the materials they provided encouraged me to believe I could write this small segment of their history. Of the Iranian army officers who were helpful I must mention Major-General (ret) Homayuni, Brigadier General Ali Asghar Fiuzi, and Colonel Mehran. The names of my principal Kurdish sources appear throughout this book and in the appendices. Most of them prefer to remain anonymous, so I shall not cite them individually, except for Sayyid Ahmad, son of Sayyid Taha of Shemdinan, who first told me of his adventures in the service of the Republic one day in 1955 as we motored by jeep into Barzani territory to Mergasor. Sayyid Ahmad's accidental death at Arbil in 1958 removed a bright spirit from the scene and a loyal friend from Kurdistan when I returned there in 1959. Of my other Kurdish friends and sources, those who contributed the most will know who they are.

Books that include names and phrases in Middle Eastern languages customarily set forth a system of transliteration or at least try to justify the lack thereof, as I do, since my system is sometimes inconsistent though based on certain relevant considerations. For example, most personal names are derived from Arabic and when written in the Arabic script that is used by the Persian, Arabic, and Kurdish languages, retain their original Arabic spelling. Kurdish pronunciation, though varying greatly within Kurdistan, usually remains nearer to the original Arabic than does Persian. I have therefore tended towards transliteration from the Arabic, making exceptions, as in Obaidullah rather than Ubaidullah, where the Arabic did not hit close enough to actual pronunciation in the region under study. Confining myself within the limits of the latin alphabet and omitting the *ain* and *hamza*, I provide no sure means of scientifically restoring foreign names and words to their original forms. Middle Eastern scholars and linguists should have no trouble, however, in recognizing where

the *ains* and other symbols are lacking, and the innocent would do well to remain so.

Because of my past and present association with the United States Foreign Service, I must stress that the material used here is of non-official origin and that I alone am responsible for all views and interpretations.

W.E.

April 1962

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I. HISTORY

BEFORE 1800

On the southern edge of Mahabad where dusty houses tumbled down toward the running waters of the Chom i Sauj Bulaqeh there was a small circle called in Kurdish 'Chwar Chira' after the four lamps in its centre. Now in their place stands a statue of the Shah, Muhammad Reza Pahlavi, surrounded by four painted lions. When, on 22 January 1946, Qazi Muhammad of Mahabad stood on a platform in that circle wearing a Soviet-style uniform and the white turban of a religious dignitary, he was addressing the citizens of a small town of 16,000 souls and the leading tribal chiefs of a region that represented but a corner of those ill-defined highlands across which on maps the word Kurdistan used to be, and sometimes still is, written. But Qazi's message was directed outward beyond the town, beyond the still-undefined borders of a small state, beyond the frontiers of Iran into the mountains and valleys of all Kurdistan, and forward in time towards a year of hope and despair that has now become history.

Qazi Muhammad and his compatriots had spent the preceding months looking for clues to the origin of their race, their language, and their culture. They were seeking a Kurdish identity; and in the history books, read by only a few, they found confusion.

In a modern sense it is sufficient to define a Kurd as a person who identifies himself as such. Looking back, however, it is not at all clear just who the Kurds were, whence they came, whether they were one race or several. Imaginative historians and collectors of Kurdish traditions continue to search among ancient lands and peoples for obscure kingdoms whose names can, with the change of a few letters, be transformed into 'Kurd'. To some a hint appears with the land of Gutium which could be placed in southwest Iran as early as the third millennium B.C. Others have studied Assyrian inscriptions and believe they can identify military campaigns into the hills of Kurdistan and around Lake Rezaieh north of Mahabad. Or the period of Kassite rule in Babylonia

might suggest a kinship; at least the initial consonants are identical. Again the Kurds are alleged to appear in Babylonian inscriptions referring to the submission of the hordes of the north, and Cyrus is sometimes supposed to have been aided in his attack on Babylon by Kurdish cavalry. Herodotus refers to the Paktuike, while Xenophon learned to respect the highland tactics of the Carduchi during his serpentine retreat north to the sea. One scholar, however, has attacked this etymology and instead identifies the Carduchi with the Georgians.[1]

The Kurds themselves, at least the Kurds of Iran, lean towards a belief that their forebears were equivalent to a section of the people identified in history as the Medes, probably Aryan tribes that entered Iran from the north at an unknown time, reached their zenith in the late seventh century B.C., merged with the great Achaemenian empire of Cyrus, and thereafter retained something near their original identity in the mountains of western Iran whence they eventually extended their sway westwards into the Hakkari and other Turkish highlands to the west. Along with these scientific theories is an account appearing in the *Sharaf Nameh*, a historical Persian epic written at the end of the sixteenth century, which tells of a mythological tyrant, Zohhak, from whose shoulders two serpents' heads emerged each of which could be appeased only by consuming the brains of a young man daily. After the sacrifice of many pairs of victims, by a genial ruse one of the brains was replaced by the brain of a sheep, allowing a youth to escape daily to the mountains to propagate the Kurdish race. Perhaps in fact several of these many versions contain elements of truth and the Kurds are a combination of ancient peoples held together by an Iranian, or Median, culture giving the whole a semblance of unity.

In a superficial sense the Kurds appear physically to represent one homogeneous race. Persons who have lived in or near Kurdistan usually believe they can distinguish a Kurd from an Arab, an Azerbaijani Turk, an Armenian, or a Persian even if the Kurd is not wearing his native clothes. Scientific inquiry, however, indicates a great variety of head shapes, hair and skin colours, and other physical characteristics. Some have noted that the Kurds of a specific district appear to exhibit certain of the traits of their most immediate non-Kurdish neighbours, which would include

[1] Basil Nikitine, *Les Kurdes* (Paris, 1958).

most of the Middle Eastern peoples along the 700 miles from the northwest to the southeast tip of the Kurdish arc.

The Kurdish language has been the subject of almost as much controversy as Kurdish history. Is it one language or several, or merely a dialect of Persian and therefore no language at all? Bypassing learned linguistic discussions, it can be maintained that Kurdish is a separate language, a member of the Aryan branch of the Indo-European family of languages, differing from Persian in syntax, grammar, and vocabulary. The dialectal differences can be illustrated by the fact that the Kurdish of Kermanshah in the south is probably as intelligible to an Iranian as it is to a Kurd of the Turkish highlands. Cutting through these many dialects a line can be drawn separating the main northern and southern divisions at a place where the linguistic differences are most notable. This line bisected the little Kurdish Republic of Mahabad, climbing from the city of Rezaieh southwest into the mountains near Ushnavieh, with Mahabad lying to the south and its people speaking what, with the similar dialect of Sulaimaniya in Iraq, is considered the most sophisticated and literary version of the language; while to the north of the line dwell the fierce Barzanis of Iraq and the great Shikak and Herki tribes of Iran and the Kurdish peoples of Turkey. The linguistic division is also to some extent a cultural one separating as it does the dress of the southern Kurdish tribesmen, baggy trousers pegged at the ankle, from those sporting the slightly belled stovepipe trousers of the north.

To return to the Kurdish history in which Qazi Muhammad carved out his place that January afternoon in 1946, a clear Kurdish identity emerges only after the Arab invasions of the seventh century which the Kurds, together with other Iranians in the highlands, vainly sought to oppose. By the tenth century small Kurdish dynasties began to appear on the scene and then, after flaming briefly to life, they sank again into obscurity. Later, from a family of Tekrit and Arbil in Iraq, descended the great Salah ad Din al Ayubi. Though of Kurdish stock, Saladin seized control of a predominantly Arab state; and rather than champion a narrow Kurdish cause, he led Islam in brilliant battle and negotiation with his European adversaries. During the thirteenth century the Mongol hordes descended from the north and east to throw a vast region into turmoil and to set in motion tribes and popula-

tions, including those of Turkish stock, who continued to press into Azerbaijan as neighbours of the Kurds with whom they were to live in profound but fitful hostility.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Kurdish territory occupied a central position in the intense rivalry between a revived Persia under the Shia Safavid dynasty and the newly consolidated Turkey of the Sunni Ottoman line. Most Kurdish tribes sided with their Ottoman co-religionists against the neighbouring Shia Azerbaijanis and Persians to earn in the midst of those ruinous wars a durable fighting reputation. By the treaty of 1639, Sultan Murad IV of Turkey and Shah Abbas II of Iran agreed on a frontier line slicing through the middle of northern Kurdistan and sealing a fatal tradition of Kurdish division.

The Kurds of both Turkey and Iran reacted to the decline of the great sixteenth-century empires hemming them in by throwing up strong men and ruling families who established their temporal dominion over tribes whose names still exist. These new Kurdish leaders included Sufi religious Shaikhs and Sayyids who attracted fanatical followers and carved out large areas of spiritual and temporal influence.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

By the beginning of the nineteenth century the 'wild Koords, had entered the tales told by missionaries, archaeologists, and those curious travellers from Europe who wanted to investigate, often on behalf of their interested governments, the inner reaches of a disintegrating Ottoman empire and a stagnant Persia. This remarkable and romantic era of western penetration began with Kinneir and Fraser and reached full flower just before the First World War when mission schools were flourishing, when Gertrude Bell, le Comte de Cholet, Mrs Bishop, and Sir Mark Sykes were crisscrossing eastern lands on foot and horseback, in blizzards and heat, and when the greatest of them all, E. B. Soane, disguised as a Persian, pushed from Istanbul to Beirut and east across the Tigris into the rich Kurdish valley of Shahrazur to Halabja near Sulaimaniya where Adela Khanum in her elegant silks and cotton stuffs ruled the great Jaf tribe and engaged the laconic Soane as her Persian scribe. It is not surprising that when the British army

of occupation in Iraq spread its influence to the Sulaimaniya area, Soane was sent there as Political Officer.

The nineteenth century, however, cannot be passed over so quickly in looking back on Kurdish history from that little square in Mahabad. After the massacre of the Janissary Corps in 1826, the new Ottoman army took steps to pacify and re-establish the Sultan's authority in the Kurdish highlands. The insurrection that followed brought Bedr Khan of Derguli to the fore in the Bohtan tribal area of what is now southern Turkey centred at Jezireh ibn Omar on the upper Tigris. Meanwhile the 'Mir of Ruwanduz', Muhammad Kor Pasha, gained hegemony over Ruwanduz, Arbil, and briefly over Mosul in Iraq. Fully occupied elsewhere, usually in Egypt, the Turks tolerated large areas of Kurdish autonomy and the cruel excesses of Kurdish tribesmen, as in 1843 and 1846 when Bedr Khan pillaged and massacred some 10,000 Assyrian Christians who had become too powerful and independent of spirit in his midst.

Although he was a typical feudal tribal leader, Bedr Khan at times expressed himself in terms of Kurdish nationhood. His real intentions, however, may never be known, for by 1846–7 the Ottoman armies were able to turn their full attention to his overthrow with superior military techniques imported from the west combined with the often more effective eastern devices of bribery and tribal intrigue. Finally, in August 1847, anticipating by almost exactly 100 years a similar scene on the Iranian side of the frontier, Bedr Khan descended from his mountain retreat and submitted to the army commander. He was then exiled with several members of his family and tribal allies to Crete and was later allowed to settle in Damascus, where he died in 1868.

When the activities of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan were revived after the Iraqi revolution of 1958, membership vouchers began to appear on both sides of the frontier bearing photographs of five men who had made their mark in Kurdish nationalist history; Shaikh Abdul Qader, Sayyid Reza, Shaikh Mahmud of Sulaimaniya, Qazi Muhammad, and Mulla Mustafa Barzani. The first of these was a son of the great Sufi Shaikh Obaidullah of the Naqshbandi order, himself son of Sayyid Taha who had conferred Sufi vicarship on a certain poor but aspiring religious man in the obscure village of Barzan near the Greater Zab river of Iraq. In 1880 that remarkable American missionary doctor,

Joseph P. Cochran, went up into the mountains from his hospital at Urmia (Rezaieh) to visit certain remote Assyrian Christian villages, including several that were subject to Shaikh Obaidullah in the Shemdinan region of Turkey. During these visits a firm friendship typical of those times developed between the American doctor and the Kurdish chief of a people who often terrorized, plundered, and massacred the local Christians, but were beheld with fascination and often respect by the missionaries. Cochran is reputed to have helped cure the Shaikh of lingering pneumonia and to have heard from his lips suggestions that the Kurds would welcome the support of the American and British Governments to throw off their Turkish and Persian yokes. Indeed, the Shaikh had written a letter to a British Consul in 1878 insisting that 'the Kurdish nation is a people apart' and protesting against alleged evil deeds of the Turkish and Persian Governments.

During the summer of 1880 the Persian Government committed additional 'crimes' against Kurds within Persian territory, which Shaikh Obaidullah determined to avenge. The Shaikh then, in league with Hamza Agha of the Mangur tribe on the Persian side, gathered a somewhat ragged Kurdish cavalry from Turkish Kurdistan and entered Persia through the passes south and west of Urmia with some 20,000 armed men. Part of this force, commanded by his eldest son, Shaikh Abdul Qader, captured Sauj Bulaq, later to be known as Mahabad, without difficulty, after which it moved on to Miandoab and massacred a large number of its Azerbaijani Turk inhabitants. The Kurds then drew up before Maragheh where they defeated some Persian cavalry, whose flight spread panic in Tabriz. Thence the Kurds retired to the heights above Urmia ready, as the missionaries used to say, to sweep down 'like wolves on the fold'. City officials, knowing that Persian army reinforcements were on the way, asked Dr Cochran to go up to Mt Seir to confer with Shaikh Obaidullah about surrender terms. This the good doctor did to protect the many Christians of the area who would be pillaged or killed in any general attack by the wild Kurdish tribesmen. In the delay thus arranged Obaidullah's movement lost momentum, and dissension rent the ranks of his tribal allies; so that when Persian army reinforcements arrived a few days later, the Shaikh and his closest companions were forced to retire into the mountains of Turkey. In 1881 Shaikh Obaidullah submitted to the Sultan, who had

come to an agreement with the Shah on outstanding disputes. Taken by the Turks, he was exiled to Mecca where he died in 1883. One of his sons, Shaikh Muhammad Sadiq, blamed Dr Cochran for his father's defeat and was rumoured to be planning revenge against the American missionaries; but in a typical Kurdish reversal he instead sent his ailing wife to the mission hospital in Urmia where she was well cared for, in return for which Dr Cochran received a donkey-load of the finest highland honey and tobacco. Two of Shaikh Obaidullah's Persian-Kurdish allies fared less well than did his son: Jalil Agha, responsible for the massacre at Miandoab, was blown from the mouth of a cannon, and Hamza Agha Mangur was lured into a Persian ambush at Sauj Bulaq.

The removal of Shaikh Obaidullah to Mecca deprived the strategic central Kurdish mountain redoubt of its military and political unity but in no manner lessened the respect of interested governments for Kurdish military prowess. During the last two decades of the nineteenth century Russian blandishments attracted a number of Kurdish chiefs, including Jafar Agha of the Shikak tribe, Abdul Razzaq of the Bedr Khan family, and Sayyid Taha, grandson of Shaikh Obaidullah. In 1889 these men were invited to visit Russia by Nicholas II. They returned with generous gifts and encouraging messages that stimulated their imaginations and ambitions.

The Turkish Government, meanwhile, developed a new tribal and Kurdish policy based on the recruitment of the famous Hamadieh tribal cavalry which fought for the Sultan and quarrelled among themselves, and in 1897 set upon the Armenians whose national hopes, sometimes encouraged by the Russian Government, were burning more brightly than those of any other people subject to the Ottomans.

The wave of reform that swept the Ottoman and Persian empires before the First World War encountered in a number of places the resistance of Kurdish tribal elements such as the Milli confederation of northern Syria led by its Hamadieh-trained chief, Ibrahim Pasha, and, 700 miles southeast at the other end of Kurdistan, the large Kalhor tribe near Kermanshah which in 1911 supported the abortive military move of Salar ad Dola against the Constitutionalist government in Tehran. While a number of tribes were supporting the current brands of reaction, a small

group of Kurdish intellectuals, not to be outdone by the Arabs and Armenians, set about establishing secret societies of the type then in vogue. Foremost in this endeavour were several of the numerous sons of Bedr Khan, who in 1897 began publishing a Kurdish newspaper, *Kurdistan*. After the promulgation of the Turkish Constitution of 1908, a committee called the *Kurdi Taawin Jamiyyati* (Kurdish Co-operation Society), as well as a student group called *Hewa* (Hope), were formed in Constantinople. In addition to members of the Bedr Khan family, Shaikh Abdul Qader, eldest son of Shaikh Obaidullah, and two Baban Amirs from Sulaimaniya, near the present Iraq–Iran border, participated. However, these days of *hurriet* (freedom) were not welcomed by the many Kurdish tribal and religious leaders who considered the Young Turks godless and revolutionary. For their part these same Young Turks soon made it clear that *hurriet* did not give licence to movements seeking the disintegration of the Ottoman empire. Still, the Turks could play an active role among their coreligionists in Iranian Kurdistan by sending their troops and their Kurdish allies into the Sauj Bulaq region in 1907 and again in 1909. In 1913, however, British and Russian influence was decisive in causing the formation of a Perso-Turkish Frontier Commission which succeeded in establishing a properly marked national frontier, splitting Kurdistan from north to south.

Thus by 1914 Kurdish tribal and religious leaders, urban dwellers, and rootless intellectuals were reacting to events according to local self-interest or personal ambitions which in widely separated regions could involve tribal rivalry, raiding, international political intrigue, religious conflict, and, for a few, organized Kurdish nationalism. When Russia declared war on Turkey on 2 November 1914 the Kurds were thrust by what appeared to them a distant fate into a conflict which ranged them with a few exceptions on the side of Islam against the great Christian power to the north and its Armenian and Assyrian allies dwelling among the Kurds. By the time the war ended four years later, the central Kurdish highlands lay desolate and new leaders and problems had been thrust to the fore.

THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Many of the Kurds who gathered at Mahabad on 22 January 1946 had themselves or through the tales related by their fathers participated in the seesaw campaigns and fanatical local forays that characterized the Turco-Russian struggle in Azerbaijan and eastern Turkey during the First World War. The origin of the hostilities lay in the presence in Iran of large bodies of Russian troops. In 1909 the Russians had taken the part of the reactionary Shah who was driven out by the Iranian constitutionalists, and from that time they kept large forces in northern Iran, especially in Azerbaijan. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Turks should have sent troops into Iran in spite of the neutrality declared by the Iranian Government. This was on 29 December 1914; they captured Tabriz ten days later but were forced from the city by Russian troops on 30 January. The Russians later moved west toward the Kurdish areas on the other side of Lake Urmia and met resistance near the town of Khoi on the threshold of Kurdistan by some 3,000 Shikak tribesmen under the leadership of Ismail Agha 'Simko' and Amr Khan. Russian arms prevailed, and the Kurdish warriors retreated to the mountains parallel to the Turkish frontier west of the lake. On 25 May, after five months of Turkish occupation, Russian troops re-entered Urmia, singing in unison, to the joy of the American missionaries and the local Christians.[2] In the Mahabad region armed bands from the Mangur and Mamash tribes were likewise forced into the hills after skirmishes with the invaders. When an armistice was concluded between Bolshevist Russia and Turkey in December 1917, the Russian frontier in Azerbaijan collapsed and the area west of Lake Urmia was left to the opposing ambitions of Kurdish tribes, Assyrian and allied Christian forces, the Azerbaijani Turks of Urmia town, and units of the Turkish army.

In the autumn of 1915 the independent Assyrian tribes of the Hakkari region of southeastern Turkey had been led by their patriarch and national leader, the Mar Shimun, down into Iran where the plains of Salmas and Urmia with their indigenous Christian populations provided a temporary sanctuary. By the

[2] Frederick G. Coan, *Yesterdays in Persia and Kurdistan* (Claremont, Calif., 1939).

end of 1917 the Mar Shimun was in command of 5,000 Assyrian riflemen who had received arms before and during the Russian collapse, after which the allied representatives in the area tried to rally them and some remaining Russians to hold the front against the Turks. There were a few Russian volunteers, but a total of 6,000 armed Christians was available. Such a strong Christian force was considered a threat both by the Moslems of Urmia town and by the Kurdish chiefs, paramount among them Ismail Agha ('Simko') of the Shikak tribe. Simko was a handsome and daring young man who had been bred on violence and the memory of the assassination ten years earlier of his older brother, Jafar Agha, at an official dinner in Tabriz where he had gone to be invested as Governor of the Kurdish areas west of Lake Urmia. With the Russians out of the way, revenge, though not on Jafar's assassins, was nevertheless satisfying. Simko invited the Mar Shimun to a parley at the village of Kohneshahr in Salmas, where a Kurdish-Assyrian alliance was cordially discussed over dinner, after which, in a hail of bullets, the patriarch and all but one of his bodyguard were dispatched. There were rumours that Simko had taken a Turkish bribe to encourage the deed. In any case, counter-revenge was the duty of the Mar Shimun's sister who rallied the Assyrian forces to drive the Kurds out of the Salmas plain. With the help of the Turkish army, however, the Kurds soon returned to the attack, pressing the Christian forces south to Urmia where skirmishes were fought in which the Assyrian lines and morale were broken. The retreat of the Assyrian remnants towards British protection at Hamadan was turned into a disaster by the harassing attacks of their Kurdish pursuers and by tribes along the way. Though it was not fully realized at the time, the Assyrian nation had been destroyed.

The year 1919, with its promises of Wilsonian national self-determination, was a heady and hopeful time for the non-Turkish peoples of the Ottoman empire, including Arabs, Armenians, Kurds, and even Assyrians. In the Sulaimaniya area of Iraq, Shaikh Mahmud's ambitious rule was tolerated by the British authorities until he overreached himself and sought kingship over ever-widening parts of Iraqi Kurdistan. Farther north individual tribes were ready to revolt or negotiate for the sake of favours to be gained from the Turks, the British, or the Iraqi Arabs during the several years when the Turco-Iraqi frontier was still un-

defined. In northwest Iran, with which this study is primarily concerned, Simko had filled the vacuum left by the retreating Russians, Turks, and Assyrians. It was with Simko that Gordon Paddock, the American Consul in Tabriz, negotiated, for about $5,000 in silver coins, the safe evacuation of the American missionaries from their pillaged property in Urmia. The Iranian Government likewise recognized Simko's *de facto* control over the area by appointing him Governor of the highlands west of the lake.

Though at the time Simko was heard to talk of Kurdish statehood and independence, he had no notion of government other than by tribal fiat. This caused him to oppose attempts by Tehran to make appointments in his area. In 1921 he led his forces against Mahabad (then Sauj Bulaq) where most of the gendarmerie force of about 600 men was massacred together with an American Lutheran missionary. But the fortunes of Reza Khan were in the ascendancy and his able army commander, General Abdullah Tahmasib, in league with the nomadic Azerbaijani Turki Shahsavan tribes under Amir Arshad, relentlessly drove Simko west into the mountains and across into Turkey. Simko's great days were finished, but not his personal history, which was concluded one day in 1930 in an ambush by Iranian forces in Ushnavieh, where he had gone to make his submission and receive the government's pardon.

BETWEEN THE WARS

The Treaty of Sèvres signed by Turkey and the Allied powers on 10 August 1920 provided for the Kurds as follows:

Article 62. A Commission sitting at Constantinople and composed of three members appointed by the British, French and Italian Governments respectively shall draft within six months from the coming into force of the present Treaty a scheme of local autonomy for the predominantly Kurdish areas lying east of the Euphrates, south of the southern boundary of Armenia as it may be hereafter determined, and north of the frontier of Turkey with Syria and Mesopotamia. . . .

Article 63. The Turkish Government hereby agrees to accept and execute the decisions of both the Commissions mentioned in Article 62 within three months from their communication to the said Government.

Article 64. If within one year the Kurdish peoples within the areas

defined in Article 62 shall . . . show that the majority of the population of those areas desires independence from Turkey, and if the Council [of the League of Nations] then considers that these peoples are capable of such independence and recommends that it should be granted to them, Turkey hereby agrees to execute such a recommendation and to renounce all rights and title over these areas.[3]

But the treaty was a dead letter from the moment it was signed, for history was written otherwise by Mustafa Kemal and finally by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923. By then it was clear that within Atatürk's Turkey there was no place for an Armenian or a Kurdish nation. Atatürk, however, did not disdain the support of Kurdish forces in his drive for Turkish unity from 1920–3, after which he turned his attention towards internal pockets of resistance, including the Kurdish highlands toward the east. In 1925 Shaikh Said led a large-scale revolt in southern Turkish Kurdistan and two years later Ihsan Nuri Beg organized a resistance movement that lasted three years in the north and east on the slopes of Mt Ararat. Both of these revolts were effectively put down by the Turkish army but only after fierce fighting and heavy casualties. Thereafter the Turkish Government undertook to break down further those Kurdish feudal-tribal relationships which enabled the Kurds to revolt or otherwise assert their independence. Titles were abolished, chiefs and sections of tribes were transplanted, the study of the Turkish language was made compulsory, and the Kurds became known officially as 'Mountain Turks'.

Meanwhile, in Iraq, the influence of the mandatory power held the Arab Government to its commitments towards minorities, including the Kurds who represented about 20 per cent of the population. Nevertheless new difficulties arose because of the pretensions of Shaikh Mahmud in the Sulaimaniya area and the shaikhs of Barzan and their followers farther north. Assyrian levies were employed in some of the punitive actions undertaken against Kurdish tribes; but in 1933 the now independent Government of Iraq, prompted by a variety of motives, took action against the Assyrians, many of whom were massacred and their villages looted. After this the Mar Shimun was removed to Cyprus, whence he eventually made his way to the United States.

In Iran Reza Khan, later Reza Shah Pahlavi, forged a new

[3] Cmd. 964.

national unity by defeating tribe after tribe by force of arms and intrigue. He then placed influential chiefs in forced residence in Tehran or elsewhere away from their tribal domains. Efforts were then made to impose the Persian language in Kurdistan and to replace regional dress, for which the Kurds were noted, by a westernized Iranian variety. Then on 25 August 1941 Soviet Russian and British troops invaded Iran from the north and the south and a few days later Iranian resistance ceased. It took the Second World War and a foreign occupation to release Iran from the authoritarian but modernizing hand of Reza Shah, who abdicated on 16 September 1941 in favour of his son, Muhammad Reza Pahlavi, a young man of quite different temperament.

II. THE SECOND WORLD WAR

THE RUSSIANS, THE KURDS, AND THE WAR

THE Soviet-British occupation of Iran in August 1941 had an important effect on Kurds of the northwest. Russian forces initially pushed south all the way to Sanandaj, but later withdrew to the Ushnavieh–Miandoab line north of Mahabad. Their zone of influence, however, extended south of Miandoab to, but not quite including, Saqqiz, Baneh, and Sardasht. Meanwhile British influence in Kurdistan was centred at its southern extremity, Kermanshah, where British forces were stationed on the main road to Iraq. The British zone of influence extended north into the Sanandaj region in a form similar to that which placed Mahabad within the 'Soviet sphere', and the two zones met along the Saqqiz–Sardasht line.

Although the Soviet Union, a year earlier, had secretly apprised Nazi Germany of its territorial aspirations 'in the general direction of the Persian Gulf',[1] a more immediate objective in 1941 and 1942 was the protection of the rear of the Russian armies as they were retreating towards the Caucasus and Azerbaijan, and the maintenance of the supply line bringing American trucks and tanks up from the Persian Gulf. Thus Soviet policy during the first year and a half of the occupation was cautious and flexible, designed to offend as few influential groups and personalities as possible and to give the Kurds no reason to heed Axis agents, who were thought to be attempting to influence them from Turkey.

By comparison with the pre-war period, the Kurdish position had improved greatly. As the Iranian army disintegrated or withdrew towards the south, rifles and ammunition fell into the hands of Kurdish tribal elements. Meanwhile those restless chiefs whom Reza Shah had maintained in exile were permitted to return to their homes where they quickly regained local dominion, their popularity sometimes enhanced by their confinement. It was natural that many of them should look with gratitude and hope towards the outside force that had restored their position.

[1] U.S. Dept. of State, *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939–41* (1948), pp. 244–5.

At that time the Kurdish notion of freedom prevailed in its purest form in the mountains west of Rezaieh where it was inseparable from brigandage, raids on the settled villages of the plain, and the levy of road tolls. Foremost in these activities were the Herki and Shikak, not always under the control of their paramount chiefs. Mahabad, south of Lake Rezaieh, did not figure prominently in the early days of occupation though small bands from the Dehbokri tribe occasionally collected tolls on the Mahabad–Miandoab road. Security in Mahabad itself was assured by the presence there of respected religious and civil leaders who rendered the town immune from tribal raids. The insecurity of the Mahabad–Miandoab countryside, however, was dramatically revealed on 25 April 1942 when Mrs Lea Burdett, wife of the American journalist Winston Burdett and herself a press correspondent, while travelling from Mahabad to Tabriz was shot when her car stopped near a tea-house south of Miandoab where the road leaves the flat Turki-inhabited lakeside plain to penetrate the Kurdish hills. On the day of the murder Mrs Burdett had been entertained at lunch in Mahabad by Qazi Muhammad, an influential local personality, who was profoundly shocked when he heard of the senseless killing. Although the full story remains unclear, it appears that the attack was directed by a rival of Majid Khan of Miandoab whose son was travelling in Mrs Burdett's car. The assailants were apprehended and tried in Tabriz, but never punished.

Such were the security problems with which the Iranian 'authorities' were unable to deal as long as the Russians prevented Iranian army units from entering the area; for during this period Iranian-appointed officials in Tabriz, Rezaieh, Khoi, and other centres found themselves powerless to act without Soviet permission or to adopt forceful measures against tribal leaders whom the Soviets were attempting to win over. Having tacitly accepted responsibility for the maintenance of security but remaining dedicated to a policy designed to retain the goodwill of the Kurdish tribes, Soviet officials vacillated between encouraging Kurdish aspirations on the one hand and tempering their unconstrained and lawless natures on the other. Finally, on 25 May 1942, Iranian army troops were allowed to enter Azerbaijan. Their first mission was to suppress Kurdish anarchy in the Rezaieh district.

In trying to establish their influence in Kurdistan, Soviet political agents had to overcome a traditional Kurdish distrust of the power that for a century had been rolling back the frontiers of Islam in the Caucasus and posing as protector of native Christians against the Kurds of Turkey and Azerbaijan. Furthermore, memories of the excesses and brutality of Russian troops during the First World War extending to the border of Kurdistan in the Kermanshah region were still fresh in the minds of many Kurds. Nevertheless times had changed, and when an invitation was extended in late 1941 to some thirty prominent chiefs to visit the USSR, the offer was readily accepted.

From Rezaieh, Miandoab, Bukan, and Mahabad the Kurdish delegates were taken by road to Tabriz, whence they travelled by train to Baku in the company of General Salim Atakchiov, whose name will appear again in this study. Although the group included contrasting personalities, it was relatively homogeneous in its feudal and conservative make-up. From Mahabad came Qazi Muhammad and from Miandoab Majid Khan; from Bukan came Ali Agha Amir Asad, his son Omar Aliar, and Haji Baba Shaikh; Rashid Beg, Zero Beg, and Taha represented diverse factions of the Herki, and Sayyid Muhammad Sadiq (Shaikh Pusho), son of Sayyid Taha, of Shemdinan was there. Amr Khan Sharifi, paramount chief of the Shikak, was later glad that he had been unwell and unable to join the group, but Hasan Honara and Hasan Telo of his tribe were with the party. Musa Khan represented the Zarza tribe from near Ushnavieh, and Haji Qarani Agha and Kaka Hamza Nalos the two opposing factions of the Mamash west of Mahabad. At this point it may be helpful to give a brief description of certain Kurdish tribes in Iran.

KURDISH TRIBES IN IRAN

In Iranian Kurdistan more than sixty Kurdish tribes can be identified, ranging in size from the huge (120,000) but amorphous Kalhor, southwest of Kermanshah, to the small tribes near Sardasht numbering only a few thousand souls each. To avoid unnecessary confusion in the labyrinth of tribal nomenclature and data, only those tribes and personalities which had roles in the Kurdish drama of 1946 will be dealt with here.

In the far northwest, pressed into the corner against the Soviet and Turkish frontiers, dwell the Jalalis, some 25,000 strong, whose place in later events was less conspicuous than their numbers might have warranted. Most of the Jalalis had crossed as refugees from Turkey in the 1920's and soon became embroiled in activities which brought down on them repressive action by the Iranian army and the internment of their chiefs in Tehran, whence they returned after the Russian occupation. During the war the Jalalis remained much under the influence of Amr Khan of the Shikak. Next to the south were some 10,000 Milanis with a multiplicity of chiefs. Both the Jalalis and the Milanis were influenced by the Soviet Consul in Rezaieh, who later advised them to back the Republic at Mahabad.

Moving south, the next relevant tribe is the great Shikak itself, second largest Kurdish tribe (40,000) in Iran. Its leadership after the killing of Simko by the Iranian army in an ambush in 1930 devolved upon the towering figure of Amr Khan, whose discrimination, intelligence, and foresight earned him a reputation as a diplomat and a person of consequence. While Amr Khan was tied to the Kardar section of the tribe, a rival Abdovi section, led by Simko's son, Tahir Khan, and others remaining of his family, stood by sullenly, ready to grasp at tribal hegemony should Amr Khan fail or falter. In 1942 most of the Shikak tribesmen still wore the distinctive high white felt headgear with a turban encircling its base, the whole recalling certain friezes at Persepolis. Shikak tribal territory not only pressed against the remnants of the Christian communities of the Salmas plain, but also stood in hostile confrontation with the Azerbaijani Turki population of the large town of Khoi at what was to become the frontier between the Azerbaijani and Kurdish Republics.

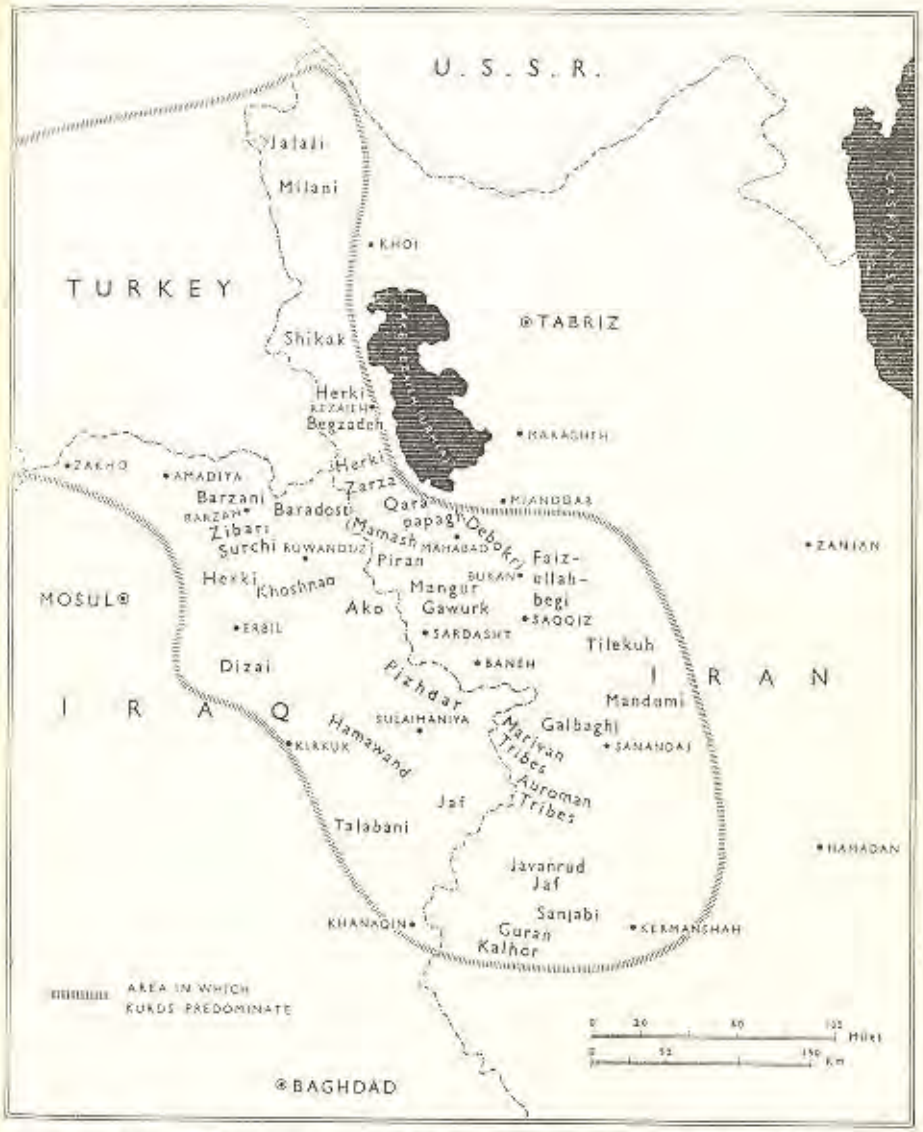
Next to the south were the settled Iranian sections of the large Herki tribe. More numerous factions of the tribe were based in Iraq and led a nomadic existence, rare among the Kurds, wintering on the low plains northeast of Arbil and summering in the Iranian highlands near Mt Dalanpar where the frontiers of Iraq, Turkey, and Iran meet. Twice yearly the Iraqi Herki pass on their migration through the dominions of the Shaikhs of Barzan 'like locusts', as more than one observer has remarked. During the past hundred years the Iranian Herki, 20,000 strong, have occupied the Tergawar and Mergawar valleys running parallel to the Turkish frontier

west and southwest of Rezaieh town. Of their many chiefs the most influential were Rashid Beg, a quiet but not insignificant man of about forty, and the irresponsible Zero Beg Bahadori at the head of a mixed crowd of cut-throats representing several tribes and even including Azerbaijani Turks. Spread out in an arc above Rezaieh the Herkis had for many years hung like a sabre over the city folk. During and after the First World War they had moved in upon the ruins of the Assyrian Christian villages in the Tergawar valley.

Living in the midst of the Herki due west of Rezaieh near the Turkish frontier were the Begzadeh, some 5,000 strong, whose chief was the wizened Nuri Beg residing in the village of Ambi surrounded by his hardy family and tribesmen. The Begzadeh, whose history is intertwined with that of the Herki, are sometimes erroneously identified as a section of the latter. They deny such a relationship, however, and take pride in their lineage which they consider more distinguished than that of their neighbours.

Herki influence in the Mergawar valley southwest of Rezaieh is shared with the family of the Naqshbandi Sayyids of Shemdinan, descendants of Shaikh Obaidullah of the 1881 invasion of Persia. When one of Shaikh Obaidullah's sons, Shaikh Muhammad Sadiq, died at Shemdinan in 1911, a brother, Shaikh Abdul Qader, then involved in the Kurdish intellectual movement in Istanbul, contested leadership with Muhammad Sadiq's son, Sayyid Taha. The latter prevailed, was in correspondence with the Russians during the First World War, and in 1923 was installed by the British as Qaimmaqam of the Ruwanduz area in Iraq where he could be counted upon to oppose the encroachments of the Turkish Government which had dispossessed his family farther north. Finally, after Iraq gained full independence in 1932, Taha's restless ambitions led him back to Iran where forced residence in Tehran and death of an undefined and suspicious illness in 1939 ended his days. Shaikh Abdul Qader was little better served by his collaboration with the Turkish Government following the First World War, but his name now occupies an honourable place among Kurdish nationalists because of his death at the hands of the Turkish Government in 1925 after it was discovered that he was plotting with his nationalist friends.

By the Second World War Shaikh Abdullah Effendi Gilani had established himself as the most respected Sufi religious leader in



I. Most of Iranian and Iraqi Kurdistan, indicating Main Tribal Areas

northern Iranian Kurdistan, whence his influence extended over the border into Iraq and Turkey. Although some Kurdish Sufis adhere to the Qaderi order founded by Shaikh Abdul Qader Gailani in Baghdad in the twelfth century, a larger number are of the Naqshbandi order which originated in Turkestan in the fourteenth century. The Sayyids of Shemdinan Turkey trace their descent from Abdul Qader Gailani whose surname they have adopted. In the early nineteenth century, however, the ruling Shaikh was converted to the Naqshbandi school by that peripatetic friend of the great and enemy of the unsuccessful, Mawlana Khalid.

The stature and influence of a Sufi Shaikh depends initially on his lineage, piety, statecraft, and indefinable charismatic qualities. During the nineteenth century several Shaikhs in Shemdinan possessed these attributes and used them to acquire material power and influence which took both enlightened and despotic forms. With their Hakkari and Baradost allies and their Christian subjects, the Shaikhs of Shemdinan held sway as feudal barons, often directing the fanaticism of their followers into a relationship of loyal subservience more binding than that enjoyed by mere tribal leaders. During the years preceding the Second World War, Shaikh Abdullah Effendi lived in Iraq while his eldest son, Shaikh Abdul Aziz, attended military school in Baghdad and received a commission in the Iraqi army. In 1941 Shaikh Abdullah crossed into Iran where his family had claim to lands in the Mergawar valley. One of his young relatives, a son of Sayyid Taha, was also in the Rezaieh area. This was Sayyid Muhammad Sadiq, known familiarly as Shaikh 'Pusho' after Marshal Foch whom his father had admired. Pusho initially gained the friendship and confidence of the Russian occupiers and accompanied the group to Baku; but he later found it expedient to return to Iraq. At the time of our story, these Sayyids controlled an immediate following corresponding to that of a medium sized tribe (about 8,000) but their influence reached farther afield.

South of the Mergawar plain and over the Zard Kuh mountains into the plain of Ushnavieh, from which foot and donkey travel converges toward the Kaleshin Pass into Iraq, dwell the Zarza on the linguistic and cultural frontier that has for centuries separated northern and southern Kurdistan. Chief of the 4,000 Zarzas was and still is Haji Musa, a wiry and intelligent figure then fifty

years old, who during the Mahabad era pledged his loyalty to the Republic and at the same time employed his wiles to protect his area from the depredations of the Barzanis and other tribal elements who passed through Ushnavieh on their way to and from Iraq.

South of Ushnavieh on the Solduz plain near the southwestern shore of Lake Rezaieh is situated a non-Kurdish tribe whose largest village is Naqadeh and which found itself thrust by its strategic location into the events of 1946. These are the Qarapapagh, after the exaggerated black sheepskin hats that they wore when, as a Shia Turki-speaking tribe, they crossed to the south of the Aras river to remain in Persia after the Russian victory of 1828 and the Treaty of Turkmanchai. The 15,000 Qarapapagh are divided into sections, the paramount of which were ruled by Amir Fallah and his brother-in-law, Qolam Reza Khosravi. As Turki-speaking Shia Moslems in a Kurdish sea the Qarapagah have always been hard put to it to maintain their independence and integrity. The task was made easier however by their partial assimilation with their Kurdish friends and neighbours, their cultivated coolness toward the Azerbaijani Turks, and their association with Soviet political agents in the region.

South again into the mountains, the large Mamash tribe of the old Bilbas confederation had split into two parts, with 12,000 subject to Qarani Agha Amir al Ashairi of Pasveh village usually in dispute with an equal number under Kaka Hamza and his son Kaka Abdullah Qaderi of Jildian. The Mamash had considerably increased in strength since the Mir of Ruwanduz decimated the Bilbas confederation in the 1830's. Of the modern Mamash, it was the fate of Haji Qarani Agha to visit Baku in 1941 and of his rival Kaka Abdullah to embark on the same journey under different circumstances in 1945. Southwest of the Mamash, contiguous with the Iraqi frontier, is the territory of the Piran, a smaller tribe which under Muhammad Amin and his lesser rival, Garani Agha, took its position at the side of the differing factions of the Mamash with which it had at one time been associated within the Bilbas confederation. Farther south, extending from the frontier of Iraq to the threshold of Mahabad, the Mangur, the third tribe of the Bilbas, are spread across the mountains and narrow valleys. By 1946 rival Mangur factions had chosen different political paths with Ali Khan and Ibrahim Salari opposing Abdullah Bayazidi.

East and south of Mahabad are situated a collection of influential chiefs descended from the great Mokri, now Dehbokri, who intermittently fought the Bilbas during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries but have since then been fragmented, holding within their confines a variety of personalities including the three sons of Ali Agha Haji Ali Khani of Bukan, whose villages were strung out along a rich valley thirty miles east of Mahabad. Two of the families had adopted the title 'Ilkhanizadeh' and the other, after Ali Agha who visited Baku in 1942, the surname 'Aliar'. Another branch of the Dehbokri occupied the prosperous villages along the Chom i Sauj Bulaqeh north of Mahabad where the grandsons of Karim Agha adopted the surname Karimi and gave to the Republic its Chief of Staff, Jafar Karimi. Other sections of the Dehbokri could be found in and around Mahabad town and included the Azizi, Piroti, Marufi, and Fatahi families. South of the Dehbokri of Bukan dwell the 15,000 Faizullah Begis at the limit of Mahabad influence within the Saqqiz orbit.

To the west the tribal picture becomes obscured by the proliferation of minor tribes of which the three quite separate sections of the Gawurk (Mahabad, Sardasht, and Saqqiz) were the most influential. Other mixed tribes occupy the area around Sardasht near the Iraqi frontier. From the Saqqiz Gawurk rose Ali Javanmardi whose involvement in the excesses of Hama Rashid Khan Baneh led him to the Iranian army gallows in Saqqiz in 1944. And between Saqqiz and Sardasht is the town of Baneh where Hama Rashid Khan's 'Government' in a crude way anticipated the Mahabad experiment by three years and assured Hama Rashid an honourable place in the hierarchy of the Republic.

Hama Rashid, son of Qader Khan, rose from the small Yunis Khani subsection of one of the four tribes occupying the rugged country around the town of Baneh near the Iraqi frontier whose leaders, as Begs, were often known as the 'Baneh Begzadeh'. When, in August 1941, Russian troops passed Saqqiz on the way south to Sanandaj before again retiring to the north, Hama Rashid, still lean and vigorous in his fifties, left his obscure village on the Iraqi side of the frontier, gathered his tribal allies, and seized the initiative, together with some 10,000 rifles stocked at Iranian army outposts. When the Iranian army re-entered Saqqiz in 1942 Hama Rashid launched a surprise attack in which the Iranian commander, Colonel Amin, was killed. Other chiefs in

the region who resisted the pretensions of the Baneh upstart were swiftly set upon and more than one of them, including Ali Khan of the Tilekuh below Saqqiz, were killed. From 1942 to 1944 Hama Rashid ruled the Saqqiz–Baneh area behind the façade of an Iranian-appointed Governor. In the latter year however he over-extended himself and attacked Mahmud Agha of Kani Sanan near Marivan to the south. Mahmud Agha, backed by an Iranian army column, then drove Hama Rashid over the hills into Iraq whence he reappeared in 1945, at the hour of Mahabad.

South of Saqqiz and Baneh are found many other tribes. Those of Marivan, the Auroman or Hewraman, and the Javanrud and Salas Jaf, extend down the Iraqi frontier to the main road linking Iraq and the Iranian plateau at Kermanshah. West of Kermanshah the militant Sanjabi and the heretical Gurans of the Ahl i Haqq religion are located north of the once great Kalhor. Farther removed from the Iraqi frontier to the east were the numerous small tribes exposed to the power and the softening influences of central government and urban civilization; but these tribes, falling within the British sphere of influence and several mountain ranges removed from the incubative nationalist atmosphere of Mahabad, were to have little bearing on the events that followed.

THE FIRST VISIT TO BAKU

In Baku the Kurdish chiefs spent several days visiting factories, theatres, farms, and cinemas. One night at 11 p.m. they were taken into the presence of Jafar Baghirov,[1] Prime Minister of the Azerbaijan SSR, who spoke to them in the general terms of Soviet friendship and of Kurdish-Azerbaijani brotherhood. There is to this day disagreement among members of that colourful party as to whether or not Kurdish nationalist aspirations were the subject of serious discussion between the guests and their Soviet Azerbaijani hosts. It is, however, agreed that one of the Kurdish requests was that the tribes be allowed to keep the rifles they had accumulated before and since the occupation. The Soviet reply was ambiguous.

According to some, Qazi Muhammad was treated with special

[1] Baghirov was tried and executed for treason for his association with Lavrenti Beria in April 1956.

respect as was his eight-year-old son, Ali 'Kur i Rash', who received a pistol which was perhaps a token of things to come, but an ambiguous one at a time when Soviet political agents were attempting to reduce the numbers of arms held by Kurdish tribes west of Rezaieh. Each of the other Kurds received a leather saddle and six metres of chintz; and a number of them purchased shotguns with their own funds. However cautious the Russians might have been in discussing Kurdish demands, their guests returned to Iran after two weeks in Soviet Azerbaijan with the clear impression that the Soviet Union was with them.

In Iran Kurdish tribal depredations continued, particularly in the Rezaieh area. In May 1942 a number of Soviet officials, including the Consul-General from Tabriz, met on the Rezaieh side of the lake with Rashid Beg and Kamil Beg Herki, Nuri Beg of the Begzadeh tribe, and several Shikaks. The Russians pursued the theme that security must be maintained, that Iranian Government regulations and officials should be treated with respect, and that rifles seized from the Iranian army should be returned. The Kurds replied with their own proposals which included the provision that they should be allowed to carry arms, while certain villages in the plains near Rezaieh should surrender theirs to the Soviet army. They further requested that the Kurdish language should be used in schools and, more significantly, 'that the Kurds should have freedom in their national affairs'. These vague demands were bold but unrealistic a full two years before the Soviet gambit in Azerbaijan. Nothing came of the meeting except perhaps a growing realization on the Soviet side that their security problems were beginning to take on a Kurdish nationalist aspect. The Russians, however, continued to try to maintain order and at the same time preserve the trappings of Iranian sovereignty, both of which ran counter to Kurdish tribal and national aspirations. Confined by this policy, Soviet army officers and political agents were forced to rely on the cultivation of the friendship of individuals by supplying scarce items such as sugar and tea.

III. MAHABAD

THE POLICE STATION

MEANWHILE Soviet influence hardly touched Mahabad and its environs where Qazi Muhammad and several of his then most steadfast tribal friends, including Abdullah Bayazidi of the Mangur and Haji Qarani Agha Amir al Ashairi of the Mamash, prevented the plundering of the town and near-by villages by the more rapacious tribal elements. The Soviet occupation officially extended only as far south as Miandoab, an hour north of Mahabad by motor vehicle; and in the early days of the occupation the sole Russian resident in Mahabad town was one Abdullaov, a horse buyer for the Red Army whose only political mission appeared to be on rare occasions to facilitate contact between Kurds of the region and Soviet political officers in Tabriz.

Nor did the Iranian Government possess real authority in the town in spite of its appointment of a Governor and its control of the distribution of scarce commodities such as sugar. In fact an incident involving sugar served to erase the last vestige of the Iranian presence in Mahabad which, in May 1943, clustered around an unimposing police station on the north side of the town. In those days, it was the custom for citizens and officials to claim rations for people who never had, or who no longer, existed. A grosser device for padding the sugar ration was the creation on paper of whole villages, a less difficult deception than might be imagined in tribal areas where village names and locations kept well ahead of cartographers and, in the wartime confusion, of the Government's statistical department. It so happened that the central authority, aghast at the apparent population explosion, determined to investigate sugar rationing and as a first step entrusted the list of persons and villages receiving rations to the apparently safe hands of the Mahabad police. Certain individuals were naturally made apprehensive by this development and set their minds on obtaining the list.

One afternoon as the town's activities recommenced after the

traditional siesta, a group of citizens gathered at Chwar Chira circle to hear a speech on Kurdish culture and national identity by one Aziz Khan. It took little prodding from several interested onlookers for a consensus to favour the delegation of Minai Khalindi to the police station to obtain the list. Khalindi was forceful in discharging his duty and became the object of several inaccurate rifle shots by the police. Their easily-roused blood up, the crowd attacked and badly damaged the police station killing seven of its Azerbaijani Turki police without suffering any losses themselves. Other police who were fortunate enough not to have been on duty took themselves hurriedly out of town, and the Mahabad police station was closed for good.

There was no evidence of direct nationalist instigation of the rioting, although a Kurdish political party had been working secretly in the region for eight months. The people, however, had made it abundantly clear that representatives of the authority that remained in Tehran were no longer welcome in Mahabad.

THE TOWN

Mahabad lies just south of and above the winding banks of a usually bright stream fed by tributaries farther south in the highlands of the Mangur. The stream is locally called simply 'Chom i Sauj Bulaqeh' or the 'Sauj Bulaq river', just as Mahabad is still called Sauj Bulaq, or 'Sa Balaq' in the hurried local dialect. Since Sauj Bulaq derives from the Turkish *Sovukhu Balagh* (cold spring), there is little reason why the Ayrian Persian name, Mahabad, would not better suit the local inhabitants; but the new name is reserved by Mahabadis for occasions when they have reason to speak Persian, which they do middling well as they do Azerbaijani Turki. Just as the name Urmia, town and lake, was changed to 'Rezaieh' during the reign of Reza Shah, so Sauj Bulaq became Mahabad. The derivation of the latter from the name of a fictitious holy man remains obscure to residents of the town who display little interest in nomenclature imposed from Tehran.

In the sixteenth century Sauj Bulaq was inferior in size and consequence to Deryaz ten miles downstream, near whose ruins is a large rock-cut burial chamber probably of the early Median

period. Deryaz was finally destroyed by Safavid attacks in the name of Shia Islam against the Sunni Moslem Kurds of the region. In 1834 Baillie Fraser found Souje Bulagh 'a nice town on a fine stream'. By 1890 Isabella Bird Bishop visited a Sauj Bulaq of 5,000 inhabitants with an additional 1,000 soldiers to keep the peace between Turks and Kurds. When she took the wrong turning at the entrance of the city she found herself riding through endless cemeteries whose shallowly covered dead polluted the air as the living polluted the stream. Indeed, as the religious and urban centre of the Mokri Kurds and as the trade entrepôt of the area, Sauj Bulaq has over the years accumulated the dead while the live population has remained at the modest level that such an outgrown village could economically support.

These limitations on size and prosperity have persisted into the present to cause Mahabad, whose population was 16,000 in 1945 and 22,000 in 1961, to cast forth the semi-employed and the semi-content. Yet the people of Mahabad are winning in their ways; and though their lamb kabab is inferior to that of rival Sulaimaniya on the Iraqi side, their open hospitality, goodwill, and sense of humour more than overcome this deficiency. In any case, the cuisines of Sulaimaniya and Mahabad both deserve praise.

THE PEOPLE

The approach to Mahabad is normally made by one of two roads, both of which enter the town from the north on opposite sides of the stream, one linking it with Tabriz and Miandoab east of the lake and the other gathering travellers from Rezaieh and the Solduz plain on the west. On the east and south the mountains are pierced only by trails, but to the southwest a single motor track winds with the Chom i Sauj Bulaqeh in the direction of Sardasht and the frontier of Iraq.

In the streets of Mahabad, which during the Second World War were mere alleyways, a mixed people gathered. These included the proud horseman, perhaps a son of a tribal leader, his gauzy fringed turban dangling rakishly over his brow and his baggy pegged trousers draped naturally over the saddle. His routine might have taken him to the barber, the bazaar, and the guesthouse where his tribal and city friends gathered and drank

tea; while over the dusty trails and roads leading into town from all sides the ragged villagers clad in remnants of Kurdish and western materials, their weather-beaten faces proving their closeness to nature, drove sheep and goats or donkeys laden with quicklime, food, or thorny fuel. Children, many qualifying as urchins, were and are an ever present part of the street scene, their numbers great even in the old days when only half survived birth and the first year. Their fathers and older brothers thronged the streets in costumes reflecting their economic condition or their sophistication, including Kurdish and mixed Kurdish-western dress, as well as pure western imitations. The strikingly fine features of women could be seen everywhere unveiled or partly veiled as they went about their work or on errands, unaffected by the promenade and street-corner sociability that is reserved for the men. The higher-born of the women, however, hardly ever left the large enclosures of their rambling homes except in escorted groups, perhaps veiling under *chadors* the multitude of skirts and shawls that constituted their visiting finery. While the middle and upper-class women of Mahabad clung to their traditional customs, their husbands had been converted to western attire by the forced reforms of Reza Shah, at first adopted reluctantly, then, when restrictions were relaxed, retained as a badge of status and an earnest of their desire to take their places in modern society. Many however kept as a last Kurdish symbol the fringed turban worn over the *clau* or skull cap.

MINORITIES AND RELIGION

Mixed in with the homogeneous Kurdish population were a few minority groups which, far from diluting the Kurdishness of the town, like salt brought out the flavour. Some fifty families of Jews owned shops, sold spirits, or worked as goldsmiths. Now most of them are in Israel. A very few Azerbaijani Turks worked as labourers; and by 1943 only two Armenians, a photographer and a wineseller, remained. Just before the First World War an American Lutheran missionary, L. O. Fossum, established himself in Mahabad to look into the possibilities of working among the few Christians and Jews of the town. His most enduring achievement, however, was the production of a useful but now rare

Kurdish grammar in English. After the war a teaching and medical mission was established, but the time was ill chosen, coinciding with Simko's attack on the town in 1920 during which Professor Bacheman was killed and the ladies took refuge in Tabriz. Later in 1932 Reza Shah's nationalistic repression of foreign missionary and educational activities caused the mission to close. Unlike the Presbyterians of Urmia, who arrived in 1835 and during the next hundred years built up a physical legacy of schools and hospitals and a spiritual legacy of Christian religious revival, the Lutherans of Mahabad hardly had an opportunity to leave their mark on the community. But this statement is not entirely true; for one of the American mission nurses, Miss Dahl, a Norwegian by birth, married a Kurd of an old Mahabad family named Habibi and devoted herself to a career of midwifery.

The Sunni Moslem tradition in the town was represented by numerous mullas and by the *faqihs* or theological students who could be seen in the streets walking in groups of twos and threes wearing white turbans and long loose coats or Kurdish costumes. Not that Mahabad is particularly fanatic or even notably religious, but a Sunni clergy had to be trained and young mullas were needed in the villages to perform legal-religious functions. Although outsiders sometimes conclude that religion sits lightly on the Kurd and that heretical tendencies and pre-Islamic tendencies lie close to the surface, it is a mistake to suppose that Islam has no force or influence in the region; for though the trend is not in their favour, nowhere else do Sufi Shaikhs retain such devoted followers.

During the war years the most influential figure in northern Iranian Kurdistan was Shaikh Abdullah Effendi, whose centre was in the mountains southwest of Rezaieh. Mahabad had its own respected religious figures and families, however, represented by the members of the Shams i Borhan family, by the Shaikhs of Zambil near Bukan, and, in a different sense, by Qazi Muhammad. The latter's religious function was just what his name *qazi* (judge) indicated; for he was the most influential member of a family of religious jurists who for generations had administered Islamic justice in the region. The title, *qazi*, was neither meaningless nor shallow, since it involved recording births, marriages, deaths, and all manner of litigation connected with inheritances and disputes under Islamic law.

As in Moslem urban centres, the population of Mahabad could be roughly divided and classified according to first families, second-rank families, and others. In all, perhaps twenty Mahabad families possessed the social status, wealth, traditions, and influence that placed them in the top rank. Although Kurdish urban society is basically conservative, movement up or down from one level to another is more feasible than might be imagined.

Several of Mahabad's first families draw large numbers of men, women, and children into a single house dominated by a family patriarch. The professions, property holdings, and avenues of influence of such an extended family reach into many different fields and enterprises. On the border-line between the first and second families are those who are moving up or down and who because of new wealth or old prestige mix easily with the first families. The bulk of the second families were and are bazaar merchants, shopkeepers, teachers, government officials, and second-rank professional people, and below them are the many labourers, servants, small bazaar salesmen, traders in livestock, masons, mechanics, donkey drivers, and the self-employed.

QAZI MUHAMMAD

In 1943 Mahabad had within its circle of first families no very wealthy men or great feudalists of the kind familiar in other parts of Iran. Instead, power and influence were based partly on wealth, but also on family tradition, the size of the extended family, its tribal alliances by marriage, and its hold on services essential to the community. By these standards none of the first families could quite match the Qazis. There was, of course, the huge Shafai clan whose patriarch, Haji Rahmat, ruled a household of some sixty persons inhabiting a large, rambling house and courtyards on the east side of the town. His wealth included real estate in the bazaar and fertile farmland on the road to Miandoab. No one else in Mahabad could come closer than Haji Rahmat to challenging the pre-eminence of the Qazis; but as the city drifted toward Soviet-sponsored Kurdish secession, the Shafais were compelled to keep a bitter silence.

Qazi Muhammad was the son of Qazi Ali, the most respected judge of Mahabad in recent times, and the grandson of Qazi

Qasim. Other relations of his were also Qazis, but his mother was of the Faizullah Begi tribe of Saqqiz. Qazi Muhammad had one brother, Abol Qasim Sadr i Qazi, four years his junior, and also three sisters. As a small child Qazi attended one of the religious *kutubkhanehs* presided over by a mulla, the only form of primary education at the time. His real education, however, was acquired from his father and from the books in several languages that found their way into his large house.

Before being appointed *qazi* to succeed his father, Muhammad served as head of the *Awqaf* or Religious Endowment Department of Mahabad. Once a *qazi*, his influence rapidly soared. His legal opinions were decisive and his presence always commanded respect. His house was by tradition a haven for murderers or other criminals or for a girl or wife who had 'gotten into trouble'. Regarding the latter there was sometimes gossip in the town, for Qazi was not a recluse but a sociable man of the world. This detracted in some measure from his religious reputation among those who demand absolute standards of their betters. Nor did Qazi's marriage late in life to a divorced woman enhance his prestige; but it did provide him with a faithful partner and a happy home. He had one son and seven daughters.

In spite of the gaps in his educational background, Qazi Muhammad was by Mahabad standards a learned man; and his religious functions did not prevent him from adopting a progressive outlook towards economic, political, and social relationships. His personality exhibited a stubborn and dictatorial quality; though he was modest and deferential in public. He was an excellent speaker addicted to short sentences delivered with authority and vigour, punctuated by pauses every three or four words. Qazi was always polite to foreigners when on rare occasions they visited Mahabad, and he particularly sought the friendship and company of Americans. The Lutheran missionaries and a German doctor living in the town looked upon him as a friend, and when the danger of tribal raids was most real in 1942, 'Miss Dahl Khanum', the only European resident of the town at the time, sheltered her young son at night under Qazi's roof. Later, as his Russian friends began to occupy more and more of his time, Qazi became more circumspect in his relations with Western Europeans and Americans. In spite of Qazi's several defects, the unruly region of Mahabad was fortunate that the vaccum created in

1941 by the absence of both Iranian and Soviet troops, was filled by a forceful and respected personality able to govern the city from behind the scenes and protect it against tribal depredations.

Qazi Muhammad's younger brother, Abol Qasim Sadr i Qazi, also had a primary school education which had not, however, made him a scholar or a judge. Nevertheless Sadr i Qazi's appearance and manners were if anything more refined than those of his brother. Further, he had married, at a normally early age, a woman from one of the most respected families of the area. He was well liked by his friends and the people of Mahabad and in 1943 was an obvious candidate for deputy to the Majlis. Suddenly transported from provincial Kurdistan to Tehran, he was cultivated by the several Tudeh (Communist) deputies with whom his political leanings, and those of the Russians in Azerbaijan, tended to coincide. It could later be seen that his fatal mistake at the Majlis had been his bold speeches in support of the Tudeh Party and against the Iranian army.

A third member of Qazi's family who rose and fell with the Mahabad Government was a cousin, Muhammad Husain Saif i Qazi, whose father had been given the title *Saif i Quzzat*, sword of the Qazis. In 1945 Saif i Qazi was about forty-two years old, a tall, fat, domineering man, and owner of half a dozen rich villages near Miandoab. He drank heavily and continually had trouble with his digestion. His corpulence and digestive disability took him from one doctor to another and finally to Baku again and back to his doom.

IV. THE KOMALA

THE FOUNDING

On the 25th of Shahrivar, 1321, or 16 September 1942 by western reckoning, a small group of middle-class citizens went out from the town of Mahabad by the dusty Rezaieh road to gather under the trees of Haji Daud's garden near the Chom i Sauj Bulaqeh. The youngest, about nineteen year old, was Rahman Halavi, a graduate of the Rezaieh Normal School, and the oldest at about fifty was Mulla Abdullah Daudi, a tobacco commissioner. In all some fifteen persons banded together on that day to talk of a Kurdish nation and to organize a Kurdish political party. Their purpose needed no outside inspiration since for years in their personal and distinct ways they had thought of forging an instrument to further the nationalist cause. Nevertheless they looked to the more politically mature Kurds of Iraq for practical advice, the bearer of which on that afternoon was a captain in the Iraqi army who was also a Kurd. His name was Mir Haj. At that time Mir Haj represented a Kurdish society which had been formed in northern Iraq during the Mandate and called itself Hewa, the Kurdish word for hope. Its membership was restricted and was dominated by educated urban elements. Its programme was purely Kurdish and nationalist. In spite of the almost continual tribal disorders that beset Iraqi Kurdistan during the Mandate of the 1920's and the later era of independence, no single Kurdish party or tribal coalition had effectively channelled the many currents of Kurdish hope towards a common goal. There existed during this period a Kurdish society called the Khoybun which from headquarters in Beirut, Damascus, or Paris, wherever Jaladet or Kamuran Bedr Khan was residing, tried to bring Kurdish aspirations to the attention of foreign powers and international forums. Although the Khoybun might have rightfully claimed that its message represented all Kurdistan, yet in fact that small group of exiles represented almost no one in Kurdistan, where its mission was only vaguely known. In Turkey Kurdish groups who were in contact with the Khoybun through

Syria remained active in the 1920's and early 1930's, but forfeited their negligible influence when the Kurdish tribal revolts during the later period were effectively crushed by the Turkish army.

Mir Haj brought with him to Haji Daud's garden the greetings of the Hewa Party and, more important, some practical advice regarding the formation of a clandestine organization composed of secret cells. Those who gathered in the garden decided to constitute themselves as a committee, for which the Kurdish word is *komala*. The full name was *Komala i Zhian i Kurdistan*, or the Committee of the Life (Resurrection) of Kurdistan.[1] Within six months the Komala had extended its membership to about 100 citizens of Mahabad town. Although a central list existed, the ordinary member was aware of the identity of only the five or six of his own cell; thus the growing strength of the Komala was known to only a few. Membership was open to any Kurd. For this purpose Shia Kurds and Christian Assyrians, considered to be Kurds by race, were accepted. Azerbaijani Turks and members of the Qarapapagh tribe, though the latter could speak Kurdish and wore modified Kurdish dress, were excluded on a racial basis.

The process of affiliation was accomplished by the swearing of an oath on the Koran in front of three members. The more pious candidate for membership would first purify himself at the bath and then at a secret meeting swear to the following: (1) not to betray the Kurdish nation; (2) to work for self-government for the Kurds; (3) not to disclose any secrets oral or written; (4) to remain a member for life; (5) to consider all Kurds, men and women, as brothers and sisters; (6) not to join another party or group without permission of the Komala. This oath had been composed by the founding members with the collaboration of Captain Mir Haj.

THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

One day late in April 1943 instructions went out to about 100 members of the Komala to congregate for a picnic on the hill near Mahabad known as Khoda Parast. Soon a party meeting was

[1] Most English-language references to the Komala have translated the word *zhian* as 'youth', which would render the name of the party 'The Kurdish Youth Committee'. The Kurdish word for youth, however, is *juwan* rather than *zhian*.

in progress and a Central Committee was elected.[1] The Central Committee was selected by popular vote; and at the time it was not realized that a Communist model was being used in so far as the name of the executive body was concerned. The fact that only a few of the founding members of the party were elected to the Central Committee was indicative of the transformation of the small group of founders into a dynamic organization. The Committee had no permanent chairman, though it was recognized that Rahman Zabihi, 'Hazhar', and Muhammad Yahu were among its most influential members. Two members of the Committee, 'Hazhar' and 'Hemin', were Kurdish poets of renown. After the Khoda Parast meeting a secret password was adopted: 'It is good to worship God'; in Kurdish: *Khoda parastin shteki chaka*.

EXPANSION

By 1944 the Komala's proselytizing activities were extended throughout northern Kurdistan both in the neutral zone near Mahabad and in the Soviet zone north of Miandoab to the Russian frontier. South of Saqqiz, the movement was restricted both by the presence of Iranian army units and by the fact that Sanandaj, not to mention Kermanshah, was beyond the social and political orbit of Mahabad. Several of the leading families of Sanandaj were in fact Shia Moslems who had for generations loyally served the ruling Persian dynasty. In Kermanshah, where the majority of the Kurdish population were Shias or Ahl i haqq, with a mixed Kurdish-Persian culture, the Kurdish nationalist cause had little appeal.

North of Saqqiz, however, the expansion of the party into tribal territory was rapid and almost complete. In Bukan some of the Ilkhanizadeh Aghas were active in the cause; in Naqadeh Haji Qader Hariri was in charge of recruiting; in Ushnavieh Musa Khan of the Zarza tribe was an active member; and farther north the Herki chiefs had joined. Shaikh Abdullah Effendi was deemed to be above party politics but was considered a spiritual member in view of his father's martyrdom in Turkey for the Kurdish nationalist cause. Abdullah Qaderi Mamash was among the most

[1] For a list of the Central Committee and of the founding members of Komala (see Appendices II and IV, pp. 133 and 134, below).

active; and north in the Shikak territory the great Amr Khan Sharifi became a member. By 1945 almost all Kurdish tribal chiefs and many more among the ordinary people had joined the party for one reason or another. Although a few no doubt did so out of expediency, the majority were probably acting in good faith. In any case, the tribal chiefs were among the most regular in paying their dues.

GREATER KURDISTAN

In March 1944 the Komala sent Muhammad Amin Sharafi to Kirkuk in Iraq to discuss mutual aid and future plans with representatives of the Hewa Party, including Amin Ruwanduzi, Izzat Abdul Aziz, Mustafa Khoshnao, Shaikh Qader of Sulaimaniya, Sayyid Abdul Aziz Gilani, and Rafiq Hilmi. A few months later, in the early summer of 1944, the Sulaimaniya branch of the party sent Ismail Haqqi Shawaiz and Osman Danish to Mahabad to repay the visit and reaffirm the pact. During the next year and a half Hamza Abdullah and Wurdi from Iraq; Qadri Beg, grandson of Jamil Pasha of Diarbakr, from Syria; and Qazi Mulla Wahab from Turkey visited Mahabad to meet Kurdish leaders there and to see for themselves to what extent autonomy by default prevailed in one part of Kurdistan.

In August 1944 a symbolic affirmation of greater Kurdish unity took place at Mt Dalanpar where the frontiers of Iraq, Iran, and Turkey intersect. Kurdish delegates from the three countries met there to sign a pact, the *Peman i Se Senur*, or the Pact of the Three Borders, which provided for mutual support and the sharing of material and human resources in the interests of a greater Kurdistan. Iranian Kurds were represented by Qasim Qaderi of the Komala from Mahabad. From Iraq came Shaikh Obaidullah of Zeno village near the frontier where the main motor road for Ruwanduz crosses into Iran above Khaneh. Turkey was represented by Qazi Mulla Wahab.

By this time an official, if tentative, nationalist definition of a geographical Kurdistan was available. Rumours have persisted that 'the map' came from a British source, but it was in fact prepared in Beirut by the Kurdish Society in which the Bedr Khan family was active. Its authors consulted a number of sources to produce the largest possible Kurdistan. Since this

Kurdish rights and in carving out an area of Kurdish autonomy. Leftist members of the front, however, including some Communists, were allowed to monopolize the formulation of political doctrine and to lead the nationalist movement to subscribe to a number of Communist-line slogans, particularly in external issues.

QAZI'S MEMBERSHIP

Up to this point the Komala had been in a very Kurdish sense a democratically ordered grouping. No leader was chosen nor did any one of its members try to form a dominant clique within the party. Since no known Marxist or Communist had joined, there had been no attempted take-over from the left. One question involving membership, however, remained unresolved during the first two years of the Komala's existence. This was whether the leading citizen of Mahabad, Qazi Muhammad, should be asked to join and, if he were asked, whether he would accept or not. A number from among the Central Committee were opposed to Qazi's admission because they foresaw that his authoritarian personality would dominate the organization. Others opposed his membership for personal reasons. Nevertheless there was nothing in the rules or regulations of the party that would exclude him and there was nothing to prevent members of the party who sought his association from swearing him in. Thus it was that one day in October 1944 Qazi was invited to the house of Ahmad Ilahi where about twenty-four party members had gathered, tense with uncertainty. In order not to expose the identity of the whole group, it was decided that two of them, Qasim Qaderi and Qader Mudarisi, would meet Qazi in a room apart and propose that he should join the Komala. If he declined he would leave the house; if he accepted he would be brought in to meet the other members and to swear the oath. Qazi did not hesitate. Thereafter, though never elected to the Central Committee, he was the guide and voice of the party.

A KURDISH OPERA

Early 1945 produced a succession of events which step by step carried the Kurdish movement to a point of no return. In March

of that year a group of young party members staged a dramatic performance that was unprecedented in form and influence. This was an 'opera' called *Daik i Nishtiman* (Motherland). Its message was in the Kurdish language of Mahabad, and the message was Kurdish nationalism. The motherland was in danger, and tears filled the eyes of the audience; the motherland was in chains, and the onlookers groaned; and finally the motherland was rescued by her sons to the applause of all. The leading role, which called for the unbroken voice of a boy, was taken by Cyrus Habibi, son of 'Miss Dahl Khanum'. After the performance the older boys lingered behind in secret conference, but young Habibi was not invited to join them.

The atmosphere became heavy with nationalism, for *Daik i Nishtiman* caused a profound impression among Kurds who for the first time witnessed their anguish in dramatic form. Performances took on the character of religious revivalist meetings. Conversions were many. After several months of playing to full houses in Mahabad, the opera went on the road. In July 1945 it penetrated the Soviet zone at Ushnavieh. The Russian officer in charge objected to the play's anti-Iranian message and ordered that in place of Iran the Nazis should become the villains. Not long afterward the Russians saw to it that by other subtle changes in the script the Soviet Union stood with the sons of Kurdistan in their rescue of their motherland.

At the same time that the opera was enjoying its unprecedented success, a unique Mahabadi folk custom was likewise given a nationalist turn. It was in those times the custom for a man possessing unusual self control to be appointed 'Mir' or prince, to be dressed in fine robes, and to walk the streets with a retinue, including a jester. The Mir could make requests of the people, such as demanding contributions for the poor; however, as he made his way through the streets the townfolk and urchins carrying sticks used every strategem to provoke him to smile. Should he smile, he would be beaten to death. The origin of this more European than Moslem pageant is obscure. In 1945, however, the commands of the Mir carried a special significance, for they were calculated to further the cause of Kurdish nationalism.

AZERBAIJAN AND KURDISTAN

Meanwhile, north of Mahabad in eastern Azerbaijan and in the Turkish fringe around Lake Rezaieh events were moving rapidly toward an Azerbaijani separatist solution. In this region Soviet forces had been present since 1941. By 1945 their principal local agent in Azerbaijan was Jafar Pishevari, a veteran Communist who had also been a leading figure in the autonomous Government set up by the Soviets in the Iranian province of Gilan on the Caspian Sea in 1921. When that separatist movement collapsed the same year, Pishevari joined the departing Russians, only to return during the Second World War as a Tudeh leader in Azerbaijan. His election to the Iranian parliament in 1943 was not ratified when the Majlis met in Tehran in 1944; so his political ambitions remained centred in Tabriz, where he and his colleagues were free to pursue their Communist goals in the favourable atmosphere provided by Soviet exclusion of Iranian army forces from the province. Immediately north of Iranian Azerbaijan, across the Aras river lay Azerbaijan SSR, whence a trained band of 'Muhajarin' (immigrants) had descended to fortify the feeble Tudeh Party of Tabriz and its local *fidayis* (militants). And still the Communist movement failed to gather momentum in Azerbaijan until in the summer of 1945, when economic and social grievances were coupled with a long existing regional resentment against Tehran and its alleged neglect of Iran's proud northwest province. In August the Tudeh Party sent armed squads under the protection of Soviet occupation forces to seize a number of government buildings in Tabriz. For some reason the Russians determined that this revolutionary move was premature and the Azerbaijanis withdrew temporarily.

In Kurdistan Soviet policy was likewise in a fluid state. While Kurdish autonomy was being openly discussed within the Komala and also in conversations between leading Kurds and Soviet political officers and agents, the Russian attitude was not always consistent or well co-ordinated. In 1942 General Atakchiov in Tabriz met Shaikh Abdullah Effendi Gilani, whom a large number of tribal leaders had indicated as their choice as leader of northern Iranian Kurdistan, and told him that he would be designated Governor of the district. Soon afterwards, however,

the Shaikh's enemies advised the Russians that he was a British agent and could not be trusted. This was sufficient to cause Soviet officials to turn elsewhere. It appears that at one point they approached Amr Khan Sharifi of the Shikak tribe, but this was probably no more than a probe. In any case, by the summer of 1945 they had picked their man, Qazi Muhammad, and their political instrument, the Komala.

For Kurdish nationalists, including conservative tribal chiefs, the need to collaborate with the Soviet Union hardly required justification. The Russians were in *de facto* control of the area. They alone kept the Iranian army at a safe distance. They had on countless occasions professed their sympathy for the Kurds. They had given a handful of Kurdish nationalists, including Qazi Muhammad, the clear impression that the post-war settlement in Iran would provide for the realization of Kurdish nationalist aspirations. It was therefore no more than a natural step in the desired direction when a group of Komala leaders, including Qazi Muhammad, Wahab Blurian, Manaf Karimi, and Karim Ahmadain, accepted the suggestion of the Russian General Atakchiov that they should be in Tabriz on 3 September to attend the ceremony officially changing the regional Tudeh Party into the Democratic Party of Azerbaijan. Soviet policy was at that moment moving away from an all-Iranian, openly Communist, orientation toward a regional popular front effort. The means appeared to be at hand to detach the province of Azerbaijan as a wedge for further penetrations south and east. Meanwhile conditions in Kurdistan were such that, at the same time that Iranian Azerbaijan was being brought into the Soviet orbit, another province 'in the general direction of the Persian Gulf' could be absorbed. The pieces were set for the Kurdish gambit.

V. THE SECOND VISIT TO BAKU

TOWARDS the end of September 1945 Qazi Muhammad was told by General Atakchiov, chief Russian Political Officer in Azerbaijan, that the time had come for a group of prominent Kurds to visit the Soviet Union, where they would meet Soviet officials and could discuss the future of Kurdistan. Since the first visit of tribal chiefs in 1941 to the capital of Soviet Azerbaijan the Soviet position *vis-à-vis* Iranian Kurdistan had completely altered. In 1942 the Soviet Union was a beleagured victim of Nazi aggression trying to exclude German influence and intrigue from the Kurdish regions behind the lines. By 1945 a buoyant and victorious Soviet Union was preparing to take full advantage of a fluid post-war situation to pursue traditional Russian aims. In this endeavour it was supposed that a second Kurdish delegation to Baku not only would be impressed by Soviet hospitality, but could also be groomed to assume the leadership of a pro-Soviet Kurdish movement that would be tied to the Communist-nationalist effort in Azerbaijan. This time Qazi Muhammad, in collaboration with his Russian hosts, selected the members of the delegation. In addition to Qazi himself, Manaf Karimi and Ali Raihani represented Mahabad. From Bukan Qasim Agha Ilkhanizadeh was recruited. Saif i Qazi from Miandoab was with them; and other tribal chiefs included Abdullah Qaderi and Kaka Hamza Nalos of the Mamash, and Nuri Beg of the Begzadeh.

From west and south of the lake, the party converged on Tabriz, where some of the delegates had been told to contact a Dr Samadov at the Russian Hospital. Later they gathered at the small Jaleh Guest House, whence they were driven to the railway station which marked the southern terminal of the Russian system; for in 1945 the Iranian network reached only half the distance from Tehran to Tabriz. There they boarded a special car and were told that their destination was Baku. Although this was the first clear indication that their goal lay beyond Tabriz, most of the group had already sensed from the secrecy attending their journey that the USSR was at the end of the line. Only Qazi knew the details.

At Baku they were met by their Russian hosts, Alayov and Ayub Karimli. At the station they were presented with the traditional bouquets of flowers and then driven several miles north to a hotel at the resort of Merdakan.

Next morning the group assembled to draft some proposals that would be handed to Alayov for transmission to the Soviet Government in the person of Baghirov, the Prime Minister of Azerbaijan SSR. Qasim Ilkhanizadeh from Bukan, chosen because of his fine hand, slowly wrote down Kurdish desires for a separate state and the need for assistance from the Soviet Union in the form of arms and money. The request was delivered to Baghirov before the reception. At 7 p.m. the group were taken into the presence of a tall, husky, well-groomed man of about sixty who looked younger. His features and the language he used were not strange to the Kurdish visitors, for he was a typical Azerbaijani Turk and spoke in a Turki dialect not far removed from the language of Tabriz, familiar to most northern Iranian Kurds. Baghirov opened the session with an exposition of the Soviet attitude toward nationalities. People with separate languages and cultures, he explained, should have separate sovernments. Iran contained four such 'nations'. These were the Farsi-speaking Persians, the Gilaki-speaking peoples of the southern Caspian littoral, the Turki-speaking peoples of Azergaijan, and the Kurdish-speaking peoples of Kurdistan. Each of bhese would eventually enjoy local autonomy and the first to be to favoured would be the Turks of Azerbaijan. There was no need, he declared, for the Kurds to hurry the formation of their own state. Kurdish freedom must be based on the triumph of popular forces not in Iran alone but also in Iraq and Turkey. A separate Kurdish state was a desirable thing to be considered in the future when the entire 'nation' could be united. In the meantime Kurdish aspirations should be achieved within Azerbaijani autonomy.

This was probably not the first time that Qazi Muhammad had been exposed to such Azerbaijani reasoning. His reply, therefore, made it clear that the Kurds were determined to enjoy an autonomy separate from that of Azerbaijan. Baghirov had done all he could to support the position of his Azerbaijani colleagues in Tabriz. Now he could gracefully concede the Kurdish claim. Banging his fist on the table, he proclaimed that 'as long as the Soviet Union exists the Kurds will have their independence'. Qazi rose to the emotional pitch of his host by declaring that a weak nation would welcome any hand extended to it: 'Not only will we shake it, we will also kiss it.'

The tea party then turned its attention to Kurdish material requirements; and at this point Qazi told the story of the poor villager who was given a fine saluqi dog by the Agha. On the following day he went to the Agha and thanked him over and over again in the most flattering terms. The Agha, surprised, asked the villager why he was the object of so much gratitude for the simple gift of a dog. The villager replied: 'Since you have given me a hunting dog I know that you must also intend to give me a horse to ride to the chase. And after you give me the horse you will surely provide it with food. And then of course both the horse and its master will be given dwellings. And thus I shall be the most contented of men.' To be sure that Baghirov had understood, Qazi explained that since the Kurds had been promised their own state they would also expect to receive the necessary material means to defend it and make it prosper.

Baghirov had not missed the point, and his reply was just what his listeners had hoped to hear. In emphatic if general terms he promised that military equipment including tanks, cannon, machine guns, and rifles would be sent to Mahabad. He also alluded to the possibility of financial support, and promised places in the Baku Military College for as many students as the Kurds could send. Pishevari, he said, would be told to accept eighty Kurdish students at the university which was to be founded in Tabriz. And a printing press would be dispatched to Mahabad to provide for publications in the Kurdish language.

Baghirov then turned to the political aspects of the Kurdish movement. The Komala, he suggested, could accomplish nothing in its present form. With the triumph of democracy in the world, notably in the United States, the United Kingdom, and the USSR, a Kurdish movement could progress only under its banner as the 'Democratic Party of Kurdistan' (*Hizb i Demokrat i Kurdistan*). Baghirov also referred to the armed revolt of Mulla Mustafa Barzani that had been under way for several months in northern Iraq and which claimed association under Razgar i Kurd with the greater Kurdish nationalist movement. Mulla Mustafa,

warned Baghirov, was a British spy and should therefore be viewed with suspicion and treated with caution.

The following morning, during their sightseeing tour of Baku, the Kurdish delegates were informed by Karimli that Mulla Mustafa and his armed Barzanis were at the frontier near the Kalishin Pass and were preparing to cross into Iran. Later that day the group were advised that their projected trip to Tiflis had been cancelled so that they could return home immediately to take the necessary precautions.

That afternoon the delegation laid a wreath of flowers on the tomb of Azizov near the statue of Kirov. Qasim Agha Ilkhanizadeh remembers the time of day well because one member of the party said his evening prayers at the foot of the statue. That night the Kurds were entertained quietly in their own hotel by Azerbaijani musicians, and several of them retired to a side room away from Qazi Muhammad to enjoy a few glasses of Georgian cognac. Such discretion was necessary because the Communist hosts were trying to impress Qazi with their respect for Moslem traditions. Even the sheep that were provided, it was stressed, had been slaughtered by a good Moslem in the prescribed manner.

The following morning at 8 a.m. the Kurds boarded the same special railway car that had brought them to Baku. Each carried as a token of friendship a heavily framed coloured picture of Joseph Stalin. But this was the least of the Soviet burdens placed on their shoulders in Baku. Optimistic and exalted, they were not particularly concerned, in spite of Baghirov's warnings, about the intentions of Mulla Mustafa; for they were firmly convinced for him as well as themselves that a Kurd could only be a Kurd and that outside connexions or commitments would melt away once Kurdish goals were attained.

VI. THE BARZANIS

THEIR PAST

In the mountain fastness northeast of Arbil in Iraq, on the left bank of the Greater Zab and in the highlands above it, dwell the followers of the Shaikhs of Barzan. The village of Barzan itself possesses no outstanding features except for the solid stone houses of the Shaikhs whose residence there has frequently caused it to bustle with activity and intrigue. It was early in the nineteenth century that Sayyid Taha, father of Shaikh Obaidullah from Neri of the Shemdinan region farther north, extended the *khilafat* or 'vicarship' of the Naqshbandi Sufi order to a man of religious inclination living in Barzan village, thereby joining him to one of the great dervish communities of Islam. This first Shaikh of Barzan, whose name was Taj ad Din, could not, like his patron, claim descent from the Prophet; but by presiding over the hypnotic prayers and chantings of the *silsila*, or chain linking the powers of the Shaikh with those of his religious forebears, he soon acquired influence over the primitive people of the valley. When Mark Sykes visited the area in 1906, he found that Hasan Agha of Zibar from across the Zab had been plundering the Shirwani Kurds, while the Shaikh of Barzan had removed himself to Aqra to see the Qaimmaqam on their behalf.[1] The Qaimmaqam, having 'eaten' a Zibari bribe, had meanwhile instigated the nomadic Herki tribesmen to burn Shirwani villages. In short, conditions were normal.

It would seem that at the beginning of this century the followers of the Shaikhs of Barzan were effectively contained by their neighbours; but such has not always been the case. Even in 1906 Mark Sykes observed that the Barzanis were 'a tribe famous for its fighting qualities'; and then they were only 750 families, compared with the 1,000 families of their enemies, the Zibaris, and the 3,000 families of the nomadic Herkis. Soon afterwards the term Barzani was to embrace additional tribes that looked to the

[1] Mark Sykes, *The Caliphs' Last Heritage* (London, 1915), p. 433.

Shaikh of Barzan as their religious guide and master. These were the Shirwani, who in 1906 comprised 1,800 families, the Mizuri, 'a poor sedentary tribe',[2] with 120 families, the smaller Barushis, and the equally small Dola Mari. Thus the Barzanis were able to hold their own against their several enemies: the Zibaris, the Baradost tribesmen to the east, the nomadic Herkis, and sometimes their original patrons, the Sayyids of Shemdinan, who were alternately tolerant of and aggrieved with these upstarts who rivalled them in armed ascendency if not wealth. By 1945 the followers of the Shaikhs of Barzan could be reckoned at about 1,800 households or perhaps 9,000 persons.

In 1908 young Shaikh Abdul Salim took up the mantle in Barzan, defied the Turkish authorities, and, like the Sayyids of Shemdinan, began to intrigue with the Russians who were enlisting Kurdish tribal support on their Turkish flank. Seized by the Turks in 1914, Shaikh Abdul Salim was hanged in Mosul, and his place was taken by the young and unstable Shaikh Ahmad. By 1919 the victorious British, with inadequate resources, were attempting to establish a civil administration strong enough to frustrate Turkish ambitions in the still-disputed Mosul Liwa. Shaikh Ahmad, true to his nature, fell into correspondence with the Turks to oppose the British who then represented the central authority most likely to limit tribal autonomy and repress anarchy. Later, in 1927, Shaikh Ahmad, unfettered by orthodoxy and intoxicated by the devotion of his followers, allowed them to proclaim him an incarnation of God. The tribal fighting which ensued was accompanied by police intervention, and Shaikh Ahmad's claim to divinity collapsed though his influence remained. In 1931 the Baghdad Government, anticipating the end of the Mandate the following year, prepared to extend its authority throughout the realm, including those tribal areas that had been left largely to their own devices. At just this time Shaikh Ahmad became possessed by the notion that he should test the loyalty of his followers by establishing whether or not they would follow him into heresy. His enemies even charged that he was propagating Christianity. To the east in Baradost territory near the Iranian frontier the wily Shaikh Rashid, also of the Naqshbandi order, proclaimed a holy war against the Barzanis in the name of the true faith. To what extent he was instigated by

[2] Ibid. pp. 560–1.

outside influences is not clear, but in any case he was soundly beaten by one of Shaikh Ahmad's brothers, a young man known as Mulla Mustafa.

An Iraqi army column sent to restore order was routed and the Royal Air Force was called in, not for the last time, to save the situation. In the spring of 1932 a second Iraqi punitive column thrust towards Barzan and met the usual fate of ambush by tribesmen more skilled in mountain warfare than the foot soldiers of the plains. Again the RAF, after due warning, bombed the Barzani villages. This softening process proved effective; Iraqi troops finally reached Barzan, and Shaikh Ahmad was compelled to retreat to Turkey where he was seized, and in 1935 handed over to Iraq for internment at Hilleh and later at Sulaimaniya. Mulla Mustafa spent the same period confined in the latter town.

TRIBAL LIFE

As the jeep, pack horse, or foot trail, depending on the season, turned north from the Arbil–Ruwanduz road near Khalifan, it kept to the dry but uneven high ground along the eastern edge of the valley of the Greater Zab which it followed upstream to the town of Billeh where the Zibari tribe and sometimes Iraqi administrators were stationed. From there on only horses or mules could cross the ridge a short distance to the valley of Brazan. Above the road on the east stretches a mountain chain separating the Zab and Barzan from Shirwani tribal territory centred at Mergasor village. For the rugged tribesmen, the track from one side of the Barzani realm to the other was routine, but to a column of troops the mountains were a formidable barrier.

The remote valleys of Barzan have bred a sort of Kurd different from those who dwell in the more accessible centres of Shaqlawa, Ruwanduz, Arbil, and Sulaimaniya. The Barzanis, a simple and fierce pastoral folk, are free from many of the vices of civilization. Personal moral standards were high, based on a code of honour which governed relationships within the tribe, but which was often violated in dealings with outsiders. Revenge could be speedy, often executed by the rifle that was carried by any male strong enough to lift its weight and which was prized above all other possessions. Internal disputes and external relations were decided without question by the Shaikh. It would, however, be a

mistake to suppose that all of the followers of the shaikhs loved their leaders. On the contrary hatred, well dissimulated, was a part of the Barzani character, but this mattered little so long as respect and fear predominated; for each man knew his place and was ready at any moment to fall back into the pattern of absolute submission. That the primitive Barzanis, pressed into this feudal mould, should have become a vanguard for leftist Kurdish nationalism was indeed ironic, since the urban nationalists detested tribal life, feared tribal power, and sought the collapse of the feudal system.

The semi-barren Barzani hills were well suited to flocks, and the watered valleys could support vineyards and orchards. Unlike their Zibari neighbours, the Barzanis, in spite of their physical stamina, were temperamentally unsuited for the sustained effort required for long-term cultivation and the tending of trees and vines. Chronic insecurity in the area, inaccessibility of markets, and limited resources in cash crops kept life near the subsistence level. From the flocks and cattle came basic elements of the diet—milk products—hand-woven materials, and leather foot coverings laced over durable knitted socks. Wheat and barley products, usually in the form of flat bread, supplemented milk and cheese and sometimes eggs, for the many. For the few who could afford it, rice and mutton, beef, and chickens provided a more varied diet. Fruits, both in season and stored for the winter, were available during good years. Tea and sugar were consumed by all according to their means. Any excess cash was apt to find its way to the hands of the shaikhs who by tradition were obliged to support and entertain a continuous stream of visitors. The shaikhs also controlled ammunition and rifles, both expensive items. Their life was, however, austere and devoid of luxuries, though their stone houses built by draft labour were well constructed. But even these symbols of status could quickly be turned to rubble by explosive bombs. As for the humble dwellings of the villagers, constructed of mud and uncut stone, their value was reckoned in terms of the labour and the cost of poplar poles used as roof beams. After a bombing raid, the Barzanis would replace stone on stone and collect enough beams to provide the base of a reed and mud cover. Then the roll bedding, small wooden chests, a few metal pots and pans, and pottery jars could be moved back from the hills and life could be resumed as before.

MULLA MUSTAFA RETURNS

By 1943 Mulla Mustafa was, by his standards, barely subsisting on the small government allowance provided him during his internment at Sulaimaniya. After the gold pieces from the headgear of his wives had been spent and his resources were completely exhausted, he resolved to escape. This he did in the summer of 1943; and on foot he crossed into Iran, then back into Iraq to regain Barzan, some 120 miles northwest. Back home, he was the immediate object of attention from his own followers, the chiefs of neighbouring tribes, Iraqi government officials who wished to reintern him, and members of the Kurdish nationalist movement, including certain army officers, who were attentive to anyone with the proven ability to defy the central authority.

Although only of medium stature, Mulla Mustafa was an imposing figure. Brilliant eyes accented the firm lines of a strong and intelligent face. Endurance and audacity were stamped on his mind and body. Though he had received only the rudiments of a primary education from village mullas, he quickly grasped the essence of a situation and exercised diplomatic and military cunning in achieving his objective. If he was over-confident and obdurate, he recognized his own intellectual shortcomings and admired those Kurds whose education had prepared them for higher service to their people. Hence his attitude towards Kurdish students who at a later date clamoured to join the fighting ranks of Kurdish nationalism. He admonished them instead to stick to their books. Hence, too, his respect for Qazi Muhammad. Less commendable characteristics were Mulla Mustafa's egotism, opportunism, shortsightedness, and intractability. This complex personality could arouse widely differing passions and opinions among those who knew or were obliged to deal with him.

Back in Barzan, Mulla Mustafa gathered together an armed tribal force and set about attacking government police posts. He corresponded with the British Embassy, negotiated fitfully with the Government in Baghdad, sent emissaries to enlist the support of neighbouring tribes and sought to subvert Kurdish army officers. An Iraqi army column sent up to restore order met with ignominious defeat and failure. By the end of 1943 Mulla Mustafa's arsenal and forces had grown so large that he could not be

reduced by any small-scale punitive expedition. The new Iraqi cabinet headed by Nuri Said chose instead to negotiate. To the north was dispatched the new Minister without portfolio for Kurdish Affairs, Majid Mustafa, a man of about forty-five who after the war had thrown in his lot with Shaikh Mahmud at Sulaimaniya and had thereafter become a government official while remaining a sensible and moderate Kurdish nationalist. By giving in to most of Mulla Mustafa's demands, the new minister created a disarming semblance of security in Kurdistan and stimulated the dangerous assumption that Baghdad would acquiesce in the seizure of additional bits of its authority by those devoted to the Kurdish cause. Thus Majid Mustafa's friendly negotiations with Mulla Mustafa fed the latter's egotism and emboldened him, together with his Kurdish nationalist associates, to seek further concessions. The Prime Minister, Nuri Said, was inclined to concede a number of points; but most of his Arab colleagues withdrew their support when they felt that the territorial integrity of Iraq was being threatened. The Government fell and was succeeded by a ministry that was prepared to discuss Kurdish grievances but was not inclined to compromise on essentials. Nevertheless Mulla Mustafa kept his communications with Baghdad open while continuing to raid police posts and seize government property.

During this protracted period of Barzani lawlessness a curious sort of contact with the Government in Baghdad was maintained by several Kurdish army officers who, because of their mixed linguistic and cultural background, were considered well suited for seeking a Kurdish-Iraqi rapprochement through compromise. The first of these was Major Izzat Abdul Aziz from Amadia who had once been a personal aide to the Crown Prince and had somehow managed to gain the confidence of Arabs, Kurds, and British. Another was Lt-Colonel Amin Ruwanduzi who, as Qaimmaqam of Ruwanduz in early 1944, was in official contact with Mulla Mustafa on behalf of the Government. A third was Captain Abdul Aziz Gilani, who has been mentioned before as the son of Shaikh Abdullah Effendi, the great Sufi leader of northern Iranian Kurdistan.

The extent to which the Kurdish blood of the north was running thicker than the waters of Arab Baghdad was not clear until later; nor were all the activities of the Hewa Party, with

which these officers were associated, known to the Iraqi authorities. During Nuri Said's term as Prime Minister, on the advice of Majid Mustafa, four additional liaison officers were appointed to the Barzani area. These were the well-known Kurdish nationalist who had launched the Komala in Mahabad, Captain Mir Haj from Zakho, together with Captain Mustafa Khoshnao of Koi Sanjak, and Captains Majid Ali and Faud Araf (a Cabinet Minister in 1961) of Sulaimaniya. Negotiations through these officers finally led to the release of Shaikh Ahmad in early 1944 and his return to Barzan where he resumed his spiritual leadership. Effective political and military control, however, remained in the able hands of Mulla Mustafa.

THE 1945 REVOLT

In March 1945 an amnesty bill swept the slate clean for Mulla Mustafa and other Kurdish offenders who had been involved in operations against the Iraqi Government before February 1944. Flushed by the success of his military exploits, the possession of ample arms, and the revival of Kurdish nationalism throughout northern Iraq, the implacable Mulla and his sturdy Barzanis were in no mood to recognize a higher authority in their domain. Thus it was that in April 1945 one of the Barzani leaders named Uli Beg went to the police post above Mergasor to obtain tea and wheat. Soon a disagreement led to fighting in which Uli Beg was killed as well as a number of police, after which the Mergasor post was besieged and taken by the Barzanis. Mulla Mustafa, who at that time was arbitrating a tribal dispute west of Barzani territory, was obliged to return home to direct the campaign. As the revolt spread, Mulla Mustafa increasingly adopted a nationalist position and even claimed the backing of the British Government in spite of the clear warning from British officials that they were supporting the Baghdad Government. Once again, an Iraqi army column was dispatched to the area and was on the edge of the usual debacle when air force planes began to take their toll of Barzani property and morale. At the same time the Government enlisted the help of some of Mulla Mustafa's neighbours and rivals, reputedly including elements of the Zibari, Berwari, Doski, and Sharif Bayani Kurds, as well as elements of the 'Muhajarin' who

were loyal to several of the sons of Sayyid Taha of Shemdinan. Leading the latter force was a young Iraqi army officer named Abdul Karim Qasim.

By the end of September Mulla Mustafa had no choice but to withdraw towards the most hospitable frontier available. In view of the capabilities and known attitude of the Turkish army his choice could only lie in the direction of Iran, where a Kurdish movement was known to have taken hold in the territory around Mahabad that was free of both Soviet and Iranian troops. It is still believed in some quarters that Mulla Mustafa had previously contacted the Russians for the purpose of providing Barzani support for an autonomous Kurdish state in Iran. The chronology at Baku, however, would suggest otherwise; for unless the Iranian delegation was the victim of a deception, the warning by the Prime Minister, Baghirov, that Mulla Mustafa might be a British agent should be taken as his considered view at the time. It must be remembered that in areas where British influence in the Middle East was once decisive, the popular image of omnipotent and hidden British power endured long after the reality. Hence the Russians as well as some Kurdish observers were prepared to suspect that any movement emanating from Iraq, be it by the Barzanis, the Hewa Kurdish Party, or the forays of Hama Rashid Khan Banch, must have been British-inspired. Mulla Mustafa, however, later found ample opportunity to reveal his true attitude towards both the Mahabad Republic and the near-by Soviet presence.

VII. PRELUDE TO THE REPUBLIC

RIFLES

When the Kurdish delegates returned from Baku they found those who had stayed behind eager to follow the adventurous path of Kurdish nationalism. During the four years after the Soviet occupation of Azerbaijan both tribesmen and city Kurds had acquired arms. As if a shortage still existed in Mahabad, where almost every household already had at least one rifle, Qazi Muhammad arranged through the Soviet trade agent in Mahabad, Babayov, for the supply of additional rifles to the Democratic Party of Kurdistan (DPK). One night in December, a few days after Azerbaijani forces had captured the Iranian gendarmerie post in Rezaieh, several Russian trucks drew up near the Perd i sur bridge crossing the Chom i Sauj Bulaqch southwest of Mahabad on the old road to Rezaieh. Their lights were off. Out of the narrow lanes of Mahabad filed members of the party to take charge of 1,200 rifles that had belonged to the gendarmerie. Ample supplies of ammunition were also unloaded under the supervision of a Russian officer. This first Soviet-sponsored shipment to Kurdistan was a covert operation; but those Kurds who had met Baghirov in Baku told their friends that more military equipment, including tanks and artillery, would soon be on the way.

BARZANIS AND ASSOCIATES

Not long after the delegation's return from Baku, Mulla Mustafa and a number of his armed Barzanis descended from the mountains to Ushnavieh, then passed through Qarapapagh country to the village of Qum Qaleh ten kilometres north of Mahabad on the Rezaieh road. Shaikh Ahmad, still the most venerated Barzani religious personage, accompanied his younger brother who as military commander had assumed the real leadership of the tribe. By the time all the Barzanis and their allies had entered Iran they numbered about 10,000 persons, including

women and children. Some 3,000 could bear arms, and of these about 1,200 were individually accountable to Mulla Mustafa. In addition to the followers of the Shaikhs of Barzan (Shirwanis, Mizuris, Barushis, and Dola Maris) other miscellaneous forces from Iraq had joined the movement including the Iraqi officers: Mir Haj, Mustafa Khoshnao, Khairullah, Izzat Abdul Aziz, and Nuri. In a special category was Captain Abdul Aziz Gilani who, as eldest son of Shaikh Abdullah Effendi, represented a family that might have challenged Qazi Muhammad for Kurdish primacy. Not long after Aziz reached Mahabad he was selected to receive a higher education in the USSR, a solution attributable perhaps to the rivalry of his family with the Qazis. Thereafter the Russians had reason to expect Shaikh Abdullah's co-operation and right behaviour. The several other non-Barzani Iraqi Kurdish tribal elements who joined Mulla Mustafa in Iran were all that remained of a vast coalition of chiefs who a few months before had sworn on the Koran to support with arms a generalized Kurdish nationalist movement. These steadfast few were Wahab Muhammad Ali Agha of Jildian and adjacent villages near Ruwanduz, and two of the younger sons of Sayyid Taha of Shemdinan, Sayyid Ahmad and Shaikh 'Jeto' from Batas village, who with about fifty 'Muhajarin' from Turkey settled in the Naqadeh region where Ahmad married the very eligible daughter of one of the richest and most influential Qarapapagh chiefs.

At his first meeting with Qazi Muhammad, Mulla Mustafa pledged his fighting men to the Kurdish cause. It was also agreed that his followers and their families should be billeted at a number of places in the Mahabad region, with about 3,000 assigned to Mahabad town. Although details regarding this period in Mulla Mustafa's career remain obscure, it is likely that he lost no time in seeking out Soviet officials and attempting to dispel their well-known suspicions regarding his previous associations and orientations.

THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF KURDISTAN

Meanwhile, preparations were proceeding apace towards making good Baghirov's advice to transform the Komala into the Democratic Party of Kurdistan. It took twenty days to get everything ready. In September 1945 the Soviet Consul from Rezaieh, Hashimov, had opened a cultural relations centre in Mahabad. Since the Komala, as a secret organization, still had no public meeting place, the group of some sixty tribal and town leaders who were called together by Qazi Muhammad on that day in November 1945 assembled at the cultural centre. In spite of the Soviet inspiration of the meeting, Russian officials stayed away and left the proceedings to the Kurds. Qazi's speech, delivered slowly with logic and force, reviewed the Baku trip and then led on to Baghirov's advice that the Komala should change its name, come into the open, and function under the banner of democracy. Our Russian brothers, he declared, will help the new party. Were there any questions or comments? None. The issue was decided.

Nothing specific had been said about forming an autonomous Kurdish Government, but many of those present were aware of Baghirov's promises at Baku. Nor did fundamental changes in the party organization accompany the change in name. The composition of the Central Committee was not immediately altered. Qazi Muhammad had not been a member of the old Central Committee, nor did he become one in the new Democratic Party. He merely continued to dominate the Kurdish movement, with Russian advice from behind the scenes, as he had since he joined the Komala. The 'new' party had a programme, one of its versions being:

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

Thus, as the Kurdish nationalist movement took on the protective colouring of 'democracy', it was in fact formalizing a trend that had developed during the preceding year away from the easy *camaraderie* and the give and take of the Komala's formative period and towards a more efficient, effective, and authoritarian organization drawing on Soviet experience and advice. The new political movement had its popular leader of the type considered indispensable in those Stalinist days. This was that same Qazi Muhammad who, as many early Komala members had feared, imposed his authoritarian personality on the nationalist movement. He had been favoured and groomed by the Russians. He was personally convinced that the Russian way, however it might twist and turn, would guarantee the final victory of the Kurdish people. But while accepting Soviet tutelage, Qazi remained an implacable and incorruptible Kurdish nationalist and as such carried with him all but a handful of his compatriots.

One of the doubters was Qasim Agha Ilkhanizadeh of Bukan, a prominent member of the Dehbokri tribe. He had accepted General Atakchiov's invitation to visit Baku on the chance that the Kurdish cause might thereby be strengthened. Baghirov's schemes for the partitioning of Iran, however, struck him more as an extension of the Soviet system southwards than as the creation of free nations. In Bukan he found that Kaka Hamza Nalos of the Mamash tribe shared his misgivings. When Qasim Agha returned from Baku, instead of taking his place in the electric atmosphere of Mahabad he journeyed to Tabriz, where he spent several weeks and shared his suspicions with so many persons that the Russians discovered the source of a leak of information about the meeting at Baku. Qasim Agha thus became the object of suspicion in Mahabad; justifiably so, for other chiefs of the Dehbokri of Bukan later established contact with General Homayuni, who commanded Iranian army units containing the Republic on the south.

Qasim Agha was at that time an exception. Soviet arms had triumphed in Europe, and Soviet influence appeared to be an unalterable force in northwest Iran for as long a period ahead as anyone dared look. The Russians had by now managed to convince all but a very few dissenters that Kurdish freedom was inseparable from Soviet hegemony.

AZERBAIJANI AUTONOMY

History was also being written in Iranian Azerbaijan where Soviet occupation forces had been reinforced in October 1945 to assure by their intimidating presence the success of a 'popular movement'. By mid-November armed partisans, including 'Muhajarin' from Soviet Azerbaijan, set out in earnest to take over civil and military control of the province. They compelled Iranian army units to retire from Tabriz. Gendarmerie and police posts were attacked and disarmed, public buildings in Tabriz were occupied, and the city was cut off from Tehran. While Soviet officials were dealing politely with Iranian officials in Azerbaijan, they were at the same time encouraging and protecting a revolutionary movement which could hardly have prevailed had Iranian military forces had access to the province. Tehran's attempts to reinforce the region, however, were frustrated by the Soviet occupation force. On 17 November the Iranian Government notified the Soviet Embassy in Tehran, for the information of the Soviet military authorities, of its intention to dispatch troops to Tabriz, but the advance force of two battalions was stopped by Soviet forces at Qazvin, far outside the border of Azerbaijan. Iranian protests were rejected, and an attempt made by Mr Byrnes and Mr Bevin at Moscow in December 1945 to devise a plan to bring the Azerbaijan problem into a framework of general provincial reform in Iran, was finally rejected by Stalin, who declared that Iran was 'not properly on the agenda'.[1]

During this time the Kurdish autonomy movement pursued its objectives hardly aware that, compared with Azerbaijan, it was a mere Soviet step-child. True to Soviet promises, a printing press arrived in Mahabad in November, a first instalment of Soviet material support promised at Baku. The Russians, however, were circumspect and insisted that the gift be camouflaged as a commercial transaction by a bill of sale stating that a price of 100,000 tomans (about $22,000) had been paid for the press. Soon afterwards publications in Kurdish began to appear, including the newspaper *Kurdistan*, all of which intensified the pressures building up behind the movement, particularly within the younger ranks of the party.

[1] J. F. Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly* (London, 1947), p. 120.

In Tabriz Jafar Pishevari and his Soviet colleagues were at last ready. On 12 December a provincial National Assembly composed of 101 deputies chosen by the Azerbaijan Democratic Party was formally inaugurated. Technically it was argued this was not independence but autonomy within the Iranian state, as sanctioned by the Iranian Constitution, which provided for the establishment of provincial councils. Assurances were given to property holders in Azerbaijan, but at the same time a succession of revolutionary decrees nationalized banks, called for land distribution, and stipulated that the local Turki language should be used for educational and official purposes. Although Soviet officials tried to minimize the significance of these acts, the facts spoke eloquently to the contrary; and little occurred in Azerbaijan that was not initiated or sanctioned by the Soviet authorities.

On the advice of Russian officials Qazi Muhammad sent five delegates to represent the Democratic Party of Kurdistan and the Mahabad region in the Tabriz Assembly. The five were Qazi's cousin, Saif i Qazi, Haji Mustafa Daudi, Manaf Karimi, Karim Ahmadain, and Wahab Blurian. In Tabriz the five Kurds were an uneasy minority, joining the Assembly not as representatives of a separate Kurdistan, but merely as deputies from specific constituencies, like all the others. They soon became aware that under the new dispensation Kurdistan was to have merely a town council inferior to the provincial council of Azerbaijan. Although the Kurds had suspected that their Azerbaijani neighbours might resort to such a manœuvre, they had nevertheless agreed to send representatives to Tabriz so as not to offend their Russian friends. After three sessions at the Assembly, however, the five Kurds returned to proclaim their discontent in Mahabad.

KURDISH AUTONOMY

Baghirov had bound himself to Kurdish autonomy at Baku, and this undertaking could not be delayed indefinitely. Still Qazi Muhammad temporized and counselled caution in deference to the wishes of his Soviet advisers, whose goodwill was essential to the Kurdish future. On 17 December, however, high spirits overcame discretion and a meeting of party members was converted into a march on the vestigial remains of Iranian authority in

Mahabad, the Department of Justice. The crowd demanded that the building should be set on fire; but moderation prevailed and instead the coat of arms was shot from the façade and the Kurdish flag was raised on the roof.

In late December Qazi authorized Abdul Rahman Zabihi and Ali Raihani to approach the British Consul in Tabriz regarding the possibility of establishing some kind of official relations between an autonomous Kurdistan of the future and the United Kingdom and other Western Powers. The Consul's reply was vague and unsatisfactory from the Kurdish point of view. Qazi himself also visited Tabriz to discuss Kurdish aspirations with Pishevari and Soviet officials. When he returned to Mahabad he gauged the temper of the people, and rather than forfeit his commanding position in the nationalist movement, he quietly prepared for the day fixed as the Second of the Kurdish month of Rebandan, 22 January 1946, when Kurdish autonomy would be officially proclaimed.

A few days later Qazi discussed his plans with Lt Nemaz Aliov, then Soviet Political Officer in Miandoab, and with Major Yermakov, who acted in a liaison capacity with Soviet officials in Tabriz. Neither objected. By 17 January word was being spread in the town and to the tribes in the hills that an important meeting would be held in Chwar Chira circle on the Second of Rebandan. On the day before the big rally a number of prominent Kurds of Mahabad gathered in the town's largest mosque to discuss Kurdish autonomy and the following day's programme. Secrecy was so well maintained that on the morrow only about twenty persons knew in detail how far the spokesmen for the Kurdish nation were prepared to go to achieve their ambitious designs.

VIII. THE REPUBLIC FORMED

22 JANUARY 1946

ALTHOUGH it had snowed the previous day, the morning of 22 January 1946 broke sunny and relatively warm for mid-winter at an altitude of 4,500 feet, 37° north latitude. By mid-morning a vast throng of townspeople and visiting tribal elements had gathered at Chwar Chira circle. The two streets leading to the circle, indeed the only straight streets in the town, were decorated with Kurdish flags and red, white, and green bunting. From among those assembled a delegation of the most prominent walked west 100 yards to the large brick house of Qazi Muhammad, overlooking the Chom i Sauj Bulaqeh. From there Qazi was escorted back to the circle and up to a wooden platform that had been constructed on its northwest edge. In front of him was a colourful assemblage of Kurdish men and children; and from the roofs and windows of near-by houses some of the women were able to observe the circle and still maintain their seclusion. Less striking in appearance, but for the moment the most influential, were the members of the Central Committee of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan, mostly young to middle-aged, middle to upper-class citizens of Mahabad town, attired in unstylish western suits, some of them wearing turbans as well. Also well represented were chiefs of the tribes of the Mahabad region and of the Mamash, Mangur, Gawurk, and Zarza from the area towards the Iraqi frontier, wearing the southern male dress. There were also members of the Herki, Begzadeh, and Barzani tribes dressed in the northern style in pastel-tinted homespun materials. Some of them wore red, blue, and white checked Arab *kaffiyehs* from Iraq as turbans. From farther north came the Shikak and Jalalis who affected Cossack breeches and assorted coats, high white felt hats and a wide variety of turbans. No Russians stood with the crowd, but Yermakov from Tabriz watched the proceedings from a near-by jeep.

Qazi mounted the platform and in his slow, assured voice argued that the Kurds were a people apart, occupying their own land and

sharing with other nations the right of self-determination. The Kurds had been awakened and had powerful friends. An autonomous Kurdish Republic was from that moment established. Amid cheers Qazi thanked the Central Committee of the party and the people of Kurdistan for having chosen him to lead the new nation. Then he removed his long, ill-fitting coat and stood before them straight and neat, his head encircled by the white turban of a religious dignitary, wearing a Soviet-style army uniform that had just been made for him in Tabriz. According to several sources, Qazi had intended also to wear a military cap but had been convinced by friends that a turban was more appropriate to his religious role. Thereafter he continued to wear the turban and alternated his other attire between the long gown of the *qazi* and the Soviet uniform in which he alone was dressed that day in January, but which was later adopted by the military and many of the civilian leaders of the Republic.

Qazi's speech lasted no more than fifteen minutes but in that time he was able to thank the Soviet Union for its moral and material support and to congratulate his Azerbaijani brothers who had achieved their own independence and would help the Kurds and be helped by them. As he stepped from the platform, the shouting was punctuated by the firing of 300 rifles, for each of which five rounds had been supplied; for no Kurdish celebration or wedding would be complete without the sound of gunfire.

No one wanted to spoil the joyous occasion by questioning the sincerity of Qazi's declaration of Kurdish-Azerbaijani brotherhood; but another element of dissension came to break for a moment the spell that had been cast over them all. Qazi was followed on the platform by several prominent tribal and town leaders who congratulated him and the people of Kurdistan on the auspicious occasion. When Zero Beg Herki rose to speak it was assumed that his words would equally befit the occasion. Instead, however, he launched on a scathing attack on Shaikh Abdullah Effendi Gilani, who he alleged had been half-hearted in his support of the Kurdish nationalist movement and was perhaps even the instrument of a foreign power, Great Britain. The crowd was astonished by Zero Beg's irreverence and bad taste. From the throng came young Sayyid Abdul Aziz who had left the Iraqi army to join the Kurdish movement and now rose to defend his father. Following Aziz, Qazi again took the stand to

speak in defence of Shaikh Abdullah and to denounce Zero's charges as prompted by personal motives. Some Kurds suspected at the time that Zero Beg had been encouraged by Captain Nemaz Aliov of Miandoab who was known to distrust the Shaikh and suspect him of pro-British tendencies.

The rejoicing in the streets of Mahabad continued all day. The zurna, resembling in shape and sound the horn end of bagpipes, and the loud dohol drums were soon spelling out the hypnotic rhythm of the Kurdish dance. When the noise finally subsided the founders of the Republic could confidently assume that their goal had been attained and that, with the support of the USSR, their creation would endure.

THE RUSSIAN PRESENCE

Two days after the Republic was proclaimed one of the rare political assassinations of those times occurred in Mahabad. After seizing power in Tabriz in December, the Communist-led Azerbaijani autonomy movement instituted an inefficient but neverthless real reign of terror in its area. Secret police and informers were everywhere to guarantee that 'reactionaries' should not interfere with the Communist-style progress of the masses. The ex-Tudeh, now Democratic Party of Azerbaijan, was supported in its revolutionary mission by the 'Muhajarin' from Soviet Azerbaijan. Many of the wealthy landowners of Tabriz had by this time fled to Tehran. In Mahabad, however, there was no social revolution, no serious move towards land distribution, no Marxist indoctrination, no secret police, and no Russian-trained 'cadres'. Soviet influence was there, however, its strength related to the calculation by the Kurdish leaders that their cause would be bound to succeed if they anticipated Soviet desires and obeyed the advice of Soviet officials. Collaboration was extended willingly, as in the use of Russian sources for newspaper articles, the praise of Soviet leaders, the glorification of Soviet armed might, and the proliferation of Stalin's photograph in homes and in government offices.

On 24 January Captain Nemaz Aliov informed Qazi Muhammad that a Kurd named Ghaffar Mahmudian, who had been a sales agent for Hungarian and Russian radios in Rezaich and

Tabriz and a sugar agent for the Iranian Government in Mahabad, had been caught as a double agent supplying information both to Russian and Iranian officials. Such a dangerous traitor, suggested Nemaz Aliov, should be put out of the way. Qazi complied by ordering that Ghaffar Mahmudian should be arrested and brought to the police station. On the way, the prisoner was shot dead by three police agents near the house in which Nemaz Aliov was staying.

The liquidation of Mahmudian was an exceptional occurrence; after this Russian pressures were brought to bear more often to restrain Kurdish ambitions than to urge them to violence. To accomplish their objectives, the Russians had stationed in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan a number of army officers and civilian officials who dealt wholly or in part with Kurdish affairs. It will be recalled that several Soviet officers were involved in the first trip of Kurdish tribal leaders to Baku in 1941. Among them was General Salim Atakchiov, who throughout the period of Russian occupation held the senior political position in Azerbaijan. Also active in 1941 was a Colonel Aslanov, one of the few Soviet Kurds in contact with the Kurds of Iran. Another was Mustafayov, who was attached to the consulate in Rezaieh and accompanied the first group to Baku. These last two officers were no longer in the region in 1945 when the Soviet plan for Azerbaijan and Kurdistan had moved into a more active phase.

In 1945 General Atakchiov was still supreme in Tabriz, and he remained there until the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Azerbaijan in May 1946. Atakchiov, an Azerbaijani from Baku, was about fifty but looked younger, a stocky man usually attired in civilian clothes. He was recognized by his Kurdish friends and contacts as being both intelligent and cunning. He often drove to Mahabad in the morning and returned to Tabriz the same day; more often, however, Kurds who had important matters to bring to the attention of the Soviet Government themselves set out for Tabriz to see Atakchiov or some junior official.

One such Soviet contact in Tabriz was, strangely enough, a middle-aged doctor at the Russian Hospital on Pahlavi Avenue near Gulistan Park. His name was Samadov and his handsome wife was also a doctor, specializing in ophthalmology. It was at the Russian Hospital that several members of the second Baku group had mustered before being sent on by Atakchiov. A second doctor named Qoliov was sometimes contacted in Samadov's

absence, but his political functions remained insignificant. It was not uncommon for Dr Samadov himself to answer questions or otherwise dispose of the business of his Kurdish callers. Some cases, however, were referred to higher officials such as Atakchiov, and Atakchiov reported to Baku or sometimes Moscow. The two doctors remained on the hospital staff until the very last days of the Azerbaijani Republic.

In the Rezaieh area the chief agent of Soviet Kurdish policy was one Hashimov, a middle-aged Azerbaijani Turk attached to the Russian Consulate there. He had arrived before Azerbaijani autonomy was proclaimed and remained in Rezaieh until the Republic fell. His work often caused him to visit Mahabad where he dealt with Qazi Muhammad and other officials. Hashimov is remembered as a tall, stout, friendly man with a detailed knowledge of Kurdish tribes and personalities. By 1946 he was probably the Soviet official most directly involved in the implementation of Russia's Kurdish policy.

In Mahabad itself the Russian who left the deepest impression was Captain Salahaddin Kazimov, known familiarly as 'Kakagha'. He had been sent to the town in March 1946 as a military adviser to the Republic. In Mahabad he was reputed to be a clever and diligent officer. He was also a plain man who mixed little with the people of the town, though his Azerbaijani background provided him with a language, Turki, understood by nearly everyone in Mahabad.

The only other Russian officer permanently assigned to Mahabad was the 'Trade Representative', Asadov, about forty-five, who arrived in February and remained until the end of the Republic, at which time he joined the staff of the Russian Consulate in Rezaieh. Asadov was preceded in the 'economic' position first by Hajiov and later by Babayov. Very little of his time however was devoted to commercial activities. His real mission was to serve as Russian political adviser to supplement the military functions of 'Kakagha'.

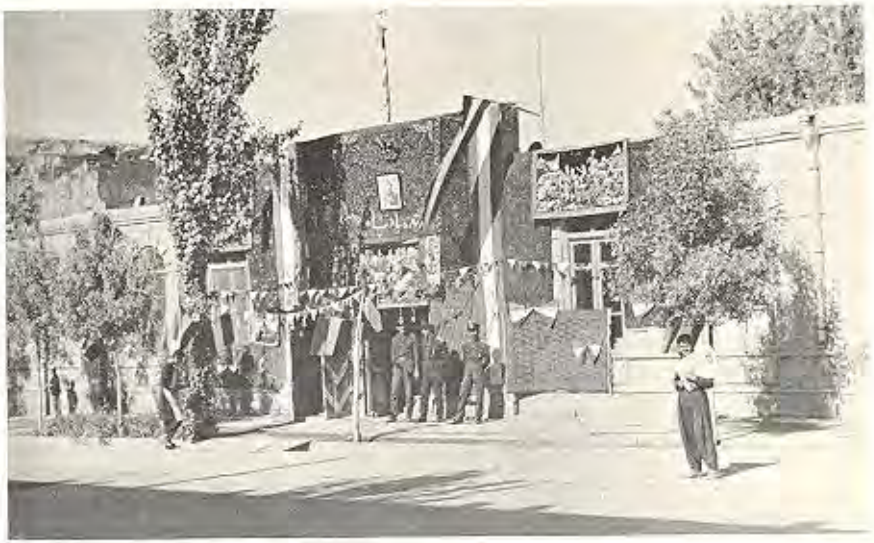
In Miandoab the Soviet political agent was the previously mentioned Captain Nemaz Aliov, about thirty-five, an Azerbaijani Turk, taciturn and less popular with his Kurdish contacts than were most other Russian officials. Although he lived at Miandoab, he spent a great deal of time in Mahabad, only one hour distant by jeep.

1. On a Road in Kurdistan (Iraq)

2. 'Faqraqa': an early Median tomb near Qum Qaleh, ten miles from Mahabad

3. Ismail Agha 'Simko' (lower centre) at the height of his influence, *c.* 1921

4. Shaikh Abdullah Effendi Gilani in 1961
(*l-r:* Shaikh Abdul Qader, son of Shaikh Abdullah; Shaikh Abdullah Effendi Gilani; Sayyid Musa; the Author)



5. The Mahabad Police Station (1961)

6. Chom i Sauj Bulaqeh and Mahabad Qazi Muhammad's house upper right (1961)

7. *Faqih* (theological students) in a street of Mahabad (1961)

8. Kurdish girls of Mahabad

9. Children in Gazgasek village, west of Mahabad (1960)

10. Mahabad (1961)

11. Street auction in Mahabad (1961)

12. Entrance to Saqqiz from the Baneh road (1961)

21. Officers of the Mahabad Army

Front row, l-r: 2nd Lt Husain Khafafi; Lt Muhammad Takmachi; Col Muhammad Nanavazadeh; Capt Aziz Sadiqi; Col Salah

22. Qahrawa (1961)

23. Muhammad Husain Saif i Qazi (1946)

24. On the Saqqiz front (1946)

Saif i Qazi driving jeep; Mir Haj on back of jeep in Barzani dress; others include soldiers of Mahabad army and Barzanis

25. Kurdish officials in Mahabad

Front row, l-r: Wahab Blurian; Sayyid Muhammad Ayubian; Mustafa Sultanian; Ghani Khosravi; Muhammad Amin Sharafi; Khalil Khosravi; Muhammad Yahu

Standing, l-r: Wahab Qazi (Chief of Transport); Rahim Lashkari (Qazi's Chef de Cabinet); Dilshad Rasuli; Karim Ahmadain; Manaf Karimi; Said Homayuni; Ahmad Ilahi; Rahim Saidzadeh; Ali Raihani; Rahmat Ashabi

26. Looking down on Mamashah village and the Saqqiz–Baneh road (1961)

27. Qavam as Sultaneh, the Iranian Prime Minister (seated) with Muzaffar Firuz (1946)

28. Qazi Muhammad in his office at the time of Captain Roosevelt's visit (September 1946)

29. *l-r:* Habib Amiri, the American Ambassador, George V. Allen, and Amr Khan Sharifi Shikak at Zimdasht village (March 1947)

30 Major-General (ret) Fazlullah Homayuni

31. Kurdish prisoners, spring 1947

Seated, l-r: Sayyid Muhammad Ayubian; Ibrahim Naderi; Muhammad Amin Sharafi; Ahmad Ilahi

Standing, l-r: Karim Ahmadan; Manaf Karimi; Husain Furuhar; Aziz Kirmand (involved in attack on police station); Sayyid Kebzir-Nizami (Chief of Police); Sayyid Muhammad Ishaqi (in charge Mahabad garrison)

32. The Three Qazis

L-r: Muhammad Husain Saif i Qazi; Qazi Muhammad; Abol Qasim Sadr i Qazi

In Tabriz, in addition to the doctors of the Russian Hospital and General Atakchiov, there was stationed Major Yermakov whose code name was simply the telephone number eleven. Major Yermakov left Iran with the Soviet occupation forces in May 1946. Three other Russian army officers who also left in May were Major Jafarov, an expert on the northern Iranian Kurds including the Shikaks; Captain Samadov, who was stationed in Naqadeh; and Captain Fatullayov at Ushnavieh.

THE CABINET

For some time after the 22 January meeting Kurdish party officials were engaged in the arduous task of creating the essential offices and services for the new state. After the First World War Shaikh Mahmud had encountered similar difficulties in his attempt to set up and consolidate a Kurdish government at Sulaimaniya in Iraq; but his overweening ambition had caused his downfall before anything lasting had been accomplished. The first concern of Kurdish party officials in Mahabad, however, was to ensure the security of the state and to provide for its expansion to the south beyond the zone of Russian influence. For this purpose Qazi sent emissaries to all corners of Iranian Kurdistan, from the Jalali tribe on the Soviet frontier to the isolated Auromani and Javanrudi valleys northwest of Kermanshah, near the Iraqi frontier. Below the Saqqiz–Sardasht line the presence of Iranian army units limited proselytizing activities; while north of that line the failure of influential persons to join the party subjected them to considerable risk.

Apart from the nationalist activities of the Komala and later the Democratic Party of Kurdistan the only other wartime move to carve out an area of Kurdish autonomy was the seizure of the Saqqiz–Baneh region by Hama Rashid Khan after the Iranian collapse in 1941. Hama Rashid's movement was a typical tribal affair which filled a power vacuum but failed to provide security or the essentials of government. In 1944 Hama Rashid was driven from his domain into Iraq, but by 1945 he was back once more with some 200 armed cavalry who remained at a discreet distance from the Iranian army. In the summer of 1945 Hama Rashid had brought his troops into Mahabad and then taken them south

again towards Sardasht. Shortly after the Republic was proclaimed he again visited the capital of the new state to discuss with its leaders his role in the movement. He left again for the south with assurances that he would not be overlooked. But Hama Rashid was suspect in Soviet eyes, as were other Iraqi Kurds who were assumed to be under British influence, and his usefulness to the new régime was to be limited.

Although Qazi's leadership had been recognized by the people of Mahabad on 22 January, it remained to install the President and select a cabinet. Thus on a day in early February Qazi summoned ten members of the Central Committee to the Soviet–Kurdish Trade House, where he requested their views on the formation of a cabinet, it being assumed that they themselves were possible candidates. After some deliberation a list was drawn up and carried away by Qazi. Six days later, on 11 February, the list was published unchanged in *Kurdistan* and the ministers, together with Qazi as President of the Republic, took their oaths of office.

Below the President of the Republic was a Prime Minister, Haji Baba Shaikh from Bukan. Haji Baba Shaikh had been a politician for most of his sixty-five years. A member of the family of the religious Sayyids of Zanbil near Bukan, he was short and thin, his eyeglasses and white beard endowing him with an intellectual appearance that was not supported by any formal education. In the old days he had been a friend and staunch supporter of Reza Shah. After Reza Shah's exile he had turned to Hama Rashid Khan of Baneh, who at that time controlled the Saqqiz–Baneh region. Now he was for the Republic. Haji Baba Shaikh was popular with the people of the area but had not been an active member of the Komala. In late 1945, however, he joined the Kurdish Democratic Party and staked his ambitions on Kurdish nationalism. He was not particularly close to Qazi, and it was suspected in some quarters that he had been appointed Prime Minister partly to offset the influence of his neighbours, the Ilkhanizadeh family of Bukan. In spite of his high office, Haji Baba Shaikh was never a powerful figure in the Government.

As Minister of War the Committee had selected Muhammad Husain Saif i Qazi, Qazi's corpulent cousin from Miandoab. Saif i Qazi was also designated Assistant or Vice-President. As Minister of Education and Special Assistant to the President, Qazi chose

young Manaf Karimi from Mahabad who had been an early member of the Komala and a constant figure on its Central Committee. Manaf Karimi, in spite of his mere twenty-five years, was a well-known and popular figure in Mahabad where he was socially of a 'first family' though of moderate means.

In the position of Minister of the Interior, which in those days of popular front governments in Europe was considered the key to Communist penetration, Qazi placed Muhammad Amin Moini of Mahabad. As the owner of a garage in Mahabad, Moini had in the early days of the war developed close relations with Russian traders from Tabriz; and when Soviet objectives became politically oriented, Muhammad Amin became a highly trusted contact and collaborator.

As Minister of Health Qazi chose Sayyid Muhammad Ayubian, a young man of about thirty whose family was wealthy enough to find a place in the upper class. Sayyid Muhammad had little formal education but was self-trained and ran the largest pharmacy in the town, which was owned by his father. He joined the Komala little more than a year after it was founded.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs was Abdul Rahman Ilkhanizadeh, son of Haji Baizid Agha. His cousin, Ismail Agha Ilkhanizadeh, was appointed Minister of Roads. The inclusion of these two representatives of the influential Bukan faction of the Dehbokri tribe, which as a family rivalled the Qazis, was no doubt a political necessity. The Ilkhanizadehs now claim that they agreed to the inclusion of two of their number in the cabinet under pressure exerted by Mulla Mustafa who was stopping in Bukan with some of his Barzanis at that time. Abdul Rahman Agha had received a good religious education and had been an early member of the Komala. Ismail Agha had little formal education and did not join the Komala until 1944. Both were about thirty-five years old.

Ahmad Ilahi, about forty, from one of the second-rank Mahabad families of bazaar background, was appointed Minister of Economics. He was not wealthy but was literate and knew the ways of Kurdish commerce. He had been an early member of the Komala, and it was in his house that Qazi had sworn the party's oath.

The Minister of Labour, Khalil Khosravi, was from an old Mahabadi family that had slipped into the second social rank and

moderate economic position. He had joined the Komala only four months after its founding. The Minister of Posts, Telephones, and Telegraphs, Karim Ahmadain, about forty, was of good family but possessed little personality or influence. He was, however, related to Qazi Muhammad's wife. Haji Mustafa Daudi, Minister of Commerce, about fifty-five, was from one of the large respected families of Mahabad. It was in his garden that the Komala was founded in 1942, but he did not join till a year later.

Mulla Husain Majdi, Minister of Justice, was the most learned and respected mulla in Mahabad. Though he had been a member of the party for only a few months, his religious and legal reputation made him an obvious choice for the Ministry of Justice. Mahmud Valizadeh, the youngest member of the cabinet at about twenty-three, had been trained at the agricultural high school at Karaj near Tehran and therefore presumably possessed the proper background to be Minister of Agriculture. He was from one of the first families and had joined the Komala in 1943.

Taken as a whole the Kurdish Government represented the upper-class of Mahabad town and its environs. Its political and economic orientation was conservative, as would be expected of landowners; but its social and educational outlook was relatively modernist by Kurdish standards. Although the cabinet represented fairly well the organized Kurdish nationalist movement and the Mahabad region, it left out the important Rezaieh district in the north and the Saqqiz–Sardasht area to the south, and of course contained no delegates from the Greater Kurdistan outside the confines of the Republic. The failure of the cabinet to include certain important tribal elements did not mean that a small group of urban Kurds in Mahabad was arbitrarily imposing its will over the whole. Though it was contemplated that a representative assembly based on population would eventually be elected, in the meantime the tribal chiefs who would no doubt have taken seats in such an assembly controlled their own areas with little or no direction from the Kurdish capital. Nor did Qazi and the cabinet make important decisions of a military or political nature without consulting prominent leaders such as Amr Khan Shikak, Rashid Beg Herki, or Mulla Mustafa Barzani. Thus, the executive power of the Republic was in fact, if not in theory, diffused and decentralized along tribal and personal lines which successfully

fell into balance under Qazi's primacy, based on his prestige, his personality, and his enjoyment of Soviet support. The fact that this makeshift creation functioned with such efficiency and equity was primarily owing to its able and enthusiastic leadership, particularly that of Qazi who had the good sense to relinquish regional authority to the tribes.

IX. MARCH

THE IRANIAN CASE

Not long after the Soviet and British 'invasion' of Iran in August 1941 and Reza Shah's abdication in September, the British Ambassador in Tehran, Sir Reader Bullard, using a draft provided by the British Foreign Office and approved by the Soviet Government, began negotiating a treaty with the Iranian Government to establish the legal basis of the dual 'occupation'.[1] After a number of amendments had been made to protect Iranian interests, the treaty was finally approved by the Majlis and was signed on 29 January 1942.[2] Among other things, the treaty affirmed that the presence of Allied troops in Iran did not constitute a 'military occupation' and would 'disturb as little as possible the administration and the security forces of Iran, the economic life of the country, the normal movements of the population and the application of Iranian laws and regulations'. Certain Soviet wartime actions, not to speak of ambitions, in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan clearly violated this section of the treaty. Another of its provisions, however, enabled Iran to bring a complaint to the Security Council of the United Nations in the spring of 1946; this was the assurance that all foreign military forces would leave Iranian soil by 2 March 1946. When Soviet troops in Azerbaijan had made no move by that date, the British Government, on 4 March, addressed a formal protest to the Soviet Union. Two days later the United States followed the same course. Shortly afterwards reports began to reach the western capitals that, far from withdrawing, the Soviet troops in Azerbaijan were being reinforced with armoured columns that were being deployed in the directions of Tehran and the Turkish and Iraqi borders. A note delivered in Moscow on 9 March reflected the grave concern of the United States, where it was beginning to be recognized that primary responsibility for the containment of Soviet expansion had shifted from London to

[1] Sir Reader Bullard, *The Camels Must Go* (London, 1961).
[2] G. Lenczowski, *Russia and the West in Iran* (Ithaca, NY, 1949), p. 175.

Washington. The hardening of the American attitude was apparent also in New York, where the Security Council was about to convene and where the Iranian Ambassador Hussein Ala, was mustering wide support for his country. As events moved towards a crisis the Soviet Union suddenly backed down with the announcement by Gromyko on 26 March that all Soviet troops would be out of Iran within five or six weeks '. . . unless unforeseen circumstances arise', and on 4 April the Iranian Prime Minister, Qavam as Sultaneh, and the Soviet Ambassador in Tehran, I. G. Sadchikov, concluded an agreement that confirmed the Soviet intention to remove its forces by 6 May, and announced that the terms of the agreement to form a joint Irano-Soviet oil company would be 'submitted to the fifteenth Majlis for its approval within seven months after March 24'. With regard to Azerbaijan, 'since it is an internal Iranian affair, peaceful arrangements will be made between the Government and the people of Azerbaijan'.[3] At that time very few Azerbaijanis and virtually no Kurds realized that the Soviet Union, in exchange for the prospect of an oil concession, had decided their fate in a sense contrary to the private assurances of the preceding year.

The Soviet oil plan was not new but a variant of a scheme brought forward in the autumn of 1944, when the Soviet Government demanded prospecting rights over most of northern Iran and a concession over a very wide area if they should request it. The Iranian Government referred to a cabinet decision not to consider any applications for oil concessions until the war ended, but they were attacked so fiercely by Soviet propaganda that the Prime Minister resigned. Frightened by the Soviet campaign, the Majlis promptly passed a law forbidding the granting or the discussion of oil concessions with foreign states or companies.

The way to an oil concession being blocked in 1945, the Soviet Union turned to the Azerbaijani and Kurdish separatist movements, and then in 1946 back again to the oil concession. From the Soviet point of view these were merely different paths to the same goal 'in the general direction of the Persian Gulf'. By mentioning oil in his agreement with Sadchikov, Qavam had probably violated Iranian law; but in exchange for his vaguely worded undertaking, he secured the removal of the instrument of

[3] *New York Times*, 6 Apr. 1946.

Soviet influence in Iran: the physical occupation of vital parts of the country.

IN TABRIZ

By March 1946 the Azerbaijan that was the centre of attention in Washington, London, New York, and Moscow was hardly known to include within its territorial claims a small Kurdish state occupying its southern and western extremities. In Mahabad, however, events were moving even faster than the Russians had expected. Shortly after the cabinet was formed, two prominent Kurdish party members, Muhammad Amin Sharafi and Khalil Khosravi, while in Tabriz on personal and party business, were pressed by Dr Samadov at the Russian Hospital to explain why the Kurds had proclaimed their independence and formed a Government without first having obtained Soviet permission. The Russians, not satisfied with the answer, asked Qazi to come to Tabriz to see Pishevari. In Tabriz Jafar Pishevari, head of the Azerbaijani Government, went to the shabby Grand Hotel to confer with the Kurdish President. Qazi's defence was simple; the Soviet political representative from Tabriz, Yermakov, had been aware of the Kurdish intentions before 22 January and had even witnessed the ceremony from his jeep parked near the Chwar Chira circle. Yermakov had already denied having authorized the creation of a Kurdish state, but Qazi's arguments were sufficiently compelling to satisfy General Atakchiov and to silence Pishevari for the time being. Qazi then returned to Mahabad to proceed with the consolidation of the Republic, the most essential element of which was the creation of a disciplined military force.

Not long after the cabinet was formed, towards the end of February 1946, there arrived in Mahabad two consignments of about 5,000 Soviet weapons including rifles, machine guns, and pistols of Brno and Colt manufacture. No tanks or artillery pieces had yet been delivered in spite of previous promises, but in their place the Russians provided 'tank destroyers', bottles of petrol equipped with wicks. In Mahabad most of the Soviet-supplied arms were temporarily stored in the cellar of the tobacco office, awaiting the formation of a Kurdish army. Another Soviet gift arrived a month later. This was a full set of band instruments to

play marches and the new Kurdish national anthem whose words had been composed shortly before by the poet 'Hazhar', and whose music, of mixed Iranian-Kurdish melody and western cadence, had been put together by two cabinet ministers, Manaf Karimi and Mahmud Valizadeh. The first verse and the refrain contained the expected glorification of motherland, flag, and leader (*Peshawa*), Qazi; but a later verse was more notable for proclaiming the territorial ambitions of the Republic:

Naftim awi zhiana
La Sert u Kermanshana
Baba Gurgur dazane
La Muslish da hamana

Our oil is water of life,
From Sert [Turkey] to Kermanshah,
Baba Gurgur [Kirkuk] knows,
In Mosul we also have it.

THE BARZANIS AT MAHABAD

A vital part of the Kurdish army was already at hand. Although Barzani leaders had visited Mahabad a number of times since crossing into Iran in November 1945, the bulk of their 10,000 tribesmen, women, and children had settled in the area to the northwest extending towards the Iraqi frontier from Khaneh to Ushnavieh, while an advance guard had been quartered at the Dehbokri village, Qum Qaleh, on the Chom i Sauj Bulaqeh ten kilometres north of Mahabad. In early March Mulla Mustafa brought the greater portion of his best fighting men with their families to Mahabad town until about 3,000 were assembled there. He then established his military headquarters at a place now occupied by the Jahan Noma Hotel. One of the houses of the town taken over by the Barzanis was a residence that had been built by an American missionary and had been left unoccupied by 'Miss Dahl Khanum' Habibi, who had moved with her family to Tehran in August 1945, when she saw the pro-Russian trend of Kurdish nationalism and felt that her presence in Mahabad might prove embarrassing to Qazi Muhammad. In the Mahabad region the 3,000 Barzanis behaved well; they mixed little with the local

population, for neither in culture nor speech had the two types of Kurds much in common. Mulla Mustafa meanwhile undertook to convince the Russians, against their inclinations, that he was their man. Though he was careful not to cross Qazi, he made it known to a few of his friends that he feared the President was intriguing with the Russians against him. Some who were there at the time also remember that Mulla Mustafa used to argue skilfully that Soviet support assured the existence of a Kurdish Republic. Though one or two dissenters argued that the United States and Britain would not recognize the permanence of a Soviet-influenced Kurdish state, Mulla Mustafa would not be convinced. A few months later, however, a comment he made showed that he realized where and why the fate of the Republic had really been settled.

TABRIZ AGAIN

It might have been supposed that Qazi's talk with Pishevari in February had established the right of the Kurds of Azerbaijan to self-government; but the Azerbaijani Turks still held that Iranian Kurdistan should enjoy only semi-autonomy within their autonomy. In late March Soviet sources in Tabriz sent Qazi word that he and other Kurdish leaders should come to Tabriz. They were not told, however, that they were being summoned to meet the Minister of Education of Soviet Azerbaijan, Mirza Ibrahimov, and General Qoliov, from Baku. So the President, Qazi Muhammad, the Prime Minister, Haji Baba Shaikh, the Minister of War, Saif i Qazi, the Minister of Education, Manaf Karimi, the Minister of Health, Sayyid Muhammad Ayubian, Abdullah Qaderi, Chief of the Mamash Qaderi tribe, Kaka Suwar of the Mangur, and Kaka Hamza Amir al Ashairi of the Mamash found themselves in Tabriz, where Ibrahimov preached to them the advantages of Kurdish union with Azerbaijan until such time as the Kurds in Iraq and Turkey could be liberated to make possible the formation of a larger, more viable Kurdish state. Who, asked Ibrahimov, had given the Kurds permission to establish their own Government? The reply, as before, was that the whole matter had been cleared with Yermakov. The Russians were insistent, however, to the point that Qazi weakened and finally

declared in his customary metaphoric manner: 'A sick man must do as the doctor requires.' Saif i Qazi and Haji Baba Shaikh did not agree. They pointed out with logic that 'you Russians are more advanced than we and therefore we have obeyed you. If, however, you insist on turning us over to people no more progressive than ourselves we should have no reason to obey them. If it is a question of the Kurds, in their weakness, joining a larger state, why should we not reunite with Iran?'

The Russians asked the delegation to wait twenty-four hours while instructions were sought from Baku. Within the appointed time, the reply was received: the Kurds could have their own Government. It was during this visit to Tabriz that the Russians presented Qazi with a black sedan of non-Russian manufacture. Not long afterwards he was obliged to rush from Mahabad to Miandoab to prevent a clash between the Kurds of the Shaikh Aghai clan and local Azerbaijani Turks from developing into a large-scale conflict. This was not the last dispute between partisans of the two Republics, nor was Ibrahimov's trip to Tabriz the last time that Soviet pressure was applied in favour of unification and negotiation.

A MAHABAD ARMY

Shortly after the appointment of Saif i Qazi as Minister of War, steps were taken to organize a Kurdish army apart from the Barzanis and the Iranian tribal levies that were presumably available to defend the Republic. It has always been a characteristic of the Kurdish nationalist movement that those urban elements which have been most militant in their pronouncements against, and demands on, the central governments have also been the least capable of defying such governments and forcing concessions from them. The tribes, on the other hand, have at times possessed the means of revolt and secession, but have proved uneven and unreliable in their nationalist sympathies, which they are apt to confuse with feudal or tribal autonomy. Hence the leaders of the Kurdish Republic were determined to create a military force subject to their discipline and dedicated to their own modern brand of nationalism and statehood.

Qazi himself, together with Saif i Qazi, designated the com-

missioned officers of the new army, relying mainly on the town and immediate region of Mahabad. Tribal chiefs took honorary ranks and remained with their tribesmen, neither receiving salaries nor always recognizing the higher authority of Mahabad. The Mahabad 'army' at full strength had some 70 officers on active duty, assisted by 40 n.c.o.s, and 1,200 *sarbaz* or privates. Many of the officers were assigned to administrative duties in the Government. With the Mahabad forces and later at the front with the Barzanis were twelve young men who had been in the Iraqi army[4] and who had accompanied Mulla Mustafa or otherwise defected to the Kurdish Republic. Several of these were Barzanis and others were liaison officers who had been appointed by Nuri Said and Majid Mustafa to discuss Kurdish demands in northern Iraq. Of these Colonel Mustafa Khoshnao and Captain Muhammad Mahmud soon became useful as training advisers, while the others functioned as commanders of Kurdish forces on the southern front.

During the month of March Captain Salahaddin Kazimov of the Soviet army arrived in Mahabad to help organize and train the national Kurdish army. He was soon appointed colonel in the new army and nicknamed by his Kurdish friends 'Kakagha'. Training in Mahabad was rudimentary but varied. In addition to drill, rifle and machine gun practice, and instruction on the use of grenades, some of the recruits were taught how to drive trucks, of which ten of Soviet origin had been bought from the Soviet Trade Commission in Tabriz and ten old U.S. manufactured army vehicles and ten jeeps had been donated by the Russians.

On the last day of March, *Kurdistan* newspaper announced the appointment of four Kurdish generals: Muhammad Husain Saif i Qazi, Amr Khan Shikak, Hama Rashid Khan Baneh, and Mulla Mustafa Barzani. Mulla Mustafa was by far the most formidable of the four in terms of the forces he could put into the field—about 1,200 disciplined and skilled fighting men. Amr Khan Shikak, then about sixty-five years old, was the grand old man of northern Iranian Kurdistan with a personal following of about 700 horsemen. Hama Rashid Khan had presumably earned his general's rank during skirmishes with Iranian forces in the Saqqiz area from 1942 to 1944, though he had only 200

[4] See Appendix VII, p. 136, for list.

men with him in 1946. He was not in Mahabad at the time he was 'commissioned'.

Other military ranks were conferred sparingly. Only Kakagha, Nanavazadeh of Mahabad, and several ex-Iraqi army officers received colonels' commissions, while the new Chief of Staff, young Jafar Karimi of the Mahabad Dehbokri, was only a major, as were half a dozen other influential individuals. Members of the Central Committee of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan, most of whom were in the cabinet, wore honorary Lt-Colonels' badges when they dressed up in their Russian-style uniforms, for early in March Major Muhammad Amin Sharafi had gone to Tabriz to obtain cloth for uniforms, as well as buttons, badges, and insignia bearing the Kurdish emblem. By April nearly all persons connected with the Kurdish Government or army could at appropriate times appear looking like Soviet officers in khaki with boots, riding breeches, and caps. Many tribal chiefs affected the same uniform. It was indeed a busy and prosperous time for the tailors of Mahabad, Rezaieh, and of course Tabriz where the more numerous Azerbaijani forces were fitted out.

While March saw the conception of the Kurdish military organization, several advance parties of tribal character had already taken up positions towards the south in the Sardasht area which was garrisoned at the time by understrength Iranian army forces. During the second week of March a small scale armed clash occurred when Zero Beg and some of his Herkis, supported by local tribes, raided several villages in which the Iranian army had outposts. The assault, in which some 200 Kurds participated, was badly conceived and had not been approved by the Government. It failed. A month later, on 21 April, the Sardasht garrison was reinforced by a column of Iranian soldiers; but by that time the Kurdish front had also been reinforced.

X. APRIL

THE INTERNATIONAL SETTING

DURING the month of April 1946 the Iranian Government together with much of the world was looking with scepticism tempered by hope towards the date in early May set for the evacuation of Soviet troops from Azerbaijan. Meanwhile the Security Council remained seized of the Iranian question in spite of the contention of the Soviet delegate Mr Gromyko that his Government had reached an accord with the Iranian Government which removed the basis of the Iranian complaint. Mr Gromyko continued to insist that the Soviet promise to evacuate Iran five or six weeks after 24 March was unconditional, though in Tehran it was clearly understood that the Soviet troops remaining in Iran were being used as a lever to obtain some kind of Soviet oil concession in the north and to secure a measure of Iranian recognition of a special status for Azerbaijan. The agreement of 4 April between the Soviet Ambassador in Tehran and the Iranian Prime Minister was so vague and the date of departure of the Soviet troops was still so uncertain that neither party wished to rock the boat.

THE KURDISTAN–AZERBAIJAN TERRITORIAL DISPUTE

In Kurdistan meanwhile the clock could not be set back to a pre-autonomy situation. Kakagha was busy training an army designed to hold Kurdish gains after the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Azerbaijan. Mahabad's army barracks, which had been partly destroyed at the time of the Soviet occupation in 1941, were restored to house the army of the Republic. Early in the month of April, 1,200 Barzanis were supplied with the best of the rifles, pistols, machine guns, and grenades from the stocks provided by the Russians. Already possessing tactical skill forged during the revolts of 1943 and 1945 in northern Iraq and subject to the iron discipline of their chiefs, the Barzanis were held to

be worth more than the ragged cavalries of the Iranian Kurdish tribes or the raw recruits of the embryonic army of the Republic. During April they moved south to take up positions above Saqqiz, where an Iranian army garrison had likewise been reinforced. Meanwhile the great Shikak and Herki tribes from the mountains west of Rezaieh were being gathered to move south in support of the Barzanis' right flank anchored on the Iraqi frontier to the west.

At this time Qazi was plagued by the threat of a fatal clash between autonomous Kurds and autonomous Azerbaijanis, the latter continuing to claim that Kurdistan should be subject to them. Azerbaijani forces had already seized control of several urban centres located on the ethnic frontier between the two peoples. These were the large town (35,000) of Khoi northwest of Lake Rezaieh, overwhelmingly Azerbaijani, but flanked on the west by Kurdish mountain dwellers; Shapur, thirty miles farther south, with a population of about 12,000 more Turk than Kurd; Rezaieh, due west of the centre of the lake, with a population of 55,000, predominantly Turk but including 8,000 Christians and contending, in the minds of some Kurds, with Mahabad for the seat of Government; and Miandoab, a town of 8,000 souls a few miles southeast of the lake, largely Azerbaijani but considered by the Kurds to be at least partially theirs. As though seeking a natural geographical line, the Kurds contended that the ninety-mile-long Lake Rezaieh should be their frontier, even though the towns of Rezaieh and Shapur west of the lake admittedly contained a large majority of Azerbaijani Turks. Although at this time it could not be established that the Turki-speaking inhabitants of these four towns wished to be a part of Kurdistan, there were among them some who preferred the relatively relaxed and conservative atmosphere of the Mahabad Republic to the revolutionary and slogan-ridden Communism of Tabriz.

THE KURDISH–AZERBAIJANI TREATY

In mid-April Soviet advisers in Tabriz, Rezaieh, and Mahabad took steps to bring the two Governments together to negotiate their differences. The venue was Tabriz and the Kurdish representatives were Qazi Muhammad, Muhammad Husain Saif i

Qazi, Sayyid Abdullah Gilani, Amr Khan Shikak, Rashid Beg Herki, Zero Beg Herki, and Qazi Muhammad Khezri of Ushnavieh. The composition of this delegation, in which the Soviet Consul Hashimov had a part, was an admission that the territorial question meant most to the Kurdish tribes west of Lake Rezaieh. Across the table the Azerbaijani Republic was represented by Jafar Pishevari, Haji Mirza Ali Shabestari, Sadiq Padagan, Salamullah Javid, and Muhammad Beria.

According to Kurdish sources, the Treaty of Friendship and Alliance that was signed on 23 April 1946 was imposed by the Soviet officials who occupied a near-by room during the negotiations. The Kurds received little Soviet encouragement in their claim to all the area west of the lake. Again the Soviets argued that permanent frontiers could not be fixed until the Kurds of Turkey and Iraq were united with those of Iran. The final agreement,[1] as it turned out, ignored the essentials of the territorial dispute:

Article 1. Wherever it is deemed necessary by both parties, official representatives will be accredited in each other's territory.

Article 2. In areas of Azerbaijan where Kurds out-number Turks, Kurds will be appointed to government departments, and vice versa.

Article 3. The two Governments will form a Joint Economic Committee to deal with economic problems and the decisions of the Committee will be observed by the heads of both states.

Article 4. In time of need a military alliance will be formed and necessary mutual help will be given.

Article 5. Any negotiations conducted with the Iranian Government should be carried out with the approval of both states.

Article 6. The Government of Azerbaijan will take steps to contribute to the cultural and linguistic progress of the Kurds living in its territory, and vice versa.

Article 7. Anyone who tries to disturb the historic friendship and alliance of the two peoples or anyone who tries to undermine their national unity will be punished by both nations.

To the treaty were affixed the signatures of all the delegates mentioned above. Although the Kurds who signed had been displeased with the attitude of their Russian friends, there seemed to be nowhere else to turn. In Tehran there was consternation when it was learned that two Iranian provinces had signed a treaty

[1] Najafqoli Pesian, *Az Mahabadeh Khunin ta Karanehayeh Rudeh Aras* (from blood-stained Mahabad to the banks of the Aras), Tehran, Dec. 1949.

providing for a formal exchange of representatives as between sovereign states. Later, however, Qavam was able to take advantage of Azerbaijani willingness to ignore the spirit of Article 5 by concluding an agreement with Tabriz that lacked full Kurdish approval. The Iranian Government also profited from the unresolved territorial claims of the two provinces which engendered Kurdish resentment of Tabriz more intense than that felt towards Tehran.

One article of the treaty, however, was weighed and welcomed by Qazi at a time when Soviet troops were about to remove their protective shield from the area. That article was the fourth one which called for mutual military support in the event of war. On his return to Mahabad, Qazi summoned a group of military and civilian leaders and asked them to swear to defend Azerbaijan if it were attacked. He could only hope that the Azerbaijanis on their part were sincere in their pledge to protect Kurdistan; not that he held their military prowess in high esteem, but because he recognized that the Communist-led Government at Tabriz was ideologically as well as physically near to the Soviet Union. A certain satisfaction could be derived from the conclusion of a military alliance between Kurdistan and a state whose survival was believed to be guaranteed by the influence of a great power.

STUDENTS FOR THE USSR

April was also the month the Kurdish students were sent to Baku. It will be recalled that in November 1,200 rifles had reached Mahabad; in December the urgently needed printing press had arrived and been put to use; then about a month after the Republic was proclaimed some eight truckloads of light military equipment had reached Mahabad and five more had arrived two weeks later. Time and again the Kurds asked for the tanks or at least the artillery needed to bring their troops nearer to equality with Iranian units to the south. The Russians never refused these requests outright; in fact it was specifically stated that eight cannon would soon be sent; but they never were. With regard to the tanks, the Russians insisted on the advantages of old Iranian or United States models so that the Russian hand would be less obvious; but these tanks never arrived either. They probably would not have been decisive in any case.

Although financial support for the Republic was mentioned at Baku, no Soviet funds were ever forthcoming. One promise, however, was kept in its entirety, and this was the one most beneficial to Soviet long-range interests; that is, the training of Kurdish youth in the USSR. Baghirov had said at Baku that as many students could be sent to school in Baku as the Kurds desired. He could afford such generosity, knowing that the rudimentary educational background of the young Kurds would limit the number qualified to attend a Russian military or other college.

In Mahabad during March and April Qazi Muhammad, assisted by his Minister of Education, Manaf Karimi, began to search for prospective Kurdish officers from among the students of the town. Educational standards were soon lowered so that any boy who had completed the sixth grade was eligible for selection. The total thereby could have been as high as 600. In mid-April when a first group of forty had been selected the fathers of several boys who had been passed over complained and were not entirely satisfied when the alternative of the military high school in Tabriz was suggested.

By late April the group of forty Kurdish students reached Tabriz having paid their own expenses that far. Fifteen days later a second group of twenty followed them. From Tabriz the Russians took over and transported the boys to Baku by rail to what was called a military college but which in fact provided only primary and secondary school courses and military drill. The Commandant of the school was a General Malchanov and the Supervisor of the Kurdish students was Colonel Husain Hajiov.

The Kurdish boys were given uniforms and divided into classes according to their abilities. All their expenses were paid and they were given extra rations. They were not openly indoctrinated with Communism but the accomplishments of the Soviet Union and Stalin's devotion to the Kurds formed part of the daily diet. Kurdish nationalist doctrines were also preached. Although the Kurdish boys mixed well with the Azerbaijanis of Baku, a traditional hostility lessened the amity of their relations with the 250 students from Iranian Azerbaijan.

Of the sixty students sent to Baku, a few did not return: Sultan Utamishi, who is now a doctor in Baku; Sayyid Karim Ayubi, who also finished his studies and remained in Baku as a plastic surgeon; Rahman Garmiani, now in Baku; Hasan Hesami, a doctor now in Iraq; Rahim Saif i Qazi, now in the USSR; and a youth called Gilawezh (Kurdish for the planet Venus) who in 1961 was broadcasting anti-Iranian propaganda in the Kurdish language from East Berlin. Another boy and a girl, Hamid Khosravi and Hajar Zandi, were recruited in Rezaich for intelligence training by Jafarov. Three other high school boys from Mahabad had previously received scholarships at Baku University from among those offered the year before to the Iranian Government. These were Rahman Halavi, Khosro Zolfaqari, and Mustafa Shalmashi. Only the last is still in the Soviet Union.

The sixty who went north in April 1946 were presumably just the first of the many who were to receive Russian education and return as pro-Soviet 'cadres' to dominate the Kurdish civil service and army. A second group, however, was overtaken by events and never reached the Soviet Union. It would have been a strange assemblage in any case since the Mahabad officials had decided to send in a sense as hostages the sons of tribal leaders, whose loyalty to the Mahabad Republic was in some cases beginning to wear thin. But the tribal chiefs improvised countless excuses for the reluctance of their offspring to undertake the trip to Baku. Some were needed at home to administer tribal property, others were unprepared intellectually, and others were quite willing to leave 'after the harvest'. Such delays were successful; the scheme came to nothing and Kurdish tribal leaders faced the last months of the Republic relatively free from intimidation by their Soviet benefactors. Meanwhile the sixty Kurdish boys stayed on at Baku into the summer unaware that their exciting careers were leading them nowhere.

QAHRAWA

By 29 April the reinforced Iranian army garrison in Saqqiz was ready to show its strength in order to impress hostile forces, raise the morale of Iranian troops, and gain the support of several potentially pro-Iranian tribes in the region. From Miandoab a road cuts southwest into the foothills to Mahabad. Due south another road follows the valley of the Tatahu stream forty miles to Bukan and then continues south another thirty miles to Saqqiz

whence it eventually reaches Sanandaj and Kermanshah. At intervals of a few miles along the well-watered valley between Miandoab and Saqqiz are found the rich villages of the Ilkhanizadeh Dehbokri of Bukan and of the Faizullah Begi nearer Saqqiz.

Early in the morning of 24 April Colonel Kasra, the Iranian Commander at Saqqiz, and about 600 of his troops including cavalry and artillery support began to march north into 'enemy' territory. The music of a band set the step of the procession. By noon the column had moved eight miles north to the small village of Qahrabad, 'Qahrawa' to the Kurds, where the waters of a cool stream form a grove of green in a setting of barren hills. There the soldiers put down their packs and rifles, and sat down to a picnic.

For the Barzanis the Iranian sortie was a threat to their positions west of the road above Saqqiz. Since the Iranian march had been well publicized, the Barzanis had already placed themselves in ambush. Suddenly rifles opened fire on the Iranian troops from all sides at close quarters, and soon 21 soldiers had been killed, 17 wounded, and 40 taken prisoner. The remainder were chased back to Saqqiz.

Later that afternoon, as the Iranian prisoners reached Mahabad in open trucks, they came upon a public ceremony which turned into a celebration. While in Kurdish hands they were well treated, for they were looked upon as handsome prizes rather than as hated enemies. Not long afterwards the officers were turned over to their compatriots at Saqqiz and the soldiers were sent north to Tabriz, whence they were released to return to Tehran. Qahrawa was a classic Kurdish ambush rather than a battle. It proved little in terms of real military strength in the area. The Iranian troops had been routed because of their untenable position, not because they were afraid to fight. Nevertheless the 'Kurdish victory' provided a bracing tonic for the small Republic.

XI. MAY

TOBACCO

By May it was apparent that a new dynamism had seized Mahabad. The cabinet, in essence the Central Committee of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan, was at work individually and collectively during long hours of the day and night in a sustained activity unfamiliar to its upper-class members. They were now filling government positions for salaries that could hardly explain their unprecedented zeal. Their almost daily meetings were presided over by Qazi, though he was President of the Republic, not the Prime Minister. When the Government was formed, the party offered him a salary of 3,000 tomans or about $700 a month, but he would accept no payment for his services. The cabinet ministers received only 280 tomans or $65 a month. Not that the economic conditions of the Republic or its treasury were seriously strained, for the previous year's crops had been good and a number of expensive items, such as arms and ammunition, the printing press, and some motor transport, had been provided without payment by the Soviet Union. Taxes were still being collected by ex-officials of the Iranian Ministry of Finance under the direction of Ahmad Ilmi; and all such funds went into the party-government treasury which was in the safe keeping of Ilmi and the Shirkat i Taraqi, an official trading company which controlled the external commercial transactions of the Republic and included on its board the Russian contact, Muhammad Amin Moini, Minister of Interior.

The most notable commercial venture during the time of the Republic was the sale of the 1945 tobacco crop which in early 1946 was stored in the warehouses of the Tobacco Monopoly at Mahabad. The Iranian government monopoly had paid for 10 per cent of the tobacco but made no move towards completing the purchase, so in late April Qazi sent Muhammad Amin Sharafi to Tabriz where he informed the Russians through Dr Samadov that Kurdish tobacco was available for sale. Dr Samadov listened with sympathy but advised a cautious and correct approach to

the problem. The Kurdish officials should first send a telegram to Tehran requesting payment for the balance of the crop. A copy of the telegram should be sent to Mahabad's representative in the Iranian Majlis, Sadr i Qazi. If no reply were received within five days, a Soviet Commercial Officer from Tehran named Agabegov would be sent to Kurdistan to discuss tobacco purchases.

Thus it was that at the beginning of May the entire Kurdish tobacco supply was bought for the sum of about $800,000, paid in Iranian currency and Russian goods such as sugar, cotton cloth, glassware, and china. Though the price paid was lower than that fixed by the Iranian Tobacco Monopoly, the total proceeds were greater than they would have been under the old system since accurate weighing revealed a larger quantity of tobacco than had been registered by Iranian officials. Furthermore no extra-legal commissions were required to complete a commercial deal with the Soviet Trade Commission. Finally, the 10 per cent that had already been paid by Tehran was kept in Mahabad and was never recovered by the Central Government. A few days before Soviet troops left Azerbaijan for good, a fleet of trucks converged on Mahabad from Miandoab and Tabriz, and were loaded by Kurdish porters. Within forty-eight hours 1,875,000 kg of tobacco had been taken across the Aras river. The Soviet army was to follow very soon.

IRAN AND AZERBAIJAN

According to Radio Moscow all Soviet troops left Iran on 9 May, but this could not be verified by neutral observers until several days later. The Soviet evacuation had been conditional on the establishment of a satisfactory relationship between the 'autonomous' Azerbaijani Government and the Iranian authorities in Tehran as well as on the eventual ratification by the Iranian Majlis of the promise of the oil concession in the north. The Russians realized that once the pressure exerted by their occupation had been removed, they stood little chance of obtaining approval of an oil concession unless the Azerbaijan question had first been solved. The Prime Minister, Qavam, had made it clear that the election of a Majlis would be delayed until the authority of the Central Government had been re-established throughout Iran.

Although pressures from the United Nations and the western

powers had seriously interfered with Soviet plans for Iran, the situation from the Russian point of view was far from hopeless; for the Tudeh Party in Tehran and elsewhere combined with a solid block of presumably pro-Soviet representatives from Azerbaijan might yet have been able to carry the whole of Iran into the Soviet orbit. These were doubtless among the considerations that caused the Soviet Union to desire the expeditious conclusion of an agreement between the Government of Azerbaijan and Qavam. On 28 April Pishevari arrived at the Iranian capital where he spent the next fifteen days negotiating on behalf of both Azerbaijan and the autonomous Kurdish region to which it was allied by treaty. The basis of the negotiations was a seven-point programme that had been proposed by Qavam on 22 April and which, particularly in its insistence on Tehran's right to appoint army and gendarmerie commanders in Azerbaijan, would have amounted to a virtual capitulation on the part of the Tabriz Government.

On 13 May Qavam issued a statement blaming the Azerbaijani delegation for the breakdown of negotiations and was reported to have made the pointed remark that 'since according to law and the accord reached with the Soviet Government concerning northern oil, the 15th Majlis should meet within seven months of the signature of the accord, general elections should take place as soon as possible. I expect the Azerbaijani representatives to provide the necessary facilities . . .' Pishevari returned to Tabriz on 14 May and issued his own version of the suspension of discussions. Noting that the Azerbaijani Government had not appointed Ministers of Foreign Affairs or of War, he reaffirmed Azerbaijan's desire to remain within the Iranian nation. But, he stated, Qavam had demanded 'unconditional surrender', and, surprisingly, had dragged questions of oil and elections into the scene. But the Soviet Union, as well as both parties to the dispute, had reasons for desiring a negotiated settlement. Therefore talks were opened in Tabriz later in May with the Iranian side represented this time by Qavam's pro-Soviet friend, Muzaffar Firuz.

THE BIG OFFENSIVE

After Qahrawa, where Kurdish forces had routed an Iranian column without casualties, membership of the Democratic

Party of Kurdistan took a new turn upwards and Kurdish political leaders as well as tribal units converging on the southern front were emboldened to consider a military drive southwards towards Kermanshah to 'liberate' the rest of Iranian Kurdistan and attach it to the Republic. On 20 May an Iranian reconnaissance platoon led by Captain Khosravi, a Kurd from Sanandaj, was attacked by a group of Barzanis as it scouted beyond the Saqqiz defence perimeter. Captain Khosravi and two soldiers were killed and the morale of Iranian forces in the area dropped still farther.

By the beginning of June Iranian army units stationed in Saqqiz were commanded personally by the Chief of Staff of the Iranian army, General Razmara, who had at his disposal in the immediate area the equivalent of three battalions or about 5,000 men, supported by obsolescent tanks, artillery, and aircraft. Kurdish effectives at and near the front available for an attack towards the south were composed of about 13,000 armed men strung out between Saqqiz and the Iraqi frontier. Since this force represented the maximum military resources of the Republic, its composition reveals something of tribal strengths at that time. First, however, it should be understood that Kurdish fighting tactics and traditions had an important bearing on the offensive potential of the Kurdish forces. As in Europe until the nineteenth century, the idealized Kurdish warrior has usually been a mounted man carrying the weapon of his times. Travellers from the west used to make much of the brilliant horsemanship of Kurdish tribesmen playing at battle with clashing lances and wheeling horses. After 1880, however, with the introduction of the Martini rifle, mounted warfare became obsolete, though as elsewhere in the world popular awareness of this fact lagged behind reality. A Kurdish cavalry charge could still terrify an ill armed or badly organized force, but it could not prevail against trained infantry carrying repeating rifles and concealed by the rugged terrain of Kurdistan. Moreover the horse that carried a man into battle against the enemy could all too easily carry him in retreat. Still, these were times of transition. Cavalry charges had been used effectively only a few years earlier by Hama Rashid Khan. Perhaps there was still merit in the old ways.

A tribal inventory indicates that most of the Kurdish forces assembled south of Mahabad in 1946 could be classified as cavalry. It does not follow, however, that these men would fight

only from horses, for it was assumed that in appropriate circumstances they would dismount and take advantage of natural cover. But the Kurdish cavalry was by no means a disciplined, tried, and reliable force. Much would depend on how the battle was moving at a given time and the quality of individual leadership.

It was widely recognized at the time that the Barzanis constituted the chief Kurdish force to be reckoned with. After years of skirmishing with their neighbours and ambushing Ottoman and Iraqi army units, the Barzanis were masters of mountain warfare. They could remain motionless in concealment until an entire enemy force had moved into their ambush. They had also improvised cunning siege tactics against isolated police posts without foolishly exposing their men to direct enemy fire from behind the walls. In keeping casualties low lies the secret of success in Kurdish warfare; for the willingness of tribesmen to join a military venture depends upon the probability that casualties will be light and gains morally and materially satisfactory. It is also characteristic of Kurdish tribes that they usually cannot operate effectively more than one tribal area's distance from their homes, or perhaps fifty miles. The Barzanis, capably led by their shaikhs and by ex-officers of the Iraqi army, were an exception to this rule when they took up their positions on the Saqqiz front.

By mid-May Kurdish forces facing south could be listed roughly as follows, starting with the northernmost tribes:

Barzanis under Mulla Mustafa	1,200 infantry
Barzanis under Shaikh Ahmad (not at the front)	900 infantry
Jalalis and Milanis	400 cavalry
Shikaks under Amr Khan	800 cavalry
Shikaks under Tahir Khan, son of Simko	500 cavalry
Herkis under Rashid Beg and Begzadehs under Nuri Beg	1,000 cavalry
Herkis under Zero Beg	700 infantry
Followers of Shaikh Abdullah Gilani's family under Sayyid Fahim	200 cavalry
Zarza tribesmen under Musa Khan	300 cavalry
Qarapapagh (Turki) under Pasha Khan and Khosravi Khan	500 cavalry
Mamash of Kaka Abdullah Qaderi faction	400 cavalry
Mamash under Kaka Hamza Nalos Amir al Ashairi	500 cavalry

Piran under Muhammad Amin Agha and Qarani Agha	300 cavalry
Mangur under Abdullah Bayazidi	300 cavalry
Mangur under Salim Agha Ojaq	200 cavalry
Mangur under Ali Khan and Ibrahim Salari	400 cavalry
Sardasht Gawurk under Kak Ala	200 cavalry
Mahabad Gawurk under Bayazid Aziz Agha	300 cavalry
Saqqiz Gawurk under Ali Javanmardi, Mamand Agha, and Haji Ibrahim Agha	400 cavalry
Miscellaneous Sardasht tribes	500 cavalry
Suesni tribe	100 cavalry
Mahabad Dehbokri under Jafar Karimi	400 cavalry
Bukan Dehbokri under the Ilkhanizadeh Aghas	500 cavalry
Faizullah Begis of Bukan and Saqqiz	800 cavalry
Saqqiz Bedaghi family	200 cavalry
Miscellaneous Mahabad and Shahindezh tribes	300 cavalry
Followers of Ilama Rashid Khan Baneh	300 cavalry
Recruits from the Javanrud and Auroman areas south of the Republic	150 cavalry
Total:	12,750

These tribal forces needed a supply system to provide food and ammunition, and in this the Mahabad regular army proved useful. To each tribal group was assigned an officer whose duties, in addition to the transmission of military instructions, included the provision of adequate food supplies. Thus the Republic overcame the most disruptive factor in large-scale tribal movements, i.e. the foraging which often led to looting.

NEGOTIATIONS

By May 3 Major-General Razmara had arrived at the Saqqiz front to take command of the reinforced units of the Iranian army and, if feasible, to negotiate with Kurdish representatives to maintain the truce and keep supply lines open. At that time a joint Azerbaijani-Kurdish delegation was in Saqqiz discussing frontier problems with the local commander. Kurdish members of the delegation were Lt-Colonel Izzat Abdul Aziz of Iraq, Major Ibrahim Salah, and the Kurdish Chief of Staff Jafar Karimi of the Mahabad Dehbokri. Azerbaijani members were

Ibrahim Alizadeh, Khalil Azarbadagan, and Hasan Jawdat. Several days earlier, Jafar Karimi had arranged for the temporary opening of the road from Saqqiz to the Iranian garrisons at Baneh and Sardasht; but the Iranian side wanted a written agreement to guarantee this supply route. On 3 May such an agreement was signed with the understanding that it was subject to ratification by the Government in Mahabad before it became effective. The agreement provided for the withdrawal of Kurdish forces four kilometres from Saqqiz and three kilometres from the road to Sardasht, for a cease-fire and the detail of permanent Kurdish representatives to Saqqiz town. Although the Iranian forces undertook not to advance towards the north, the other terms favoured them. Hence it could have been foreseen that the Mahabad Government would refuse to ratify the treaty. Although the Kurds might have been flattered by the degree of autonomy implied in their negotiation of a frontier agreement with the Iranian army commander, leaders of the Republic had no intention of pulling back the forces that were building up for the attack towards Sanandaj.

IRANO-AZERBAIJANI AGREEMENT

Meanwhile in late May and early June Pishevari and Firuz were busy haggling over Qavam's ten points of 22 April in search of the basis of a settlement between the Central and Azerbaijani Governments. During this period the Azerbaijani official position regarding the autonomy of the province was reversed in an effort to combat the Iranian Ambassador Ala's attempts at the United Nations to keep the Azerbaijani case on the agenda. Suddenly Tabriz officials and newspapers began insisting that Azerbaijan had always been an integral part of Iran, and that therefore its relationship with the Central Government was entirely an internal matter. The Soviet hand was apparent when Pishevari told senior Azerbaijani officials on 27 May that an agreement with the Central Government was essential 'because the Americans and British are using Azerbaijan to play tricks on our big friend, the USSR'.[1]

[1] Robert Rossow, Jr, 'The Battle of Azerbaijan 1946', *Middle East Journal*, Winter 1956.

Besides wishing to remove western pressure at the United Nations, the Soviet Union desired an agreement that would permit national elections in Iran which, it was expected, would produce a sizeable Tudeh contingent which, together with the Azerbaijani delegates, would ensure the ratification of a Soviet-Iranian oil agreement. Finally, on 13 June, a fifteen-point agreement was signed by Pishevari and Muzaffar Firuz. In it the Central Government retreated somewhat from Qavam's proposals of 22 April. Azerbaijan was brought back into the Iranian nation with its Majlis recognized as a provincial council. Azerbaijani conscripts were to become a part of the Iranian army; but the status of Azerbaijani officers and military contingents would be determined later by a joint commission including representatives of the Central Government and the Azerbaijani provincial council. A Governor-General of the province would be appointed by the Central Government from a list recommended by the provincial council. The only mention of Kurdistan was Article 13, which stipulated that the Government agreed that Kurds living in Azerbaijan would benefit from the terms of this agreement and, in accordance with Article 3 of the Government's decree of 22 April, they might teach the Kurdish language up to the fifth grade in elementary schools.

Many points of the agreement were vague, their implementation depending on who exercised *de facto* control in the province at a given time. Nothing was said about constituting a Mahabad provincial council nor was Kurdish autonomy recognized in any way. Now that Soviet troops were north of the Aras river and Azerbaijan was nominally a part of Iran with an Iranian-appointed Governor-General, Salamullah Javid, the Mahabad Government was left dangling, its status in no way assured. From this point onwards Kurdish leaders could only hope that somehow the influence of their Soviet friends and advisers would provide for the continued existence of the Republic. The Soviet attitude was to become clearer within the next few days. First, however, a military engagement was to be fought between reinforced Iranian units at Saqqiz and Barzani tribesmen above the town.

XII. JUNE

MAMASHAH

During the first half of June the Barzanis had been gradually edging up into the hills overlooking Saqqiz from the north and west where they adopted a threatening attitude towards traffic supplying the Iranian garrisons at Baneh and Sardasht. From these heights they also observed every movement of the reinforced units at Saqqiz itself. General Razmara, who had taken personal charge of the front, considered the Barzani stranglehold on Baneh and Sardasht intolerable, particularly after the Kurds began to snipe at traffic moving along the dusty valley road below. To take no action would seal the fate of the garrisons to the west and perhaps disastrously weaken the morale of the Saqqiz garrison and upset the calculations of the potentially pro-Iranian Kurdish tribes to the south. Thus it was determined that an assault in force should be made against the nearest height held by the Barzanis, a high hill known as Mamashah. In a harangue to his officers, General Razmara made it clear that the honour of the Iranian army, particularly of the officers, was at stake in the coming engagement.

Early on the morning of 15 June two battalions supported by artillery, tanks, and aircraft started bravely up the gentle slope to the foot of Mamashah. Both Kurdish and Iranian sources agree that the attack which followed was resolute and well executed. Both sides also agree that the Barzanis were virtually invisible in their homespun clothes against the buff hillside. One feature of the battle, however, remains a subject of disagreement. According to Kurdish sources the Mamashah heights were held at the beginning of the fight by thirteen Barzanis armed with rifles and machine-guns and led by the famous warrior, Khalil Khoshawi. During the course of battle, according to these sources, about thirty other Barzanis moved on to the hill to support the thirteen. According to Iranian army sources, however, the Barzani defences at Mamashah were manned by some 500–800 tribesmen. Both sources agree that the Barzanis displayed their usual cool nerve

until the range was extremely close. Khalil Khoshawi is said to have ordered his men to fire only within a range of 200 yards and to aim above the waist. By the end of the day the Iranian army had secured the heights and the small Barzani force was in retreat. The army had lost twenty-two killed and forty wounded. And although some Iranian sources suggest that a large number of Kurds were also killed in the battle, Kurdish sources insist that their only loss was Khalil Khoshawi himself who with ten bullet wounds was taken to the Russian Hospital in Tabriz where he died two days later. Mulla Mustafa was in Tabriz when word was brought to him that a fight was under way near Saqqiz. Slowly he named each of the thirteen men at Mamashah and predicted that Khalil Khoshawi would not leave the hill alive.

In view of the strong Kurdish position on the southern front in mid-June, an explanation must be found for their failure to counter-attack in force to relieve the Barzanis at Mamashah and to retake the heights. At the time, Colonel Mir Haj and a larger group of Barzanis occupied the hills to the west; but when the battle began he decided to hold his position against a possible attempt by the army to sweep west to outflank the entire Kurdish line. Other inhibiting factors were the lack of a unified front-line command and the previous issuance of orders that tribal units should maintain the defensive and not attack Iranian forces without permission from Mahabad. It seems that the Barzanis on the Mamashah heights had pressed farther forward than their instructions allowed and had trespassed on territory tacitly reserved for the Iranian army until a general offensive should be launched or the status of Kurdistan in relation to Iran should be established.

Mamashah as a battle was apparently satisfactory to both sides. The Iranian army was pleased to have attained its objective against what was believed to be a large, well-entrenched force of the formidable Barzanis, and its morale took a leap forward. The Kurds on the other hand were far from discouraged by the day-long resistance of some forty-five tribesmen who, with the loss of only one man, inflicted heavy casualties on a vastly superior force. After Mamashah what could stand in the way of the Kurdish offensive towards Sanandaj? The answer was not slow in coming.

CONCERNING THE OFFENSIVE

It had been the understanding of the Kurdish leaders that their Soviet advisers supported their designs on the southern part of Iranian Kurdistan, including the urban centre of Sanandaj, once called Senna. Asadov, the Russian political contact who remained in Mahabad as a Commercial Officer, was aware of Kurdish tribal movements toward the southern front and of the plan to launch an offensive sometime during June. The Kurdish Minister of Education, Manaf Karimi, and several colleagues were already on the way to Sardasht to sound the order for battle when the Soviet position abruptly changed and caused the dispatch of a second courier to reverse the instructions. It was not a coincidence that on 13 June an agreement had been signed in Tabriz between Pishevari and Muzaffar Firuz which mighthave opened the way for Soviet penetration of Iran on a national scale. A week after the treaty was signed and several days after Mamashah, the Soviet Consul in Rezaieh, Hashimov, hurried to the village of Sara north of Saqqiz where he met Qazi Muhammad, Mulla Mustafa, Amr Khan Shikak, Mir Haj, and Mustafa Khoshnao. In strong terms Hashimov gave warning that if the Kurds persisted in their pressure on the Iranian army below Saqqiz, they would be entering a British sphere of influence and might be considered a threat to vital British oil interests near Kermanshah. It will be recalled that the Russians themselves were at the time seeking an oil concession in what they considered to be their own sphere of influence. If the Kurds launched an offensive, Hashimov said, they could no longer count on Soviet support to restrain the Iranian army should it attack the Republic on some other front.

Qazi and his colleagues were impressed; but before the offensive could be abandoned consultations at government level were necessary. Hence Qazi returned to Mahabad and called together the tribal chiefs and the Central Committee of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan. After reviewing Hashimov's warning, Qazi told the group that he saw three possible alternatives: Kurdish forces could disobey the Russians and attack Sanandaj; they could obey the Russians and hold back; or they could submit to the Central Government of Iran. In favour of the second alternative were Soviet assurances that the Iranian army commander at

the front would soon receive orders from Tehran to let Kurdish forces occupy the frontier towns. After his exposition, which seemed weighted in favour of abandoning the offensive, Qazi left the decision to the group.

Haji Baba Shaikh, reversing his usual colourless performance as a powerless Prime Minister, spoke up in favour of the offensive. With only four tribal leaders and their men, he boasted, he could march to Sanandaj. If the Russians objected, the Kurdish Government need only reply that Haji Baba Shaikh and a few tribesmen had acted against instructions; and by that time all of Iranian Kurdistan would have been brought into the Republic.

The majority, however, saw the wisdom of moderation. Such a course did not damage their honour or fighting reputation since they could argue that in the long run it would be disastrous for the Republic to disregard the advice of its powerful protector. Some of the tribal leaders gathered in Mahabad that day perhaps saw an easy way out of a campaign for which their enthusiasm was beginning to wane. Not that there was any doubt in their minds but that the combined Kurdish forces could easily sweep through the Iranian units on the Saqqiz front and, with the help of sympathetic Kurdish tribes to the south, occupy the rest of Iranian Kurdistan. But then where would they be? Tabriz had reached an accommodation with Tehran legally reuniting Azerbaijan with the Iranian nation. Soviet troops remained north of the Aras river, and in any case were no more willing to support an unauthorized Kurdish offensive than were the Azerbaijani Turks of Tabriz. Further, a number of the chiefs of the northern tribes were beginning to doubt the wisdom of a decisive fight against Iranian forces towards whom they harboured little ill-feeling when the real enemy was close at hand in the form of the Communist-led Government at Tabriz. And it was understood by some of the Kurdish leaders who followed foreign radio broadcasts that the Iranian Government was not without powerful friends.

Now that the offensive was to be abandoned, the Mahabad Government decided to go a step farther and undertake truce talks with Iranian commanders on the southern front. How else could it be arranged for Iranian troops to be withdrawn from Saqqiz, Baneh, and Sardasht as the Soviet advisers had suggested? Forbearance and restraint could perhaps after all benefit the Republic.

DÉTENTE AND TRUCE

Manaf Karimi, the Minister of Education who had been intercepted on the road to Sardasht with revised orders calling off the offensive, continued on to Sardasht anyway. There he first advised the Kurdish forces not to attack; then he stayed on for two weeks visiting the Iranian officers stationed in the town, General Ayrom and Colonel Pezheskian. The atmosphere was friendly. The Iranian officers suggested that the Kurds and Iranians together should attack and remove the leftist Azerbaijani Government. While such a scheme had merit in the eyes of many Kurds, it was less attractive to members of the Central Committee of the party than it would have been to the northern tribal chiefs.

Meanwhile more serious negotiations were taking place between Qazi Muhammad and General Razmara in the village of Sara. Pressed by his Russian advisers to be pliant in dealing with Iranian officials, Qazi agreed to a truce which would open the supply road to Baneh and Sardasht and place three Kurdish representatives in Saqqiz: Haji Baba Shaikh, the poet Hazhar, and Haji Muhammad Agha. And in Saqqiz the three remained until the end, futilely awaiting Tehran's instructions to the Iranian garrison commander to relinquish the frontier towns to the Republic.

XIII. JULY

CONDITIONS IN THE REPUBLIC

PLANS for the offensive having been abandoned in mid-June, the month of July began in an atmosphere of misleading normality. Tribal units reinforcing the south, no longer animated by a militant purpose, had begun their leisurely trek back north, their presence beginning to weigh on the villagers who, in spite of supplies from Mahabad, were compelled to provide prolonged and costly hospitality. When the withdrawal of the tribal cavalry left gaps in the defensive line, the sturdy and reliable Barzanis were moved into their place. Besides other considerations prompting a dispersal of the tribal cavalry, the Government and its Soviet advisers were beginning to harbour doubts regarding the ultimate loyalty of several of the tribal chiefs; and by that time Mulla Mustafa had established his credentials both with the Republic and with the Russians. As inhabitants of Iraq the Barzanis felt no qualms about fighting Iranian army units or tribes, and for this reason they became the most useful and versatile force at the disposal of the Republic.

Meanwhile in Mahabad little had changed. Saif i Qazi had been appointed Governor of Mahabad under the Governor-General Javid who had been appointed to the post in Tabriz after the Pishevari–Firuz agreement of 13 May. As before, however, the important affairs of state were held tightly in the hands of Qazi aided by the Central Committee of the party. Funds available to the party were not excessive but were sufficient to meet normal daily expenses. Twenty thousand tomans (about $4,400) had been borrowed a few months before from the Tabriz Government and had been repaid in Kurdish sugar at the Miandoab refinery. Taxes and party dues were being collected, notably from tribal chiefs who were anxious to prove their loyalty to the régime. Levies were also made on a few rich families, such as the Shafai of Mahabad, who had opposed the Republic from its inception. The bazaar was thriving on the lucrative exchange of goods smuggled freely from Iraq and sold in Mahabad or Tabriz or even Tehran.

Ordinary citizens were free to move in and out of the Republic as they wished, but, naturally, prominent officials hesitated to risk falling into the hands of the Tehran authorities.

The nearly free economy of the Republic was matched by a more open political and social atmosphere than the people of Mahabad had previously experienced. Citizens were free to carry arms, and nearly every adult male did so. Citizens were free to listen to radio broadcasts from all parts of the world, and they took advantage of this privilege, which was not shared by the Azerbaijani Turks. The secret police who were an integral part of the Tabriz régime hardly existed in Mahabad. Captain Hamid Mazuji, chief of the Kurdish military police, during a year's service arrested only a handful of Qazi's personal enemies. Qazi himself did not believe that the Republic held in its territory elements capable of threatening its existence. Hence he ordered that citizens should not be bothered regarding their political inclinations. Qazi was on safe ground in his assessment, for the Republic was universally popular in Mahabad town and was assured of the support of the tribes so long as no much more powerful force existed in the area.

By July the Soviet-supplied printing press was busy with the daily newspaper *Kurdistan* and several weekly and monthly magazines, *Hawar*, *Agir*, and *Halala*, all of which were widely disseminated in Iranian and Iraqi Kurdistan. The press was also used to print official documents, receipts, and stationery. By that time primary school books in the Kurdish language were nearly completed and ready for printing. Meanwhile certain Iraqi Kurdish educational materials had been brought to Mahabad; but a slight difference in dialect detracted from their effectiveness. The Russian-supplied radio transmitter broadcast from 4 to 10 p.m., but its weak signal hardly reached the frontiers of the Republic and failed entirely to carry its message to the Kurdish citizens of Iraq and Turkey. Numerous requests to the Russians for more powerful equipment were unavailing. News material for both the press and radio was gleaned from a number of press and radio sources, but in practice broadcasts from near-by Russian transmitters were most often used. Press coverage and radio broadcasts contained almost no Communist material, but the Soviet army and leaders were glorified in the bad taste and exaggerated style of those Stalinist times.

SOVIET INFLUENCE AND POLITICAL TENDENCIES

Compared with Tabriz the Soviet presence in Mahabad was slight, even though portraits of Stalin were outnumbered only by those of Qazi Muhammad on the walls of offices and homes. In the Middle East, however, the proliferation of photographs is related less to popularity than to power, and the Kurds had known Soviet power for four years. Nevertheless, while Kurdish leaders had proclaimed countless times their devotion to the Soviet Union, their relationship with the Russians was correct and rather formal, and no one pretended that it was a relationship between equals.

While Kakagha was busy with the Mahabad army, Babayov and Asadov had helped organize the Democratic Party of Kurdistan. The Komala, it will be recalled, had functioned as a democratic and informal association with no political doctrine beyond that of Kurdish independence. The new Democratic Party, however, tried to emulate the more modern doctrinaire parties of the east and west though it was weak in political theory. Whether or not party members were fully aware of it, the Communist Party had been used as their organizational model. An example was the creation of a Women's Section headed by Qazi Muhammad's wife. There was also a Youth Section headed by Ali Khosravi which issued special cards to a membership that soon reached into most of the towns and villages of the Republic. The Youth Section was, of course, subject to the higher discipline of the Central Committee, but it retained its own separate identity and soon gained a reputation for militancy surpassing that of the parent organization.

In May it was found useful to broaden participation in the party hierarchy and to deal with complaints from the populace by forming a twelve-man Supreme Council.[1] The composition of the Supreme Council, like that of the Central Committee of the party, was upper class or tribal, and like the Committee was weighted in favour of the Mahabad area. The Supreme Council never became an important decision-making body but it did fulfil a useful function by removing some of the pressure of individual petitioners from the offices of the overworked cabinet.

The Democratic Party of Kurdistan, despite its adoption of a

[1] See Appendix IV, p. 134, below.

Communist type of internal organization, was almost free from doctrinaire political direction of any kind. Only one person in Mahabad at the time was at all familiar with Marxist doctrine and he was a student who had fallen in with the Tudeh Party in Tehran. Although 'progressive' slogans and glorification of the Soviet Union found their way into party speeches and propaganda, there was no mention of socialism, land distribution, or equality of peasant and landlord of the type that filled the press and the broadcasts from Tabriz.

Within the Republic, however, there prevailed among urban Kurds an imperfectly concealed hostility towards the tribal chiefs. The Central Committee of the party and other government offices were weighted heavily in favour of urban elements from Mahabad who would have welcomed a diminution in the prerogatives of tribal leaders. Nevertheless, except for the small Mahabad army and the Barzanis from Iraq, the military strength of the Republic was entirely based on tribal levies. Any campaign to reduce the power of the tribal leaders had to be subtle and indirect, such as dispatching their sons to schools in Tabriz or Baku, or distributing the best arms and ammunition to the Mahabad army and the reliable Barzanis.

The Russians for their part were not squeamish about dealing with Kurdish feudalists and tribal leaders. Though there is no evidence that they subsidized Kurdish chiefs, as did the British in Iraq during the war in order to secure their support for the Allied cause, there were other ways in which the Soviet political and military officers could strengthen their friendships with those who were considered worth cultivating. For example, in the case of Zero Beg Herki Soviet officials ignored his profitable looting of Azerbaijani and Christian villages west of Lake Rezaieh. Other chiefs could be sweetened with sugar, a scarce item in those times which could readily be re-sold at prices as much as ten times that paid to the Russian supplier.

Whatever the ultimate intentions of Soviet advisers towards the Kurdish Republic, in 1946 they were making every effort to secure the co-operation and friendship of the most influential Kurdish elements, urban and tribal. When friendship alone was an insufficient inducement, Soviet advisers could control Qazi Muhammad's major military and civil decisions by means of threats, direct or implied, to withdraw Soviet support from the

Republic. Any attempt to introduce leftist economic or political doctrines would, however, have driven tribal and urban leaders such as Qazi Muhammad beyond the point of useful co-operation. The Russians understood this and refrained from pressing such matters. But on several occasions they almost failed to carry Kurdish leaders with them on essential issues, such as the territorial question, during negotiations between Kurds and Azerbaijanis, and in June when Soviet interests dictated abandonment of the big offensive. For the most part the Russians were content with influencing major policy decisions along lines favourable to their larger tactical and strategic interests which by June had turned towards an ambitious effort to bring all of Iran within their sphere. In that they several times pressed their advice to the limit, the Russians cannot be absolved from sharing the blame for what happened later.

THE NORTHERN FRONT

Having seen their ambitions diverted from the south, Kurdish tribal elements near the frontier north of Lake Rezaieh, between Kurdistan and Azerbaijan, were prepared to assert their rights against the Azerbaijani Government, which was recognized by the Iranian Government as exercising an ill-defined authority over the Kurdish state. On 19 July cavalry of the Herki and Shikak tribes advanced on the town of Maku in the far north near the Russian frontier and on the large town of Khoi northwest of Lake Rezaieh. When Azerbaijani army units were dispatched in the direction of Khoi the Kurds prudently withdrew, but they did not renounce their right to share in the administration of the disputed towns. Far removed from Mahabad, the northern Kurdish tribes were restrained from attacking their Azerbaijani neighbours more by the Soviet Consul Hashimov in Rezaieh than by Kurdish government officials in Mahabad. The hostility of Kurdish tribal chiefs towards the Azerbaijani Turks combined the traditional rivalry between two cultures and races with a new-found suspicion of the leftist orientation of the Tabriz régime and its devotion to land reform. Furthermore the Kurds often maintained that their Azerbaijani neighbours possessed no national spirit. Proof of this they saw in the ease with which

Pishevari had agreed to reunite with Iran, subordinating nationalism to the larger interests of the Communist cause. For the Kurds, however, their national feelings were foremost. They could not write off their aspirations in any document that ignored the depth to which Kurdish separatist sentiment had penetrated the area since the beginning of the Second World War.

XIV. INTERLUDE

MEETING IN TEHRAN

It was on Soviet advice that in early August Qazi went to Tehran to seek an agreement that would provide a legal basis for the continued semi-autonomy of a Kurdish province within the Iranian state. There he saw Qavam twice and General Razmara once, and on two occasions he called at the Soviet Embassy which had arranged his safe conduct to and from the Iranian capital. Qavam was reasonable. He proposed that all Iranian Kurdistan including Sanandaj should be combined into one province or *ostan* under a Governor-General appointed by the Central Government. The status of Kurdistan would thereby be made equal to that of Azerbaijan, and Qazi would no doubt be appointed its first Governor-General. Although he was inclined to accept the proposal, Qazi realized that Russian approval was essential to any scheme altering the relationship between Mahabad and Tabriz.

At the Soviet Embassy Qazi's reception was not as cordial as he had expected; for there he was faced with complaints that the Kurds had been ill treating the Azerbaijanis who lived in minority status under Kurdish jurisdiction. The acceptance of Qavam's proposal, it was made clear, would represent a betrayal of Azerbaijan and could not obtain the approval of the Soviet Union. As long as the future of the weak and otherwise friendless Kurdish state was still dependent on the benevolence of the great power to the north, Qazi was not prepared to assume responsibility for a break. So he returned to Mahabad with nothing gained and nothing conceded. Qavam, always a master of diplomacy and intrigue, had perhaps foreseen that his proposal would fail to win the acceptance of all parties concerned.

IRANIAN DECISIONS

During the month of August, Mahabad lived through its normal midsummer doldrums, while the world press and public

found it hard to sustain interest in the distant problems of Iran. In Tehran, however, the power struggle continued without respite. On 2 August, Qavam reshuffled his cabinet so as to include for the first time three members of the Communist Tudeh Party. At the same time, Muzaffar Firuz, notorious for his pro-Soviet inclinations, was appointed Vice Premier and Minister of Labour and Propaganda. Meanwhile Tudeh agitators in the large cities and in the oilfields of the south set out on a course of direct political action which in July 1946 produced a strike against the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and violence which caused a number of casualties. Prospects for a Communist take-over in Iran, by which the Soviet retreat from Azerbaijan had in part been prompted, were never brighter.

Great Britain, however, recognized the growing threat to the Persian oilfields and to her strategic position in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East as a whole and dispatched troops to near-by Basra in Iraq. Still the Tudeh agitation continued, and on 24 August Qavam arrested a number of the more extreme Communist leaders; but it was evident that such half-measures were not enough. There remained, however, other instruments of political persuasion that had not yet been engaged in the struggle. These were the southern tribes, including elements of the Qashqai and Bakhtiari, which in coalition launched a revolt against the Tudeh Party and the Government. Some of the leaders of the revolt were alleged to have been in contact with British officials in the area. As the anti-Communist tribal movement gained headway in the south, the mercurial morale of religious and conservative elements in the cities rose significantly. At this crucial juncture the Shah called on Qavam to resign. He obeyed, but obtained permission to form another cabinet, on the condition, however, that he should drop the three Tudeh ministers and embark on the restoration of Iranian authority in Azerbaijan.

The new cabinet that was formed on 19 October put an end to the tribal revolt and the government crisis and began the delicate operation of restoring Iranian sovereignty throughout the realm. In mid-November about 100 Tudeh organizers were arrested in Tehran; and on 16 November Iranian troops received an enthusiastic welcome from the population of the large town of Zanjan, midway between Tabriz and Tehran, which Javid and

Pishevari had finally ceded to the Central Government. The stage was set for the last act in Azerbaijan.

FINAL ALIGNMENTS

For the Kurds of the Mahabad Republic, the crisis in Tehran and the trial of tribal and Tudeh strength in the south were far more remote than were the confrontation with Azerbaijan along the northern frontier and the still undefined boundary with Iran in the Saqqiz region. Meanwhile, among the tribes near Mahabad, minority elements of the Mamash and the Mangur, whose chiefs were in personal dispute with Qazi and the Barzanis, made known their disaffection and were compelled by other factions within their tribes to flee to Iraq. The southern front remained stabilized and tranquil except for a few isolated clashes in the Sardasht and Baneh regions. In spite of Russian assurances, the evacuation of the frontier towns by the Iranian army had not taken place. In the north, the Shikak and Herki maintained pressure on the Azerbaijani villagers of the plains and won from Tabriz a measure of joint rule in the four disputed towns. For example, in early October the military governorship of Shapur was held jointly by a Kurd, 'Colonel' Zero Beg Herki, and an Azerbaijani, General Danishyan.

In early September the Central Government made a last attempt to reach an accommodation with Qazi along the lines of Qavam's proposal in Tehran. During the Moslem Id al Fitr feast that breaks the month-long fast of Ramadan, General Razmara sent Lt-Colonel Ali Asghar Fiuzi to Mahabad to discuss the return of Kurdistan to Iran and the recovery of Iranian arms that had been seized by Kurdish tribesmen on the Saqqiz–Baneh road. Colonel Fiuzi was also instructed to obtain any military intelligence that might come within his grasp. Fiuzi's visit coincided with a tribal gathering and military parade during which Qazi inspected all units. Otherwise, however, the negotiations were ill timed. The Iranian suggestion that the Kurdish Government should lay down its arms and accept a status within Iran but separate from Azerbaijan was apparently well received by Qazi at first, but the cabinet's assent had to be obtained. On the following day Colonel Fiuzi was informed that his proposal

was not acceptable; nor could the war materials seized near Baneh be returned. He was able to make an estimate of Kurdish military strength, but this left some doubt regarding the crucial question whether and how the Kurdish Republic would defend itself against a serious assault by the Iranian army.

It was later in the month of September 1946 that Captain Archie Roosevelt, Jr, then Assistant U.S. Military Attaché in Tehran, and one of the few westerners to visit Mahabad during the Republic, arrived in the area. Captain Roosevelt's account of the visit is available[1] and corresponds closely with the recollections of Kurds remaining in Mahabad who well remember the careful preparations taken to impress favourably an American visitor bearing a famous name. Roosevelt was in fact surprised by the free atmosphere of Mahabad as compared with the Communist regimentation of Azerbaijan; and he told Qazi so. Qazi for his part sought to convince the American representative that the Kurds wished to form a democratic province under a federal system similar to the American model: if the American Government could not support Kurdish aspirations, at least it need not oppose them. During the visit the Central Committee of the party was careful to keep evidence of Russian influence out of sight; and this was not difficult since only Asadov remained in Mahabad. Although after seeing Qazi and Mahabad, Roosevelt was able to provide his Government with a clearer view of conditions in the Republic than had previously been available, there was no question of the United States becoming involved in a nationalist movement in a remote corner of Iran.

Meanwhile the political trend in Tehran was perhaps better perceived by tribal leaders in the north such as Amr Khan of the Shikak than it was in the still solidly nationalist atmosphere of Mahabad. To the northern tribes the Mahabad Government represented a legal instrument of their nationalist sympathies, but did not always provide for their most vital needs. Amr Khan looked to the east and saw only the Communist Azerbaijanis, and this suggested a community of interests with the Bakhtiari and Qashqai tribes of the south. Why should not those Kurdish tribes which shared Qavam's newly manifest aversion to the Tudeh Party join with the Iranians against the common enemy? At about

[1] Archie Roosevelt, Jr, 'The Kurdish Republic of Mahabad', *Middle East Journal*, July 1947.

this time Amr Khan, on behalf of a coalition of like-minded Kurdish chiefs, asked the American Consulate in Tabriz to transmit a message to Qavam pledging their loyalty to the Central Government in exchange for assurances of fair treatment. Qavam's reply, that the Government's attitude towards the Kurds would depend on the loyalty they displayed during this and future emergencies, was interpreted as providing, albeit obliquely, the necessary assurance. On 12 November Amr Khan's representative in Tabriz hurriedly left the city for Shikak tribal territory with word that the Iranian army would soon enter the province.

In Mahabad Qazi was aware that Amr Khan was casting about for an alternative to the perhaps fatal Kurdish dependence on the Russians; and Qazi was not entirely unsympathetic towards such tactics. But Amr Khan, as a tribal chief with a private armed following, had all the advantages of independent action that Qazi lacked. In Mahabad the Russians had their agents. It was not inconceivable that Qazi might have been replaced had he broken with his Soviet advisers. Still motivated by a deep sense of responsibility for the people he had led into autonomy, Qazi was irretrievably caught in the net he had allowed to encircle himself and his cause. On 20 November Qazi's cousin, Muhammad Husain Saif i Qazi, returned from a visit to Baku where he had undergone medical treatment for his obesity and his digestive disorder. He would have done well to have delayed a little longer.

XV. THE END

THE FALL OF AZERBAIJAN

THE end came with unexpected suddenness. The Soviet Ambassador in Tehran had warned the Iranian Government several times that disturbances near the Russian frontier in the strategic region of Azerbaijan could not be tolerated. Many interpreted this to mean that the Soviet Union would oppose by force Qavam's announced intention of sending Iranian army units into Azerbaijan to supervise the elections to the Majlis. Azerbaijani and Kurdish leaders for their part assumed that there could be no question of Qavam's calling the Russian bluff; and although the moment of maximum support for the Kurdish Republic had passed, few in Mahabad supposed that a Kurdish state in one form or another was not permanent. On 27 November the American Ambassador in Tehran, George V. Allen, openly expressed the opinion that 'the announced intention of the Iranian Government to send security forces into all parts of Iran . . . seems to me an entirely normal and proper decision'.[1] On the same day Qazi Muhammad addressed a telegram to Qavam opposing the Government's plan to send troops into Azerbaijan and Kurdistan. But Qavam was not to be deflected from his purpose.

As the day fixed for the occupation of Azerbaijan approached, Soviet advisers became increasingly reticent in discussing armed support for their Azerbaijani and Kurdish allies. In early December a Kurdish delegation from Mahabad went to Rezaieh to consult the Soviet Consul Hashimov. There they were assured that the Iranian Government intended to send to Kurdistan only the minimum force needed to maintain order during the elections, after which it would be withdrawn. For some reason the Russians appeared to have confidence in Qavam's intentions.

Nevertheless on 5 December Qazi called a 'war council' of about ten Kurdish leaders including the Minister of War Saif i Qazi, and the Majlis deputy Sadr i Qazi. This group signed a resolution pledging armed resistance by the Kurdish army and

[1] Rossow, in *Middle East Journal*, Winter 1956.

tribes. The document was taken the next day to the Abbas Agha mosque where a larger number of party members and tribal chiefs awaited the decision of the inner circle. At the mosque Sadr i Qazi reported that on the basis of his residence in Tehran, he could assure those present that the Iranian army would be no match for the united forces of the Kurdish tribes and army. At first the resolution and its pledge to fight appeared to enjoy overwhelming support. Later, however, several voices were raised in warning that it was already too late and that the fate of the Kurdish Republic would depend on developments in Azerbaijan and on the attitude of the great powers. The meeting ended indecisively with many private reservations sapping the official resolve to resist.

In Tabriz a similar 'war council' had been held in which the Governor-General, Javid, and the president of the provincial council, Shabestari, adopted a defeatist attitude while Beria and the military commander, Danishyan, demanded resistance. Pishevari, the realist, was somewhere in the middle. On 11 December an early morning proclamation in Tabriz called on the people to resist; but later that day the news circulated that Javid had sent a telegram of submission to Tehran and that party leaders and officials were fleeing north. On 12 December a violent anti-Communist reaction set off the traditional reprisals. The unpopular ex-Minister of Education, Muhammad Beria, escaped from his pursuers and gained the Russian Hospital; but the mob stormed in, seized its victim, and dragged him along behind a jeep. On the evening of 13 December, two days after Javid's surrender, the first Iranian army units entered the city.

THE FALL OF MAHABAD

The sudden collapse of Azerbaijan stunned the Kurds of Mahabad. But while they conferred among themselves and awaited instructions from Qazi, the Shikak and Herki tribes west of Rezaieh saw which way the wind was blowing. On 11 December they stormed down to the plain and towards Rezaieh and Tabriz, to claim their share of the Iranian victory.

In Mahabad Qazi and his colleagues never seriously contemplated resistance after it became clear that the Soviet Union had

allowed their Azerbaijani creation to collapse. Of the party officials a small group of militants began to discuss flight and asylum in Iraq or the USSR. They made their preparations and on the evening of 14 December went to Qazi's house to ask him to join them. Qazi approved the project and told them to take away any provisions they required; but he would stay with the people of Mahabad whom he had sworn to protect. Afterwards several of the group reassessed the situation and decided that if Qazi remained calm those of lesser stature in the Republic had no cause to fear the future. Flight and resistance being both ruled out, Kurdish tradition provided only one alternative: dignified total submission.

On 14 December a first group of Kurdish urban and tribal leaders had motored fifty kilometres northeast to Miandoab to surrender and to confer with General Homayuni, who had arrived there by the direct road from Saqqiz. The delegation included Mirza Rahmat Shafai, Shaikh Hasan Shams i Borhan, Ali Agha Amir al Ashairi, and a few others whose sometime lack of enthusiasm for the Republic assured them fair treatment by the Iranian army. The group found Homayuni in a forgiving mood and returned to Mahabad with the impression that it would be safe for others to make their submission.

On 15 December the Soviet commercial representative in Mahabad, Asadov, left for the Soviet Consulate in Rezaieh. Taxed by a Kurdish official with having betrayed his friends, Asadov lamely replied that the status of the Republic had become an international issue, but that if the name of the party were changed back to 'Komala' perhaps the Russians could help. On the next day Qazi Muhammad, Saif i Qazi, Haji Baba Shaikh, and several others went by car to Miandoab where they submitted to General Homayuni.

Why, asked the General, had Qazi led the Kurds into secession? The Kurdish leader replied that his acts had been forced on him by Soviet pressure. Why then, asked the General, had Qazi not explained this fact to Qavam when he was in Tehran a few months earlier? When the conversation turned to the situation at Mahabad, Qazi warned the General that the Barzanis were still preparing to defend the town and that they retained control of Bukan. General Homayuni knew better and suggested that Qazi, Haji Baba Shaikh, and Saif i Qazi should go to Bukan to see for them-

selves. In Bukan it was confirmed that the Barzanis had left several days before on the short-cut northwest towards Mahabad. From Bukan General Homayuni's party moved to the near-by Dehbokri village of Hammamian, residence of the Ilkhanizadeh chiefs, several of whom had been in touch with the General during the preceding year. At 4 a.m. on 16 December Qazi and Haji Baba Shaikh awoke the General and suggested that they should all proceed at once on the short-cut to Mahabad. The Dehbokri chiefs, however, informed them that snow blocked the way; so the party returned to Miandoab where a telephone call from Mahabad was awaiting them. After Qazi had spoken with Mahabad he warned General Homayuni that the situation in the Kurdish capital was no longer under control, for the Barzanis had surrounded the town with every intention of defending it. The General, however, advised Qazi to return to Mahabad to provide for the arrival of the Iranian army.

When Azerbaijani resistance collapsed on 11 December several thousand Azerbaijani Turki soldiers, who a few weeks before had been sent to help defend the southern front, retreated towards Tabriz. At the same time Mulla Mustafa gathered some 1,500 Barzanis and a smaller group of other tribesmen and withdrew north on the Miandoab road as far as the town of Bukan. At Bukan Mulla Mustafa decided to turn west into the mountains on the short-cut to Mahabad. It was at Bukan that one of the Ilkhanizadeh chiefs heard him remark that 'The Kurds have not been defeated by the Iranian army; rather it was the Soviet Union that was defeated by the United States and Great Britain'. When Colonel Ghaffari and an advance guard of the Iranian army reached Bukan on 12 December, his forces were joined by local tribesmen who wished to demonstrate their loyalty to Iran by participating in the march to Mahabad. Thus it was that on 15 December Ghaffari with his tribal allies stood near Mahabad in a threatening attitude that might have prevented the peaceful occupation of the town by regular Iranian troops. Not for the first time Qazi Muhammad acted quickly to prevent a tribal assault which might have led to killing and looting. To Ghaffari he sent Jafar Karimi on 16 December with news that an agreement had been reached with General Homayuni for the occupation of Mahabad by the army. He also warned Ghaffari that a number of Barzanis were still in Mahabad and would doubtless resist any

attempt by hostile tribes to enter the city. The Colonel prudently delayed until on 17 December General Homayuni and his forces approached the capital of the Republic from the north-east. Mulla Mustafa had in fact returned briefly to Mahabad on 16 December to plead with Qazi to accompany him towards the Iraqi frontier; but again Qazi rejected the suggestion that his life would be in danger if he remained.

Thus on 17 December Qazi Muhammad and other Kurdish leaders took the road northwest 13 kilometres to the village of Gwey Tapeh to meet the Iranian officials and render the traditional honours of reception. Thereafter the Iranian army from the north and Colonel Ghaffari with accompanying tribesmen from the east quietly entered Mahabad and by their presence proclaimed the end of the Republic and its reattachment to Iran. Up to that point everything had gone smoothly, almost too smoothly.

Meanwhile the Barzanis, with their military strength intact, were camped near the town to the west and at Naqadeh northwest on the road to the Iraqi frontier. In Mahabad and elsewhere hasty efforts were made by Kurdish officials to destroy all records, documents, and photographs. At the same time, individuals and families removed all traces of their involvement in the Kurdish movement by burning letters, commissions, and photographs of themselves, Qazi Muhammad, and Stalin. Some small arms were hidden, but a larger number was kept to be handed over to the Iranian army. Three thousand of the best rifles, as well as 120 machine guns, 2 artillery pieces, and quantities of hand grenades had been taken towards Naqadeh by the Barzanis. Although the Iranian troops stationed in Mahabad were tired from their long march in bitterly cold weather, they were nevertheless obliged to construct watch towers to ensure security within the town and to keep watch against a possible attack by the Barzanis and other tribes controlling the countryside.

After General Homayuni reached Mahabad, Qazi Muhammad told him he was worried about his son, Ali 'Kur i Rash', who was then in Tabriz, so the General sent a car which brought the boy to Mahabad on the 19th. In Ali's pocket was found a letter to Qazi from his brother Sadr i Qazi who on 8 December had gone first to Rezaieh and from there to Tabriz where one of his actions was to send the Kurdish students back to Mahabad. In the letter,

Sadr i Qazi advised his brother to establish friendly relations with General Homayuni during which time he, Sadr i Qazi, would meet Qavam as Sultaneh in Tehran and devise a means to ensure the safety of the leaders of the Kurdish Republic. Homayuni read the letter and sent it on to Qazi.

ARMS AND ARRESTS

Shortly after his arrival in Mahabad, General Homayuni received word that Mulla Mustafa wished to see him. At that time Mulla Mustafa and his Barzanis were still the key to whether the Kurdish tribes would lay down their arms or fight the Iranian army. The General guaranteed Mulla Mustafa's safe conduct to a parley in Mahabad on 20 December. Meanwhile Qazi Muhammad was confined to his house, which was surrounded by Iranian soldiers to prevent contact between him and Mulla Mustafa. When the General met the Mulla he asked what an Iraqi tribal chief was doing on Iranian territory. Mulla Mustafa replied that if the British Government would guarantee their safety, he and his tribe would return to Barzan. He also agreed to write a letter of submission to the Iranian army, which he did in the Arabic language. General Homayuni then suggested that Mulla Mustafa, Mir Haj, Izzat Abdul Aziz, and Nuri should go to Tehran with Colonel Ghaffari to discuss their intentions and material needs with the Iranian Government and to obtain the necessary assurances from Iraq through the British Embassy. General Homayuni made these arrangements without prior approval by Tehran, but as he explained later, he could not have proceeded with the disarming of the tribes and the local people so long as Mulla Mustafa remained in the vicinity.

On the morning of 21 December Mulla Mustafa and his party left for Tabriz by car. At noon General Homayuni called in Qazi Muhammad, Haji Baba Shaikh, and Saif i Qazi and told them they must order the disarming of the tribes and the surrender of all the arms given to the Republic by the Russians. In reply the Kurdish leaders admitted they had received 5,000 rifles; but these, they said, had been distributed by the Central Committee of the party, who alone could provide the necessary information. Accordingly General Homayuni ordered the Central Committee

and other prominent Kurdish leaders to appear, and about forty-five of the most prominent Kurds of the Republic assembled at the municipal building. The General demanded the records of arms distributed and the receipts for them. The answers were unsatisfactory: several days before all documents had been taken to the bath-house at the Mahabad barracks and burned. The ashes remained as evidence. Qazi accepted full responsibility, but all the Kurds were arrested as they left the building.

THE ALVAND PLAN

Mulla Mustafa, Mir Haj, Izzat Abdul Aziz, and Nuri spent just over a month in Tehran as guests at the Iranian officers' club. Their discussions at the British Embassy produced no satisfactory guarantee of their safety in Iraq. Their Iranian hosts, however, proposed that the Barzanis as a tribe should be resettled in the southeast corner of Kurdistan in the Alvand mountain region near Hamadan. Their transport from the frontier to Hamadan would be paid for by the Iranian Government and their maintenance would be provided for during their first six months there. Mulla Mustafa expressed his satisfaction with this scheme and returned to Mahabad on 29 January 1947 in the company of an official from the Ministry of Finance who carried with him 100,000 tomans (about $18,000) for transport and food. This official also bore a sealed letter to General Homayuni instructing the General to see to it that the Barzanis were resettled without delay. Mulla Mustafa insisted, however, that he must first visit his brother, Shaikh Ahmad, to obtain his support for the move. He was allowed 24 hours for this purpose. When word got back that the Barzanis would not agree to leave the frontier region, Colonel Ghaffari was sent to Naqadeh to see Mulla Mustafa. He reported that the Barzanis would fight rather than leave the area. Consequently, on 19 February General Homayuni and Colonel Ghaffari went alone and unarmed to Naqadeh to discuss the question direct with Shaikh Ahmad.

At Naqadeh General Homayuni found that, as he suspected, the Barzanis were unwilling to leave the area. Shaikh Ahmad explained that although no British guarantee had been obtained, when spring came and the passes were clear of snow the Barzanis

would regain their tribal area in Iraq by force. General Homayuni would not agree to a further delay. Instead he suggested three alternatives: the Barzanis could leave immediately for Iraq, or they could surrender all their arms and advise other tribes to do the same, or they could fight. During the negotiations a small clash broke out between Homayuni's men and a group of Barzanis outside the town, but no one was killed. The meeting ended without agreement, thereby implying recourse to the third alternative. The Barzanis would fight.

General Homayuni, with a Barzani escort, returned to his own positions south of Naqadeh after giving warning that within two days he would occupy the town. That night the General received the news that a group of Barzanis moving towards the north near Ushnavieh had killed eleven aghas of the Mamash tribe. They were clearly burning their bridges behind them. After waiting forty-eight hours, on 22 February the Iranian army moved into Naqadeh unopposed and the Barzanis redeployed their forces towards the frontier.

IN BAKU

In contrast to the northward exodus of Azerbaijani leaders from Tabriz, officials of the Mahabad Republic made no move towards the sanctuary of the USSR, but there remained in Baku some sixty Kurdish military school students who heard from refugees grim tales of the fall of Azerbaijan and of bloody reprisals in Tabriz. The Soviet directors of the school did nothing to ease their anxiety. On the contrary, they seemed to want all Kurdish students to remain in the Soviet Union. The young Kurds were warned that death awaited them south of the frontier and that their families, if not already massacred, would soon join them in Baku. In spite of these grim warnings the prospect of continued residence in Soviet Azerbaijan cut off from their homes did not appeal to the boys. As the Russians continued to procrastinate, the students began a hunger strike that soon achieved its purpose. In March they were allowed to leave.

XVI. THE AFTERMATH

THE BARZANIS AGAIN

MULLA Mustafa did not intend to settle in the Hamadan region unarmed and powerless, but on the other hand he was apprehensive about the reception he might expect in Iraq, whence he had withdrawn more than a year before under conditions of revolt. Furthermore the winter snows had closed the main passes into the Baradost region of Iraq or had at least rendered their passage arduous and dangerous for the women and children. Mulla Mustafa therefore adopted delaying tactics in the hope of securing better terms either from Iraq or Iran. In essence, his plan appears to have been to divide his tribesmen and their families into groups small enough to subsist on the local economy in the series of valleys running parallel to the Iraqi and Turkish frontiers from Lahijan due west of Mahabad and north to the Tergawar valley west of Rezaieh. In such a manner they could survive and maintain their freedom of movement until spring. In the chosen region were the towns of Ushnavieh on the normal tribal route into Iraq, and Dizai in the Mergawar valley where Shaikh Abdullah Effendi Gilani maintained his residence. The story of the Iranian army's campaign against the Barzanis from 11 March until 15 April is an epic in the annals of such warfare. The Kurdish Republic had fallen, but this history would be incomplete without a brief record of developments between the arrival of Iranian armed forces in Azerbaijan in December 1946 and the final pacification of the area in June 1947.

After evacuating Naqadeh on 22 February the Barzanis set out in a general movement northward out of the Lahijan valley and westward into the region around Ushnavieh and farther north to the Mergawar and Tergawar valleys. Then, while General Homayuni was conferring with Shaikh Ahmad in Naqadeh, the fatal incident occurred at the Mamash village of Silva just north of Lahijan. A group of Barzanis while passing through Silva ordered the Mamash chiefs to assemble and surrender their arms

so as to ensure the Barzanis a safe passage through the area. One of Mam Husain's sons was heard to exclaim 'Give them the arms'; at which another son drew his pistol. This gesture was misinterpreted by one of the Barzanis who fired an automatic rifle, killing eleven of the Mamash, including Ibrahim, a younger brother of Ali Agha Amir al Ashairi. This senseless act damaged the Barzanis' reputation and placed between them and Mahabad the hostile Kurdish forces of the Mamash and their allies, increasing considerably the risk of any move that might have been contemplated to sweep down on Mahabad to rescue Qazi Muhammad and the other Kurdish prisoners, a possibility then the subject of rumours in the town.

On 4 March an advance party of Barzanis had reached Mawana in the Tergawar valley where Rashid Beg Herki and Nuri of the Begzadeh found it expedient to ally themselves with their Iraqi guests. On 23 February the Iranian army had announced that all tribes should hand in their arms; and on 12 March a column left Rezaieh for Mawana to enforce the order. After brief fighting Rashid Beg and Nuri Beg submitted and were pardoned by General Homayuni on condition that they should join in the campaign against the Barzanis. After that a co-ordinated Iranian offensive directed from Rezaieh in the northern sector and from Mahabad and Naqadeh in the south was seriously set in motion. In the first battle Herki tribesmen supported by Iranian army units fought a section of the Barzanis south of Mawana. After that encounter the Barzanis retired southward to concentrate their forces in the Mergawar and Ushnavieh valleys.

On 14 March the Iranian offensive in the Naqadeh–Ushnavieh area was launched. The Barzanis proved a resourceful and elusive foe. They fought in familiar conditions, on their kind of terrain, and usually at times of their own choosing. It is not surprising therefore that in engagement after engagement Iranian losses in lives and prisoners were greater than those of the Kurds. During the next month armed clashes of some sort occurred almost daily, several of them involving large forces, and bearing the names of the villages near which they were fought. On 16 March at Nalos the Barzanis killed some twelve Iranian soldiers including one officer, and took five officers and sixty-eight soldiers prisoner. On 20 March General Homayuni met the Iraqi General, Ali Hijazi, at the Haj Umran frontier post south of Kalashin. General

Hijazi offered to send over Iraqi forces to assist the Iranian operations; but his offer was refused as unnecessary. On 24 March at Khilij the Barzanis attacked an Iranian column, killed Lt Imami and thirteen soldiers, and took prisoner Lt Jahanbani, son of General Jahanbani, and fifteen others. In an ill-conceived Iranian counterattack an officer and seven more soldiers were killed.

Although localized Barzani successes added to their already considerable fighting reputation, the Iranian offensive movement was unrelenting and gradually began to wear down the morale of men, women, and children. Bombings by twelve obsolescent fighter planes added to the general confusion. Within the tribe pressures began to build up for a return to Iraq where it was supposed pardons would be available for all but a few of the chiefs. Even several ex-Iraqi officers, including Mustafa Khoshnao, Major Khairullah, Captain Muhammad Mahmud, and Colonel Izzat Abdul Aziz declared their preference for an unknown fate in their Iraqi homeland to a continuation of the long and indecisive struggle against the Iranian army. Mulla Mustafa warned these officers of their folly; but the longing to put an end to eighteen months of wandering was too strong to resist.

Shaikh Ahmad, still religious leader and nominal chief of the Barzanis and always considered by the Central Government to be more moderate and amenable to persuasion than his younger brother, arranged in early April through Shaikh Abdullah Effendi Gilani to deliver to the Iranian army the prisoners taken during the previous month of fighting. A few days later, having received a written guarantee of amnesty from the Iraqi authorities, Shaikh Ahmad led the bulk of the tribe across the frontier at a number of crossing points near the Kalashin Pass and into the hands of the waiting Iraqi army. Shortly afterwards Mulla Mustafa, with a separate force of armed tribesmen, took a less exposed route by night to the relative safety of the mountains above Barzan. On 13 April the Iranian Colonel Fuladvand could report to his headquarters that all of the Barzanis had crossed the Gadar river and entered Iraq.

DECISION IN MAHABAD

Three weeks before the Barzanis left Iran, Qazi Muhammad, his brother, and his cousin were hanged on three separate gibbets

in the Chwar Chira circle of Mahabad. The time was 3 a.m. on 31 March 1947, fourteen months after the proclamation of the Republic at the same place. The hangings were performed in secrecy and with maximum security. Only a few citizens living near the circle remembered next morning having heard the sound of troubled voices outside during the night. Mahabad was shocked into silence, and the tribal disorders that had been predicted by those who had opposed the executions never materialized.

From the moment of their arrest the two special prisoners, Qazi Muhammad and Saif i Qazi, had been kept apart from some twenty-eight other Kurdish officials against whom charges had been made. In early January a special military court sitting in Mahabad began to consider the cases of the two Qazis. Colonel Parsi Tabar was president of the court and the Prosecutor-General was Colonel Fiuzi who, as General Homayuni's Chief of Staff, had entered Mahabad with the first army units. Colonel Fiuzi first studied the materials at hand and then insisted that Qazi's brother should be brought from Tehran to give evidence. At that time Sadr i Qazi was negotiating with Qavam in Tehran, but he was handed over to Mahabad on 30 December, where he became the third special prisoner. A complete record of the court proceedings has never been released, but information has been obtained from Iranian army sources including General Fiuzi and from a book[1] in Persian covering with varying accuracy the events in Kurdistan between the fall of the Republic and the end of the Barzani campaign.

Before the trial began the accused were advised to choose lawyers to defend them. Qazi asked for two army officers then at Tehran who were known to be the best in the legal field, but was told that he could not avail himself of outside legal counsel, for if the trial were delayed while a lawyer was brought from Tehran it could be further delayed by a request for an attorney from London. Qazi's reply, that if he had been in closer touch with London he would not be on trial, demonstrated that he had not lost his endearing wit and his gift for polemics. With his choice thus reduced, Qazi picked a Captain Sharif of the Mahabad garrison.

On 9 January Qazi spoke long in his own defence, objecting to the proceedings on the grounds that the special court-martial in Mahabad was not competent to deal with his case since as a

[1] Pesian, *Az Mahabadeh*.

civilian he should appear before a civil court, or before a military court in Tehran. Further, he complained, the court had not given him sufficient time to choose a lawyer. The court rejected these objections and proceeded with the trial. A long indictment drawn up and presented by Colonel Fiuzi was summarized in twenty-two points of unequal significance. Wherever possible the prosecution cited acts alleged to have violated the Iranian constitution. Thus the foundation of a Kurdish Republic on 22 January, the award of military ranks, the distribution of arms, and the changing of the flag were all included in the indictment. According to available sources, Qazi based his defence on the contention that the Iranian Government had been unable to exercise its authority in Kurdistan after the Russian occupation in 1941. It followed that he and his Government had filled a vacuum and had been obliged to co-operate with the Soviet Union under duress just as the Iranian Government in Tehran had been forced to collaborate on various occasions. As for the Kurdish flag, there was, he said, no legal basis for the relative positions of the red, white, and green stripes of the Iranian flag and, therefore, his reversal of their order in no way contravened the constitution. The prosecution then cited the Kurdish coat of arms that appeared on some of the flags, and this could not be refuted.

The indictment went on to list each of the engagements in which Iranian lives had been lost, beginning with the attack on the Mahabad police post in 1943, continuing through Qahrawa, and ending with Qazi's instructions to resist the entry of Iranian troops into Kurdistan, but the defence sought to dissociate him and his relatives from all military clashes and casualties. Qazi's position was not improved when the prosecution was able to establish in court that his wife had given his defence attorney 14,000 tomans, or about $2,800, to stimulate his interest in the prisoner. Captain Sharif was obliged to turn over the money to the court. Then it was revealed that an additional 21,000 tomans had been paid to other officers on Qazi's behalf. The money was all recovered and finally, on orders from Tehran, was returned to Qazi's wife, who had by that time become a widow.

The indictment against Saif i Qazi centred on his having worn a general's uniform, made three trips to Baku, and participated in the fighting. In his defence it was argued that the authorities in Tabriz had approved his visits to the Soviet Union and that after

being appointed Governor of Mahabad, under the terms of the Pishevari–Firuz agreement, he had stopped wearing the uniform. Moreover, he maintained, it was unfair to hold him personally responsible for the armed conflicts.

Sadr i Qazi, who had spent most of the duration of the Republic in Tehran as a member of parliament, argued that his parliamentary immunity protected him during the period of his deputyship. If, he added, he had committed a crime since then, his case should be placed before a civil rather than a military court. But the charge that he had spoken up for Kurdish resistance at the Abbas Agha Mosque on 6 December was true and did him much harm.

On 23 January, after seventy-two hours of secret deliberation, the special military court sentenced the three prisoners to death. The verdict was then sent to Tehran amid rumours that clemency would prevail. Two review boards investigated the case and confirmed the original verdict. Orders to proceed with the executions arrived none too soon for those who had been responsible for the conduct of the trial. General Homayuni had been apprehensive and had sent Colonel Fiuzi to Tehran with all relevant documents to seek an explanation for the delay. In Tehran Fiuzi was told that the sentences had been duly confirmed and had received Qavam's approval but that 'political considerations' required further postponement. This was understood to mean that Qavam needed additional time to negotiate with the Soviet Embassy about Iranian-Soviet relations and specifically about the oil concession. When the order for the executions finally reached Azerbaijan on 30 March, General Homayuni and Colonel Fiuzi were in Rezaieh directing operations against the Barzanis. A radio message sent to Mahabad on the same day permitted the execution of Tehran's orders early the next morning.

Within a few days of Qazi's death some twenty-eight other members of the Kurdish Government and army who had been arrested with him or had surrendered later were sentenced to terms of imprisonment most of which ranged from two to fifteen years. Only three received life sentences, and these were later reduced to fifteen years. Fourteen others had fled to Iraq or elsewhere to escape punishment. In addition to the three Qazis, five other Kurds were hanged in early April. One, Major Ali Khan Shirzad, met his fate in Bukan. The other four, Captain Hamid Mazuji, Lt Muhammad Nazimi, Lt Rasul Nazadei, and Lt Abdullah Roshanfikr, were hanged in Mahabad. All of these Kurdish officers were charged with responsibility for the deaths of Iranian army personnel within or on the frontiers of the Kurdish Republic.

It is not clear at what level the final decision to execute the three Qazis was made, but it is known that there were within the Iranian army and Government at that time divided opinions on the subject. In the end the more extreme group prevailed, and it can be assumed that this group was dominated by military officers. According to witnesses, the officers in the court were furious when a letter written by Qazi two months earlier to the military commander at Saqqiz was read. In the letter Qazi had by inference referred to the famous couplet by Firdausi:

> Hama sar be sar tan bekoshtan dehim
> Az an beh keh keshvar be doshman dehim.
>
> (We would much rather die one by one than
> give our country to the enemy.)

Qazi had said in the letter: 'You are the officers of an army which, at the time of fighting and risking lives, take to your heels and traduce Firdausi's great lines of poetry thus:

> Hama sar be sar posht be doshman konim
> Az an beh keh khodra be koshtan dehim.
>
> (We turn our backs to the enemy one by one,
> Rather than die for our country.)

Such a deadly insult to the honour of the Iranian army, stronger in Persian than in translation, was for many of the officers present an unpardonable crime and was the kind of emotional issue that damaged the prisoners most.

Saif i Qazi was not only a cousin of the President of the Republic but, as Minister of War, he was among those considered by the Iranian army most deserving of punishment. Sadr i Qazi appears to have been the most innocent of the three since he was seldom in Mahabad and on several occasions served as peacemaker between the central and the Kurdish authorities. He had, however, in a number of speeches in parliament strongly criticized the Iranian army. He had also called for tribal resistance at the Abbas Agha Mosque on 6 December.

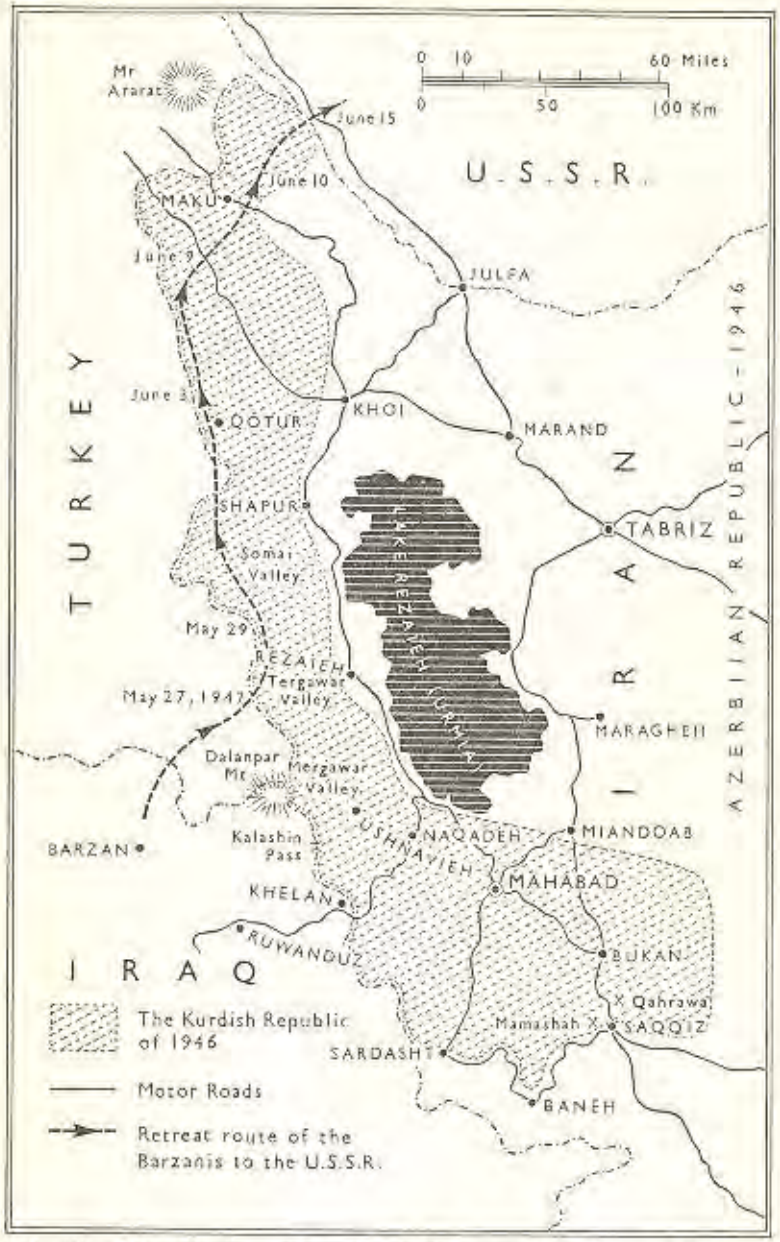
Whatever the reasons for the severity of the sentences, many Iranian and Kurdish observers now maintain that it would have been in Iran's interest to have shown clemency in dealing with the Qazi family. These are issues that can never be positively decided one way or another, but the fact remains that the spirit that broke into a flame of Kurdish nationalism in Iran between 1943 and 1946 still exists in Mahabad and elsewhere in Kurdistan.

A FINAL SCENE

Back in Iraq a large number of the Barzanis including Shaikh Ahmad, four ex-army officers, and most of the women and children submitted directly to the military authorities. Nevertheless a significant portion of the Barzani military strength, under Mulla Mustafa, remained intact though divided among several groups spread out across the northeastern corner of the country. So far as possible, fighting was avoided while negotiations were being conducted through Kurdish members of parliament in Baghdad. Some observers assumed at the time that the influence of moderate Kurdish officials and parliamentarians in Baghdad would obtain pardons or at least clemency for the four army officers who had gone over to the Kurdish Republic. However, the predominantly Arab Government and the Iraqi army were not moved to mercy. Later in June Mustafa Khoshnao, Khairullah, Muhammad Mahmud, and Izzat Abdul Aziz were all executed. Not even the latter's previous position as personal aide to the Crown Prince could save his life.

Mulla Mustafa, sensing that vengeance was in the air, had decided by the middle of May that asylum in a friendly country, at least for himself and several other prominent Barzanis, was the only way out. Refuge in Iran was ruled out by the blood of the Iranian army officers and men killed in recent battle. Turkey could not be expected to welcome a troublesome nationalist Kurd into an area that was being detribalized. Only the Soviet Union remained, some 200 miles away across the Aras river.

It is still not clear what arrangements had been made or assurances obtained from the Soviet Union beforehand. According to Barzani sources, the die was cast when Mulla Mustafa called a tribal meeting at which he explained that for him and a few others



III. The Boundaries of the Kurdish Republic, Sites of Battles, and the route of the Barzanis retreating to the USSR

only the Soviet Union offered possible asylum. He would be prepared, he said, to take with him any tribesmen whose services were not required by their families. Most of those assembled chose to stay with Mulla Mustafa, but of the volunteers a number were rejected because they did not meet his conditions. In all, 500-800 set out towards the north.

Early on 27 May the local commander of Iraqi forces informed the Iranian army that the Barzanis had crossed into Turkey and appeared to be heading towards Iran. That afternoon one of Nuri Beg Begzadeh's sons sighted the first group of Barzanis near Anbi in the Tergawar valley. His report reached General Homayuni while he was at Khoi awaiting the arrival of the Shah, who was visiting Azerbaijan for the first time since its reattachment to Iran. By 29 May the Barzanis were moving north out of Tergawar and into the Somai territory of the Shikak tribe. Iranian officers detailed to lead presumably loyal Iranian Kurdish tribes were unable to bring them into action against the Barzanis but did manage to keep the intruding forces under observation. One of their reports indicated that the Barzanis were moving slowly, with nearly everyone including Mulla Mustafa on foot. Only the wounded and essential belongings were seen on the backs of horses and mules.

By 30 May it was clear to the Iranian army that the Barzanis were heading in the direction of the Soviet Union. The Chief of Staff then issued instructions that Mulla Mustafa's way should be blocked at the Qotur valley. For that purpose two battalions were dispatched from Khoi, while other columns headed farther north towards Maku. Contact was lost between 31 May and 2 June during which time the Barzanis had moved west to the frontier and briefly crossed into Turkey and then back into Iran. At sunrise on 3 June a group of Barzanis were sighted north of Qotur. They had all passed through the two Iranian battalions during the previous night without being detected.

The Shah, who was then visiting Ardebil, issued instructions that the Barzanis should immediately be engaged in battle. He gave warning that commanders who did not perform their duty would be tried by military courts. Other messages from the army Chief of Staff were written in an even more reproachful tone. The Barzanis, however, could not be located in the rugged territory due west of Khoi, but on 9 June in the Susuz mountains twenty-

five miles northwest of Khoi contact was established when an Iranian army column found itself under rifle and grenade attack from the flanks. In addition to a large number killed, sixteen Iranian prisoners were taken. After the battle the Barzanis moved northeast into the hills. On 10 June they were sighted twenty-five miles southeast of Mt Ararat overlooking the Aras river plain and the Soviet frontier that lay less than ten miles to the north. The trek was virtually over, 220 miles having been covered in fourteen days. On 10 June Mulla Mustafa sent two men north across the border into the Soviet Union.

During the next five days Iranian army units moved up from Khoi and out from Maku to converge on the Barzani positions. When they reached the Aras on 18 June, however, they found that all their foes had crossed into the Soviet Union during the previous two days leaving behind a few rifles and grenades, some ammunition, and the bodies of two men who had drowned in the river. This was at a point opposite the Soviet frontier post at Sarachlu. Mulla Mustafa and his men did not find their way home again until eleven years and four months later.

XVII. EPILOGUE

WHAT did the Kurdish Republic of 1946 really represent: a valiant national struggle or a treacherous separatist revolt? What had Barzani participation involved: a selfless contribution to a noble cause, or a self-seeking attempt to extend personal and tribal influence? During the years since the Republic collapsed these questions have been answered only in relation to personal or national prejudices. It was because the facts themselves, apart from their interpretation, had begun to drift into obscurity that the telling of this story was undertaken.

During the past sixteen years Mahabad has altered in appearance and in spirit. At the present time some 22,000 residents walk on new straight and asphalted streets in a town which enjoys many of the amenities of modern urban life that were lacking in 1946. The Third Corps of the Iranian army has its headquarters in Mahabad, providing by its presence an armed force far better trained and equipped than the one that pressed on the frontiers of the Republic in 1946 and harried the Barzanis out of the country. Much of the improvement in the physical aspect of Mahabad and other Kurdish towns has been due to the dynamic leadership of Iranian army officers such as Lt-General Karim Varahram, who commanded the Third Corps from 1955 to 1960.

The mood of Mahabad is now more subdued than it was in the heady days of 1945 and 1946. Its inhabitants, however, remain considerably more vital and less restrained than they were before 1941. With the extension of educational facilities and the accumulation of practical experience, the citizens of Mahabad are more cosmopolitan and less naïve than they were during the Republic. Most ex-officials of the Kurdish Government have long since returned to their occupations in the town; and the rancour that smouldered on after the executions of 30 March 1947 has slowly been dissipated by time, though the houses of the Qazis remain sadly peopled by women. The tribesmen of the region now carry no arms but retain their dignified bearing and colourful dress. Some of the grand old chiefs, such as Amr Khan of the Shikak and Ali Agha of the Dehbokri, are now dead. Others remain to

recall the old days and build for the future. Organized Kurdish nationalism, driven underground, has recruited only a few young extremists. Majority opinion among the Kurds, however, though still conscious of the separateness of the Kurds within the Iranian family, is not attracted by Soviet Communism; but it is united in sympathy with the Kurdish nationalist movement which has recently asserted itself in Iraq.

For it is in Iraq that Kurdish nationalist aspirations have centred since the revolution of 1958 made possible the return of Mulla Mustafa and his Barzani tribesmen. At first the Barzanis were fêted as heroes of the new régime, and the Democratic Party of (Iraqi) Kurdistan, headed by Mulla Mustafa was licensed and permitted to proselytize. Later, however, Kurdish nationalist demands grew until, in September 1961, the most extensive armed revolt in Kurdish history was launched in Iraqi Kurdistan. Mulla Mustafa in the north was chief of a tribal coalition and leader of the Democratic Party of Iraqi Kurdistan; while to the south at Rania, Abbas i Mamand Agha Ako seized the initiative; and farther south still in the Sulaimaniya Liwa another coalition of Kurdish tribal chiefs and party-members opposed the Iraqi Government for reasons of their own. Once again the Central Government called on Shaikh Rashid Lolan to oppose the Barzanis; but he could no more do this in 1961 than in 1931. Meanwhile the nomadic Herkis find their yearly migrations from the plains of Arbil through Barzani territory to the Iranian frontier as eventful as they were in 1906 when Mark Sykes visited the area. As in 1932, 1943, and 1945, the principal weapon used by the Iraqi Government against the tribes has been the air force, now equipped with MIG jet fighters armed with rockets.

The present condition of Kurdistan recalls not so much the Republic formed at Mahabad after that visit to Baku in 1945, which diverted the Kurdish movement towards Soviet goals as the days of the Komala in Iran and the Hewa Party in Iraq, with tribesmen defiantly pursuing their own ideals of freedom in their traditional ways. Once again the tribes of a portion of Kurdistan have taken up arms in a struggle against heavy odds, possessed by mixed ambitions. In some cases they are sustained by little more than the old Kurdish tradition that *Shar chaktira la bekariya* (Fighting is better than idleness). And it can be predicted

for the future, as we know from the past, that the Kurds in their distant mountains and separated valleys will at times be forgotten or ignored. Then, when moved by resolve or temerity, some of the characters of this book, and others, younger and perhaps unknown in Mahabad, will be heard of once again.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

THE FIRST VISIT TO BAKU

Qazi Muhammad
Haji Baba Shaikh
Ali Agha Amir Asad (Dehbokri)
Omar Aliar (Dehbokri)
Rashid Beg Herki
Zero Beg Herki
Taha Herki
Sayyid Muhammad Sadiq ('Shaikh Pusho')
Muhammad Amin Shikak
Hasan Honara Shikak
Hasan Telo Shikak
Haji Qarani Agha Mamash
Kaka Hamza Nalos Mamash
Majid Khan of Miandoab
Nuri Beg Begzadeh
Hurko Begzadeh
Ahmad Beg Faizullah Begi
Baiz Agha Gawurk
Muhammad Husain Saif i Qazi

APPENDIX II

THE FOUNDERS OF THE KOMALA

Rahman Halavi
Muhammad Amin Sharafi
Muhammad Nanavazadeh
Rahman Zabihi
Husain Furuhar (Zargari)
Abdul Rahman Emami
Qasim Qaderi
Mulla Abdullah Daudi
Qader Mudarisi
Ahmad Ilmi
Aziz Zendi
Muhammad Yahu
Mir Haj from Iraq

APPENDIX III

THE SECOND VISIT TO BAKU

Qazi Muhammad
Saif i Qazi
Manaf Karimi
Ali Raihani
Qasim Ilkhanizadeh Dehbokri
Abdullah Qaderi Mamash
Kaka Hamza Nalos Mamash
Nuri Beg Begzadeh

APPENDIX IV

MEMBERS OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE (with *) OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF KURDISTAN IN 1946 AND THE CABINET

*Haji Baba Shaikh	P.M. and Chief of Supreme Court
	Ministers
*Muhammad Husain Saif i Qazi	War and Asst. President
*Manaf Karimi	Education and Asst. to President
*Sayyid Muhammad Ayubian	Health
*Abdul Rahman Ilkhanizadeh	Foreign Affairs
*Ismail Ilkhanizadeh	Roads
*Ahmad Ilahi	Economics
*Khalil Khosravi	Labour
*Karim Ahmadain	Posts, Telegraphs and Telephones
*Haji Mustafa Daudi	Commerce
*Muhammad Amin Moini	Interior
Mulla Husain Majdi	Justice
*Mahmud Valizadeh	Agriculture

OTHER MEMBERS OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF KURDISTAN

*Muhammad Rasuli (Dilshad)	Secretary of Central Committee
*Muhammad Amin Sharafi	(Major) in Supply
*Abdul Rahman Zabihi	

APPENDIX V

MEMBERS OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF KURDISTAN FORMED IN MAY 1946

Mulla Husain Majdi	Abdullah Qaderi Mamash
Karim Agha Bayazidi	Qasim Ilkhanizadeh Dehbokri
Aziz Abbasi	Rahman Zabihi
Shaikh Hasan Shams i Borhan	Nejmadin Tohidi
Sayyid Ali Husaini	Muhammad Amin Khatemi
Ali Khan Mangur Nozari	Hashim Yusefi

APPENDIX VI

DIRECTORS-GENERAL AND OTHER PERSONALITIES OF THE KURDISH REPUBLIC, 1946

Directors-General:

Sadiq Haidari	Propaganda
Ali Raihani	Land Registration
Ali Khosravi	Youth
Ghani Khosravi	Municipal Affairs
Ahmad Ilmi	Ministry of Finance

Miscellaneous:

Qasim Ilkhanizadeh	Inspector
Rahman Zabihi	Inspector
Nejmadin Tohidi	Inspector

Sherkat i Taraqi (commercial company):

Muhammad Amin Moini (Minister of Interior)
Qasim Utamishi
Rahman Valizadeh

Abdul Rahman Sharafkandi ('Hazhar')	National Poet
Sayyid Muhammad Hamidi	Editor of *Kurdistan*
Abdul Rahman Zabihi	Editor of *Nishtiman*

APPENDIX VII

AN INCOMPLETE LIST OF KURDISH ARMY OFFICERS[1]

Officers from Iranian Kurdistan

General Muhammad Husain Saif i Qazi, Minister of War
General Mulla Mustafa
General Amr Khan Sharifi Shikak
General Hama Rashid Baneh
Major Jafar Karimi, Chief of Staff
Colonel Muhammad Nanavazadeh
Major Muhammad Amin Sharafi
Major Ali Khan Shirzad
Major Ibrahim Bey Salah, Commander of Mahabad Forces
Captain Khalil Muvaffaqi
Captain Hasan Rahimzadeh
Captain Muhammad Saidzadeh
Captain Hamid Mazuji, Chief of Military Police

Officers from Iraqi Kurdistan[2]

Colonel Mustafa Khoshnao (ex-Capt)
Major Khairullah from Arbil (1st Lt)
Captain Muhammad Mahmud Qazi (2nd Lt)
Colonel Izzat Abdul Aziz (Maj)
Captain Bakr Khoshnao (Capt)
Major Sayyid Ahmad Sayyid Taha
Colonel Mir Haj Ahmad (Capt)
Colonel Sayyid Abdul Aziz Gilani (Capt)
1st Lieutenant Nuri Shirvani
1st Lieutenant Jalal Amin
1st Lieutenant Abdul Aziz
Sharif Niman (Warrant Officer)
Captain Nuri Amin

[1] All members of the Central Committee had the rank of Lt Colonel.
[2] Iraqi ranks in parentheses.

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