Chapter 10

The Kurds in the Soviet Union

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THE KURDS UNDER IMPERIAL RUSSIA

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Georgia, eastern Armenia and northern Azerbaijan were conquered by the Russians. These territories, previously under Persian rule, all contained sizeable Kurdish minorities. Whether these Kurds were the descendants of the Transcaucasian Kurds of earlier centuries was, except possibly in the case of the Azerbaijani Kurds, not clear in the light of the complexity of the historical changes that had taken place since the reign of the Shaddadids, let alone those of the earlier periods of the Khoren and the Medians. All that can be stated with certainty is that the original inhabitants of Kurdistan had always overspilled its boundaries into neighbouring territories, including Transcaucasia, for reasons which ranged from economic pressures and internecine conflicts to semi-nomadism. According to the census of 1897, the first to be based on mother tongue, the Russian empire had a total population of 125,640,200 including 100,000 Kurds approximately as shown in Table 10.1.

The figures in Table 10.1 are unreliable (as are later Soviet statistics) and there are strong grounds for believing that the total of 99,900 refers solely to the Kurdish population of Transcaucasia and does not include Turkmenia, which at that period was the only Central Asian territory with a Kurdish minority.

These, according to A. Bennigsen (1960, pp. 513–30) the least known of the USSR's minority peoples, were in fact a part of the initially small settlement in Khorasan of Kurmanji-speaking Kurds who had been moved there from Azerbaijan in the eighteenth century by Shah Abbas to defend Persia's north-east frontier against the Uzbeks. By the end of the nineteenth century the

Table 10.1 The ethnic population of Russia according to the census of 1897

Ethnic Groups	*Numbers*
Russians, Ukrainians and Byelorussians	89,933,600
Armenians (total for all Russia)	1,173,100
Georgians	824,000
Tajiks	350,400
Turcomans	281,400
Ossetians	171,700
Kurds	99,900
Kabardins (Caucasian-speaking)	98,600
Tats (Iranian-speaking)	95,100
Abkhaz (Caucasian-speaking)	72,100
Circassians (Caucasian-speaking)	46,300
Persians	31,700
Afghans	500
Jews	5,063,200
Others	27,398,600
Total	125,640,200

Source: *Processus ethniques en URSS*. French version translated by Emery, Larionova and Rygalov, Moscow, 1982, p. 35.

Kurds of Turkmenia were probably as numerous and as thriving as those of Transcaucasia.

As far as the origins of the Kurdish population of present-day Soviet Armenia are concerned, few are descended from those included in the 1897 census because most of the latter were massacred during the First World War or under the Tashnak Armenian Republic in 1918–20. They were largely replaced by Yazidi Kurdish emigrants from northern Kurdistan during the Second World War as was confirmed to the author by Armenian Kurds in 1990.

During the second half of the nineteenth century the Armenian nationalist movement laid claim to six vilayets in Eastern Turkey: Erzurum, Van, Bitlis, Diyarbakir, Mamuret Aziz and Sivas. Despite their being represented to public opinion in Europe as "Armenian vilayets", only 17 per cent of their population was in fact Armenian according to contemporary Ottoman statistics (Fany 1933, p. 159). These exaggerated claims caused considerable damage to the relatively good relations that had hitherto existed between the Ottoman government, the Kurds and the Armenians,

for while the population of Sivas was predominantly Turkish that of the other five vilayets was 80 per cent Kurdish. The situation was further complicated by the overriding concern amounting almost to obsession on the part of Russia, Britain and France with the freeing of the Christian nations of the Balkans from Ottoman rule, a concern which led them to support the Armenian demands for local autonomy in the six vilayets. The Kurdish majority thus found itself in a difficult position: excluded from the proposed reforms designed to benefit the Armenian minority alone and dismissed as "marauding tribes" by Armenian propagandists and Christian missionaries, they were at the same time Muslims linked to the Turkish caliphate and preferring Turkish to Armenian rule and yet also a people which saw itself as forming a separate nation, and had for that reason frequently revolted against Turkish rule during the nineteenth century. One of the most important of these uprisings took place during the Crimean War in 1853–5, a timing which was deliberate. Its leader was Yezdan Sher, "who occupied Bitlis, Mosul and subsequently the entire region between Van and Baghdad" before being captured after betrayal by "a British consular agent, Nimroud Rassam" (Nikitine 1956, p. 159).

After Turkey's defeat in the Russo–Ottoman war of 1878, Russia obtained the independence of Romania and a Greater Bulgaria under the terms of the Treaty of San Stefano, which also contained an article (no. 16) providing for reforms in the eastern "provinces inhabited by the Armenians" and for a Turkish guarantee of their security "against the Kurds". Largely because Britain was reluctant to see Turkey placed under the virtual tutelage of Russia, the Treaty of San Stefano was superseded by that of Berlin within the same year (1898). Article 61 of the latter reproduced word for word Article 16 of the former with the addition of an undertaking by Turkey to "inform" the Great Powers of the progress of reform in the six eastern vilayets.

The Sultan was far from eager to introduce the reforms thus imposed. When G.J. Goschen, the senior European diplomat accredited to the Porte, in a memorandum of 11 June 1880, asked the Ottoman government on behalf of the Powers to report progress, he received a six-page reply dated 5 July from the Grand Vizier, Abidin Pasha, which concluded, "Je crois enfin superflu que la Sublime Porte donne avis aux Puissances signataires du Traité de Berlin des mesures prises par elle pour l'introduction successive des

réformes dans les provinces du Kurdistan and d'Anatolie habitées aussi par des Arméniens" (Fany 1933, pp. 153–9).

Abidin Pasha's closing paragraph is significant in that it gives an undertaking by the Ottoman government to keep the Powers informed of the reforms to be effected "in the provinces of Kurdistan and Anatolia inhabited by Armenians". Not only were there no provinces inhabited by Armenians in Turkey, but Turkey itself was composed of two entities, Kurdistan and Anatolia, as witness the terms used by Abidin Pasha himself. Kurdistan did not become "Eastern Anatolia" until the Kemalist regime assumed power in Turkey, just as it was not until much later that southern Kurdistan became transformed into "Northern Iraq".

While this diplomatic exchange was taking place, the Kurds staged an armed uprising in Turkish Kurdistan and the northern areas of Persian Kurdistan with the aim of gaining independence. The leader of the revolt was Shaykh Ubaydullah of Nehri and Shemdinan, chairman of the Kurdish League whose manifesto opened with the declaration "The Kurds are a separate nation". Shaykh Ubaydullah sent copies of the manifesto to the representatives of the Western Powers and also endeavoured to guarantee the security of the Christian minorities in Kurdistan.[2] But as Olson points out, the Powers, Russia in particular, were as opposed to Kurdish independence as Persia and Turkey:

> At the end of this first stage of Kurdish nationalism, all of the European powers, as emphasized in the Treaty of Berlin, were opposed to Kurdish independence movements . . . Russia did not want to be robbed of the territories, some of which were largely Kurdish, in eastern Turkey that it had obtained by the Treaty of Berlin. Neither did it want a Kurdish state on its Caucasian borders, especially one animated by the religious fervour of the Nakşbandi order. Russia had its fill of such movements with Shah Şamil in the 1840s.
>
> (Olson 1989, p. 7)

Shaykh Ubaydullah's uprising failed. In 1881 he was taken prisoner and exiled to Mecca.

In 1891, Abdulhamid II, Sultan since 1878, raised the Hamidiye Light Cavalry Regiments (Hamidiye Hafif Süvari Alayları) composed entirely of Kurdish troopers under Kurdish officers, who were sons of tribal chieftains, trained in a military academy in Istanbul. Their formation caused tension amongst the Kurds as

a whole because recruitment was restricted to Sunni Muslims, Alevis being excluded. In Olson's opinion (Olson 1989, p. 8), Abdulhamid saw the Hamidiye regiments as a means of tying the empire "more firmly to its Muslim roots" providing "a defense against Russia and the Armenians, both increasingly aggressive after 1878, and the Kurds . . . as a balance against the urban notables and the provincial governments" (ibid. p 8).

By 1895, there were 57 Hamidiye regiments each with a minimum strength of 512 men and a maximum of 1,512, a total of approximately 50,000 men constituting a corps under the Sultan's direct command entirely separate from the Ottoman army.

The Hamidiye regiments were responsible for the massacres of Armenians in 1895 and detachments also took part in the Balkan wars and the fighting with Syria. Their numbers were increased to 64 under the Young Turks in 1910 when, according to Olson, "there had not been such a concentration of Kurdish power and authority since 1874" (i.e. the fall of the Kurdish principality of Botan ruled by the Bedir-Khan family) and "the Hamidiye era was a necessary interlude in emergent Kurdish nationalism marking the third stage in its evolution. It contributed to feelings of solidarity among Sunni Kurds and offered leadership opportunities to many young Kurdish men. The Hamidiye also provided many Kurds with knowledge of military technology and equipment and the capabilities to use it" (Olson 1989, p. 10). And it is true to say that in Shaykh Sa'id's rebellion many of the leaders were former Hamidiye officers whereas the Alevi Kurds from the north scarcely took part.

The Armenian response to the massacres of 1895–6 was to massacre the Kurds in Armenia and north Kurdistan during the Russian incursions of 1914–15 into Bayazit, Erzurum, Eleşkirt, Van, Bitlis, Muş and as far south as the river Rawanduz. The Kurdish historian, Muhamed Amin Zaki (1880–1948), a native of Sulaimaniya who was serving as a staff officer in the Ottoman army at the time, writes of "large-scale massacres of the Kurdish population in these areas by well-armed bands of Armenians who acted as an advance force of the Russian army".[3] Zaki also mentions massacres of Kurds by forces under the command of Turkish officers inspired by pan-Turanist ideology. These, together with famine, epidemics and deportation, led Zaki to estimate the total deaths among non-combatants amongst the Kurds at 500,000. It is relevant here to point out that those principally responsible for

the massacres of Armenians during the same period (1915–16), Talaat Pasha, Enver and Jamal, were also members of the pan-Turanist party, Union and Progress (İttihad ve Terakkî Cemiyeti).

Although Russian policy opposed Kurdish independence, St Petersburg became, from the middle of the nineteenth century, the leading centre of Kurdish studies. To be sure, the founder of this area of knowledge is generally acknowledged to have been the former missionary priest, Padre Maurizio Garzoni, who published his *Grammatica e Vocabolario della Lingua Kurda* at Rome in 1787, but in the same year Pallas's comparative dictionary containing several hundred Kurdish words was published in St Petersburg under the patronage of Catherine the Great and laid the foundations for subsequent studies by Russian, French and German Scholars.

Most of these published under the aegis of the Imperial Academy of Sciences and among them was the Russian Pole, A.D. Jaba, a former Russian consul at Erzurum, whose *Receuil de notices et extraits kurdes* appeared in 1860. Jaba also compiled a Kurdish–French dictionary, a conversational lexicon and an unpublished parallel French–Russian–Kurdish dictionary. A German scholar, Peter Lerch, published at St Petersburg in 1857 a selection of Kurdish texts, *Forschungen über die Kurden*, based on material collected during the Crimean War from Kurdish prisoners segregated in a camp at Smolensk for this purpose. Ferdinand Justi (*Kurdische Grammatik*, 1880), E. Prym and Albert Socin (*Kurdische Sammlungen*, 1890) also published studies of Kurdish material.

Perhaps the most important Kurdish material to be published in St Petersburg was the history of the Kurds originally compiled in 1596 by Sharaf Khan, "Prince of Bitlis, Moush, Khinis, Akhlat the Dependencies thereof and of all the Lands and Strongholds inherited by him from his Forefathers". This work, written in Persian, as its title *Sharaf-nameh* indicates, covers five centuries "so that the history of the great ruling dynasties of Kurdistan will not remain unknown". The original manuscript with corrections in the author's own hand dated and signed 1599 in the Royal Safavid Library at Ardabil was taken to St Petersburg with the rest of the library as part of Russia's spoils after the war with Persia in 1828. The Persian text was edited with an introduction in French by the Russian academician, V. Veliaminov-Zernov, under the title *Scheref-nameh ou histoire des kourdes* in 1860. A French

edition in four volumes was published, also in St Petersburg, in 1869–75 under the title *Sheref-nameh ou Fastes de la Nation kourde* and was accompanied by an introduction and a formidable critical apparatus by its editor, François Charmoy.

This florescence of academic studies of the Kurds and their culture, disinterested as it may have been as far as individual scholars were concerned, was nevertheless a clear reflection of Russia's overriding territorial ambitions which envisaged the dismemberment of the Persian and Ottoman empire, access to "the warm seas", and the liberation of Christian minorities. Kurdish independence had no part in these ambitions and any encouragement shown from time to time was nothing more than an opportunistic move towards the realization of these ambitions on the part of Imperial Russia.

KURDS IN THE USSR: LENIN TO BREZHNEV

When the Bolsheviks assumed power in Petrograd in November 1917, Russia was still allied to Britain and France and at war with Germany and Turkey – an important factor contributing to the new central government's inability to extend its rule in any effective sense to the outlying regions of the Russian empire. Most of these territories were quick to declare themselves independent, among them Transcaucasia and Central Asia.

On 11 November, three days after the Bolsheviks took control, a Transcaucasian Assembly was set up. This brought together deputies from the various nationalities: Georgians who were mainly adherents of the Menshevik party; Armenians from the nationalist Tashnak movement; Tatars from the conservative Musavat (Equality) group. These were joined by a handful of Kurds.[4]

In 1918, on 22 April, the assembly proclaimed the establishment of the "Democratic Federal Republic of Transcaucasia". A month later it succumbed to disputes raised by its differing ethnic constituents. Georgia, with German encouragement, proclaimed its independence on May 26 to be followed next day by Azerbaijan supported by the Turks (Enver Pasha was in Baku at the time). On 30 May the Armenian National Council in Tbilisi claimed sovereignty over "the Armenian Provinces" without giving specific details of the territories designated by the term, an announcement which was immediately followed by a Georgian ultimatum to

quit Tbilisi. The Armenian Tashnak government subsequently established itself in Yerevan where it was soon under attack by Ottoman forces who captured Alexandropol (modern Leninakan). The period 1918–20 saw the new-born Armenian republic embroiled in a series of conflicts in which resistance to invaders and massacres of minorities loomed large. Aram Manoukian, after his appointment as virtual dictator, was able to utilize the abilities of Russian-trained Armenian officers to launch a series of punitive expeditions against Kurdish and Azeri villages in the spring of 1918. These attacks were directed against regions where Armenians were in fact a minority of the population. In the summer of the same year General Andranich continued the attacks on Muslim communities (Ter Minassian 1989, pp. 73–6). From July to September 1920, Rouben Ter Minassian, a Turkish Armenian who had been named defence minister in Yerevan took over the anti-Muslim campaign with the aim of creating "une patrie par le fer et le sang" (ibid, pp. 215–18), despite his public declaration of admiration for the courage and code of honour of his Kurdish victims (ibid, p. 216).

Some eighteen months before the beginning of these campaigns, early in 1918, Enver Pasha despatched his brother Nuri Pasha to Baku. Shortly after his arrival a general uprising against the Russians and Armenians took place and Azerbaijan was proclaimed an independent republic. A few months later, on 15 September, the Ottoman army occupied Baku only to withdraw with the rest of the Turkish forces in Transcaucasia after the signing of the Mudros armistice on 30 October and the defeat of the Ottoman empire in a wider conflict of the First World War. The Turkish occupying forces were replaced by British troops in Azerbaijan who secured the British interest in Baku's oil wells.

It was in this context that Mustafa Kemal whose power in Turkey was in the ascendant, sought an alliance with the Soviet government to counter "Western imperialism". In 1919, he despatched two envoys, Enver's uncle Khalil Pasha and Fuad Sabi, to Baku for further negotiations which resulted in the Soviet–Turkish agreement of 29 November 1919, which included a Soviet undertaking to supply the new regime in Turkey with money and arms. Shortly afterwards, in the spring of 1920, a branch of the Turkish Communist Party was formed in Baku under the auspices of Mustafa Sufi, a leading member of the Communist Party in Turkey itself. Due largely to the efforts of the newly-established party, Azerbaijan became a Soviet republic without

notable opposition on 27 April. Georgia followed suit on 7 May, becoming a full member of the Soviet Union in 1921. On 19 July 1920, the Turkish Foreign Minister, Beku Sami, led a delegation to Moscow. On 24 August, two weeks after the signing of the Treaty of Sèvres, a Soviet–Turkish agreement was concluded. In September, Turkish forces attacked Armenia and captured Alexandropol with tacit Soviet collaboration. Faced with this double opposition the Tashnak party lost control of Yerevan and by 29 November the independent republic of Armenia had ceased to exist; three days later Armenia became a Soviet Socialist Republic.

At this period the Kurds formed a majority in those areas of west Azerbaijan which marched with Armenia. They were for the most part farmers and urban tradesmen, Sunnis as compared with the Azeri Shi'ites. In the ancient city of Ganja, subseqently Kirovabad, the Kurds were almost completely assimilated, but this was not the case in the area which began forty kilometres to the south west and extended to the Araks and the Iranian border with Nagorny Karabakh to the east; approximately 5,200 square kilometres, this territory was almost entirely Kurdish. It included the capital Lachin together with the principal towns Kalbajar, Kubatli and Zangelan and the administrative sub-divisions of Karakushlak, Koturli, Murad-Khanli and Kurd-Haji. It was this area that subsequently formed the autonomous region (*uyezd*) of Kurdistan, known to the Kurds as "Red" Kurdistan (*Kurdistana sor*). One version of its genesis[5] has a letter from the leader of the south Kurdistan (now Iraq) national movement, Shaykh Mahmud Barzinji, to Lenin requesting Soviet aid in the struggle against British imperialism and drawing his attention to the "international significance of the Kurdish national question". Lenin is said to have expressed his awareness of the issue together with concern about the role of "Soviet Kurds".[6] Moreover, an autonomous Kurdistan was to be established and 40 million roubles was to be allocated to further this aim.

The Karabakh area had been divided before 1917 into seven Muslim, four Kurdish and three Azeri districts with the Armenian Christian area of Nagorny Karabakh isolated in their midst, albeit with "significant" Tatar and Kurdish minorities. The Armenian majority of Nagorny Karabakh was "reinforced" between 1917 and 1920 (Ter Minassian 1989, pp. 130–1). At the beginning of Soviet rule this area, with Nakhichevan, was disputed by Armenia and Azerbaijan, with further complications arising out of its close

proximity to areas where Kurds predominated. It took the Soviet government three years to settle the Azeri–Armenian dispute. In 1920 a solution was deferred to a later date and the Red Army assumed administrative responsibility for the area in the meantime. Lenin's letter to Narimanov had implied that Lachin was to be included in Azerbaijan, but the authorities in Baku and Yerevan were given promises that were inevitably contradictory.

March 16 1921 saw the signing of a pact of non-aggression between Turkey and the Soviet Union. Two years later, on 4 July 1923, Moscow decreed that the Kurdish area of which Lachin was the capital was to become a part of the Azerbaijan SSR together with Nagorny Karabakh despite the status of both as autonomous regions. In February 1924, the enclave of Nakhichevan with Turkey, Iran and Armenia on three of its borders was also absorbed into Azerbaijan; it was however accorded the status of autonomous republic, one grade higher than *uyezd*.

These decisions established a series of five areas extending eastwards from Nakhichevan in an arc along the river Araks, all possessing distinct ethnic identities and with differing political status, viz the Nakhichevan ASSR (5,500 sq km) with an "Azeri–Kurdish majority" as Soviet statistics termed it and an Armenian minority population; the narrow southern strip of Armenian territory comprising Kafan, Goris and Yekhezghadzor; the autonomous region of Kurdistan (5,200 sq km) composed of four Kurdish districts; the Armenian autonomous region of Nagorny Karabakh (4,400 sq km), capital Stepanakert, whose Armenian majority was increased from 70 per cent to 94 per cent between 1919 and 1920; the remainder of the Azerbaijan SSR.

It cannot be denied that it would have been far more appropriate, given the ethnic constitution of the area as a whole, if Nagorny Karabakh had remained a part of Armenia, but at the same time it is hardly likely that Lenin, already ill and in his last year, could have envisaged the fate of "Red Kurdistan" under Stalin.

The undisclosed reason for the area's inclusion in Azerbaijan was the desire of the Soviet government to maintain friendly relations with the Kemalist regime in Turkey.[7] Armenian historians, among them Anahide Ter Minassian, assert that there were wider political aims, foremost among them the creation of "Greater Azerbaijan" extending from the Caspian to the Black Sea, as envisaged by the Azeri Musavat delegates to the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. Further, this was seen as a step on the road to a pan-Turanic entity,[8]

an ideal which the establishment of Azerbaijan had by no means extinguished. Armenian commentators of today, however, tend to ignore the problem, comparable in all respects, of Kurdistan.

Kurdistan was able to survive as an autonomous region within Azerbaijan for roughly two years until 1925, the year which saw the beginning of Sheikh Sa'id's Kurdish uprising in Turkey. A Kurdish governing body was established, Kurdish schools and a teacher's training college were founded, books in Kurdish and a political periodical, *Sovyet Kurdustan*, were published.

This measure of self-government was of short duration. In 1929, the Baku government reduced Kurdistan from an *uyezd* to an *okrug* (district), the lowest territorial unit for the Soviet non-Russian nationalities. Eight years later Soviet Kurdistan's autonomy had entirely disappeared, again largely as a result of the desire to maintain good relations with Turkey where Kurdish insurgents remained a problem.[9]

To help understand subsequent events as they affected the Kurds as individuals and as families, it is worth citing an interview with Nadir K. Nadirov, a Kurdish member of the Kazakhstan Academy of Sciences, which appeared in the various foreign language editions of *Moscow News* at the beginning of 1990 (26 January–1 February). In his introductory resumé of his subject's background, the interviewer recalled that "Kurdistan" had been established in Azerbaijan in 1923 by order of the Central Committee and shortly afterwards became an autonomous district with Lachin as its capital. The leader of its first government was Gussi Gajev. The journal *Sovyetskiy Kurdistan* recalled as well as the teachers' training college at Shusha, the schools where Kurdish was the medium of instruction, and Kurdish-language broadcasting. In 1937 the Kurds, including Nadirov's family, were deported from Azerbaijan and Armenia. In 1944 the Georgian Kurds were also sent to the "special colonies", among them Nadirov's early home in Siberia, where they were resettled. Most adult males were deported separately and their fate is at present still unknown.

It should be emphasized that the deportations of 1937 referred to by Nadirov's interviewer were quite unrelated to the Second World War or its anticipation. Nor can the deportation of 1944 be connected with the war. In this respect they differ from the cases of the Crimean Tatars and the Volga Germans. According to Mihoyi, the deportations took place at the instigation of the head of the Azerbaijani government, Mir Jafar Bakirov, who had

close connections with Stalin and the OGPU. While this may be true in the case of the Kurds deported from Azerbaijan, it fails to explain why Armenia and Georgia followed suit. Here again it would seem that the deportations were brought about by pressure from Turkey, which was resettling its Kurdish population at the same time (cf. the deportations from Dersim – modern Tunceli – in 1937–8). Not only did Turkey and Azerbaijan pursue an identical policy, both employed identical techniques, e.g. forced assimilation, manipulation of population figures, settlement of non-Kurds in areas predominantly Kurdish, suppression of publications and abolition of Kurdish as a medium of instruction in schools. A familiar Soviet technique was also used: Kurdish historical figures such as Sharaf Khan of Bitlis and Ahmad Khani and the Shaddadid dynasty as a whole were described as Azeris. Kurds who retained "Kurdish" as their nationality on their internal passports as opposed to "Azeri" were unable to find employment. The Kurdish department of the Institute of Oriental Studies at Baku was abolished as late as the 1960s although Kurdish studies continued in comparable institutions in Moscow, Leningrad and Yerevan. Strangely enough, *Sovyet Kurdustan* continued to be published in the 1930s, but not in Kurdish. A Turkic language, in a synthetic alphabet made up of Cyrillic as well as Roman letters, was used to provide coverage of issues unrelated to the Kurds and all too characteristic of *zastoya* (the period of stagnation).

Official Soviet statistics produced by the Azerbaijan SSR within the past two years show a decline in the number of Kurds within its borders according to census figures covering almost seventy years:

1921	32,780
1926	41,000
1939	6,000
1959	1,500
1970	5,000
1979	No Kurds recorded in Azerbaijan
1989	13,000

These figures are of dubious value and almost certainly inaccurate. It is scarcely credible that the figure for 1926 can be so low given that they include the population of "Red Kurdistan", when in 1921 the figure was only 8,000 fewer and did not include the autonomous region's population. The fluctuations between 1959 and 1989 are barely feasible. The official reasons given by the

Azerbaijani government are even less so. When, for instance, Soviet Kurds questioned them about "the disappearance of the Kurds" (*windabûna Kurdan*), the answer given was that "they had assimilated for objective reasons", i.e. because they were Muslims like the Azeris. It may be asked why this was the case in Azerbaijan when it was so evidently not so in Turkey, Iraq, Syria and Iran. Moreover, in 1988 some 10,000 of these "lost" Kurds returned their Azeri passports to Moscow with the request that the nationality description be changed to Kurdish. Professor Shakero Mihoyi estimated that the number of Kurds in Soviet Azerbaijan today is "at least 250,000". Mamo Khalit Darwishyan, a Kurdish ethnographer based in Yerevan, puts the figure even higher at 400,000. In 1988, Darwishyan wrote to Gorbachev to complain that the local authorities had prevented his investigating the situation in Lachin; in Kalbajar he was able to question Kurds because he had avoided making any request through official channels.[10] There are Kurdish communities to be found elsewhere in Azerbaijan: in Baku, Nakhichevan and Nagorny Karabakh.

The figures for Soviet Kurds in 1926, 1939, and 1959 census returns are cited by Bennigsen who comments that "most Soviet Kurdologists regard these as inadequate" and goes on to quote an estimate made by Aristova in 1954 of 160,000. The 1939 figure includes 15,000 Yazidi Kurds while those for 1959 include 21,000 Kurds in Armenia where in 1916 they numbered in the province of Yerevan alone, an area representing nearly 50 per cent of Soviet Armenia, more than 36,000. In Azerbaijan there were even greater numbers. The 1979 census figures given in *Processus ethniques en URSS* are not to be relied on. It may be asked how it was that the Kurdish population scarcely showed any increase between 1897 and 1979 when that of other Soviet nationalities increased four-, six- and in some cases eight-fold during the same period. Under Tsarist rule the Kurds increased in number by 32 per cent in the period 1897–1916.

Not all Transcaucasian Kurds were deported to be resettled in the other Soviet republics of Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Siberia, and some of these were subsequently able to return to Transcaucasia. The numbers deported are unknown. Some idea may be gained by considering what is known of deportations from "Red Kurdistan". Compared with Nagorny Karabakh, this is a larger, less mountainous, more fertile and more populous region. Given comparable increases

of population over the same period, where Nagorny Karabakh in 1990 had a population of roughly 190,000, the four districts of Kurdistan might have a total population of 300–350,000 of whom some two-thirds would be Kurdish, and in Transcaucasia as a whole Kurds would have numbered close to one million, including 500,000 in Azerbaijan, had it not been for deportations and other forms of persecution.

This is not the place for a detailed analysis of Soviet estimates of the number of Kurds outside the USSR, but the 1970 census figure of 88,930 Soviet Kurds reflects – quite apart from any manipulation of the figures returned – the mass deportation of Kurds. Isayev's reference (see below) to their "assimiliation" because of their being "scattered among several other nationalities" is a typical Soviet euphemism for the forcible deportations of 1937 and 1944 and the resettlement in Soviet republics largely in Central Asia. What is true is that the ethnic situation in the Transcaucasus under Soviet rule is as complex as it was under the Tsars. Figures for 1959 give a total of 2,787,000 Armenians in the USSR as a whole, while the Armenian republic had 1,763,000 inhabitants consisting of 1,551,600 Armenians, 107,700 Azeris, 65,500 Russians, 25,600 Kurds (a figure higher than the 21,000 estimated by Bennigsen for the same year), 5,600 Ukrainians, 5,000 Assyrians, and 2,000 other nationalities. According to the 1970 census cited by Isayev, the total for Armenians was 3,559,151 of which 2,208,327 were in Soviet Armenia, 452,309 in Georgia, 483,250 in Azerbaijan and 298,718 in the Russian federation (Isayev also gives a figure of 1.5 million for the Armenians outside the USSR which should in fact be closer to 2 million). Soviet Armenia, which the Armenians themselves refer to as Eastern Armenia, is considerably smaller than the historical Armenia. The Soviet government with the support of the neighbouring republics adopted a policy of exclusion of those territories which had once had Armenian majorities, but which by 1920 had gained majorities of Georgians, Azeris or Kurds. Even taking into account the loss of Western Armenia, now part of Turkey, the Armenians can still count themselves fortunate compared with the Kurds for they at least have their own republic and have benefited in the long run from their membership of the USSR.

In other areas, particularly Turkmenia, the Kurds were as numerous as they were in Transcaucasia. The main areas of settlement were Kopet-Dag and Firyuza with smaller rural groups

in Ciok-Tepe, Kakha and Kara-Kala with urban communities in Bagir, Bayram-Ali and in the capital, Ashkhabad.[11] But unlike the Kurds in Armenia, the Kurds of Turkmenia were subjected to an active campaign of assimilation and were granted no facilities for education in their own language. Nevertheless, they remained conscious of their identity and have participated in recent efforts by Soviet Kurds to obtain a restoration of the right to be acknowledged as a separate nationality.

The total number of Kurds living within the USSR today is unknown. Soviet Kurds themselves give estimates that range from approximately 300,000 to a precise figure of 1,120,000. As an example of the increase in numbers within the Kurdish diaspora in the Soviet Union, we may take the 3,000 Kurds resettled near Vladivostok in 1937 who today number 30,000 with their own schools using Kurdish as the medium of instruction and separate units such as *kolkhozy* within the Yakutsk ASSR. These Kurds are so conscious of their cultural identity that at the beginning of 1990 they sent a group of observers to the Düsseldorf trial of alleged PKK activists.

In the period since 1987, ethnic quarrels have forced many Kurds to leave Kirghizia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and move to Transcaucasia, the Krasnodar area in particular. In 1987–8, roughly 18,000 Kurds under threat in Armenia moved to the same area, although other Kurds left Azerbaijan for Armenia at the same time. The Kurds who have moved into the city boundaries of Krasnodar do not have valid internal passports and are not welcomed by the authorities with the result that in 1989 some 20,000 (of a rough total of 40,000) moved to Azerbaijan where a policy shift on the part of the government in Baku had made them relatively welcome.

The writer's own estimate of the number of Kurds in the USSR in 1990 is given in Table 10.2 of the Kurdish population in the republics or regions named. The figure for Azerbaijan includes between 10 and 20 per cent from rural areas who in part assimilated, but who have begun to rediscover their cultural identity under the more liberal rule initiated by Gorbachev's policy of *glasnost*.

The majority of those Kurds who were not deported from Georgia in 1944 have tended to congregate in or near the capital, Tbilisi, where they number approximately 34,000. A further 8,000 live in villages in the nearby region of Telavi. The Tbilisi Kurds, predominantly Yazidis, have established their own elementary and

Table 10.2 Estimate of the number of Kurds in the USSR, 1990

USSR republic/region	*Numbers*
Azerbaijan	180,000
Armenia	50,000
Georgia	40,000
Kazakhstan	30,000
Kirghizia	20,000
Uzbekistan	10,000
Tajikistan	3,000
Turkmenia	50,000
Siberia	35,000
Krasnodar	20,000
Other	12,000
Total	450,000

secondary school and a cultural centre where the languages of instruction and information are Kurdish, Georgian and Russian.

They have also formed their own theatre company and with the recent liberalization policies have begun to engage in private enterprise. Unlike the 100,000 Abkhazi Muslims in Georgia, Kurds are not perceived as a threat by the Georgians who see them as a tough and resilient people, much as Russians view Georgians.

Armenia, it must be conceded, is the only Soviet republic which preserved and protected Kurdish cultural infrastructures after the persecutions under Stalin. The Kurdish intelligentsia is mostly from Armenia, which is largely due to the fact that the Armenian Kurds have been able to be educated in their own language at primary and secondary level except in scientific subjects. The Writers' Union of Armenia has a Kurdish section and there is a flourishing department of Kurdish studies in the Oriental Studies Institute of the Armenian Academy of Sciences with a joint Armenian–Kurdish faculty board. A large number of books including textbooks, literary and scientific works as well as translations of foreign authors have been and continue to be published in Kurdish. Kurds arre represented politically on the Central Committee of the Armenian Communist Party, in parliament and in the government while the Armenian radio broadcasts news, music and other programmes in Kurdish.

In Armenia the main Kurdish settlements are in Alagöz and Tallin with others at Ashtarat, Zangibazar, Shamiran and Oktyabr

as well as in Yerevan where the community numbers between 10,000 and 20,000.[12]

Among the older generation of Kurdish intellectuals born in Armenia one of the most prominent was the novelist, Ereb Shemo (1898–1978). Born into a poor family living in the neighbourhood of Yerevan, he left home in his early teens to work as a shepherd in the northern Caucasus where he experienced considerable hardship. Contacts with revolutionary soldiers and workers led him to join the Bolsheviks at sixteen and for the rest of his life he remained loyal to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. From refugees who had fled to the northern Caucasus he learned of the atrocities being committed against Kurds by "the Tashnak counter-revolutionaries of the Armenian bourgeoisie" whose aim was to create a greater Armenia "from sea to sea". When he eventually returned home it was to find that his father had been killed by the Tashnaks and that his mother had died in the mountains she had fled to with his surviving sister, Chichek. Soviet rule brought improved conditions and Shemo was able to acquire an education, as he related in his autobiography, *Shvanê Kurmanja* (*The Kurdish Shepherd*), which was published in Kurmanji Kurdish in Yerevan in 1935.

In 1937, despite his being a model communist author, Shemo was deported to Siberia and spent the next twenty years in a series of *gulags*. When he was allowed to return home under Krushchev he resumed writing, but never referred to his years in Siberia. He published four more novels in Kurdish of which the first was *Berbang* (*Dawn*) and the second, which appeared the following year, *Jîna Bextewar* (*Happy Life*). Mamed Jemo[13] points out that the term "Kurdistan", which Shemo had used in his work published in the 1930s to designate the Kurdish regions of Transcaucasia, never appears in his later novels.

That Kurdish was very early recognized as one of the 130 languages of the Soviet Union is noted by the philologist M.I. Isayev in his "One Hundred and Thirty with Equal Rights" and he comments in a later work published in 1977, *National Languages of the USSR: Problems and Solutions*:

> Most Iranian languages and dialects are represented within Soviet territory including Tajik, Ossetic, Kurdish and Tat which also have a written form and those without any such as Talish, Baluchi,* Yaghnobi, Ishkashmi, Yazgulami and the Shughni-

of population over the same period, where Nagorny Karabakh in 1990 had a population of roughly 190,000, the four districts of Kurdistan might have a total population of 300–350,000 of whom some two-thirds would be Kurdish, and in Transcaucasia as a whole Kurds would have numbered close to one million, including 500,000 in Azerbaijan, had it not been for deportations and other forms of persecution.

This is not the place for a detailed analysis of Soviet estimates of the number of Kurds outside the USSR, but the 1970 census figure of 88,930 Soviet Kurds reflects – quite apart from any manipulation of the figures returned – the mass deportation of Kurds. Isayev's reference (see below) to their "assimiliation" because of their being "scattered among several other nationalities" is a typical Soviet euphemism for the forcible deportations of 1937 and 1944 and the resettlement in Soviet republics largely in Central Asia. What is true is that the ethnic situation in the Transcaucasus under Soviet rule is as complex as it was under the Tsars. Figures for 1959 give a total of 2,787,000 Armenians in the USSR as a whole, while the Armenian republic had 1,763,000 inhabitants consisting of 1,551,600 Armenians, 107,700 Azeris, 65,500 Russians, 25,600 Kurds (a figure higher than the 21,000 estimated by Bennigsen for the same year), 5,600 Ukrainians, 5,000 Assyrians, and 2,000 other nationalities. According to the 1970 census cited by Isayev, the total for Armenians was 3,559,151 of which 2,208,327 were in Soviet Armenia, 452,309 in Georgia, 483,250 in Azerbaijan and 298,718 in the Russian federation (Isayev also gives a figure of 1.5 million for the Armenians outside the USSR which should in fact be closer to 2 million). Soviet Armenia, which the Armenians themselves refer to as Eastern Armenia, is considerably smaller than the historical Armenia. The Soviet government with the support of the neighbouring republics adopted a policy of exclusion of those territories which had once had Armenian majorities, but which by 1920 had gained majorities of Georgians, Azeris or Kurds. Even taking into account the loss of Western Armenia, now part of Turkey, the Armenians can still count themselves fortunate compared with the Kurds for they at least have their own republic and have benefited in the long run from their membership of the USSR.

In other areas, particularly Turkmenia, the Kurds were as numerous as they were in Transcaucasia. The main areas of settlement were Kopet-Dag and Firyuza with smaller rural groups

in Ciok-Tepe, Kakha and Kara-Kala with urban communities in Bagir, Bayram-Ali and in the capital, Ashkhabad.[11] But unlike the Kurds in Armenia, the Kurds of Turkmenia were subjected to an active campaign of assimilation and were granted no facilities for education in their own language. Nevertheless, they remained conscious of their identity and have participated in recent efforts by Soviet Kurds to obtain a restoration of the right to be acknowledged as a separate nationality.

The total number of Kurds living within the USSR today is unknown. Soviet Kurds themselves give estimates that range from approximately 300,000 to a precise figure of 1,120,000. As an example of the increase in numbers within the Kurdish diaspora in the Soviet Union, we may take the 3,000 Kurds resettled near Vladivostok in 1937 who today number 30,000 with their own schools using Kurdish as the medium of instruction and separate units such as *kolkhozy* within the Yakutsk ASSR. These Kurds are so conscious of their cultural identity that at the beginning of 1990 they sent a group of observers to the Düsseldorf trial of alleged PKK activists.

In the period since 1987, ethnic quarrels have forced many Kurds to leave Kirghizia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and move to Transcaucasia, the Krasnodar area in particular. In 1987–8, roughly 18,000 Kurds under threat in Armenia moved to the same area, although other Kurds left Azerbaijan for Armenia at the same time. The Kurds who have moved into the city boundaries of Krasnodar do not have valid internal passports and are not welcomed by the authorities with the result that in 1989 some 20,000 (of a rough total of 40,000) moved to Azerbaijan where a policy shift on the part of the government in Baku had made them relatively welcome.

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Rushani sub-group of Pamiri.

* A written form of Baluchi is used in Pakistan (ed.).

Isayev draws on the figures given in the 1970 census when he describes Kurdish as:

> Spoken primarily in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Turkmenia. The total number of Kurds in the USSR is 88,930 scattered among several other nationalities, a factor which contributes to their assimilation and the loss of ethnic identity. In Armenia, which has schools where Kurdish is the medium of instruction, where Kurdish books by Kurds and foreign authors are published and where there is a Kurdish newspaper, *Ria Taze (New Path)*, Kurds have preserved their cultural unity. The majority of Kurds, however, live outside the USSR: approximately 4 million in Turkey, 3.5 million in Iran, 2 million in Iraq and 250,000 in Syria. Their language is divided into several dialects, viz Sorani, Zaza, Luri, Gurani and Kurmanji, which is the dialect spoken by the Soviet Kurds. The language has had a written form from at least the twelfth century and today Kurds use both an Arabic-based alphabet in Iraq and Iran and Roman-based script in Syria. Soviet Kurds acquired a written form for their language after the 1917 Revolution. The first alphabet, devised in 1921, was based on Armenian and failed to come into general use. In 1929 it was superseded by a Roman-based alphabet, which was in turn replaced by Cyrillic in 1945. The literacy made possible by these developments has produced a significant number of writers engaged in important literary and socio-political activities including the creation of a literary language that is an instrument of social progress and communist education among this minority people. Foremost among these writers are A. Dzhindi, A. Avdal, A. Sharo, Dzh. Gendzho, U. Bako, A. Shamilov (Ereb Shemo) and V. Nadir.[14]

The French authority on the Kurds, Père Thomas Bois, published a study of Kurdish literature, *Coup d'oeil sur la littérature kurde*, in 1955. In it he points out that the writing of Soviet Kurds, although written in Kurdish, does not give expression to the nationalist feelings evident in writers from Kurdish regions outside the USSR. For Soviet Kurdish writers the homeland is the village, the valley, Armenia or the Soviet Union, not Kurdistan. Whether this is a deliberate choice or an awareness of the limits imposed

by Soviet censorship it is hard to say and Père Bois did not live to see the revival of enthusiasm for Kurdistan among the Kurds of the USSR. Even from a technical point of view, though, according to Bois, Soviet Kurdish writing is stylistically at a much lower level of accomplishment than the Kumanji written by Syrian Kurdish authors such as Celadet and Kamuran Bedir-Khan, Osman Sabri, Cegerxwin or Nureddin Zaza, or those from Turkey such as M. Bozarslan, M. Uzun and M. Baksi. This view is more or less accepted today. The reason for this is, in part, political. In the early 1920s the Soviet authorities chose to encourage and support as the official written language of its Kurdish minority, of whom 95 per cent were illiterate, the colloquial Kurmanji of Transcaucasia rather than the literary language of scholars, writers and poets. Onto this vernacular was grafted a vocabulary needed to cope with modern conditions based largely on Russian. Outside Russia new formations are based on Kurdish root words. Credit cannot be denied to the Soviets for increasing the rate of literacy and for encouraging Kurdish studies, but even these achievements are ultimately outweighed, at least in the writer's view, by the massacres, enforced acculturation and deportations for which Stalin and Bakirov, together with their adherents, were responsible.

THE SOVIET KURDS AND *GLASNOST*: THE 1990 MOSCOW CONFERENCE

In the course of six visits to the USSR over a period of thirty-odd years beginning in 1959, the writer has been able to establish close ties with Soviet Kurds and can attest that never once was there any sense on either side of political or cultural alienation. To be sure, those encountered in the first five visits were predominantly intellectuals, but the last visit in 1990 extended contacts to all classes of Soviet Kurds. It is on the basis of this experience that the writer is able to state without reservation that Soviet Kurds perceive themselves as precisely that. They have a double allegiance: to their Kurdish identity and to the Soviet Union and it is noticeable that the latter, stronger perhaps in the older generation, is greater than any allegiance they might feel to the individual Soviet republics in which they live. In this respect, they may be seen as closely conforming to the Soviet ideal of citizenship. Nevertheless, it is the sense of being Kurdish that is foremost and

many now look forward to an autonomous and united Kurdistan, for all Kurds, to be achieved with Soviet assistance.

In April 1983, I visited the USSR at the invitation of the Soviet Academy of Sciences and during the course of my stay spent many memorable evenings with Soviet and other Kurds studying or living in Moscow. On all these occasions there was an overwhelming sense of unity among all those present. At that particular time my hosts were euphoric. Yuri Andropov had succeeded Brezhnev as General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party the previous autumn and he was seen as the first Soviet leader since Khrushchev to be willing to introduce a measure of reform into the system, and indeed, in his first public speech at the November 1982 meeting of the Supreme Soviet he had specifically mentioned the Kurds. What he had said was to the effect that in the Soviet Union there were national minorities belonging to peoples of whom the majority live beyond the borders of the USSR such as the Germans, Koreans and the Kurds. Although the Soviet Kurds were gratified by thus being singled out from among numerous other Soviet nationalities, they felt he had not gone far enough in recognizing their position and made the points that the Kurds are placed on the same footing as the Germans and Koreans, but these are minorities whose majorities live in their own established states outside the Soviet Union. It follows that the Kurds have, or should have, a Kurdistan where the majority lives.

The nationalist fervour unleashed among the minority peoples of the Soviet Union by Gorbachev's policies was not absent among the relatively small number of Kurds, but they differed from other minorities in that any alleviation of their situation could be achieved only with the aid of the Soviet central government. There is no doubt that the latter was fully aware of the Kurds' problems and was willing, up to a point, to provide a measure of assistance. That Andropov had cited them as an instance was scarcely fortuitous and Gorbachev, his protégé and successor, is a native of the Transcaucasian city of Stavropol, while in turn, one of his earliest and closest collaborators, Edvard Shevardnadze, is a Georgian. Neither could be other than well-informed about the Kurdish minority in those areas. But the question that remains unresolved, however much vague goodwill may exist among government leaders in Moscow, is that of imposing a solution or arriving at a consensus with republics on the national question and the proposed new constitution of the USSR.

In 1988, Kurdish delegations from Azerbaijan were participants in demonstrations in Yerevan provoked by the dispute over Nagorny Karabakh. In the following year, on 20 May, a large and orderly demonstration by Kurds took place in Moscow in Pushkin Square. Present were groups from nine Soviet republics and on the following day, as reported by the Soviet media, including television, they marched to Ismailovsky Park. Prominent among the demonstrators were women from the central Asian republics where most adult Kurds are female because of the deportations and "disappearances" of their menfolk during the past fifty years. A spokeswoman for this group, Mezihe Ghefûr, made the following statement:

> I come from Kirghizia. Where I live there are 10,000 Kurds and 6,000 of them are women, who have asked me to speak on their behalf. As you now know, under Stalin, we were deported and resettled all over Central Asia and in Kazakhstan. We have been strictly supervised in exile; our neighbours do not know why we were deported and are hostile. The word is that we were "enemies of the people" and we cannot shake off this reputation. How can Kurdish girls go to school and study in this kind of situation? And if they can't study how can they claim their rights as human beings let alone as Soviet citizens? All over the world women tell their children stories about the heroes of their countries, but this is denied to us Kurds – our heroes have been sent into oblivion. They have robbed us of our heroes. They have robbed us of our culture. It is hard to educate our children. We cannot bring them up to love their country and their people. We are ashamed to tell them that they are Kurds through their mothers. I believe nobody in all the world is as deprived of rights as Kurdish women in this country. We left our children at home and came to Moscow to ask for justice. Where we live our lives are in danger. We are afraid for our children. We are afraid of extremists who would not stop at murder. We hide in our homes, but when we do go out they shout at us "Go home!" But where can we go? We have no home.

Another speaker in Pushkin Square was Adil Celîl from Lachin. When he was a child in the 1920s he went to a Kurdish school. When the Azerbaijani authorities filled in "Azeri" as his nationality on his internal passport in 1979 he refused to accept it and made strenuous efforts, like many other Kurds at the time, to get it

changed to "Kurdish". "The Kurds of Azerbaijan" he told the rally "refuse to die". His mother, he added, told him before he left for Moscow, "Go to Moscow, son. If they are real democrats they will give us back our independence. If they don't we'll give up believing in any of it: *perestroika*, Gorbachev or Lenin".[15] These and other statements were reported in the Soviet media. In addition to asking the Soviet central government to make the day-to-day existence of Soviet Kurds secure, the demonstrators also demanded the restoration of Kurdistan as constituted in 1923 as an autonomous region in Azerbaijan. Some delegates proposed an autonomous Kurdistan in the Krasnodar region, but they were met with incredulity on the part of other delegates who told them that the Russians would never hand over land as fertile as that. The Baku government had proposed a restoration of Kurdistan but not in the same areas. The proposed new Kurdistan was to be in Jeyran, a semi-desert. This was rejected by the Kurds. It was rumoured also that the governments of Byelorussia and Kazakhstan were prepared to offer the Kurds territory within their borders.

Two months later, on 17 August, the Supreme Soviet promulgated a law under which all Soviet citizens who had been deported under Stalin were to be repatriated with their previous rights restored.[16] However just the principle underlying this law, its application encountered insurmountable problems. Peoples like the Volga Germans were able to return to a country that made them welcome, but in the case of others such as the Krim Tatars and the Kurds, their former homelands had been colonized by Russians and in the case of the Kurds by Azeris.

A spokesman for the Soviet Kurds, the poet Ali Abdul Rahman, was subsequently received by the member of the Politburo responsible for nationalities, Chebrikov (later replaced), who advised that the Kurds should be represented by a single organization. This came into effect with remarkable rapidity on 20 September at a meeting of Kurdish leaders which concluded with the formation of Yekbûn (Union) and the election as chairman of Mohamed Sulaiman Babayev, a retired agronomist from Baku who had occupied important positions in the Ministry of Agriculture. The committee included Academican Nadir K. Nadirov, Professor Shakero Mihoyi, Ali Abdul Rahman, Tosen Rashid, an engineer, and Colonel Wakil of the *militsia*. It was agreed jointly between the secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR and Yekbûn to organize a general conference of Kurds

in Moscow and a seven-member steering committee was nominated including four Kurds, viz: N.K. Nadirov, chairman; Ivan Kitaev, Deputy Director of the Central Committee's Marxist–Leninist Institute, co-chairman; M. Babayev and A. Avdali, joint secretaries; Shakero Mihoyi, E.A. Bagramov, also from the Marxist–Leninist Institute, and G.E. Taperznikov of the Institute for Inter-ethnic Relations. The conference was to have as title, "The Kurds of the Soviet Union: Past and Present" and was originally scheduled for June, then 25–6 July 1990. The sponsors were listed on the official programme as follows: the Marxist–Leninist Institute, the Institutes for the History of the Communist Party in the republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Kazahkstan. Twenty lecturers were listed, for the most part Soviet Kurds; non-Soviet Kurds were unlisted.

There were apparently considerable behind-the-scenes negotiations between the party and Yekbûn over the Kurds to be invited from outside the USSR. The former wanted them to be limited to three to five known historians, writers or "cultural activists". The Kurds proposed thirty-eight names representative of the political and cultural establishment of the Kurdish diaspora. A compromise was reached and eighteen were accepted, many of them in fact leading members of Kurdish political parties from Iran, Iraq and Syria. They included Jalal Talabani, who would not or could not come and who was represented by Dr Kamal Fu'ad. Mas'ud Barzani was represented by Dr Mohamed Salih Guma. The Iraqi Kurds were also represented by Mohamed Aziz, general secretary of the Iraqi communist party, who lived in Moscow and by Sami Abdul Rahman, leader of the People's Democratic Party, as well as Dr Mahmud Othman of the Kurdish Socialist Party. From Iran came Dr Sa'id Sharaf Kandi, who had succeeded the late Dr A. Ghassemlou as general secretary of the KDP-Iran, and Salah Bedreddin represented Syria. The Institut Kurde de Paris was represented by Kendal Nezan. Others included Mehmet Ali Aslan, a lawyer from Turkey; the writer Dr Cemşid Heyderi, Said Molla and Ehmed Karamus, all from Sweden, and Riza Colpan, a writer resident in Australia.

The conference was held at the Marxist–Leninist Institute and six hundred attended, mostly Kurds from nine Soviet republics representing all classes, including workers and peasants as well as the intelligentsia. The opening speech was by I. Kitaev, followed by N.K. Nadirov and Boris Nikolaevich on behalf of the Nationalities

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Council of the USSR. All the Soviet delegates gave their papers in Russian for which no translation was provided, while those from abroad were in Kurdish, French or English of which a translation into Russian was made. Within the two days of the conference a total of thirty papers or short addresses were delivered, which left no time for public debate. The Soviet Kurds read scholarly papers or outlined political desiderata, but at one point there were interruptions from Kurdish peasants and workers who made impassioned speeches about national liberation and their own poverty, one going so far as to declare that he didn't want schools and didn't care about culture, but did want enough food to feed his children and a chance to live unharassed.

One of the conference's finest moments was the public reconciliation with a warm embrace of the young Kurdish Sunni Muslim chieftain, Sayid Shaykh Hasan, mufti of the Kazakhstan SSR, and the head of the Yazidi community, Shaykh Broyan Muraz Shirinovich, from Tbilisi. The first declared that he was a Kurd first and a Muslim second and the latter that he placed being Kurdish well in advance of his being a Yazidi. Another splendid moment was when Yekbûn's chairman, Mohamed Babayev and Academician Nadirov were also persuaded to embrace and forget the differences which had arisen from the former's popularity among workers and the latter's among intellectuals.

A final resolution was passed and given to the press and the other media at a press conference, and a letter was sent to President Gorbachev. This final resolution was drawn up and signed by the steering committee, but, strangely enough, it was not submitted to the conference for approval. This may have been because there was no time to do so. It was said that there was only one copy in Russian available and that there were no translations ready. I was told at the close of the conference that it made reference to the resolution adopted by the symposium on Kurdistan held in Lausanne on 27–9 April 1990, which had been attended by about 800 Kurds representing all political groupings including the PKK, as well as official representatives from the Swiss parliament. What that resolution had stated may be summed up as follows: that the Kurdish people constitute a single nation; that Kurdistan had been divided without any reference to its inhabitants between Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Syria; that the Kurdish question, including that of the Soviet Kurds, should be referred to the United Nations in the hope of a solution based on the right to self-determination. At the time,

several Kurds told me how overjoyed they were that the Moscow conference had adopted the Lausanne resolution. But when the Moscow resolution was published in the West a month or so later[17] it was no great surprise to find that all mention of the Lausanne symposium or of any other conference on Kurdistan[18] or indeed of the treaties of Sèvres and Lausanne was omitted. Even under "the new thinking" the USSR was not ready to face the issue squarely. The participation of non-Soviet Kurds was dismissed with the bland formula: "the conference was attended by Soviet and foreign scientific researchers into the Kurdish question, by sociologists, writers and other intellectuals as well as by representatives of the Kurdish intelligentsia from outside the USSR".

We ought not, however, to lose sight of the significance of the fact that the conference was primarily concerned with the Soviet Kurds and that it was the first of its kind to be organized and sponsored by the highest levels of authority within the Soviet Union. The final resolution is not therefore to be dismissed and not least because, invoking "the spirit of the new democratic tendencies" it emphasized "the flagrant perversion of national policy under Stalin in the period of stagnation (*zastoya*) with reference to the Kurdish people, namely, the dissolution in 1929 of the autonomous region of Kurdistan, the forced assimilation of Kurds, the deportations of 1937 and 1944, the closing of Kurdish schools and publishing houses and the falsification of population figures". It continues, "even in the era of *perestroika* the Kurdish problem remains unsolved and there has been no restoration of former rights". It stressed the need to develop publishing and broadcasting in Kurdish, to overcome the numerous obstacles to the teaching of Kurdish language and literature. It noted that there is only one periodical in Kurdish, that broadcasting in Armenia and in Georgia is inadequate and that "there is no co-ordination of any of the efforts being made to provide for the national and spiritual aspirations of the Kurdish people". Furthermore, it pointed to a de facto deterioration of the position of the Kurds: "for many years Kurds have been unrepresented at the highest levels of government and since the last elections there are no Kurdish representatives in the legislative assemblies of the various republics". Concern was also expressed about "the almost complete absence of cultural relations between Kurds in the USSR and those resident in other countries", and this included Kurdish publications from abroad. The committee therefore urged that Kurdish publications, using

the Roman-based alphabet of non-Soviet Kurdish communities, should be established in the USSR and the removal of all barriers to the reception of foreign-based Kurdish publications.

The conference committee also noted the growing interest of Soviet Kurds in their fellow Kurds abroad and their struggle for self-determination and noted with regret that the Kurdish question remained of little significance in the "new thinking" and in international affairs with particular reference to East–West relations. "Incredulity" was expressed at the Soviet government's lack of response to atrocities committed against the Kurds and in particular the use of chemical weapons by the Iraqi government in 1988:

> We regard it as anomalous that aid and support of any sort should be given to regimes which used these and other means to oppose Kurdish struggles to achieve self-determination . . . It is our conviction that the Soviet Union in the spirit of "the new thinking" should take the initiative in bringing to the urgent attention of international organizations, particularly the United Nations, the sufferings of the Kurdish people.

In conclusion, the resolution urged the setting up of a "Kurdish Federal Association" to include representatives from all the Soviet republics concerned, together with a Kurdish Cultural Centre based in Moscow, to include a publishing house, as a prelude to the establishment of an autonomous Kurdistan in a suitable area. The final words of the resolution gave warm support to the "policy of democratic change and liberalization in the political, social and national life of the USSR" and at the same time rejected "chauvinism and aggression" while stressing "the historic ties" between the Kurds and neighbouring peoples in the Soviet Union.

What steps the Soviet government will take remains to be seen. What is certain is that the Soviet Kurds, tenacious in their adherence to their language, culture and traditions, share with their fellow Kurds beyond the USSR the ultimate dream: a sovereign and independent Kurdistan.

Notes

chapt 2 notes

2 Kurdish society, ethnicity, nationalism and refugee problems

1 The inclusion of the Zaza and Guran among the Kurds is not an innovation of modern Kurdish nationalism. The late sixteenth-century Kurdish author Sharaf Khan Bidlisi already considers both as subgroups among the Kurds, and so does the seventeenth-century Turkish traveller Evliya Çelebi. Even earlier we find references to Guran explicitly identifying themselves as Kurds, such as the fourteenth-century mystic Jalaluddin b Yusuf al-Kurani at-Tamliji al-Kurdi (who wrote in Arabic, see C. Brockelmann's *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur*, Supplement and II p. 262). Many Kurdish nationalists prefer to ignore the fact that Zaza and Gurani are in fact different languages, and wish to minimize the differences. When several Kurdish journals published in western Europe recently began including sections in Zaza besides Kurmanji and/or Sorani, this aroused some protest by some of those whose perceive a threat to Kurdish unity. Unlike Zaza, Gurani has a long literary tradition, which is, however, virtually extinct now. (See also Chapter 5, this volume, ed.)
2 On the beliefs of the Ahl-e Haqq, see Minorsky 1920, 1921; Edmonds 1969; Mokri 1970. Several basic ideas seem typically Iranian (Mazdean or Zoroastrian), while Roux (1969) has pointed to the presence of many elements of old Turkish religion.
3 On Yazidi doctrines and history see Menzel 1911; Lescot 1938.
4 On the institution of this form of ritual co-parenthood among the Kurds, see Kudat: 1971. I heard about the existence of such *krîv* relations between tribal Kurds and Christians in the Cizre and Tur Abdin regions.
5 This tribe, the *Ermeni-Varto*, with winter quarters near Silopi (south-eastern Turkey) had by the 1950s gradually merged into the Kurdish tribe Teyyan, and spoke only Kurdish (Hütteroth 1959, p. 57).
6 By "Kurds" we mean those commonly called thus since the sixteenth–seventeenth centuries. In earlier sources, however, the term "Kurd" seems to refer to a particular type of pastoral nomads, *not* to all speakers of Kurdish (and Gurani and Zaza).

7 Even then the Turkish candidate for the left-wing Worker's Party of Turkey, which was surprisingly successful in the 1960s, belonged to the *aghawat* stratum. In the late 1970s, when the Kurdish movement had gained much strength in Turkey, several independent candidates (i.e., not affiliated to any party) challenged and defeated the established party machines in the elections, by appealing both to traditional loyalties and to Kurdish nationalist sentiment. These men obviously depended much less on state patronage.

8 A graphic description of this situation is given in Ümit Kaftancıoğlu's documentary novel *Tüfekliler* (*Men with Guns*). The author worked as a school teacher in the town of Derik near Mardin in the 1960s, and describes events that he witnessed: the power and brutal behaviour of local chieftains and their armed retinues, violent feuds, the oppression and exploitation of the peasantry, and the connivance of the local government authorities in all this. His observations are still representative of the situation in many parts of Kurdistan.

9 The name "*guran*" obviously connects these peasants with the tribal confederacy *Guran* and the *gurani* language, but they were regarded as entirely different social groups. "*Kurmanj*", the term used for non-tribal peasants in northern Kurdistan, was used in southern Kurdistan for a segment of the tribal élite. *Miskên* and *Klawspi* mean "poor" and "white-cap" respectively, the latter apparently after a distinctive headgear which had already gone out of use by the nineteenth century, while the name stuck.

10 The word *millî*, by which Atatürk designated his movement, and usually translated as "national", referred to the Muslim rather than the Turkish nation. Only later did it acquire ethnic–nationalist overtones.

11 I borrow this French term following Smith (1986) for those ethnic communities with a strong sence of identity, but lacking the political institutions characterizing a nation.

12 *Mem û Zîn*, critical edition by M.B. Rudenko (Akademija Nauk SSSR, Moskva, 1962) pp. 30–5. The passage sounds so modern that one wonders whether it could be a later interpolation. However, the manuscripts on which the cited edition is based, though not very old, predate the emergence of modern nationalism.

13 On the factions in these early Kurdish organizations, and the issues dividing them, see also van Bruinessen 1978, pp. 369–76 and 1985, pp. 129–36.

14 On developments in the Kurdish movement in Turkey during the 1970s and 1980s, see van Bruinessen 1986 and 1988a.

15 See Kutschera 1979; Chaliand 1980; McDowall 1985 and Hyman 1988 for general overviews; Jawad 1981 and Ibrahim 1983 specifically for Iraq; van Bruinessen 1984 and 1988a; and Laber and Whitman 1988 for Turkey; van Bruinessen 1981 and 1986 and Entessar 1984 for Iran. Recent developments can be followed through the useful bi-monthly bulletin of news clippings *Bulletin de Liason et d'Information* published by the Kurdish Institute of Paris.

16 The KDP was the party which, with Mulla Mustafa Barzani as its president, led the Turkish movement until its collapse in 1975. With

the defeat, the party disintegrated and several of its former leaders established new, mutually competing, political formations. Barzani's sons Idris and Mas'ud, based in Iran, attempted to resuscitate the KDP (initially under the name of "Provisional Leadership of the KDP"), this was mainly supported by Kurmanji-speaking, tribal elements from northernmost Iraq. Barzani's long-time rival, Jalal Talabani, initially based in Syria, established the PUK, which drew support from Sorani speakers further to the south. Two of Barzani's right-hand men, Mahmud Osman and Sami Abd al-Rahman, also established their own, more ephemeral parties.

17 On the Turkish reactions to the arrival of these refugees, their treatment and the political problems their presence generated, see Aslan 1988.

18 Abd al-Rahman Ghassemlou and two other representatives of the KDP-Iran were shot dead even while they were negotiating with the representatives of the Iranian government. The precise circumstances of the murders remain unclear, since the Iranian negotiators left the country without being properly interrogated by the police. Iran accused Iraq of the murders, but the evidence strongly suggests that the Iranians helped the unidentified murderer to enter the building. See the careful journalistic investigation by Marc Kravetz in the Paris daily *Libération*, 7 August 1989.

19 In 1990, the PKK was accused of two violent attacks on Kurdish villages in which tens of innocent civilians were killed. Unlike earlier attacks on families of "village guards", which it had proudly acknowledged, the PKK rejected responsibility for these attacks and claimed that they were deliberate provocations by Turkish security troops, a view that appears to be shared by the Turkish Human Rights Associations.

20 See the observations by the Polish anthropologist Leszek Dziegiel (1981), who worked on one of these development projects

21 Medico International mentions fifteen strategic villages, housing between 20,000 and 40,000 people each (1990, p. 63).

4 Humanitarian legal order and the Kurdish question

1 Wilson, H.A. (1988) *International Law and the Use of Force by National Liberation Movements*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, p. 36.

2 Higgins, R. (1972) International Law and Civil Conflict, in E. Luard (ed.), *The International Regulation of Civil Wars*, Thames & Hudson, London, pp. 160, 170–1.

3 Wilson 1988, pp. 25–8, 36–7.

4 Wilson 1988, p. 27.

5 Were the argument to be pursued and the Kurds to be considered belligerents in any of the states under consideration, all the provisions of the four 1949 Geneva Conventions would apply to the conflict, Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Syria all being States Parties.

6 The 1949 Geneva Conventions were ratified by Iran on 20 February 1957, Syria on 2 November 1953, Turkey 10 February 1954 and acceded to by Iraq on 14 February 1956.

7 On 21 March 1986 a UN Security Council statement (S/PV.2667) stongly condemned the use by Iraqi forces of chemical weapons against Iranian forces in the Iran–Iraq war, while on 26 August 1988 the UN Security Council adopted a resolution condemning the use of such weapons in the same conflict.
8 Wilson, 1988, pp. 2, 45 suggests that Article 3 was a substantial step, states for the first time declaring international responsibility in internal conflict.
9 (1958) Stevens & Sons, London, pp. 15–16.
10 Wilson 1988, pp. 2, 47.
11 Wilson 1988, pp. 47; see also Bond, J.E. (1974) *The Rules of Riot*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, p. 123 with respect to Pakistan and Ceylon.
12 Wilson 1988, p. 47.
13 Article 1: "the High Contracting Parties undertake to respect and to ensure respect for the present Convention in all circumstances".
14 Wilson 1988, p. 136: "The authority of national liberation movements to use force is not agreed upon as a matter of international law. Such authority is actively supported by the newly independent States and the Eastern bloc States, but has never been accepted by an established government confronting a liberation movement, or by the Western States. Practice in the UN particularly the Declaration on the Principles of International law and the Declaration on Aggression, both adopted without vote, does not resolve the fundamental differences over the status of national liberation movements and the extent of their authority as a matter of law. However, the trend over the last four decades and since 1960 in particular, has been toward the extension of the authority to use force in national liberation movements." See, generally, Wilson, pp. 91–136 and also Asmal, K. (1983). The Legal Status of National Liberation Movements with Particular Reference to South Africa, *Zambia Law Journal*, 15, pp. 37, 45–50.
15 The ICCPR was ratified by Iran on 24 January 1975 and Syria and Iraq, both with reservations, on 21 April 1969 and 25 January 1971.
16 See, for example, General Assembly Resolution 2625 (XXV), the Declaration of Principles of International Law Concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in Accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, adopted by consensus in 1970; The Helsinki Declaration; Resolution 1514 (XV) UNGA, 14 December 1960, Declaration on Colonialism.
17 Wilson 1988, pp. 58–78; *Western Sahara Advisory Opinion*, ICJ Rep 1975, pp. 12, 31–3; *Namibia Advisory Opinion*, ICJ Rep 1971, pp. 3, 31.
18 Crawford, J. (1979) *The Creation of States*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, pp. 84–106, 356–84.
19 See, UNGA Resolution 1541 (XV), 15 December 1960: "The authors of the Charter . . . had in mind that Chapter XI should be applicable to territories which were then known to be of the colonial type".
20 Nanda, V.P. (1972) Self Determination in International Law, *AJIL*, 66, p. 321; Nawaz, M.K. (1971) Editorial Comment: Bangladesh and

International Law, *Indian Law Journal*, 11, p. 251.

21 McNemar, D.W. (1971) The Post Independence War in the Congo, in Falk, R. (ed.), *The International Law of Civil War*, Johns Hopkins University Press, London, p. 244; Riesman, M. (1973) Humanitarian Intervention to Protect the Ibos, in Lillich, R. (ed.), *Humanitarian Intervention and the United Nations*, University of Virginia Press, Charlottesville, p. 167.

22 Sim, R. (1980) Kurdistan: The Search for Recognition, *Conflict Studies*, 124; Harris, G.S. (1981) Ethnic Conflict and the Kurds, *Annals of the American Academy*, p. 112; McDowall, D. (1989) *The Kurds*, London, Minority Rights Group, no. 23. This cultural, linguistic and religious disunity is paralleled by Kurdish political divisiveness which makes it almost impossible to locate a unified struggle for self-determination.

23 Kintominas, P. (1984) Can the Right to "Self-determination" in International Human Rights Instruments be Used to Advance the Position of Indigenous People? Sydney University, Sydney, unpublished, reaches the conclusion that the Kurds are a people for the purposes of self-determination.

24 Wilson 1988, pp. 151–62.

25 Bothe, M. (1982) Article 3 and Protocol 11: Case Studies of Nigeria and El Salvador, *American University Law Review*, 31, p. 899.

26 For the background to this provision see Cassesse, A. (1967) A Tentative Appraisal of the Old and New Humanitarian Law of Armed Conflict, in Cassesse, A. (ed.), *The New Humanitarian Law of Armed Conflict*, 1, Editoriale Scientifica, Naples, p. 467.

27 Accession on 14 November 1983, although Iran has signed. The conflict must be against a High Contracting Party for the Article to apply: Article 96(3).

28 Article 96(3).

29 Article 43.

30 Fleiner-Gerster, T. and Meyer, M. (1985) New Developments in Humanitarian Law: A Challenge to the Concept of Sovereignty, *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, 34, pp. 267, 275, suggest that the Article is, in practice, limited to those confronting the governments of Israel and South Africa.

31 Wilson 1988, pp. 173–8.

32 See, for example, the FLN which in 1960 sent an instrument of accession to all four Geneva Conventions to the Swiss government. Various other liberation movements have declared their intention to abide by the Conventions and Protocols: ANC, 28 November 1980, SWAPO, 25 August 1981; EPLF, 25 February 1977; UNITA, 25 July 1980; ANLF, 24 December 1981; Hezbi Islami, 7 November 1980; Islamic Society of Afghanistan, 6 January 1960; See, further, Wilson, 1988, p. 171 and Asmal, K. (1983), The Legal Status of National Liberation Movements, *Zambia Law Journal*, 15, pp. 37, 55–7, which describes the position of the ANC and SWAPO with regard to the Conventions and Protocol on Non International Armed Conflicts, *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, 30, p. 416.

33 Asmal, K. 1983, p. 55.
34 Meron, T. (1987) The Geneva Conventions as Customary Law, *American Journal of International Law*, 81, pp. 348, 350–1.
35 Cassesse, A. (1981) The Status of Rebels Under the 1977 Geneva Protocol on Non-International Armed Conflicts, *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, 30, p. 416.
36 Cassesse, op. cit., p. 419.
37 With respect to the Red Cross see Veuthey, M. (1983), Implementation and Enforcement of Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law in Non-International Armed Conflicts: the Role of the International Committee of the Red Cross, *American University Law Review*, 33, pp. 83, 92–3. See also Wilson, note 1, pp. 2, 137–46. Note also the attempts of the PLO to be admitted to WHO.
38 The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide, 1948, has been ratified by Turkey, Syria, Iran and Iraq. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination has been ratified by Iran, Iraq and Syria, while Turkey has signed the 1988 Convention on Protection for Torture or other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.
39 Cameron, I. (1988) Turkey and Article 25 of the European Convention on Human Rights, *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, 37, p. 887.
40 Hampson, F. (1989) Human Rights and Humanitarian Law in Internal Conflicts in Meyer, M.A., *Armed Conflict and the New Law: Aspects of the 1977 Geneva Protocols and the 1981 Weapons Convention*, British Institute of International and Comparative Law, London, p. 55.
41 This mechanism has been invoked in the context of both Greece and Turkey: Denmark, Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands v Greece, 3321–3/67; 3344/67; YB 12 bis; France, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands v Turkey 9940–9944/82, 35 D & R 143 with respect to torture. The Commission found Greece had violated the provisions of the Convention, but Greece withdrew from the organization, while Turkey reached a "friendly settlement" with the complaining states, giving assurances.
42 Hampson, F. (1989) Using International Human Rights Machinery to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law, unpublished, suggests that although the existing machinery as represented by the UN Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and the UN Commission on Human Rights have proved to be unwilling to act in the context of the Kurds, refusing to pass a resolution condemning the use of gas by Iraq against the Kurds (Decision on Human Rights, 45th Session, 1989/111: Situation of Human Rights in Iraq – to take no decision on draft resolution 1989/L. 82) this does not mean that all such machinery will refuse to act. She cites particularly the monitoring body under the ICCPR which could prove to be a more useful forum. This body, unlike the Commission, is comprised of independent experts. Hampson suggests that this Committee be used in concert with an effective monitoring and informing strategy, roles which could be played by national and

international non-governmental organizations, even individuals. This suggestion is a valuable one and these tactics need not be confined to this Committees, but could be used equally with respect to other independent monitoring Committees, such as the Committee set up under the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 1979, or the new Convention on the Rights of the Child. A useful indication of how such tactics can be used in another context, which could be drawn on by those interested in the Kurdish problem, can be seen in Byrnes, A. (1989), The "Other" Human Rights Treaty Body: The Work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, *Yale Journal of International Law*, 14, p. 1. It is to be noted that, in its most recent session, however, the Human Rights Commission did authorize an investigation of the Human Rights situation in Iraq.

5 Political aspects of the Kurdish problem in contemporary Turkey

1 This chapter was translated into English from the original French for this volume (ed.).
2 For these aspects, see Seker, M., *Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi*, Siyasal ve Ekonomik Sorunlar, Istanbul, 1987, V. Yayınları; Jafer, M.R., *Underdevelopment: a Regional Case Study of the Kurdish Area in Turkey*, Helsinki, 1976, Painoprint Oy; Nezan, K. La culture kurde en Turquie à l'épreuve du second choc, *Studia Kurdica*, 7–12, 1988, pp. 63–76.
3 Cf. Libaridian, G. Etude des relations arméno-kurdes et leurs problèmes, *Studia Kurdica*, 1–5, 1988, pp. 63–76.
4 See my article, Traditionalism or Nationalism: Kurdish Responses to the Kemalist Regime, *CEMOTI* (Paris), 6, June 1988, pp. 107–28.
5 See my article, Les révoltes kurdes en Turquie kemaliste (Quelques aspects), *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, 151, 1988, pp. 121–36.
6 Thus P. Gentizon could write in 1937 that "Insofar as one can judge, the Kurdish issue is really one of policing". Cited in Rambeau, L., *Les Kurdes et le droit*, Paris, 1937, p. 37.
7 On this see Beşikçi, I., *Doğu Anadolu'nun Düzeni*, Istanbul, 1969, E. Yayınları, pp. 131–32.
8 See Ahmad, F. and B.T., *Türkiye' de Çok Partili Politikanın Açıklamalı Kronolojisi 1945–1971*, Ankara, 1976, Bilgi Yayınları, p. 266.
9 On this party, see Vedat, S., *Türkiye' de Kürtçülük Hareketleri ve İsyanlar*, Ankara, 1980, Kon Yayınları.
10 Beşikçi, I., *Doğu Anadolu'nun Düzeni*, Istanbul, 1969, E. Yayınları, pp. 131–2.
11 For these centres see *DDKO Dava Dosyası*, Ankara, 1976, Komal Yayınları; and Diyarbakır Askeri Sıkıyönetim Savcılığı, *DDKO Davası, Gerekçeli Karar*, Diyarbakır, 1972.
12 Most notably M. Zana who was elected mayor of Diyarbakır and who is still in prison.

9 The development of nationalism in Iranian Kurdistan

1 It was the tribal armed men, together with the armed forces brought in by Mustafa Barzani, which made up the Republic's army.
2 On this see further Anderson 1983. Nairn (1977), *The Break-up of Britain*, NLB, London, offers similar reasons for the absence of Scottish nationalism.
3 The term "cultural autonomy" was not clearly defined. It was assumed to imply a recognition of the Kurdish language, and of the status of the Kurds as a religious minority.
4 At Ghassemlou's funeral on 20 July 1989 at Père Lachaise in Paris, Mr Abdollah Hassanzadeh, a member of the political office of the KPDI, revealed some details of the assassination, and announced the party's general policies after Ghassemlou's death.

10 The Kurds in the Soviet Union

1 This chapter is a greatly condensed version of a monograph-length paper on the subject which, it is to be hoped, the author will publish in full elsewhere (ed.).
2 Cf. Jalil, Jalil, *The Kurdish Uprising of 1880*, Moscow, 1966 (in Russian); Beirut 1979 (in Arabic). Cf. also HM Government's *Blue Book*, London, 1881.
3 Zaki, Mohamed Amin, *A Short History of the Kurds and Kurdistan*, Dar al-Islami, Baghdad, 1931 (in Sorani Kurdish); Arabic translation by Awni, M. Ali, Cairo, 1936, (repr. London, 1961).
4 The ethnic composition of Transcaucasia was complex. By 1917, Georgians numbered 1.4 million, almost all within Georgia itself; Armenians totalled 1.7 million, throughout Russia with approximately 1 million in Transcaucasia: Tatars, of whom a significant number lived in Armenia, numbered about 2 million. The latter, known since 1920 as Azeris, formed the Muslim Turkic-speaking population of Transcaucasia and Azerbaijan. Russian statistics of the period provide the following approximate figures. For the province of Yerevan in 1916 a total of 1,220,242 comprising Armenians (669,871), Tatars (373,582), Kurds (36,508), Russians (16,103), Gypsies (12,642). Yerevan, the capital, was relatively small with a population of 30,000. Baku (pop. 260,000) included 79,000 Russians, 69,300 Tatars (mostly workers and artisans) and 63,000 Armenians (mainly in industry and commerce). Tbilisi (in 1897) had a total population of 159,000 comprised of approximately 60,500 Armenians, 42,000 Georgians and 39,000 Russians. In 1916, the province of Nakhichevan comprised a total population of 135,000 broadly divided between 54,000 Armenians and 81,000 Kurds and Tatars. (Figures according to Anahide Ter Minassian, *La République d'Arménie*, Paris, 1989. Cf. Y. Ternom, *La Cause arménienne*, Paris, 1982.)
5 Mihoyi, S.K. "The Kurdish Question in Soviet Azerbaijan", originally published in Russian. Translation into Kurdish by Bavê Nazê in *Berbang*, 59, August 1989.

6 Mihoyi quotes a letter from Lenin to N. Narimanov, Secretary of the Baku Communist Party (Lenin, *Works*, vol. 4, pt. 3, p. 100).
7 Carrère d'Encausse, H., *La Gloire des nations ou la fin de l'empire soviétique*, Paris, 1990, p. 90.
8 Carrère d'Encausse, p. 132.
9 In spite of this, Soviet studies of the Kurds in Azerbaijan and autonomous Kurdistan were published in the 1930s, e.g. Bukchpan, K., *Azerbaijanskiye Kurdy*, Baku, 1924 and K. Pchelina's "Po Kurdistanskomu uyezdu Azerbaijana", *Sovyetskaya Etnografiya*, 4, 1932, pp. 108–21. Bennigsen (1960) also mentions studies by G.F. Chursin and B.V. Miller.
10 Letter published in *Bulletin* of the Institut Kurde de Paris, October–December issue 1989.
11 On the Kurds in Turkmenia see Sokolova, V., *Kurdskiy Yazyk*, Ch. 2, Moscow-Leningrad, 1953, on Khorasanian Kurmanji; Gubanov, S.M. in *Turkmenovedenie*, vols 5–6, Ashkabad, 1928; Kozuhov, A., Machinskiy, B. and Pabet, E.I., *Sovyetskiy Turkmenistan*, Ashkabad, 1930.
12 On the Georgian and Armenian Kurds see Lyayster, A.F. and Khrsin, G.F., *Geografiya Kavkasa*, Tbilisi, 1924, and *Geografiya Zakavkasa*, Tbilisi, 1929; Shaginyan, M., *Sovyetskoye Zakavkaze*, Leningrad, 1931, pp. 33–50; Ambaryan, A., *Kordere Sovetakan Hayastanun* (*The Kurds in Soviet Armenia*), Yerevan, 1957. A full bibliography is given by Bennigsen.
13 Unpublished thesis, "Vie, et oeuvre romanesque d'Erebe Şemo", INALCO Institut, Paris.
14 Isayev, M.I., *National Languages in the USSR: Problems and Solutions*, trans. P. Medov and I. Saiko, Moscow, 1977, pp. 63, 68–9.
15 For these and other statements, cf. Bavê Nazê, "*Kurdên sovyetistanê doza mafên xwe dikin*" (Soviet Kurds demand their Rights) in *Berbang*, 59, Stockholm, 1989.
16 *Pravda*, 17 August 1989.
17 *Berbang*, 66, Stockholm, September 1990. The text of the resolution was accompanied by an article on the conference by Dr Cemsid Heyderi. The August-September issue of Armanc also published it with an article by Bavê Nazê and a French version of the text appeared in the July *Bulletin* of the Institut Kurde in Paris.
18 Those held at Bremen in April 1989, at Paris in October of the same year and at Florence in March 1990.

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Iranicarum, Ludwig Reichert, Wiesbaden.
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NOTES

1 Many of these were presented at a conference called "Empire and Nations: the Soviet Union and the Non-Russian Peoples," held at the University of Chicago, October 24–26, 1997, and will be published in a volume tentatively entitled *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* edited by Ronald G. Suny and Terry Martin.

2 See James Harris, *Regionalism and the Evolution of the Soviet System* (Cornell University Press, forthcoming); Jonathan Bone, "A la recherche d'un Komsomol perdu: Who Really Built Komsomol'sk-na-Amure, and Why," *Revue des études slaves*, forthcoming.

3 See his "Stalinismus an der Peripherie: Das Beispiel Azerbajdzan 1920-1941," in *Stalinismus vor dem zweiten Weltkrieg. Neue Wege der Forschung* (Stalinism before the Second World War: New Avenues of Research), ed. Manfred Hildermeier with Elisabeth Müller-Luckner (Munich, 1998); also "Stalinismus als imperiales Phänomen: die islamischen Regionen der Sowjetunion, 1921–1941," in Stefan Plaggenborg, ed., *Stalinismus: neue Forschungen und Konzepte* (Berlin, 1998), and "Kolonialismus and zivilisatorische Mission im Zarenreich und in der Sowjetunion, 1800–1941," in *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, forthcoming.