

BR. 2580

**RIOP** RESEARCH  
INSTITUTE  
OF OPPRESSED  
PEOPLES



THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL ELEMENTS  
IN THE STRUGGLE OF THE KURDISH PEOPLE

Papers of the RIOP Congress  
Amsterdam, Fall 1983

Institut Kurde de Paris

P. J. A. IDENBURG  
FUAD M. HOSSAIN  
Koningslaan 31  
1075 AB Amsterdam  
The Netherlands  
tel.: 020 - 71 85 43

**RIOP** RESEARCH  
INSTITUTE  
OF OPPRESSED  
PEOPLES

GEN 718

liv-eng-n2580  
BR

THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL ELEMENTS  
IN THE STRUGGLE OF THE KURDISH PEOPLE

Papers of the RIOP Congress  
Amsterdam, Fall 1983

INSTITUT KURDE DE PARIS

ENTRÉE N° 2359

Koningslaan 31  
1075 AB Amsterdam  
The Netherlands  
tel.: 020 - 71 85 43

## CONTENTS

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <u>Preface</u>   | iii |
| by J. George Waardenburg   |     |
| <u>Introduction. "It is only a beginning"</u>  |     |
| by Peter Idenburg  |     |
| <u>The importance of the cultural elements in the struggle of the<br/>Kurdish people</u>       | 9   |
| by dr. Imet Chériff Vanly  |     |
| <u>Perspectives of the Kurdish national movement</u>   | 21  |
| by Chris Kutschera   |     |
| <u>The importance of the cultural elements in the struggle of the<br/>Kurdish people</u>       | 44  |
| by dr. Majeed R. Jafar   |     |
| <u>Report on relations between culture and revolutionary movement<br/>in Iranian Kurdistan</u> | 54  |
| by dr. Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou   |     |
| <u>Culture from a marxist perspective</u>  |     |
| by François Houtart  | 61  |
| <u>Die Kurdische Widerstandsliteratur</u>  | 73  |
| by Kamal Fuad  |     |

About the authors

J. George Waardenburg. Chairman RIOP Advisory Board, professor development planning Erasmus University Rotterdam.

Peter Idenburg. Coordinator RIOP, political scientist Free University Amsterdam.

Dr. Imst Cheriff Vanly. Scholar on Kurdish affairs, published a.o. Le Kurdistan Irakien entité nationale, Neuchatel, 1970.

Chris Kutschera. Journalist, published several books and papers on e.g. Biafra, Sudan, the Palistinians, the Kurds, was editor of: Le mouvement nationale Kurde, Paris, 1979.

Dr. Majeed R. Jafar. Economist from Iraq, residing in Sweden, several publications.

Dr. Abdul Rahman Ghassem lou. General secretary of the Kurdistan Democratic Party in Iran.

François Houtart. Professor sociology, Centre de recherches socio-religieuses, Université Catholique de Louvain; Directeur Centre Tricontinental, Louvain La Neuve, Belgium.

Dr. Fuad Kamal, Specialist on Kurdish-Iranian literature, connected with the Free University Berlin.

Institut Kurde de Paris

Preface

by J. George Waardenburg

It is by no means obvious to prepare a publication on "The Importance of Cultural Elements in the Struggle of the Kurdish People". Similarly, it is not obvious that a Research Institute of Oppressed Peoples" (RIOP) exists in the Netherlands. Therefore, if such an institute publishes the papers of its congress under the chairmanship of Fuad Hussein in the fall of 1983 at Amsterdam on that subject, a preface may not be inappropriate in order to draw briefly attention to some peculiar characteristics of both the institute and the subject and of their combination.

The RIOP's focus is on the situation and perspectives of oppressed peoples, to which the incompatibilities of world history have left no state to be recognized as their own one. It functions mainly in three, interconnected ways:

- 1) carrying out and stimulating research
- 2) providing information and education, and
- 3) creating a forum or meeting ground for different approaches and views, on selected issues of importance within its focus.

The first characteristic in pursuing these three ways is to seek a central contribution to the efforts from persons out of the peoples concerned themselves often living in the Netherlands, and have their contributions supported by interested other persons, often Dutch university people. Thus, while facts and views of the people directly involved are taken seriously, these are critically clarified and deepened by research and by dialogue among themselves and with Dutch people concerned. Both kinds of people, as well as public and private policy makers and the public at large can be served in this way while new perspectives on problems and possible approaches for thesis solutions can be developed. All this sounds to me as a sensible and rather new, though not simple, strategy.

Among the first issues to be dealt with by the RIOP the struggle of the Kurdish people was selected, in my opinion a very clear and, given RIOP's focus, appropriate choice, though challenging in its discouraging complexity.

In dealing with this issue a second characteristic of RIOP's approach came to light. The issues selected are not only regionally defined but

thematically as well. Thus an effort is made to develop a deeper understanding of the particular regional issues by adding thematic dimensions and looking at similarities, interconnections and generalizations. In the case of the Kurdish struggle the question of the importance of culture was proposed as such a special thematic dimension and it certainly pushed presentations and discussions beyond mere facts and opinions, by both limiting and deepening them, while also giving a perspective for further studies and for generalizations. The Introduction and Houtart's paper illustrate this extra dimension most clearly.

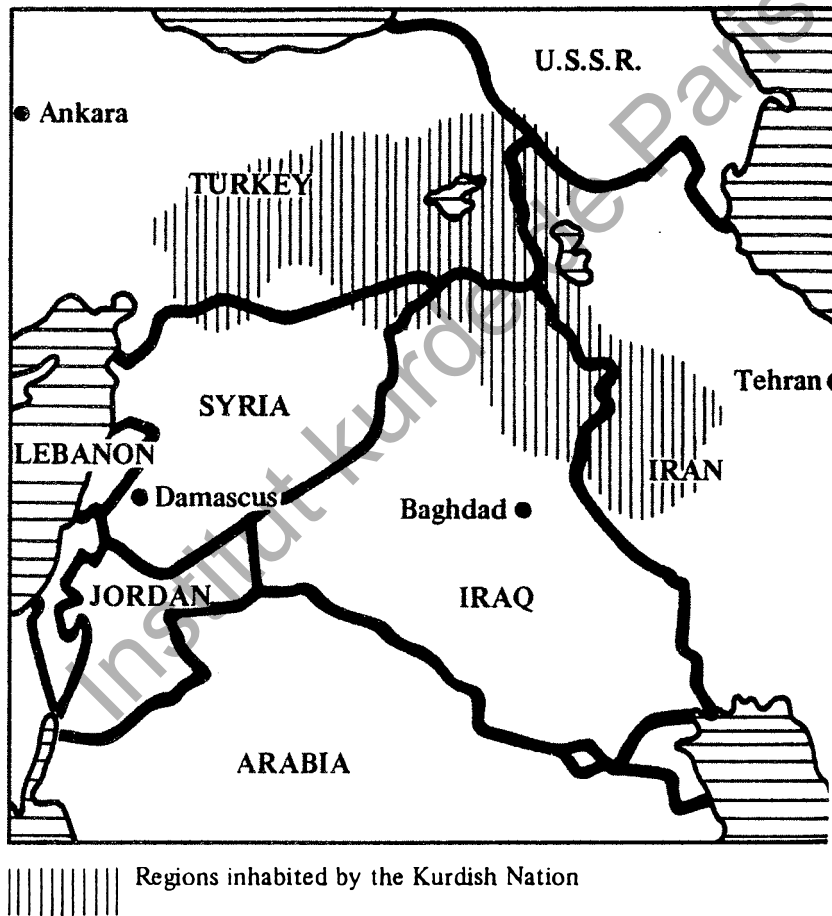
In recalling the congress the deepest memories, however, remain with the presence of some of the finest and most eminent minds of the Kurdish people, be it from the calmth of the study or from the heat of the politico-military battlefield. Their presence made it into a genuine meeting of the Kurdish people and a true dialogue between them and the non-Kurdish.

The papers of the congress, presented here, are but half a representation of its dynamic character, but in my view the RIOP can be congratulated with bringing them together. It is a good idea to publish them straight away like they were presented, without further elaboration as yet. While the congress was the strongest in its meeting ground function, it clearly based itself on research and was both informative and educational as well. But now, once published, these papers could serve not only as information but as a basis and encouragement for further research leading to further insights worth being spread around. As the Introduction says, it should be only a beginning.

Thus these papers are no mere introduction about the situation of the Kurdish people. For an introduction there are also other, good publications<sup>\*)</sup>. These papers are a starting point for a next step, thinking seriously in order to understand the Kurdish problem, attempting to gain a perspective and a wider view on it which gives access to a more general insight into the awful predicament of oppressed peoples in our world today. In this sense they should prove very useful not only to those interested in the Kurdish people, but also to those not satisfied with the bitter situation of so many in this world and to those attempting to work on that problem, as students and scholars, in action groups, or as policy makers in the government or in private organisations.

\*) E.g. Anneke v.d. Loos, Koerden, een vergeten volk, Vereniging Vluchtelingenwerk, Amsterdam, 1983; or: G. Chailland (ed.), People without a country. The Kurds and Kurdistan (tr.). London, Zed press, 1980.

## Regions Populated by the Kurds



From: G. Chailland (ed.), People without a country. The Kurds and Kurdistan. London, 1980.

INTRODUCTION.

'It is only a beginning'

By Peter Idenburg.

In October 1983 in Amsterdam a congress was organised on the theme 'The Importance of Cultural Elements in the Struggle of the Kurdish People' by the newly started Research Institute of Oppressed Peoples (RIOP).

In this introduction we will say something about the background of the RIOP and its motives for organising this congress, followed by some general lines drawn from the congresspapers. We will conclude this introduction by submitting to the reader some perspectives for further research resulting from the discussions during and after the congress.

We hope that this will provoke response, positive or negative, because this congress, like RIOP itself, should be seen as 'only a beginning', as our friends from Cultural Survival remarked wisely and hopefully.

Those of you, who are acquainted with the Kurdish Movement will notice that the names of the authors of the papers stand for a qualitatively high level of participation both in respect of scientific standards and political relevance. François Houtart made a contribution on a more theoretical level, a field in which he has quite a reputation.

The reader may wonder why and how an organisation, which just started, managed to raise such a participation. In my opinion, the explanation of this could be found to a large extent in what is expressed by the little preposition 'of' in its name:

Research Institute OF Oppressed Peoples.

And this is taken seriously.

Right from the start RIOP has used the following three criteria for its activities: a) general scientific standards as being applied to research institutes connected with universities, in



this case the Free University of Amsterdam; b) political and social relevance, lest the activities will exist 'in the void'; c) the active involvement of persons belonging to oppressed peoples in organising and executing activities.

Persons belonging to oppressed peoples, wanting to do politically and socially relevant research, tend to be refugees or 'political emigrants', since for obvious reasons there is little room for this type of research in their own countries. To a large extent one should be able to identify the activities of the RIOP as the activities of these people. As far as these people (and the peoples they belong to) are concerned, the research in order to be socially and politically relevant, cannot be set up in a political vacuum. In other words, it would not only be naive, but even unjustified to expect that this type of research could or would be set up without taking into account the way in which the Kurds have organised themselves

politically. In fact, by denying the Kurds the right to develop in an organised political way and the right to discuss the desirability and relevance of research would mean denying them one of the fundamental rights they are fighting for: the right to decide for themselves (in whatever desired or realistic political framework).

By taking this position, naturally one must be aware of certain pitfalls and even be prepared for serious and complicated problems.

Of course, mere partisanship causing research to become an instrument of one or another political party must be avoided. This does not mean that it would be unjustified for liberation movements or political parties to have their own research institutes which can be instrumental in their own policies. In that case we are talking of a type of instrumental research to which any organisation - whether political, religious or corporate - is entitled to spend a part of its attention and means to. However, this type of research is different from the type meant to be done by universities and connected research institutes.

The latter type of research requires of people - whatever their political affiliation or background may be - that they apply certain rules of the game, like e.g. objectivity, intersubjectivity and a certain level of theoretical sophistication.

The persons, who were invited for this congress, whether as a speaker or as a participant in the discussions, were invited as wellknown Kurdish and non-Kurdish intellectuals and therefore were expected to apply these rules of the game. But still, what was to be expected knowing that Dr. Ghassemlou - certainly an eminent intellectual, but at the same time the leader of the Iranian KPD - was one of the participants. And this in a situation in which as a result of the Iraqi-Iranian war stands had been taken by other Kurds, in particular the Iraqi KDP, which created direct antagonistic relationships.

It will not be a surprise to hear that shortly before the congress started there was a real crisis, as one of the co-organizing groups (non-Kurdish) wanted us to 'bring the conflicting parties to one table', which of course was a preposterous suggestion. One can imagine how glad we were when one of the guests, who participated in the discussion was someone from "the other side".

We hope that this can be the basis for a more complete participation in future.

Although the RIOP does not have the pretention to become a mediator between warring parties, it should, however, be a place where honourable men and parties can meet in frank and serious discussions.

It would also be slightly naive to expect that all participants (about hundred people, most of them Kurds and among them many Turkish Kurds living in Western Europe) would restrict themselves to only discussing the theme - the importance of cultural elements.

There was a lot of highly political talk, especially on the subject of independence versus (cultural) autonomy. It seemed that many of the participants came to the congress with this subject in mind.

When drawing our conclusions we will come back to this.

Another problem was to understand each other. It was a congress in which many languages were spoken.

In the literal sense: English, German, French and Dutch - not to mention the various Kurdish dialects.

But there were also a number of quite different frames of reference or 'discursive fields' among which - again - the easiest found common ground for discussion (not for shared opinions!) was the political field.

#### The main lines of discussion.

In view of the problems mentioned above, it will be easily understood why the RIOP wants to appreciate the congress primarily as an inventory, which has opened some perspectives and has shown some of the dimensions of the problem under discussion.

To be honest, in as far as we had hoped to discuss and further the theoretical lines developed by the late Amilcar Cabral, François Houtart and Geneviève Lemercinier - by whom articles were included in the congress reader - little can be found in the congress contributions. Two exceptions must be mentioned. Firstly Jafar's paper, which contains elements, which could provide a common basis for further research, particularly because of his functionalist approach. Secondly of course Houtart's own contribution.

Here we would like to dwell on some central elements in Houtart's paper for a moment.

Firstly, his analysis of traditional social structures and cultural elements in terms of their usefulness in the process of transition to socialism. Even if one does not share Houtart's implicit assumptions in every respect - in particular his interpretation of contemporary history as a process of transition to socialism in which specific revolutionary parties should play a more or less self-evident leading role - one could recognise the relevance of his approach for the traditional elements from a more general, admittedly more vague, interpretation of progress.

See for example his studies of the Vietnamese 'lang', the traditional patterns of leadership in Afghan tribal societies and the world of representation of the Misquito Indians in

Nicaragua.

Secondly, his marxist emphasis on the relation between the way people think, behave, feel, etc. - in short their culture - and that what is needed for reproducing material life, which is ultimately determined by the level of technology in a society. In marxist terminology: the productive forces.

The particular difficulties and challenges of the Kurdish Nationalist Movement, which to a high degree are the result of the alienation between the intellectual elite in the cities and the traditional masses in the countryside, as Chris Kutschera's paper clearly shows, should be interpreted in this way.

Urban life is based on different productive relations and a different division of labor. This inevitably leads to a different way of thinking and behaving. Nothing wrong with that. In my opinion it would be a beginning of strategic wisdom to recognise that different worlds with different ways of thinking exist -even within the same person, as Fuad Hussein, the chairman of the congress observed. These worlds are interrelated, but nevertheless different. This makes the struggle on the cultural level a very dynamic process which requires a great alertness and an ability to find a creative synthesis of the Kurdish leaders, instead of a denial of the differences.

Thirdly, the key to Houtart's interpretation is the word 'meaning', by which culture is defined. This explains how Houtart can make a direct link between culture and strategies for a planned - socialist - action. It enables him to show that (traditional) culture can provide 'models' for action. In this way he takes culture out of the world of irrationality in which for many people it seems to remain. In fact, by defining culture in this way, he comes very close to the concept 'ideology' defined as a system of interpreting reality.

Following this line of reasoning, one would expect (traditional) culture to be more a legitimate source of setting goals, than his more instrumental approach suggests.

In other words, by interpreting culture primarily as a system of meaning, the traditional cultural systems should be regarded equal to the systems of meaning of the modern world, whatever the ideologies behind the latter may be.

This requires an attitude of dialogue with the traditional world.

Fourthly, The willingness to start a dialogue, however, should never be used to legitimize the privileged position of a 'happy few'. In practice culture is very often defined as the culture of a small, privileged section of society.

Nevertheless I would like to say that no dialogue can exist without taking one's own premises seriously, however contradictory this may sound after what has been implied about the desirability of questioning the own values as a part of the own system of meaning. If an appeal for dialogue would mean the denial of the basic respect for any human being, then this appeal would be selfcontradictory. For this reason Dr. Ghassemlou's statement that "the promotion of culture in a backward country goes hand in hand with the promotion of democratic and humanitarian aspects of the whole society" is completely in accordance with this appeal for dialogue and respect.

Finally, whatever one may think of the idea of 'transition to socialism' as a definition of the situation (I think that many of the participants of this congress would not like to call themselves socialists - let alone marxists - other than in the very general sense of being progressive) there is a hard core in the socialist-marxist tradition at the basis of all discussions. This hard core represents the opinion that any massive struggle against oppression - as in the case of the Kurds - is a political struggle, in which statepower is involved. By emphasizing the decisive role of the state in the educational system, particularly when it comes to teaching in the own language, it is shown most persuasively that hoping for cultural survival without trying to participate in statepower is an illusion. Another field where political and cultural struggles tend to coincide is in the attempt to create a social self-consciousness. In modern societies the conditions for creating a self-consciousness are largely determined by the state. The state determines the possibilities for doing research in the general sense of the word, including the more practical

gathering of statistical data and other information and the long term research programs for the social sciences. A particularly relevant part of these research activities for the creation of a social consciousness is what could be called 'the recuperation of the past' to use Dr. Vanly's appropriate expression. It is the right of a people to discover its own past as a people, in other words, to write its own history. This requires not only a minimum of freedom, but also the fulfillment of some basic material conditions - e.g. the historian (and his/her family) must have enough to eat in order to be able to do research. This may sound very obvious and banal, but it is the way cultural suppression works in practice and not only in those countries with so-called totalitarian regimes.

#### Some perspectives.

The Kurds are fighting for their identity. One of the more rewarding aspects of organising this congress was the feeling that having a congress like this was really appreciated by the Kurdish participants, because it was seen as a kind of recognition by the official academic community in a world which seems indifferent to the problems of the Kurds.

In our opinion this does not only justify to continue along this path, but also makes it something like a moral imperative. Our challenge is to find a delicate balance between discussing those themes, which are relevant to the Kurds, according to the rules of science and at the same time trying to be politically relevant.

It is now up to the Kurdish parties and liberation movements to take their part of the responsibility for defining the problems, they like to see researched and for putting into practise the results of this research. This is an integral part of the Kurdish struggle for freedom.

As a result of our approach many valuable contacts were made, but we must admit that there was a limitation regarding the range of political representation at this congress. We hope this problem will not present itself again in future.

For the near future we see the following possibilities for further research:

Firstly, the publication of articles on the usefulness of

traditional social structure and cultural elements in the struggle for emancipation of 'oppressed peoples' (meaning all minorities in a really backward situation). For this the contribution of François Houtart could serve as one of the main points of reference.

It should be clear from what has been said before about the objectives of the RIOP that participation of researchers from these oppressed peoples is essential.

Secondly, the preparation of a debate on the theme which seemed to occupy so much the minds of the Kurdish participants, i.e. the question of the most desirable political structure, for instance the question whether one should strive for political independence or for (cultural) autonomy. This is of course a 'hot' issue, but since it is central in most people's interest, a theoretical discussion about this should not be avoided.

Thirdly, the RIOP would be happy to help in promoting a type of self-reflective historical research as indicated by Dr. Vanly. This research does not necessarily have to be done within the framework of the RIOP. Other - Kurdish - institutes could well be in the centre of these activities.

The importance of the cultural elements in the struggle  
of the Kurdish people

By Dr. Ismet Chériff Vanly

Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Colleagues, dear Compatriots,

I have had the chance to take part in conferences here in Europe as well as in the United States and the Soviet Union, on the question of nationalities and human rights. This is the very first time that I have the privilege of attending a congress - outside purely Kurdish circles - totally reserved to the struggle of the Kurdish people as considered in the cultural, but important, field. I do not know whether such a congress is the very first, but I feel very grateful to our Dutch **distinguished friends and hosts to have obligingly** organized it, and that should be the feelings of the Kurdish people themselves. It is indeed an excellent initiative, because the Kurdish participants, that was my case anyway, found themselves, possibly for the first time, obliged to make a serious effort of reflexion on the theme under discussion, putting thus aside immediate political considerations, in order to respond to what is expected by the distinguished non-Kurdish participants. It is useless to say that we Kurds here present are eager to know the reflection of the latter, eminent professors and colleagues.

When, only three days ago, I took my typewriter to begin this paper, I found myself rather embarrassed. Not indeed because that I had nothing to tell. But how to tell it, with what part to begin a subject which, as Dr. Peter Idenburg said, is liable to different interpretations.

As an approach to the question, I would evoke, with your permission, some souvenirs of my adolescence, when I was a teen-ager born and living in Damascus, an Arab capital, but indeed in its Kurdish quarter. Both my parents knew Kurdish, but they used to speak Arab at home. I hardly knew any



Kurdish and had never seen Kurdistan, but in books. However, if I had ever felt to be possibly a Syrian citizen, I by no means felt to be an Arab. I was but a very young Kurd, already dreaming of and even working for Kurdish national liberation. That is to say that belonging to a cultural group, as I felt it, seems to be first of all phenomenon of personal identification with that group. That is evident, La Palice would have said it, but I think it should be mentioned. When I was still a child, I made my first elementary classes in a venerable old stone building, still solidly standing and having on its frontispiece an epigraphic inscription reading that the school had been built - in the heart of the Kurdish quarter of Damascus - by a princess named Khatun, a niece of the great sultan Saladin of the illustrious Kurdish Ayyubid dynasty. I still feel proud that my first school is still used as such some eight hundred years after its construction by a Kurdish royal family who had built an empire including large portions of present "Turkish" and "Iraqi" Kurdistan, together with Syria, Palestine, the Sudan and the Yemen, who had built so many schools and academies and introduced the system of public hospitals in these countries, who also had defended the Islamic Middle East, with success and a perfect sense of chivalry, against the christendom invasions of the time. This pride is however shaded with sorrow, because the Ayyubids did not use their dominant position to establish a unified and independent Kurdistan. Of course, the epoch was not that of nationalities, but of religious expansion and confrontations. If a conclusion is to be drawn from this personal experience, it would be that belonging to a culture implies, not exactly an identification with its past, but its recuperation, a claim to the possession of his own history, with its glorious and gloomy days.

If I am still allowed to recall those souvenirs of adolescence, and I shall not be long, I should introduce the late Mohamed Amin Zeki, the first Kurdish genuine historian of the present century, author especially of a "Compact History of the Kurds and Kurdistan", published in 1931, in

Kurdish, later translated into Arabic. Amin Zeki, born in Sulaimaniya, Southern Kurdistan, in 1880, had spent the First World War as a staff colonel in the Ottoman army. During the Second World War, he used to spend summertime in Damascus, where the teen-ager that I was had several times the luck to meet him. I should pay homage to his memory not only because he was my master and that his history was already my bedside book, but much more because of the intrinsic value of his work and the great service he rendered to his people. In the introduction of his history, he wrote: "When the word OTTOMAN disappeared in Turkey and was replaced by those of Turk and Turanian, I naturally and strongly felt, as any other Ottoman but not Turkish element, to belong to a nation totally independent of the Turks". Then he explained: "Because the word Ottoman, covering all the peoples and the nationalities under the domination of the Ottoman State, had shaded off, to some extent, the national feeling of the dominated peoples".

In this quotation, the word "Ottoman" should be associated with the idea of some islamic messianism used - indeed used by the Sublime Porte as a "spiritual" means to vehicule military expansion and political domination. That leads to situate the Kurdish culture within what may be called the Middle Eastern islamic civilization. The Kurds were Kurds, for the most Zoroastrian, before being converted to Islam. In the lower Middle age, we saw it with the Ayyubids, the Kurds, without loosing any of their characteristics, used to serve the islamic community rather than themselves. But that was only a political attitude. Actually, the Ottomans used to consider them as bad Moslems. The late Father Thomas Bois (1) reports an Ottoman common saying according to which "the Kurd is a Moslem only when compared to the infidel". In a way, that is true - despite the fact that this people gave to Islam a great number of thinkers, philosophers, "feqih" (canon doctors), historians, not to speak of generals. The Kurdish conceptions of Islam was traditionally sectarian, often "kharijite" or dissident, always mixed with old pagan beliefs

(1) "Connaissance des Kurdes", Beyrouth, 1965.

and practices, as attested by E. Prym and A. Socin (2), or Basile Nikitine (3). It can also be attested through their proverbs, some of which were published by R. Lescot (4). In the last century, Major Millingen (5) noticed how little did the Kurds observe islamic essential practices, such as prayers, the Ramadan fast. Even in the political field, their attitude fully changed in the XIXth century, during which Kurdistan was the theatre of a long series of national uprisings led by the crumbling aristocracy against the Ottoman State, the latter presumably "representing" Islam. It is significant that the uprisings occurred when the Sublime Porte was involved in external war and the Empire in danger (the Greek independence war, uprising of Mehemet Ali of Egypt, Crimea war, the Russian-Turkish war of 1878). In his "Briefe..."(6) Marshal Helmuth von Moltke of Prussia, after having spoken of his participation as a young German officer in the Turkish campaigns "for the reconquest of Kurdistan", explains the Ottoman defeat before Mehemet Ali pash and his son Ibrahim of Egypt by the fact that the "Turkish" army was constituted for 75% of young Kurds forcibly enrolled, who were unwilling to fight and who massively deserted their ranks at the first occasion.

Therefore, the opinion expressed above by M. Amin Zeki should be somehow blended. However, the fact remains that after World War I, the Kurdish national feeling got much stronger for several reasons, the most important of which is possibly the penetration of western democratic ideas. Since about 1945, the discovery by the Kurds of the socialist ideas fully achieved the independence of their national movement of any religious consideration. Maybe is it in this understanding that sheikh Ezzedin Hosseini, who is however a Moslem dignitary of Mahabad, presented himself to be "first a Kurd, then a Moslem".

No doubt that the Kurds belong to the Middle Eastern islamic civilization, to the creation of which they had largely contributed. However, within this general framework

(2) "Kurdische Sammlungen", St-Petersburg, 1887-1890, in 4 vol.

(3) "Les Kurdes, étude sociologique et historique", Paris, 1956.

(4) "Proverbes et énigmes kurdes", in Rev. d'études islamiques, Paris, 1937,

(5) "Wild Life among the Koords", London 1870. ch.IV, pp. 307-350.

(6) "Briefe über Zustände und Begebenheiten in der Türkei aus dem Jahren 1835-1839", Berlin, 1841.

they have always had a culture of their own to which they cling more than to any other thing. Their political engagement is national, democratic and laic, by no means religious, and this may largely explain the bloody conflict between Iranian Kurdistan and the theocratic Republic of ayatollah Khomeini. They consider that religion, which they respect, should have nothing to do with the State affairs.

I am afraid not to have fully been within the subject and, still more, not to have got through with the problem of Kurdish culture considered historically. I feel bound to go further back to the XVIth and the XVIIth centuries, to try to illustrate two different perceptions, one aristocratic and the other popular, of the Kurdish culture of the time. I should even have a word on Melaye Jezri (Cezri), one of the greatest Kurdish poets of Kurdish expression that have ever existed, who lived in Bohtan, central Kurdistan, in the XVth century, 1417-1495, the epoch called by Father Bois "the Golden Age of Kurdish Litterature". Although deeply mystic, Jezri wrote:

Gul-ê bkh-ê îrem-ê Bohtan im  
Shebchirakh-ê shêvên Kurdistan im      that is:

I am the rose in the paradise-garden of Bohtan,  
I am the torch-light in the night of Kurdistan.

The "night of Kurdistan" is a reference to the unhappy situation of the country, yet illuminated by the poets thought and pen. The hint to a Kurdish nationalism is already evident.

Sharaf Khan, the ruling prince of Bitlis, in Northern Kurdistan, was the first known Kurdish national historian. He achieved in 1596 his "Sharaf-Nameh", a general history on his people, which in the XIXth century was also published in French, at St-Petersburg, in 4 volumes, under the title "Le Cheref-Nameh, Fastes de la nation kurde" (7).

At the end of the XVIth century, when Kurdistan was neither the unified domain of a faith, like Europe under Charlemagne - the Kurds being Moslems under Moslems - , nor the land of one king, the country being but a dust of feudal half-independent

(7) In 1868-1875, translated by François Charmoy.

principalities and small seigniories, Sharaf Khan, yes, wrote a history of his nation. In his introduction, he said that he would not write it in Kurdish - and was later to be blamed by M. Amin Zeki -, "but in better known Persian", so that "the great deeds of the great kings, of the great princes and of the valiant knights of Kurdistan will not remain unknown and covered by the mystery veil". Sharaf Khan gave a surprisingly modern ethical definition of his nation, speaking of its language, its territory, its common traditions, its character, its qualities and its defaults ("unrivalled" courage, pride, generosity, etcetera, but also disunion, excessive individualism, unwillingness to obey one to another, etcetera). He tried to find out the ethnic origin of this nation, but, there, he could not but fall into legends. He was not concerned only by his own principality, but gave a geographical definition "of Kurdistan, the homeland of the nation of the Kurds". He was deeply proud of his nation, to be a Kurd, but a Kurdish prince. Actually, his story, covering about five to six centuries, was not that of the Kurdish nobility, a series of chronicles on all the principalities, the smaller and the larger, one by one, in a systematic order, including those where he had, I think, never been - as when he speaks of the Hazarapid and the Khurshidid dynasties who had respectively ruled on the Greater - Loristan (nowadays Bakhtiyariland) and Smaller Loristan. A ruling prince and one of the wealthiest among his peers, now honoured and now fought, one day by the sultan and the other by the shah, he was content with his fate, but said nothing of "the lower classes", to the exception of those in his capital. Since everything was going for the best in his eyes, the idea of national unity and full independence did not even cross his mind.

Yet, the mere fact that Sharaf Khan wrote a history of his nation, with an introduction of ethnographic character, is seemingly very significant, owing especially to the context of his time.

Some fifty years after Sharaf Khan, in the XVIIth century, the Roman traveller and gentleman Pietro Della Valle, being in

Istanbul, was to report, as a great event occurring in the capital of the Empire, the visit paid the the "Great Turk" (the sultan), by "a Kurdish prince of Bitlis". The latter was a grandson of our author and had a case to settle against the Turkish commander-in-chief in Kurdistan. Because the sultan needed the army of the Kurdish prince in his war against Persia, he "transferred" to him the head of the cupid general, who was decapitated (8).

But in the year 1666, under sultan Murad IV, the principality of Bitlis was finally destroyed by the Ottoman army and the unbelievable treasures of its last lord, Avdal Khan, were looted. Among the treasures, thousands of rare manuscripts, ancient maps, collected by the dynasty, some of which written by the unhappy Avdal himself, who was a scientist for his time, were lost for ever. The event is fully described, not without sorrow, by an eye-witness of the battle and the looting, the Turkish traveller Evliya Chelebi (9), friend of Avdal Khan, but nephew of the Turkish invading general.

With Ehmede Khani (1650-1706), born and deceased in Bayazid, at the very southern shadow of the Ararat mountain, the XVIIth century brought, as put it Father Bois, "a new bright star in the sky of Kurdish literature". His long epic "Mem-o-Zin", several times published by the Kurds, also by the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, in 1962 (with the Kurdish text, a Russian translation and notes), is still sung, nowadays, by the Kurdish people. A simple religious mollah, like most of the intellectuals of popular extraction of that epoch, Khani was a powerful poet, a philosopher and a thinker, but by no means a mystic like Jezri. On the contrary, without being really a "materialist", Khani was fully aware of the class contradictions in the Kurdish society, strongly engaged with the still insufficiently conscious popular classes, and full of criticism against the governing feudal nobility. But his most outstanding feature was to be a zealous advocate, the father, the prophet of modern Kurdish nationalism. In the poetic introduction of his Mem-o-Zin, he defines himself as "a poor poet, and the poet of the poor". He said, in much

(8) The narrative of the Roman author was also published in French, "Voyages de Pietro Della Valle", Rouen, 1745, in two volumes. For above, see vol. I, pp. 225-226-

Generosity, valour, chivalry, ardour, audace, temerity,  
 Everything within the Kurdish nation is at its summit!  
 But the Kurds refuse to get obliged one to another, disunited,  
 If we were united, Turks, Persians and Arabs would serve us as valets!  
 We would raise to their apogee spirit and power,  
 We would conquer the realm of wisdom and science!

Again in the spirit of his time, Khani dreams of a "Kurdish conqueror" who would unify the nation and promote the Kurdish culture:

When may a conqueror spring from our ranks?  
 When will our art and our culture be consecrated?  
 When will a remedy be found to our illness?  
 And a field to our culture to flourish?  
 If we had a king, our money would become official coin,  
 God would bestow on him a diadem and a throne,  
 And a chance would be offered to us, with consideration,  
 We would get liberated from miserable hands,  
 From Turkish, Persian and Arab domination,  
 But what might we do, the poor poets?  
 The dishonour of a nation is that of its Lords!

However, Khani is not but passively dreaming. He appeals to struggle:

I asked the world what is her (10) dowry to marry me?  
 The world said it is priceless, it is but effort!  
 Never believe that without struggle and dashing,  
 We can ever attain our aim!

In Kurdistan, nobody nowadays can tell where is the tomb of prince Sharaf Khan, and his work is known only by intellectuals. But the modest burial place of Khani, at the feet of Ararat, has never ceased to be a sanctuary for popular pilgrimage. Much more, his work is orally transmitted even by simple villagers. He remained alive among the Kurdish people almost three centuries after his death. No wonder: "poet of the poor" he was, poet of the poor he remains, the zealous and poetical advocate of "national liberation and unification", a goal in itself, but also a means for "Kurdish art and cultural promotion", for "more science and consideration" and a "greater wealth" to the benefit of a people he had loved, but who are, unfortunately, still a dependent people, even more than ever.

(10) The word "world", "jihan" in Kurdish, is feminine.

more beautiful verses than it could be translated, that he was writing his epic in Kurdish "so that the other nations would not boast of having books of their own but not the Kurdish nation". Then he added (free translation):

If Khani ventured on that road,  
It is only due to the national zeal of his soul.

If this fruit may seem unripe,  
It is sufficient to be Kurdish,  
If the baby may not seem pretty,  
He is the prettiest in my eyes.  
His suit, his ear-ring are made by my hands,  
The pictures, the symbols, the style, the words,  
Nothing from the foreigners was borrowed,  
All is home-made and from the Kurdish Land.

I am not a goldsmith but a simple artisan,  
I am a Kurd and a self-made man,  
I am a Kurd of the mountains,  
Of the remote frontier-lands.

To consider only the nationalistic aspect of his work, it may be noticed that Khani, whose islamic faith is however faultless, tacitly "incriminates" the "divine wisdom", which he "could not understand" and that rendered him "full of confusion", because of the sad state of his nation. He said:

Among the world powers, why are the Kurds powerless?  
Why are they doomed and wealthless?  
They have however conquered with sword of the city of glory,  
The kingdom of effort, the land of chivalry!

Khani (9) had a precise idea of the very difficult geopolitical position of Kurdistan, squeezed between the rival Ottoman and Persian Empires:

Look! from Arabia to Georgia, it is but Kurdish Land,  
The Kurds live in this country as in a stronghold,  
Facing the Persians and the Turks from four sides,  
Who have made a target for the destiny arrows of this fortress.  
The Kurdish country seems to hold the key of the border-marches,  
Like a dam, it separates both rival parties,  
But when the Persian ocean and the Turkish sea get rough,  
Only the Kurdish country will be spattered with blood!

Then Khani dreams, "if the Kurds were united":

(9) Our compatriot Dr. Ezzedin M. Ressoul wrote an excellent book on Khani, his life, work and thought, presented in Russian as DSC doctorate dissertation at the Soviet Academy of Science, Moscow 1977, and published in Arabic, Baghdad, 1979.



Ahmede Khani indeed offers us an exemplary link between the past and present and, I think, for the subject under discussion at this Congress, an introduction which almost exhausts the theme.

Among the various definitions of the word "Culture", two would possibly fit the Kurdish situations: "The total of the inherited ideas, beliefs, values and knowledge which constitute the shared bases of social action", on one hand, and the other, "The total range of activities and ideas of a group of people, which are transmitted and reinforced by members of the group".

But such definitions cannot be admitted without further explanation or precision - some of which already evoked above in this paper, as an approach to the subject. With this respect, it can be mentioned or confirmed:

1. In its broadest acceptation, the Kurdish culture is part of the general culture of the Near and Middle East, to the creation of which this people had largely contributed, among others, since Prehistory (11) and the Greatest Antiquity. To this ancient pagan culture, successive religious beliefs, Zoroastrian, Israelite, Christian and, later, especially Islamic, were grafted.

2. Within this large general framework, the Kurdish people developed an original culture of their own, mainly due to two fundamental factors:

2.a. The particular human components in the phenomenon of Kurdish ethnical formation. That is a long and most interesting subject to which the author has consecrated some years of research and work, but that cannot be exposed here (12). Every people have their own particular ethnic formation. For the Kurds, to say a couple of words, it consisted of a long process through which different Iranian (but not Persian) elements (that is the Medes, the Sakka - Scythians properly -, the Sagart-Zikertu-, the Mards, the Kurts-Kurtii-, and much formerly the Mitanni) absorbed, and linguistically aryanized, the older populations of the country, of Caucasian (also said Japhetic) origin (The Gutians, the Lullubi, the Kassits-Kashshu-,

(11) R.J. Braidwood c.s., "Prehistoric Investigation in Iraqi Kurdistan", Chic.

(12) The author is hopeful to publish later this subject, possibly 1960. within a general history of the Kurdish people.

the Nairi - or Hahari - called later on Urartians, etcetera). The particular components in this process contributed - by heredity and heritage - to give their character to the Kurdish people, bringing especially the Kurdish language, which belongs to the Indo-European stock, north-western Iranian group, but is different from Persian (Farsi).

2.b. This process of formation was achieved in a particular geographical environment, with consequences in the economic, social and psychological fields, modeled after a particular country, Kurdistan (whose name should obviously derive from that of the ancient Kurtii). In other words, the Kurdish people, their culture, their language, had not been "imported" already "made", or fully achieved, to Kurdistan, but took their shape in this country. Without forgetting the mutual cultural cross-influence between the different neighbouring peoples of the areas, the Kurdish people owe to their forefathers, but also to their country Kurdistan, the fact to be what they are.

It was said above that - like any other people -, there is an identification phenomenon between the Kurdish people and their proper culture, as it is, but also a recuperation of that culture as it was, that is its integration to the historical heritage of this people. That identification is so true that we often use "cultural group" for "nationality" and speak of the preservation of the "cultural identity" of a people.

The Kurdish culture is in danger because the Kurdish people themselves are submitted - differently according to the concerned States and to various degrees - to a colonialist policy of political, military, racist and economic oppression, aiming at their ultimate disintegration as a national group. This, despite the fact that the Kurds, with some 21 million in number, are the largest group in the area, after the Arabs and the Turks proper, but before the Persians of Iran (13).

For the Kurdish people, to preserve their culture is at one and the same time a goal and a means:

1. It is a goal, because preserving that culture, its

(13) There are several other millions of persanophones living in the USSR (the Tajiks), and in Afghanistan.

values, that language, does simply mean to preserve the existence of the Kurdish people, the liberation of their country of the hostile forces of disintegration and repression. For the peasantry, this identification may not be fully or consciously perceptible. Anyway, it is unconsciously. Any Kurdish peasant knows that if he is a Kurd it is essentially because he is speaking Kurdish, that Turkish, or Persian, or Arabic, is not "his" language.

2. It is a means because defending the Kurdish culture - present or as a heritage of the past - has definitely a rôle in mobilizing people, owing to the identification, conscious or unconscious, of the latter to their culture.

3. In endeavouring to preserve their culture, goal or means, the Kurdish people do not intend to keep it as it is, as inherited. The struggle for national liberation also aims at cultural renewal: to cleanse culture first of all of what is traditionally harmful to its future development, to eliminate the sequelae of tribalism and feudalism - to let culture flourish with the people.

4. There are in Kurdistan some other old cultures, once important and flourishing, belonging to minority groups, nowadays numerically small and endangered, living amongst the Kurdish people. I name the Assyro-Chaldeans and the Armenians, whose culture is as oppressed as the Kurdish culture. The only way to preserve them, where they are in Kurdistan, is to achieve the national liberation of this country.

A layer of what is called "the upper class" of the Kurdish society, especially in Northern (Turkish) Kurdistan, is cooperating, to its own interests, with the very oppressors of this people. These "compradores" deny the existence of any Kurdish culture and even the very existence of the Kurdish people. The phenomenon is classical and I shall not waste your time to tell that such individuals, together with their masters, are going against the march of history.

The only question which I would like to put is whether internal autonomy, as programmed and fought for by several

Kurdish political parties, would indeed solve the Kurdish question and the problem of its culture. I have full respect for these struggling parties and for their sacrifices, not to speak of the friendship I have with many of their leaders and members. However, I am afraid that my answer to the question should be negative. It does not seem that any internal autonomy, if ever it could be obtained - which I believe to be problematic - is liable to solve the question.

The Kurdish question is that of a Stateless nation, in other words a national liberation one. So far, since 1945, it has been put and fought for as such, as it should be, and according to the deep aspirations of the Kurdish people. It is, I think, only a question of time.

Institut Kurde de Paris

Perspectives of the Kurdish National Movement

By Chris Kutschera

There is no history more paradoxal than that of the Kurdish people: forming since antiquity a people apart, living on a well determined territory, with their language, their culture, their religion, their traditions, the Kurds number today more than 15 million people (1). (There are no statistics, but one can make the following estimations: in Turkey 8 million; in Iran 5,5 million; in Iraq 3 million; in Syria 1 million; in USSR 300.000). But they are still a people without a homeland (or "patrie"), a nation without a State. At a time when the United Nations admit to their organization new "countries" of a few hundred thousand inhabitants, the Kurds were not able to use for themselves this "right of the peoples to dispose of themselves", which, for this same United Nations, is one of Man's rights (2) (General Assembly, 16 December 1966, resolution 2200-XXI).

Conspiration of History? Or tragic failure due to the inherent weaknesses of the Kurdish people? In fact, one can wonder if the Kurds do really aim for a Nation? But how does a Nation come to birth?

"One cannot clearly think of an anonymous Nation", writes Marc Bloch (3) (Bloch, 1978:598). Long before the awakening of nationalities in Europe, centuries before the words "French", "English", and "German" were forged, the word "Kurd" was used by Greek, then Arab and Persian historians.

"Antagonism against the foreigner", another factor which contributes powerfully to the development of National feeling, has acted in favour of the Kurds since very remote times, as one can see from this remark by the Xth century geographer Abu Ishak al Farsy: "Kurds are people who live in our countries, but who stand out in the category of human kind: with fragments coming from all over the world, one made a mixture which produced the Kurd".

It is difficult to maintain, as some authors did, that "Language is the Nation", but the Kurdish language is certainly

one of the axis on which the identity of the Kurdish people asserted itself: on this base, two intimately intertwined cultures developed: a "classical" culture, which produced such a masterpiece as "Mem-o-Zin", by Ahmed Khani (1591-1652); and a popular culture, one of the richest in the Mediterranean basin, which gave a special place to epic tales - these "history books of people who do not know how to read" (4) (Bloch, 1978:143), which form the "collective memory" of nations.

One cannot subscribe to Antun Saada's thesis that "Land is the Nation", (5) (Seale, 1965:66) but it cannot be denied that the geographical environment in which Kurds have been living shaped their soul - and contributed to determine the course of their history: without these mountains with their severe climate, in which they could find a refuge, Kurds would have been most probably swept away from the surface of the Globe by the barbarian hordes which rampaged through Asia Minor for centuries.

But in all these tentative definitions of "Nation" one essential element is missing: it is this factor which, in his definition of Nation, Mancini adds to those elements already listed: a Nations is a "natural society of men brought by unity of territory, or origin, of custom, and of language, to a community of life and of social consciousness" (6) (Guilhaudis, 1976:40). The problem of the Kurds with themselves lies at the level of this social consciousness, of this basically subjective factor which is "national consciousness". And it is the history of this national consciousness, of its attempts to crystallize itself into a national movement which we are going to retrace here. Schematically, one can distinguish three phases in the Kurdish national movement, three phases which in fact overlap: a feudal phase, a religious phase and a political phase.

There are very few documents concerning the beginning of Kurdish nationalism in the nineteenth century: there were then many travellers who explores the most remote provinces of

Turkey - a feat which became impossible a century later when Kurdistan of Turkey became, in the twenties and the thirties, a forbidden area, but most of these explorers were missionaries sent by the French catholic missions, the Archbishop of Canterbury or the American Board of Missions, who were exclusively pre-occupied by the fate of the Christians in the East. One of them, however, was able to put together this unique document relating the Kurds' state of mind at the end of the first half of the nineteenth century:

"As I often asked the Kurds I met why they were so many to rebel, they all answered: what can we do: if we go down in the plain to build villages, plant vineyards, sow wheat and barley, and plough an arid land, we are so crushed by various taxes (by the Ottomans) that we get no profit from our work blessed by God. We stay poor and miserable, and are submitted to the most ruthless tyranny. The impossibility to satisfy our rapacious masters is considered as a crime. Our villages are destroyed, even our beds and our tools are taken away, some of us are murdered, and the others are taken captive"...

So what can we do? We abandon our homes, and look for refuge amongst our brothers in the mountains, farther away from oppression. But even there we risk each year to be hunted like partridges. Such is our fate". (7) (Badger, 1852).

This long complaint resumes perfectly the feeling of the Kurds: revolt under oppression, an oppression which is mainly economic. But, apparently, no trace of "national consciousness". Still, it is at that time that Emir Bedir Khan's short epic venture took place, and that he governed a Kurdish kingdom stretching from Persia to the Tigris.

How could Emir Bedir Khan transform this feeling of revolt which normally leads only to unconsequent upheavals, or goes no farther than peasants' "jacqueries", into a national movement? The extraordinary charism he exerted on Kurdish tribes did certainly play an essential role: everywhere, "peasants venerated him almost as a second Mahomet (8) (Badger, 1852:305) but not only for religious reasons: what the Kurdish peasants

appreciated in him was his sense of justice, his "inflexible integrity": all the Kurds the missionaries met were convinced that nobody could ever buy him off when he was carrying out justice (9) (Badger, 1852:305).

Emir Bedir Khan, born into one of Kurdistan's most ancient families, had difficult beginnings. But he was able, in undisclosed circumstances, to gather an "incalculable" fortune, which allowed him to give all Kurds, who had not enough money to buy an arm, a sum sufficient to buy a gun, a sword and a shield: all historians acknowledge that a decisive step in the constitution of a State is taken when the king or the prince disposes of a fortune unrivalled by his rivals or vassals, a fortune which allows him to pay soldiers and civil servants.

Unless we discover unpublished documents forgotten in some archives, we will probably never know what was Emir Bedir Khan's political project; but he was able to fulfill the Kurds' basic aspiration at a time characterized by the dreadful corruption of the Ottoman administration: he gave the Kurds an embryo of a State, with law and order; as a French consular agent who travelled through Emir Bedir Khan's "kingdom" was able to see for himself in 1845: "He is a severe but fair prince. So one can see in his territory a total security and an apparent well-being that one could look for in vain in the neighbouring provinces submitted to the Turkish authority". (10) (D'Avril. 1864:61).

Emir Bedir Khan's epic coincides with the end of the Golden Age of the Kurdish feudality: in the middle of the nineteenth century, Kurdistan, then almost totally located in Turkey, still looks like the Kurdistan described in the sixteenth century by Cheref Khan, prince of Bitlis, in his famous "Cheref Nameh" (11) (Cheref Khan, 1863). The Ottoman administration is almost inexistent; except in a few rare big cities, it reveals itself only in the form of military expeditions with a fiscal aim. And Kurdistan remains an impenetrable country, without roads; in valleys isolated



from each other by almost impassable chains of mountains, beys living in castles govern tribes which spent their time between agriculture, hunting and war. Never the Kurdish identity will assert itself so much in the cultural field. And Bedir Khan's merit is to have crystallized by his charisma this identity, and to have brought together most of ethnic group until then fragmented in tribal segments, to reunite it within the framework of a State, though embryonic it was. It is for this reason that Bedir Khan remains the founding father of Kurdish Nationalism.

After Bedir Khan's fall and his departure for exile (1847) where he is followed by many Kurdish princes, the Kurdish society is practically beheaded: the tribal structure remains, but without its chiefs.

Then a new class of leaders takes over: they are the "Shaikhs": religious chiefs of naqsbendi and kadiri fraternities; as for the feudal chiefs, their prestige rests on prestigious genealogies, but also and above all on their "power", all the more unlimited since it does not belong to the world of the rational and of the visible.

"A Shaikh knows all the secrets and listens to all hearts; he is all powerful in mind and body; he goes internally, as they say, to war, when everything is silent around him; at night, he rides his horse, while not leaving his bed, and as quick as lightning, sweeps over huge spaces... He stops only in front of enemy ranks, in the middle of the army of unfaithful, which he overwhelms. After exterminating them, he comes back triumphantly, and in a wink goes back to his home, always invincible and always invulnerable" (12) (Bedar, 1920).

It is shaikh Obeidalla, one of these makers of miracles and of "gullabend" (talisman) who will lead the Kurdish national movement during half a century, who had the merit to have drafted the first known written "manifesto" of Kurdish nationalism.

"The Kurdish people is a people apart...We want to take our affairs in our hands" (13) (Blue Book, 1881, N.5:54).

Never, probably, was the misery of the Kurdish people so great. To the oppression and the extractions of the Ottoman administration, one must add the devastations of the three Turko-Russian wars (1829, 1854, 1877-1878), then those of the First World War (1914-1918). Stricken by conscription, the Kurds see their country ruined by the campaigning armies. Famine is raging in Kurdistan. More than ever, the Kurds aspire to live in peace. They want law and order. And since the Ottomans have shown that they are unable to govern this country, only the Shaikhs, these "messengers of God", can put an end to their desperate condition.

One can wonder how these extremely religious people could raise arms against the Sultan-Caliph, while Islam is traditionally a denationalising factor: it is because in these remote areas of the Turko-Persian border, the person of these shaikhs who were heading the mystic fraternities was holier than that of the Sultan. And in Shis Dersim, the question does not arise.

In contact by writing, or in direct contact with American or European missionaries or consuls, these religious chiefs proved to be astonishingly open to the western world - the ideals of which they opposed to the Ottoman anarchy. And it is in his correspondance with Dr. Cochran, an American missionary based in Ourmis, that shaikh Obeidalla elaborated his projects for the "Kurdish Nation".

Shaikh Abdes Salam II of Barzan, a remarkable man who, unluckily for his fellow-countrymen was hanged by the Turks on the eve of World War One, was also in contact with missionaries to whom he conveyed his desire to build schools in the villages. Shaikh Abdes Salam II was so eager to go and convince King George V of the need to help him solve the Kurdish question that his visitors had to leave him surreptitiously not to take him away with them to England... "You went to India, and you stay there, although the people do not want you. Why don't you want to come and stay with us, who want you? You would be welcome everywhere around here", used to repeat shaikh Abdes Salam II (15) (Wigram, 1914:145).

In his way, he inaugurates a tradition of unreasonable administration for the West, which was fatal to his younger brother, general Barzani. But shaikh Abdes Salam II was also the man who drafted the first "program" of the Kurdish national movement - a list of extraordinary precise demands:

- the adoption of the Kurdish language as the official language in the five Kurdish districts;
- the adoption of Kurdish as the teaching language;
- the nomination of Kurdish speaking officials;
- the nomination of Shafei cadis and muftis (when the Ottomans used to choose them amongst Hanafi);
- the suppression of all taxes not in conformity with Sharia;
- the taxes paid for the purchase of the work due to the administration should be used to maintain the roads of the Kurdish districts. (16) (Jwaideh, 1960:304-305)

But it was shaikh Mahmud Barzinji who realized the synthesis of the more or less confused aspirations of the Kurds and the Western conceptions of the right to self-determination: Indeed, he was the man who during more than ten years was the most determined adversary of the British in the fraction of Kurdistan attributed to Iraq who, on his hospital-bed, recited President Wilson's twelfth point and the Franco-British declaration of November 8, 1918, the Kurdish translation of which "written on leaves of the Holy Coran, was attached, as a talisman, to his arm". (17) (Wilson, 1931: 136-138)

The first point of President Wilson's "program for the peace of the World" of January 8, 1918 says, that sovereignty and security must be guaranteed to the Turkish areas of the Ottoman empire; but to the other nations which are now under Turkish domination, one shall guarantee an absolute security of existence and the full possibility to develop in an autonomous way, without any molestation".

And the Franco-British declaration of November 8, 1918 states that the moment of a "complete and definitive liberation" has come for the peoples submitted to the Ottoman domination, which will be at last able to establish a "national

government drawing his authority from the free-choice of the indigenous population".

It was on the basis of these principles, coming from the Western world he admired, that shaikh Mahmud fought for the "rights" of the Kurds.

Unfortunately, one knows nothing about shaikh Said's motivations, but we know of one letter by Seyid Reza (1937) which gives some precious indications on the aims of the revolt of Dersim:

"Three million Kurds being in their country and longing only to live in peace and freedom while keeping their race, their language, their traditions, their culture and their civilization, through my voice address themselves to your Excellency and beg you to use the high moral influence of your government to put an end to this cruel injustice". (18) (Kutschera, 1979:123).

We are very far from the "religious obscurantism" which, according to the Ankara government, was at the origin of the uprising.

Thanks to their charism, these religious chiefs were able to unify the Kurdish tribes and mobilise them by formulating, for the first time in a precise manner, the more or less confused aspirations of the Kurdish people - the right to determine freely their own fate. But their movements were only bush-firs, or ephemeral uprisings condemned to be crushed: despite the presence of a few intellectuals at their side, the religious chiefs relied for their armed struggle only on tribal coalitions which undid themselves as quickly as they were made. The Kurdish national movement was still missing an essential element: parties, which develop political consciousness, and organize the struggle, on the basis of a program.

The first political parties were born in ambiguous conditions: founded by the small number of intellectuals, of grands bourgeois and aristocrats who formed the intelligentsia of the Kurdish people at the beginning of the twentieth century, these parties, or, more correctly, the clubs, reflected the mentality of people of culture, whose culture was mainly Ottoman,

Some members of this "elite" did not even speak Kurdish, or spoke it badly. The language of their culture was Turkish. Their attachment to Islam was another obstacle: for the shaikhs who lived amidst their people, Islam created special links between themselves and their community through the network of the fraternities; but for the grands bourgeois who lived in Constantinople, Islam was another link to the Sultan-Caliph: it was difficult for them to detach themselves from the cult of great ideals of piety and unity of the Empire. (19) (see Bloch, 1978:596: "It was not amongst the more educated men that the national feeling could be born").

Despite everything, whatever their shortcomings, these men had the merit to understand that the struggle of the Kurds for their rights - autonomy or independence, they did not agree on this point - could not succeed if the consciousness of the Kurds was not awakened. So they had to develop education, and create an organic link between the elite of the Kurdish nation and these rougher strata of the Kurdish people in which dozed the "obscure preludes of nationality". (20) (Bloch 1978:596)

So the first clubs founded in 1908 are called the "association for the development and progress of Kurdistan", or the "association for the propagation of education amongst the Kurds". After World War I, the Kurds of Constantinople founded a new "association for the restoration of Kurdistan", the political expression of which is the "Democratic Party of Kurdistan", which will give its name twenty-five years later to the parties founded in Mahabad and Suleimania. The leaders of these associations are notables, such as senator AbdelKader, shaikh Khalil bey, chief of police in

Constantinople. As Emir Kamuran Bedir Khan will put it half a century later, "most of these people had one foot in the Kurdish camp, and the other in the Ottoman and Islamic camp". (20) (Kutschera, 1979:26)

Kurdish clubs are also opened in the main cities of Ottoman Kurdistan, in Malatia, Mardin, Kharput and Diyarbekir, giving a certain diffusion to the Kurdish demands, and distributing the newspaper "Jin". But very quickly the leaders of the Kurdish clubs divide themselves - on the definition of the aims of their struggle: autonomy within the framework of the Ottoman empire, or independence. And the conflict which tears apart the Kurdish clubs of Constantinople in the twenties follows a scenario which will repeat itself, relatively speaking, forty-five years later, during the conflict between general Barzani and the group of intellectuals around Ibrahim Ahmed and Jalal Talabani.

The cleavage will oppose the "feudals", partisans of autonomy, represented by senator AbdelKader, to the "Intellectuals", partisans of Independence, regrouped behind Emir Emin Ali Bedir Khan and Memduh Selim, secretary general of "Democratic party of Kurdistan". Using his prestige as the son of shaikh Obeidalla, senator AbdelKader obtains from the Kurdish guilds of Constantinople - the more modest classes of the Kurdish population of the capital: water-carriers, street-porters etcetera - a declaration stating that he alone is entitled to speak in the name of the Kurds. While the "intellectuals" simply exclude senator AbdelKader from the club of which he is the chairman! To the argument of authority of one, the others oppose an arbitrary decision; considerations of persons and of principle are mixed: in the first attempt at Kurdish political organization, the notions of democratic debate, majority and minority, respects of the rights and obligations of the former and the latter are ignored - setting up what will unfortunately become a tradition in the Kurdish movement.

At the same time, the same men manifest another naive

inclination - this search for a "protector" which, from the leader of the Kurdish clubs up to general Barzani, will prove fatal to the Kurdish movement.

Moved, as were shaikh AbdesSalam II or shaikh Mahmud by a deep admiration for the West, the leaders of the Kurdish Clubs will go as far as believing that this autonomy or independence should be "granted" to them - and in this aspect they differ from their predecessors.

But as a Foreign Office official put it, "the dream of the young Kurdish Party to be put, at the expense, in arms and in money, of a foreign power, at the head of a Kurdish State formed for them is an impossible dream". (21)

(Kuschera, 1979:34)

It is difficult to judge these men, but their naivety in the face of the Big Powers is unforgivable. And one can wonder about the purity of their motivations: these exiles who were living in the capital of the Ottoman empire never forgot, in the "deal" they were submitting to the Big Powers, to recall that they were candidates to the crown of the future Kurdish kingdom... In any case, these men were swept away by the Kemalist revolution, and by the game of the Big Powers, which never believed in their promise, although it is written in the treaty of Sèvres (1920) that "local autonomy" will be granted "for the areas where the Kurdish element dominates".

The first attempt to give a structure to the Kurdish national movement, and integrate essentially western concepts, ended in pitiful failure. The notions of nation, right to self-determination, independence and autonomy remained words used in salons by leaders totally isolated from the masses.

One must wait until World War II to see the birth of real political parties in the Kurdistan of Iraq and the Kurdistan of Iran, with the foundation of "Hewa" in Iraq (1941), "Komala" in Iran (1942); they were the fore-runners of the "Democratic Party of Kurdistan" of Iran (1945) and of Iraq (1946).

Straight way, especially in Iraq, the Kurdish national movement takes on another dimension under the influence of an entirely new ideology: socialism.

Besides a number of notables, the first members of "Hewa" are civil servants, officers, peasants, workers (railway, oil) and also intellectuals (students, teachers, writers). Some of them are deeply influenced by the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP), founded in 1934, and some will even become members of the ICP later on, phenomenon which will affect the relations between the two parties during many years.

The first program of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan (Iraq) illustrates this situation: it is the program of a progressive party, which contains, besides purely nationalist demands - autonomy for Iraqi Kurdistan, - social demands: agrarian reform, amelioration of living conditions for the working class, economic and social reforms. It is an anti-imperialist and anti-reactionary party which is part of the "national front" along with the other Iraqi progressive parties.

It is also a real party, a revolutionary and underground one, the number of adherents of which is limited: from 500 to 2000 according to sources.

Under the leadership of an intellectual from Suleimania, Ibrahim Ahmed, elected secretary-general in 1950, the KDP became more and more radical, and after the third party congress in 1953, becomes a "marxist-lenist" party. The KDP proclaims it is in favour of armed struggle, and asks for Kurdistan the stature of a federated state within the Iraqi republic. But it gives the priority to the anti-imperialist and anti-reactionary struggle. In fact, the KDP is divided between two tendencies, one a purely "nationalist" current, and the other a "progressive" fraction, which gives priority to the social question. And the struggle of these two fractions for the control of the party apparatus will make up the history of the coming years. Torn by this dilemma, animated by marxist or marxist-leaning leaders, the KDP still has no well defined ideology, and does not seem



to understand very clearly what distinguishes it from the Communist party.

To what degree do the Kurdish peasants follow these extreme positions held by the leaders of the party? Quite well, apparently, and the leaders of the KDP, as radical as they are, are even afraid of being overrun by the Kurdish peasants, who want the words "Kurdish Revolution" to have one real meaning.

"I will not deny that we are afraid that the peasants could break loose", says Ibrahim Ahmed to a journalist from "Le Monde" (22) ("Le Monde", 10 april 1963), "Sure, we did not make any specific promises, but the word autonomy has taken on for them the dimensions of an earthly paradise that we will be unable to offer them soon, and not even for several years".

For the peasants, the problem of land, of agrarian reform, was the essential question: but they did not want to alienate the traditional chiefs, despite their "hate of feudality and their desire to operate a radical agrarian reform" (23) ("Le Monde, april 14-15 1963), and the KDP leaders decided to "freeze" the social question for the duration of the struggle against Baghdad. Because of this, they did not seize the opportunity to mobilize the Kurdish peasants around a program which was directly accessible to them - and they opened the way for general Barzani.

General Barzani's charism is probably due to the fact that he went down in history during his own lifetime: when he takes over the leadership of the Kurdish movement in Iraq in 1958, he already has behind him a long history of struggles, the memory of which could have faded away, but to which his actual feats give a legendary halo: Mulla Mustafa Barzani participated in 1931-32 in his brother shaikh Ahmed's uprising, and he himself led a revolt in 1933-34 after shaikh Ahmed's surrender.

Following his escape from Suleimania in 1943, there was his campaign of 1945 against the Iraqi army; then his

participation in the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad, of which he became one of the generals. Then there was the legendary cavalcade which, in fourteen days, took him to Araxe and to exile in the USSR.

For the Kurdish tribes, general Barzani undoubtedly carries the enormous prestige of a war chief who fought against forces ten or hundred times more important than his own, and was never captured. He also enjoyed, by rebound, the religious veneration that the Kurdish mountaineers had for the Shaikhs of Barzani, first for shaikh AbdesSalam II, then for shaikh Ahmed.

For the city Kurds, for the marxist intellectuals, general Barzani practically had acquired a certificate of "revolutionary" during his long exile in the Soviet Union (1947-1958).

But it is not evident that general Barzani assimilated the lessons he received while in the USSR. As one of his friends who came to visit him in Prague before his return to Baghdad used to say jokingly: "Barzani knows marxism well in Russian, but he does not know how to implement it in Kurdish or in Arabic" (24) (Kutschera, 1979:204). Confronted with the more classical notions of autonomy and independence, Barzani is not much more at ease, and journalists who had a chance to spend long hours with him got the impression that general Barzani avoided many subjects a little too technical "because he was afraid not to understand them", and to make a blunder.

As lieutenant colonel Aziz Akrawi put it: "General Barzani is a great Kurdish leader, but he is not a politician" (25) (Adamson, 1964:151). Confronted with the concepts of western political thought, general Barzani was an "illiterate". And differing from his brother shaikh AbdesSalam II, always eager to learn, general Barzani was an illiterate who would remain so. As one of the journalists who best understood the psychological components of this complex personality has said: "General Barzani would never learn anything, and, what was more sad, he maybe knew it". Impressed by the

"pride", and in a certain measure by the "nobility" of the man, he could not help seeing the existence "in his nature, of something destructive and negative" (26) (Adamson, 1964:187).

All this explains probably why Barzani "broke" the Democratic Party of Kurdistan, reducing it to a simple instrument of power, without any autonomous life, after the big crisis of 1964 and the exclusion of Ibrahim and Jalal Talabani.

So there is a certain degree of "regression" of the Kurdish national movement under Barzani's leadership. But the mistake of these brilliant intellectuals who were Ibrahim Ahmed and Jalal Talabani was to refuse to acknowledge that general Barzani embodied in his person the Kurdish national movement - and even outside Iraq's borders, in Turkey, Iran and Syria. Being in a way an anticipation of the leaders of the Kurdish nationalist organizations which proliferate nowadays in Turkey, the Iraqi Kurdish intellectuals disqualified themselves by totally isolating themselves from the Kurdish tribes which form, whether one likes it or not, the masses of the Kurdish people.

In Iran, the Kurdish national movement, dominated today by AbdelRahman Ghassemlou's Democratic Party of Kurdistan (KDP), follows finally a similar path, torn between a purely nationalist current, on which weighs heavily the influence of the tribes, and a party which must constantly defend itself not to be a mere annex of the Iranian Communist Party (Tudeh).

The quite ephemeral Republic of Mahabad (January-December 1946) will probably go down in history as the first Kurdish movement led by an intellectual: Qazi Mohammed. But if "Komala" was founded by city people, it was soon obliged, in order to widen its geographical and social base, to recruit followers amongst the tribal chiefs. And the program of the "Democratic Party of Kurdistan" founded in 1945 reflects this social composition.

The program contains the following demands:

- autonomy for Iranian Kurdistan within the framework of the Iranian state;
- election of a provincial council;
- use of the Kurdish language as the official language;
- recruiting of local civil servants;
- adoption of one single law for both notables and peasants;
- cooperation with the people of Azerbaidjan;
- improvement of the economic and social conditions of Kurdistan through the exploitation of its natural resources, and the improvement of agriculture, health and education.

Developing under the cover of Soviet occupation forces in Iran the Republic of Mahabad frightens the western powers, but in fact it will remain up until its last day a basically nationalist movement, without any well defined ideology. Paradoxically, it is after the departure of the Soviet occupation forces and the fall of the Republic of Mahabad, that the Democratic Party of Kurdistan, which reorganizes itself underground, becomes practically speaking the "branch of Kurdistan" of the Tudeh-party.

Members of the KDP of Mahabad who went to Teheran became

automatically members of Tudeh and inversely. As in Iraq, the Iranian Kurds no longer know precisely any more what distinguishes them from the Communist Party.

But after Mossadegh's fall and a new reorganization of the KDP, the party published in 1956 a program which clearly belongs to a nationalist revolutionary movement. Stating that the Kurdish people is submitted to the "triple oppression of imperialism, the central feudal bourgeois government, and the big Kurdish feudals", the authors of the program (amongst them AbdelRahman Ghassemlou) add that one should not confuse the "central government of Iran and the other peoples of Iran", and that one should "fight against Iranian chauvinism which denies the existence of the Kurdish nation, and against the Kurdish nationalism which tries to amalgamate the Iranian people in its hate against the central government".

And the KDP suggests, as it will do twenty-five years later, a "common struggle", against the monarchico-fascist "government" with a "national parliament". Insisting on the equality of women (same rights, same salaries as men) and on the respect of the fundamental freedoms (freedom of expression, of press, of religion) the KDP program advocates a "secular" state in which the army and police would be abolished and replaced by a popular militia and a "national army". Finally, the KDP lists measures concerning industry (nationalization of underground natural resources, water and forests) agriculture (distribution of land belonging to big feudals and "enemies of the national government" to poor peasants) and culture. (27) (Kutschera, 1979:188-189)

In fact, the KDP is already divided into several currents, which have been wrestling for the control of the party until today:

From 1960 until 1970, the Iranian KDP is totally controlled by the "ultra-nationalist" trend by Abdallah Isshaki, which practically transforms the KDP of Iran into a branch of Barzani's movement.

After the signing on March 11, 1970 of an agreement on autonomy between general Barzani and Baghdad, and up until the fall of the Shah, the KDP again becomes a progressive movement, under the leadership of AbdelRahman Ghassemlou, elected secretary-general in 1971.

The Revolution and the fall of the Shah opened up for the KDP of Iran undreamed perspectives: practically overnight, the KDP is in charge of an army of several thousand "peshmergas" and the slogan which resumes the program of the party: "Autonomy for Kurdistan, Democracy for Iran", becomes a possible goal. But KDP leaders do not deny that events went a little faster than they wished: a party which, when it was underground, had aimed at recruiting one member for every thousand inhabitants (or five thousand for the whole Iranian Kurdistan) suddenly had to administrate a territory as large as one fifth of France.

In the northern part of Kurdistan, especially (western Azerbeidjan), the KDP had to delegate part of its powers to tribal elements, going as far as electing two tribal chiefs to the central committee.

But Khomeini's offensive against the Kurds upsets the political chessboard, and very quickly the tensions which opposed the various currents of the KDP reach the breaking-point, following a classical pattern:

- on one side, the elements closer to the "Tudeh" party dislocate themselves from the KDP in August 1980, and rally Khomeini's regime, going as far as forming units of "jash" (mercenaeries) who fight with the pasdarans against the KDP;
- on the other side, on its right, the KDP is threatened by the disaffection of the more conservative and religious tribal elements, who are submitted to Massood and Idriss Barzani's influence. So, for example, Sannar Khan, one of the tribal chiefs elected to the central committee, rallies Khomeini's forces and fights with the army against the peshmergas.

Undoubtedly the most brilliant Kurdish intellectual of his generation, AbdelRahman Ghassemlou, always refused to let develop his "cult" of the charismatic chief which helps to rally the tribal elements, bypassing tribal and clannish cleavages. For almost thirty years he has based all his action on political organization, on the organization of a disciplined political party. Only the future will tell whether his dream to establish in Iranian Kurdistan a "democratic socialism" (28) (Kutschera, "Le Monde Diplomatique", September 1980) will be able to resist the convergent pressures of both the Tudeh party and the religious elements. The future will also tell whether AbdelRahman Ghassemlou was not following the wrong path, and if, instead of aiming to establish socialism in Iranian Kurdistan, he should not have laid the bases for the unification of the Kurdish national movement.

Institut kurde de Paris

## Conclusion

During the last century, the Kurds have obviously given the proof, with arms in their hands, that they formed a "people apart".

Do they really form a Nation?

Probably not yet, if one holds to this essential criterion of "community of social consciousness". Confronted with the concepts which should help them to organize their national consciousness, the Kurds display more than ever this inclination to factionalism, legendary since the most remote times, if one believes this tale quoted by Nikitine (29) (Nikitine, 1956:178):

"When the Prophet Mohammed appeared, all the princes of the universe hurried to express their submission. Oguz Khan, who reigned in Turkestan, delegated for this mission a Kurdish prince from Baghdad, called Zemin. Seeing this giant, with his piercing eyes and dark complexion, Mohammed, frightened, inquired about his nationality. When he learned that he was a Kurd, the Prophet begged God not to let such a terrible enemy become one day a united people".

This, adds Nikitine, explains the Kurds' endless discords.

Looking for other explanations, a sociologist could probably explain the cause of this inclination of the Kurdish people to division. But guerilla warfare is raging in Iraqi Kurdistan, war is devastating Iranian Kurdistan, and the Kurdistan of Turkey is, for all practical purposes, a forbidden zone to researchers.

Still, short visits to the various parts of Kurdistan enable us to establish the beginning of an answer: as the founders of the Kurdish Clubs of Constantinople perceived it at the beginning of this century, part of the solution to the problems of the Kurds rests with the development of an education system. Unfortunately, one observes, on the contrary, a regression on the cultural level: wars, destructions, repression and assimilation campaigns which have been going on permanently in Kurdistan since the last century threaten to



destroy completely the Kurdish culture - reduced, in many areas, to a mere knowledge of the language.

And it is indeed miraculous that, despite everything, a feeling of identity still subsists.

Institut kurde de Paris

References

- Adamson, D. (ed) (1964) *The Kurdish War*. London.
- Avril d', (ed) (1864) *La Chaldée chrétienne*. Paris.
- Badger, G.P. (ed) (1852) *A mission to Mesopotamia and Coordistan. The Nestorians and their rituals*. London.
- Bedar, P. (Archives diplomatiques, Ministère des Relations extérieures, 1920). Paris.
- Bloch, M. (ed) (1978) *La Société Féodale*. Paris. Albin Michel.
- Blue Book (1881) (N° 5) Public Record Office. London.
- Cheref Khan (ed) (1868) *Cheref Nameh, ou Fastes de la Nation Kurde*. St. Petersburg.
- Guilhaudis, J.F. (ed) (1976) *Le droit des peuples à disposer d'eux mêmes*. Grenoble. Presses Universitaires de Grenoble.
- Jwaideh, W. (thesis) (1960) *The Kurdish National Movement*. Syracuse University
- Kutschera, C. (ed) (1979) *Le Mouvement National Kurde*. Paris. Flemmarion.
- Kutschera, C. (1980a) *La Pouxrière Kurde, Le Monde Diplomatique*.  
September 1980.
- Monde, Le (1963a) *Eric Rouleau, Le Kurdistan Irakien à dos de mulet*.  
April 10-14-15, 1963.
- Nikitine, E. (ed) (1956) *Les Kurdes*. Paris. Imprimerie Nationale.
- Seale, P. (ed) (1965) *The struggle for Syria*, London - Oxford  
University Press.
- Wigram, W.A. (ed) (1914) *The Cradle of Mankind*. London.
- Wilson, A. (ed) (1931) *Mesopotamia 1917-1920*. London

"The importance of the cultural elements in the struggle  
of the Kurdish people"

By Dr. Majeed R. Jafar

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I would like, first of all, to thank the organizers, the Research Institute of Oppressed Peoples in Amsterdam, for their kind invitation and present a paper on the "Importance of the cultural elements in the struggle of the Kurdish people" and wish the Congress every success.

The theme we are dealing with in this Congress is indeed very important and sensitive. A very modest attempt shall be made in the following short paper to explore some aspects of the role and importance of cultural elements in the struggle of the Kurdish nation. Some of the observations made and conclusions arrived at in this paper may be referred to in other papers presented to this congress.

Before embarking on an attempt to explore this important, sensitive, complex and interlocking subject, I shall try to define the terms used in the paper in order to avoid misunderstanding or confusion.

There are numerous definitions of the term "culture". It can be defined in a narrow sense to include arts and literature and folklore, or in a broad sense. "Culture" is understood in this paper to mean "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society". This is the definition offered by Edward B. Taylor in 1871.

Therefore, culture has many fundamental elements, their common characteristics being:

1. They are shared by a group of people.
2. They are acquired by the process of learning.
3. They are cumulative and not easy to eradicate.
4. They constitute a whole, i.e., a system with many mutually interdependent parts.

5. This system is in a sense unique for each society or cultural group and therefore it is diverse for the entire human kind.

Culture is thus, something acquired by man as a member of society; it is not biologically inherited and is not individual. It is acquired through the process of learning, whether social or formal. And therefore it can also be changed or modified, or even eradicated.

Moreover, culture is a means and at the same time a goal as well. This is best shown by the consideration of the cultural element "language". "Linguists have shown that language is necessary for the learning and transmittal of culture. Children could not learn the culture of their parents without languages". (Ernst L. Schasky, *Introducing Culture*, 1967, page 7.)

Thus, language is the means by which culture is learned and transmitted. But it is at the same time a goal in itself and its preservation and development being an essential factor in preserving and developing the cultural identity of a people or a group (and indeed developing the society as a whole), since without a language there can be no culture. Moreover, culture is, in some of its elements, part of the infrastructure of society (language) whereas it is part of the superstructure in other elements (beliefs, superstitions and the like). Therefore, a generic judgement is not permissible here.

### Culture and national identity

The various elements of a culture do indeed constitute the "identity" of a society or a nation or a group. These elements do not play equally important roles in determining the identity of a people. Some of them are indispensable for establishing such an identity, such as language, while others assume secondary importance. Language is the most important and essential cultural element in determining the identity of a people. For example, the French are recognized

and considered French first and foremost because they speak the French language and secondly because they share certain common traits.

For the Kurds, their culture is indeed the embodiment and expression of their life and national identity. The Kurds are Kurds because, firstly, they speak the Kurdish language (this is the general rule, but there are exceptions) which is distinguishable from other languages, such as Turkish, Persian, Arabic or others. And, secondly, because they share certain traits common to themselves, such as their customs, costumes, songs, dances, music etcetera, i.e., art and folklore, personal names and the like. That is, because their culture is distinguishable from neighbouring cultures (in addition to their separate territory and some other factors).

Kurdish culture, which is distinguishable from other neighbouring cultures, is not exclusive but rather has similarities with them in a number of its elements or aspects thereof, such as religion. This distinctiveness has played an essential part in the preservation of the national identity of the Kurdish nation, aided perhaps and reinforced by the terrain of its homeland the relative peripheral situation of the various parts of Kurdistan.

#### Cultural elements as symbols of resistance

This culture, which we have called "Kurdish culture", and its numerous elements and aspects have indeed become symbols in the long struggle of the Kurdish nation against assimilation and oppression. For example, the wearing of the Kurdish costume by the male population in Kurdistan-Turkey is banned by decree. But many men wear it to show their defiance and express their pride of their culture despite risking persecution. Wearing the banned costume is seen as a sign of courage. The same applies to possessing and playing Kurdish songs and music recorded on tape or discs, locally produced or imported. These are forbidden cultural items but they are found in almost

every household in Northern Kurdistan.

"Newroz", the Kurdish national day, is another example.

The preservation of the Kurdish identity and the use of cultural elements as symbols of resistance and as means of defiance against oppressors have entailed and still do entail persecution, imprisonment, tortures, death or exile when invaders and the so-called "national" regimes tried or try to assimilate the Kurds. When the sword or the gun is laid down, the first steps are taken by the invaders and regimes are to deny, on the one hand, and to ban, on the other, elements of the Kurdish culture, such as the use of the Kurdish language, the wearing of the Kurdish costume, art (recorded or oral), literature (written or oral)..., and to simultaneously ridicule by various means and reject the distinctiveness of the main elements of Kurdish culture by various ways. Kurds are well aware of claims made, on mainly cultural grounds, by the regimes and their apologists to the effect that the Kurdish language, for example, is in fact not a language at all but rather a dialect of Turkish (in Turkey), Persian (in Iran) or Arabic (in Iraq and Syria) acquiring certain phonemic and/or morphemic peculiarities due to the remoteness and isolation of the areas they inhabit. Thus, the Kurds in Turkey become "mountain Turks", in Iraq and Syria "Arabs", (one of Iraq's presidents, Abdul Salam Arif, is related to have said that "Kurds are Arabs who had inhabited the mountains thus becoming Kurdified"), in Iran "Arayans".

The destruction of the various elements of the Kurdish culture as first steps taken by invaders and rulers over the Kurdish nation go hand in hand with military action and long afterwards. This fact is a feature common to all parts of Kurdistan and it is a course followed by the regime of these countries. This fact illustrates both the apprehension felt by these rulers or regimes for Kurdish cultural elements and the importance of these elements in and for the resistance and struggle of the Kurdish people.

### Basic demands of Kurdish parties and movements

Cultural demands, especially its most important element - language, have figured rather prominently among the demands of all, or almost all, Kurdish political parties, societies and revolutions in all parts of Kurdistan since the turn of the century. One can refer to a few examples to make the point. The demands of the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the programme of the government of the Mahabad Republic, the March 1970 - Agreement (or Declaration) between the Kurdish September revolution and the Iraqi Ba'th regime, and the demands of the Kurdish movements in both Iraq and Iran at present, all contain cultural clauses concerning the cultural parties, societies and movements exert great efforts to issue publications in the Kurdish language, form and encourage Kurdish song and dance groups, encourage Kurds to specialize in subjects relating to the cultural life and history of the Kurdish nation...etcetera.

### Cultural elements of immediate importance to the resistance movement

The main elements and forms of cultural elements that are of immediate importance to the resistance and struggle of the Kurdish nation are many. Reference is made below to a few of them in the

1. Language: The Kurdish language is by far the most important cultural element in and for the struggle of the Kurdish people. It is indeed the single, most effective means of mobilization and one of its basic means and ends. It is the one issue that is most forceful in the agitation and propaganda process and thus the national mobilization of the Kurdish people against national cum cultural oppression, discrimination and degradation. (A distinction is here made between national mobilization and socio-economical mobilization. Although the two go hand in hand in the case of the Kurdish people now in reality, a theoretical distinction can be made,

however. The former sets the Kurds against their "foreign" oppressors whereas the latter sets them against these "foreign" oppressors as well as segments of their own society. Political mobilization includes both and envisages a futuristic model of Kurdish society, its structures, internal and external relations.) Language is often cited by Kurdish parties and movements as the most striking example of the oppression of the Kurdish nation. It is also the most powerful factor that make the Kurds feel "togetherness".

2. Celebrations, music, songs and dance: These cultural elements are, and are being used as means of agitation and mobilization of the Kurdish nation in all parts of Kurdistan. Their powerful symbolism can clearly be seen in, for example, the uniforms of the Peshmergas, the Kurdish guerillas, who have traditionally become synonymous to resistance, since this uniform is the Kurdish costume. It is no accident that all political parties that have guerilla forces have chosen this costume and not another "modern" uniform. Songs have played and still play an obvious role in agitating and mobilizing the nation. One can refer to the songs of Siwan which have reached the remotest corners of the north of our homeland, as well as the songs of other singers and groups. Newroz and celebrating it in the various parts of Kurdistan has been an effective means of mobilization and many a Newroz celebration has turned into a rally against oppression and for the rights of the Kurdish people, as happened recently in Kurdistan-Iraq.

Because of the potency of these and other cultural elements as means of agitation and mobilization they have either been banned or at least "discouraged" by various methods by the oppressors of our nation, whereas Kurdish parties and movements and the Kurdish people in general have always insisted on celebrating Newroz, sometimes even secretly.

3. Forms: These include photographs, films, paintings, caricature and the like. These means are used for purposes of



mobilization, albeit on a limited scale.

Many cultural elements that can be effective means of mobilization are either ignored or not being given their due importance. Whereas other elements, which I would consider harmful to the struggle of the Kurdish nation in the long run as well as the immediate present, are being used to mobilize some sections of society behind narrow and dangerous, short-sighted ends.

For example, the "positive" aspects of Newroz are almost ignored or not being given their full dues, namely, the use of the spirit of unity and forgiveness, which is an essential element of Newroz, and using this spirit of unity and forgiveness, which is an essential element of Newroz, and using this spirit to enhance and consolidate national unity, without which all talk, and one may dare say, and action, to achieve victory seem rather mere fantasy. On the other hand, the "negative" aspect of Newroz, namely, the spirit of defiance and resistance are used to a much better extent. Moreover, some of the cultural elements which shall be referred to later are used in the direction of harmful ends or are not discouraged or combatted, such as "revenge", "vengeance" or "bloodfeuds" and "tribalism" and the tribal, village or regional allegiance, etcetera.

These elements, which are in a sense (according to the definition offered at the start of this paper) cultural, are harmful to national reconciliation, harmony and unity. As stated above, without national reconciliation and unity, the Kurdish nation cannot realistically hope to achieve its rights, especially the right of self-determination.

#### Cultural elements and the enemy

One should not forget that culture has been and still is being used by the oppressors the the Kurdish nation to assimilate the Kurds and destroy their national identity. An example, which may cast light on what is meant by this, is the

so-called "illiteracy campaign" in Iraq. Taken at face value, this measure ought to be welcomed. But reality has shown that the aim was actually to use this campaign as yet another veiled means to assimilate the Kurds by "arabizing" them through teaching them Arabic and not Kurdish. Another example, again from Iraq, is giving financial incentive and others to any Arab who marries a Kurdish woman. The aim is again assimilation which has much to do with the cultural element since the regime believes that the children of the couple would most probably learn Arabic and adopt the "culture" of his father, thus becoming a non-Kurd. And thus, in the long run, the balance or proportion of Kurds in Iraq would be reduced.

#### Negative aspects of some cultural elements

Neither should one lose sight of the "harmful" aspects of some cultural elements, which are both factors or consequences of underdevelopment of society. One may allude to a few of these aspects, which include: the attitude to the role of women in Kurdish society as a whole and in the Kurdish parties and movements in particular. One seldom hears that a woman is a member of the political bureau or central committee of a Kurdish party or is a commander or, in some instance, even a Peshmerga in some movements. The harmfulness of this attitude lies in the fact that it "immobilizes" a large segment of Kurdish society. This is in contrast to, for example, the situation in El Salvador where women have reached very prominent posts of responsibility within FMLN-FDR and the guerilla forces FPL.

The other harmful aspect in the cultural elements is that tribal (and sometimes even family, village or regional) allegiance and loyalty override national allegiance. This has been clearly observed in the stance taken by tribal chiefs on the Kurdish movement. With few exceptions, the stand taken by the tribal chief determines the stand taken by the whole tribe. These chiefs have had a pragmatic or even opportunist stand

vis-à-vis the Kurdish movement, switching sides often. Although this stand is determined by self-interests to some extent, cultural elements play an important role in their (the chiefs') attitude towards the movement (and this attitude determines the attitude of the whole tribe). These elements include: norms of allegiance, revenge, bloodfeuds, prestige, respect... etcetera. Although this situation has been going through a process of modification and change, no reasonable man can claim that it is not still powerful and assume powerful or prominent position in the Kurdish society and its values and norms of honour and prestige. This aspect has often been exploited by the enemies of the Kurdish nation to divide them and has been an important factor in inter-Kurdish fighting and dis-unity. Giving of "gifts", for their own value and as signs of respect, is also a negative aspect since the regimes almost always have access to much larger resources than Kurdish parties or movements. The Iraqi intelligence service "al-Mukhabarat al-Amma" uses "gift-giving" on certain occasions, such as birthdays, feasts (Id) and the like, to win over tribal chiefs and others, keep them away from the struggle and use them against the movement in any way possible (gathering information, planting dis-information, carrying arms and the like).

The other harmful cultural aspect is the norms of revenge, bloodfeuds and vengeance and their rather wide-spread influence. These norms have played and still play an important role in the life of the Kurds and even in relations among political parties and factions within the same party.

These harmful aspects, and other that have not been mentioned, have been alluded to in order that they may be recognized and be taken into consideration in order to reduce their influence on the resistance movement of the Kurdish people. They were also mentioned for the sake of not falling into the trap of the "idealization" of all that is related to Kurdish cultural elements.

Finally, culture for the Kurdish nation has in a sense become almost synonymous with "politics". One can only look

around to see that almost all Kurds active in the cultural field are considered politically "dangerous" and imprisoned, killed or exiled. It is not accidental that this congress is held in Amsterdam and the Kurdish Institute is located in Paris and institutes of Kurdish studies are found in universities in North America, Western Europe and the Soviet Union and not in Diarbakir, Mahabad, Kirkuk or Qamishli.

Political agitaion, mobilization and resistance, on the one hand, and cultural activities and survival have become so inter-twined that they can hardly be separated.

This is why the theme of the congress assumes such importance and needs further study and exploration and investigation.

However, it is hoped that these few observations made above may contribute in a small way to the understanding of the role of some cultural elements in the resistance and struggle of the Kurdish people and nation.

Thank you.

Report on relations between culture and revolutionary movement  
in Iranian Kurdistan

By Dr. Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou - General secretary of the  
Kurdistan Democratic Party in Iran

Ladies and gentleman, dear friends!

You have kindly invited me here to talk to you about the contemporary features and relations of our culture and the revolutionary movement in Iranian Kurdistan.

You are not unacquainted with the history of the Middle East, of Iran, and that of the Kurds. The only thing I want to remind you here of is the historical fact that the Kurdish nation has for a long time been wilfully deprived of all facilities of development: economic, political and cultural; of those facilities which were accessible to the ruling nations in the region. No effort has been made by the governments of Iran to improve the standard of living, to improve the lot of a backward people in Iranian Kurdistan. This policy, among others, explains the high percentage of illiteracy, which amounts to 70% in general, and 90% among women. This means that the progress in the development of Iranian Kurdistan was retarded, so that it remained backward in the framework of a backward Iran!

Among all the arts in Kurdistan, the most expanded are national and popular poetry, and national epic. As Illiad and Odyssey narrate battlefields and their heroes, life and hatred, so the Kurds do the same in, for example, the epic of Mam o Zin, or in the ballad of Dym-Dym.

Travelling performers, poets and singers, accompanied by one or more musicians, roam Kurdistan and bring with them poetry and music that they learn mostly from hearsay. They bring them to villages and to remote places; with them they bring merriment to weddings, and offer assistance in funeral ceremonies. These "bayt-khans", poets and propagators of

Kurdish popular epic and national poetry, and the "goranibezhes", singers, are the bearers of the most popular art to the illiterate population.

From poetry and music there is just a step to theater and to dance. In Kurdistan of today, you have them all flourishing as never before.

Before the advent of Khomeiny, there existed many professional theaters in the central Iranian regions. In Iranian Kurdistan you could find NON.

However, there were some nonprofessional theatrical groups there. But the talented actors, not being able to develop in the peripheral conditions usually fled Kurdistan to join bigger scenes. Today, many of these actors have returned to the liberated Kurdistan and take part in the creation of a new Kurdish theater, in educating the young generation in theatrical arts.

As to dance: the popular dances are of long tradition. Kurdistan is a country where people dance on every possible occasion. It is true those who dance most are men. We cannot disregard the fact that ours is also a muslim society. But in our country it is NOT exceptional to see girls and women dancing. In Kurdish we have a special word for a mixed dance: "RASHBALAK"; and we call a girl-dancer "DO". In dances called "YEKPEYEE, SEPEYEE, SHEIKHANE", etcetera, you will see both men and women side by side. It is a beautiful sight: women in their colorful national dresses dancing together with men!

Singing, dancing, reciting poetry, theatrical performances and concerts have become very frequent in our liberated zones.

Last but not least should be mentioned the art of film. It is a completely new branch of art in today's Kurdistan. Several films have been shot under our auspices during the last few years. They are picturing the way of living, the traditions in Kurdistan, medical and scholar conditions, they show our people and our peshmergas in war. These films have already been shown on European film festivals, and have successfully passed in front of severe critiques.

This is another result of our policy to promote cultural

progress by giving opportunity to those who want to exploit and use their talents and knowledge.

From these examples it becomes obvious that the Kurdish cultural life has been advancing. It enriches our liberation movement which, in its turn, has a big impact on cultural development. We do not exaggerate if we say that the relation between the two is direct. We have two reasons to back this statement: Firstly, our fight is a national fight. Our oppressed people have to engage in armed struggle for their existence, and at the same time to maintain and develop their national culture.

In addition to that, the protection of the mother tongue, the Kurdish, is a vitally important goal in which everybody wants to participate. It has become essential to the majority of our people to be free to express its existence, its culture, its opinion - in Kurdish. I.e. in the language which has been suppressed and subjugated by the Persians, persecuted and forbidden, and which still survives.

The Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan has reopened several hundreds of elementary schools in the free regions where, for the first time in history of Iranian Kurdistan, our children are being taught in their mother tongue.

Secondly: Today, we in Kurdistan face a terribly retrograde regime, a regime of Ayatollahs who emerged from the dark Middle Ages. Their efforts so far realized, indicate the real character and the real essence of their regime: it is vital to them to destroy everything positive that has been achieved in the fields of culture by the Iranian society. They cannot coexist with arts, with the cultural achievements of the people.

This does not concern the Iranian culture alone, however. But culture as such. This regime makes painstaking efforts to annihilate everything it classifies as "the rotten culture of the West". In reality, it is not the western culture that it wants to do away with. It is all culture, all cultural achievements that humanity has worked on for centuries and have quite naturally been affected by other

national cultures.

For the first time in the history of the Kurdish people its enemy is on a lower cultural level. Our people who have never tasted liberty have changed. Under free and democratic conditions the Kurds have engaged themselves in developing every possible art and artistic institution. We have put into practice our language and the realizable arts immediately. And our people have accepted them with enthusiasm. I suppose that this is what can be justly named cultural development.

Why did I say that the enemy is culturally more backward than we are?

For its deeds. In all Iran, except in Kurdistan, art on the whole is forbidden. Just a few examples:

- all literature that does not correspond to Khomeiny's interpretation of Islam is censored;
- dance is omitted altogether from the dictionary of the Islamic Republic;
- theaters are closed, except for those performing the tragedies of the saints;
- also films, paintings, music, excepting those on religious and military themes.

And we could still continue.

In Kurdistan, we do everything to advance these arts, although our capacities and possibilities are restricted.

If a WOMAN inspires artists as a bright point in their arts, Khomeiny's obscure teachings reduce her position of a great inspirer of the arts into a black dark stain, veiled and untouchable, good only for slavery.

She is forced to remain at home to serve men, and to be held apart from man's society.

In the programme of the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan, a Kurdish woman is for the first time proclaimed equal to a man; she is asked there to participate in public life. At present, Kurdish women participate in all activities leading to strengthen our democratic movement.



Iranian men who are sent to the front to fight the Iraqis and the Kurds are taught that their life mission is to be killed in the fight against heretics; that to become a martyr is the AIM of their existence.

In Kurdistan we teach patriotism, we demand our peshmergas to fight our enemy with courage. BUT we do not tell them that it is their aim to become martyrs. We ask them to fight to achieve liberty; we teach them how to live. For, to die in our fight is a necessary and forced means for achieving freedom.

In Kurdistan we do not see a day without victims, without bombing our villages and towns. The families of the victims, their friends, and all the nation mourn for them. It is natural. But in general, morale is very high. Our people together with our peshmergas sing, dance, recite poems; they are gay, they joke, they laugh. It is the morale of a people who believes in life and in victory.

In fact, this war, imposed on us by Khomeiny, cannot be considered only as a war of arms. It has grown into a war of culture against anti-culture. We do not have other means to fight this anti-culture except our arms in order to defend our culture. Khomeiny's regime has not left us other choice. BUT! If Khomeiny has succeeded in sweeping away all cultural life in other regions in Iran, he has been unable to do the same in Kurdistan so far.

In Iranian Kurdistan the revolutionary fight, the war in which we have to confront as EQUALS a much better equipped and a much more numerous enemy, we have made our cultural life prosper. If in this war the enemy is superior to us in arms and in number, we are far superior to him in culture. The Kurdish people until recently did not know what democracy and cultural development represented. Nowadays, however, the people, of its own will, removes obstacles in its way towards cultural progression.

Revolutionary culture can exist and move ahead under conditions that offer free and democratic circumstances only. It cannot exist without democracy.

Five years of experience with the Islamic Republic show how frightfully the Iranian culture retrogrades. The so-called "culture" practiced by Khomeiny's regime in 1983 represents an authentic age of darkness.

In Kurdistan cultural evolution has become a fire-fly shining in the dark and illuminating the way. It belongs to all, and many try to participate on its improvement.

The important task of a vanguard is not to remain satisfied with certain achievements. Culture should develop in all ages and historical periods. One of its basic conditions is to do away with illiteracy. Struggle for removing illiteracy is vital to it. Only a sound education leads to the development of cultural life which should be accessible to all, to the popular masses.

Also, to promote culture in a backward country goes hand in hand with promotion of democratic and humanitarian aspects of the whole society. The education and the development of the talented, individual or collective, is organically attached to democracy and freedom.

We are proud to have been able to initiate humanism and democracy into our people's mind, and especially to that of our peshmergas', in such a historically short time. We tell them: "If we behave in the same manner as Khomeiny's mob, we shall reduce ourselves to their level. In that case, why to fight them?" And they have understood.

To give just one example: You must have heard what atrocities are being committed in Khomeiny's prisons. In our prisons, because of the humane system we have introduced there, there are Iranian prisoners who refuse to be liberated. They are afraid to go back to Khomeiny because they are alive while they should have died, while they ought to have become martyrs in the war against heretics!

Our fight against this obscurantist regime continues. On the battlefield as well as in the domains of culture and education. They have become one. The first cannot succeed

without the others; the others cannot exist without the first.

There exists another domain of struggle, too. It is situated here, in Europe, in the world outside of Iran and Kurdistan. Without the moral and material help of humanists, without the help of humanitarian organizations, and of all peoples of good will, our just fight would remain isolated; it might fall into oblivion. Should this happen, our way to liberty would be much more difficult.

That is why we ask you to support knowledge against obscurantism, culture against anti-culture, democracy against despotism, — life against death.

Institut kurde de Paris

Culture from a marxist perspective

by François Houtart

Dear friends,

I am happy to be here. The reason of my being present here is not due to my specific knowledge about the problems of the Kurds, which we are dealing with today. I read little about the Kurds. I am not a specialist like Gérard Chaliand. So the type of contribution I have been asked to bring to this discussion is a more theoretical one.

The first problem, I think, is to ask ourselves what culture is and which kind of connection it has with liberation.

I have just read the very interesting paper of Mr. Majed Jafer. He treated the same topic in a more concrete way, so I am happy about that because I do not have to go very far in explaining my approach. I think our approach will be very complementary.

I think it is important to raise that question, not because I personally began to think about it after reading the writings of Amilcar Cabral. Amilcar Cabral, as you know, was the leader of the liberation movement of Guinea Bissau and he was assassinated about ten years ago. Being a leader of the liberation movement, he came to the conclusion that it was extremely important to study and to know the cultural aspects of his own people very well. So as one of the most important leaders of the liberation movements of Africa he would have been, if he would have been still alive, one of the outstanding political leaders of Africa. Also, if he, during the liberation struggle, had come to the conclusion and had spent his time trying to study and to go even theoretically into the problem of culture. Well, this will raise a question, or at least it will attract our attention.

For myself, I came to the conclusion that there are, generally, two tendencies in the liberation movement. In some of them there is a certain under-valuation of the problem of culture, especially in the movements which are connected with or oriented to and motivated by the Marxist approach: Can the Marxist approach be able to tackle the problem?

This is one of the things which I would like to show how a Marxist approach is able to tackle the problem. It has been said sometimes that the Marxist approach was unable to relate itself to the cultural problems. I think this is a too simple vision of the Marxist theory. But it is true anyway that in many Marxist liberation movements and political parties, the cultural aspect has been underestimated.

First of all because, perhaps, Marxism itself has been a reaction against a certain type of culturism. This tendency of explaining the whole human reality by the impact of culture but in very abstract ways. As a reaction Marxism put the accent on material bases. Secondly it is because of the fact that many of those movements and parties have given their attention to the necessary transformation of economic structures and political structures. That means that the cultural aspect was underestimated.

That is one trend. Another tendency is that in other national liberation movements there is sometimes an underestimation of the global meaning of culture.

This might be explained by the necessity of defending a culture as an identity, or by the necessity of rediscovering the cultural roots of a people which has been destroyed by continuing occupation by colonialists or by some type of capitalist exploitation.

This may be particularly the case in Africa.

The idea of culture has been rather elaborate and offside the material and social bases of the construction of culture. This has resulted into a very concrete political orientation which we see, for example, in Zaire, where there is no liberation movement.

E.g. we see the 'authenticity', as it is called by President Mobutu, which is a search of the cultural roots. This is, of course, a very important objective, but we see that the objective is, as the ideology of a new bourgeoisie, to avoid by this type of orientation the problem of the social classes as they exist in the new society of Zaire.

Authenticity of culture and the search for cultural values

has become the ideology of the new dominant class, imposing its notion of cultural authenticity on the rest of the people whom are exploited.

I came to the conclusion that the problem of culture is not really one of superstructure, it is not something that you can miss.

Like Maurice Godelier, a French anthropologist, says:

"Culture is not like the cream on a cake, so that you can eat your cake without the cream, or you can have it with cream".

Culture is something which is essential to the whole of the activities of human groups and their living. It is not something superfluous; it is at the centre of it, but at the same time culture is not absolute, it is not something completely abstract. It does not come from heaven. It is something which is produced by human groups and produced, like I tried to say, in concrete situations of their material existence and in the concrete situations of the social relationships existing between groups that are constructing their material basis. So we have to avoid this bourgeois and elite concept of culture, which would detach culture from the process of its own construction as a whole.

Now I shall give a few examples, trying to be a little less abstract myself.

Having made a study on a Vietnamese commune on the delta of Red River, I came to the interesting conclusion that the culture of the peasants in twenty-five or thirty years of socialism in North Vietnam had not been destroyed. It had been profoundly transformed but not destroyed.

The whole system of the economic development which had been organized on the basis of the co-operative and the commune had permitted the peasant to be all the time, of course with some difficulty sometimes, the master of his own development, his own transformation. The state has been associated with the peasants. This has resulted, precisely, into the fact that the peasant has not been destroyed in his cultural patterns. One of the secrets of this, I think, it was that they were

not conscious about it. They succeeded in Vietnam by the fact that they used, as a small local co-operative and often as the working-brigade which now is a part of a larger co-operative, the traditional local unit of the small village which was called the 'lang'.

The lang was the small unit of the Asiatic Mode of Production that in relationship with the state has its own autonomy.

This was, of course, already largely destroyed by colonialism and by the later stages of the Asiatic Mode of Production in Vietnam. But it still has kept its social autonomy and its role on basis for social identity, and as such as the place where culture was elaborated and reproduced.

The fact that this fundamental economic transformation of the Vietnamese society to new economic relations of production was constructed on the base of this traditional local unit, I think, has been one of the reasons why the cultural pattern of the peasants even in this transformation has not been destroyed. So you can see that culture is very much related with material bases of the social relations of production.

I have just spent two months in Nicaragua.

You know that one of the problems that the Fronte Sandinista has met has been the problem of the 'Misquito's'. Misquito's are a group of Indians, who live in the centre of Nicaragua, and partly on the border with Honduras. Misquito's form a small group of about sixtythousand people. This group has kept its Indian identity very strongly. This was because of the fact that they live in the centre of the country and at the Atlantic coast, which was never really colonialized by the Spanish. But the region has been occupied by the British and after that by the Americans.

Still they have always kept a certain political autonomy and of course they have kept their fundamental cultural autonomy and cultural identity.

When the Sandinists succeeded to throw Samoza out of the country, they also came to the Misquito's to announce their liberation. But for the Misquito's it was not really a liberation, because for them, the white people from Managua had always been Spanish.

They still call them 'Spaniards'.

They never accepted Catholicism either. Catholicism was the religion of the 'Spaniards', and the Spaniards had always appeared to them as those who were really the enemies.

Also, General Sandino, when he fought against the Americans, fifty years ago, had killed one of the leaders of the Misquito's. So for them to hear that the liberation came with the Frente Sandinista was something very different than for the people of the Pacific coast and for the Spanish speaking people.

The young Nicaraguan people, full of enthusiasm and full of pride because they had made the revolution, came to the Misquito's region with all the idealism of these liberation-ideas.

But meeting the people who have not had the same ideas, who were culturally so different, created an extremely difficult situation. They try, now, to correct some of the errors that they have made.

Because of the war, and because of the fact that Misquito's are living on both sides of the border of Nicaragua and Honduras, and because of the fact that the Americans are using Honduras as a basis to attack Nicaragua, they had to transport some of the Misquito's, and brought them sixty or seventy kilometres further inside the country, so that they would not be exposed to the effects of the war which was taking place at that time.

But they understand very well what it means for a population to be taken away from their own soil.

These kinds of problems a liberation movement can find on their way.

This was the case in Vietnam. It was the case in Angola, and Mozambique. It is the case in Guatemala.

The last example that I would like to give which is much closer to your own society, is the case of Afghanistan. In Afghanistan we saw the first land-reform, almost ten years ago, which was organized very badly, especially because it was organized without any real and good knowledge of the social organization of the different peoples living in Afghanistan.



They all have their own identity and their own rules.

In Kabul I saw the students of the Law Faculty, who told me that they knew all about the French Law, all about the American Law, knew quite a bit about the Russian Law, but who do not know anything about the traditional Law of their own people.

These students were the ones who elaborated plans for land-reforms and who made the plan for the juridical transference of the use of the lands. They failed because they ignored the traditions and the social backgrounds of the people.

When the government began to distribute the land, the peasants reacted against the government in defence of the landlord.

This seems rather self-contradictory. But if we understand that the landlords were also the chiefs of the tribes, then it becomes easy to understand the role of culture in these societies. The identification with the tribal chiefs or the identification with their traditional leaders was stronger than their economic interest.

That is a cultural factor which was an element of a former Mode of Production, because the tribal leaders became land-owners only recently with the introduction of the capitalist Mode of Production. Before that, of course, the land was collective property and the leader was the one who distributed the land.

So you can see that the knowledge of culture in its relationship to the economic base is very important; its relationship to the stage of what is called the productive forces, the material development of the people, and its relationship to all social relations of the pre-capitalist types of societies and to capitalist aspects of these societies that came already to development.

All this knowledge is extremely important for a liberation movement. We could say that any liberation movement will face these kinds of problems for several reasons. It is because

today no liberation movement is completely free to put its own objectives. Each movement is faced with the problem of a very fundamental social transition. That means that the national liberation movements today must face the situation that they cannot strive after the reconstruction of a former type of society.

That would be, perhaps, in the line of the Islamic Revolution of Khomeiny, but this cannot go on for a very long time.

It is not the reconstruction of the former type of society which can be aimed at. It is at the same time a recuperation of national identity and a social transformation, which has to be achieved in order to answer the needs of the concrete situation of the population today.

So it is not only a question of political independence or political autonomy. It is a matter of total transformation. Generally when we speak about transition, especially in the Marxist theory, we speak about transition or passing from one Mode of Production to another and most probably this is what has been achieved by most of the national movements. And in particular by the liberation which are not anymore a national liberation movement, but which are a social liberation movement in countries which are at least formally independant. This transformation, this transition, is fundamentally linked with expressions, representations, etcetera, of the people that are involved.

It is not just a problem of transforming an economic situation or the social organization of the economic production.

This is very important, but it is essential to understand that it is not the only aspect. It is also a matter of a complete transformation of the representations that the people have, the way they represent their relationship to nature, and their social relationships.

What I would like to stress in my paper is the fact that the representations are an essential part of any human process including the economic process. When someone is working in agriculture, for example, then the way he will cultivate his

crop cannot be separated from the whole approach he has to reality, from the way he represents himself in connection to nature.

We know that there are very different ways of representing the relationship between man and nature in the past and in our present day societies. So from the beginning in any economic activity, material activity, there has been this representational aspect.

This is the reason why in this process of transformation, the transformation of the mentality, of the totality of the representations, of the expressions of the values, of the social and human roots, is so important.

In this process any substantial change will create, also, cultural conflicts, sometimes very deep cultural conflicts. I do not only speak about the conflicts between different groups, different tribes, different ethnic groups, etcetera, but I am also referring to the fact that some traditional cultures are unable to cope with new situations. That is a very difficult process. You know that it is easier to transfer the material and economic situation, or to transform a political system than to transform the cultural system.

I mean by 'culture', trying to give a definition, 'the whole mental approach that the people have towards their own reality'. Because of the fact that culture is always based on concrete experiences, it will function, always, in concrete experiences of the people. When it has been produced, the role of culture is to help the behaviour of the people to reproduce themselves.

That is one of the fundamental roles of culture, to help the people to reproduce their behaviour.

And once the culture has been elaborated, constructed as a model, ideal model, it will help the people to know how to reproduce their social practices; and then it receives a certain autonomy. Then this model is there, in the heads of the people, to help them to reproduce their behaviour. It can also be an impediment to change their model. It may happen

that it works as an obstacle to change. That is why the traditional culture can also be an obstacle to the transformation for a people in their process of a more rapid transition.

At the same time we know that the transformation of culture is not the same as the transformation in the economic field or in the political field and we must take that into account.

If you try to force people in their transformation, you may get a cultural blockade. You must know what are the elements of culture, if you want to achieve a certain transformation.

This is especially true on the day after the liberation struggle when the society has to be organized. The day when a new basis of society, a new economic and social basis has to be organized.

That is one of the things which I was interested in in Nicaragua. To see how the Frente Sandinista was trying to organize the society with all the problems of how to organize the people with the respect for their culture, but at the same time, trying to transform their culture.

I will finish my introduction now with the question: "What is culture?"

I think that we can define culture more or less in a very broad sense. I think that in this definition of culture we include all the representations. By this we mean that every human being, every group is representing to himself his own reality. He is representing his reality to himself all the time, his present, his past, his future. That is the representation of the nature and of the social reality in which he lives. That is one aspect of culture: representation. Then there is expression. Man has to express his representation in language, in symbols, in all kinds of expressions. Then there are the values, which are the collective objectives. This is what values are from a sociological point of view. The collective objectives, the goals, what a group thinks, are valuable. They are those things for which he will make sacrifices, and even give his life.

Also the meanings, because every human group gives meaning to

its own actions.

All these things are the functions of culture: to represent, to express, to value, to give meaning.

So all these aspects are the culture of a particular group.

But culture is always produced in a concrete situation of the productive forces, and in a concrete situation of social relations of production. That means that it is always related to the way a human group is producing its own means of material living and to the way they organize themselves socially to produce those goods, because this will effect their representations, their values, their expressions etcetera.

We should not say in a too simplistic way that any cultural expression is directly the fruit of the material condition of the group. I do not say that, because we know exactly that once the values and once an expression has been created, it receives its own autonomy, and can reproduce itself even when the material conditions of its production have been disappeared.

So culture is something richer, and also, it has the speculative possibilities of thinking; which means that with the elements of its own experience it can invent, it can think new models, new forms also of social existence; otherwise social progress would be impossible.

So in this reality, as I have tried to define or describe culture, there is a very strong affective investment.

People put their affection in it. There is very strong affective investment which can be called the identity of the group. That it is his own, that it is himself, that the group is able to recognize itself. So that man can recognize those representations, those values, expressions, meanings as his own.

That is why culture is so fundamental in the construction of the identity of the group, and, of course, as I told you, this is connected to the stage of productive forces.

We know, for example, the impact of the division of labour on the evolution of culture. We could not have had the development of philosophy or some aspects of the arts or religion.... etcetera, as long as we did not have some people

who could spend their time thinking, philosophizing.

This is only possible when a group can produce more than is necessary for its survival.

It is only possible when a group produces a surplus, something more than what you just need for you and your family.

That it can produce something for the others, so that it can make philosophy, and religion, and arts.

People must eat anyway, otherwise they will never philosophize, never develop their religious thinking.

All this means that a certain division of labour is necessary for this kind of development. A division of labour means, a specific way of producing materials. So you can see that there is a link between the development of productive forces and the development of culture.

We also know that, for example, there is an impact of a certain type of economic production on the development of certain values.

We can observe, for example, the nomadic people in the desert, and what kind of values they developed. Which are perhaps not developed by other people. Because they are nomads. They must live in a very small entity. They must have a very strong cooperation, because they are living in a very hostile environment. They cannot be a large group, because they have to go from one place to another with a small number of cattle. They will develop, for example, a great knowledge of the stars at the sky.

So you can see the link between the concrete conditions of people and their cultural development.

But it is also linked with social relations of productions. Representations, values, are different according to different kinds of societies.

Tribal societies, or societies of Asiatic Mode of Productions, or capitalist societies are developing different types of values and representations.

It is very important to be well aware, in particular in the national liberation movements, of class aspects of values and

culture.

There is a certain tendency, in certain movements that I have knowledge of, to deny these aspects.

I think, for example, of India or Egypt or many other countries in the world, where the rediscovering of the traditional culture is a dominant goal.

But where, in fact, a very elitist type of culture has been imposed and developed, and where the lower classes were not allowed to develop their own culture and values.

As a conclusion, I would like to say that for every liberation movement, it is very important to have a good analysis about the culture in the society.

Institut kurde de Paris

DIE KURDISCHE WIDERSTANDSLITERATUR \*)

von Kamal Fuad

Die ältesten nachweisbaren kurdischen literarischen Überlieferungen stammen aus dem 16. und 17. Jahrhundert. Sie sind Gedichte der Alî Harîrî, Malâ-y Djazîrî, Faqê Tayrân und Ahmad-i Khânî. Zu jener Zeit war Kurdistan das Schlachtfeld dauernder Kriege zwischen den iranischen Safawiden und türkischen Osmanen. Die Politik der beiden sich bekämpfenden Reiche zielte daraufhin, die damaligen kurdischen Fürstentümer zu unterwerfen und die Kurden in ihren Kriegen als Schachspielbauern auszunutzen.

Die ungünstige Situation, in der sich die Kurden befanden, ihren Widerstandskampf gegen die Fremdherrschaft, die blutigen Ereignisse in Kurdistan, werden in vielen literarischen Werken, in Kunstpoesie und volkstümlichen Dichtungen wiedergegeben. Dies führte zur Pflege der kurdischen Sprache und zur Bewahrung der nationalen Identität des kurdischen Volkes, verewigte den Freiheitswillen der Kurden seit Jahrhunderten und engagierte sie zum Kampf um ihre nationalen Rechte.

Der große kurdische Dichter Ahmad-i Khânî (1651-1707) schilderte Ende des 17. Jahrhunderts in dem Vorwort seines romantischen Epos Mam u Zîn die schwierige Lage der Kurden unter iranischen und osmanischen Herrschaften, die Kurdistan zu ihrem Schlachtfeld machten und die Kurden in großes Elend stürzten :

*"Die beiden Seiten haben die Kurden  
zur Zielscheibe der Pfeile des Schicksals gemacht;  
Als ob sie Schlösser an den Grenzen wären.  
Jeder Stamm ist eine starke Wehr.  
Wenn die Türken und die Perser  
sich einander bekämpfen,  
Werden die Kurden mit Blut übergossen,  
und die Kurden trennen sie voneinander wie ein  
Isthmus". 1)*



Khânî forderte die Kurden zum Kampf gegen die Fremdherrschaft und zur Ernennung eines eigenen Königs auf, damit sie nicht ewig in Elend und als Untertan bleiben :

"Wenn wir einen König hätten,  
einen würdigen Kronenbesitzer sehen würden,  
Würde für ihn ein Thron gegründet,  
würde für uns das Glück strahlen.  
Wäre für ihn eine Krone erlangt,  
zweifellos hätte man auch nach uns gefragt.  
Er hätte uns Waisen getröstet,  
er hätte uns aus den Händen der Unehrbaren befreit;  
Die Fremden hätten uns nicht besiegen können,  
wäre unser Land nicht zu Ruinen geworden,  
Wären wir nicht Untertan und Habenichtse geworden,  
besiegt und unterworfen, von den Türken und Persern".<sup>2)</sup>

Er bezeichnete die Unterordnung unter die Osmanen und Safawiden als eine Schande, diese Schande aber :

"Ist eine Schande für die Herrscher und die Fürsten,  
was für eine Schuld haben die Dichter und die Armen?".<sup>3)</sup>

Khânî vertrat die Meinung, daß es nur durch Gewalt möglich sei, die Macht zu gewinnen :

"Dann die Welt ist wie eine Braut,  
ihre Macht liegt in den Händen eines gezückten Schwertes".<sup>4)</sup>

Er verfaßte Mam u Zîn :

"Damit die Leute nicht sagen, daß die Kurden  
ohne Kenntnis, ohne Herkunft und Grundlage sind.  
Verschiedene Völker besitzen ein Buch,  
allein die Kurden sind zu kurz gekommen.  
Und damit die Gelehrten nicht behaupten,  
daß die Kurden keine Ahnung von der Liebe haben".<sup>5)</sup>

In dieser Hinsicht ist die kurdische volkstümliche Literatur keine Ausnahme. Die Heldenepen zeigen uns, inwieweit es ihnen gelungen

ist, historische Tatsachen festzuhalten. Einer der schönsten Heldenepen ist das Dindim-Epos über den Widerstandskampf der Brâdostkurden unter Khân Ahmad Goldhand in den Jahren 1608-10 gegen den Safawiden-Schah Abbâs I. (1570-1628), die in verschiedenen Versionen in verschiedenen Mundarten erhalten ist. Die schönste unter ihnen ist die Mukrî-Version, die von einem gewissen Rahmân-i Bakr in den Jahren 1902-03 in Sâwudjbulâgh (heute Mahâbâd) diktiert wurde. Die Mukrî-Version stimmt in den meisten Fällen mit einem Bericht eines Augenzeugens (der Safawiden Geschichtsschreiber Iskender Munschî in seinem Geschichtsbuch Târîkh-e Âlamârâ-ye Abbâsî, 1560-1635) überein. Das Epos beginnt mit einem beliebten Vers, den wir oft in kurdischen Volksepen finden: "Dilim rânâwastê labar awê ghamê labar awê zhânê , mein Herz erträgt nicht diesen Kummer, diesen Schmerz". In der Einleitung werden Wehklagen an Gott, an den Propheten Muhammad und islamischen Heiligen gerichtet. Danach werden die Festung Dindim und ihre schöne Umgebung beschrieben (westlich der Stadt Urmiye im iranischen Kurdistan). Besonders hervorzuheben ist das Erscheinen des Mukrî-Khân Abdâl bei Ahmad-Khân "Goldhand" und wie er sein erster Waffenbruder wird. Dies verkörpert die gegenseitige Unterstützung unter den Kurden gegen den ausländischen Feind :

*"Ich werde dir ein Bruder derselben Mutter und desselben Vaters werden.*

*Ich werde für dich kämpfen, mein Khân, bis die letzten Dolche, Schwerter, Pistolen, Flinten Lanzen sowie Schilder zerbrechen und die Kettenpanzer zerrissen sind.*

*Rosse werde ich für dich zu Tode hetzen, Männer werde ich für dich zugrunde richten.*

*Wer sollte wohl solch einen Kampf geführt haben? Rustam aus Mâzandarân, am Fuße des Berges Damâwand, als er den weißen Dîv unter die Gewalt seiner Schwerte brachte.*

*Wer sollte wohl solch einen Kampf geführt haben?*

*Die Söhne der Iraner als Blutrache für Siyawusch?"<sup>6)</sup>*

Dann wird uns über die Kriegsvorbereitungen des Schahs gegen Dindim erzählt :

"Es kamen 100 000 Häuptlinge und Sultane zusammen. Ihre Hauptstadt war Isfahan. Sie stürmten alle zur Festung Dimdim. Von ihrem Getöse kamen Bäume und Steine in Bewegung, Staub verdunkelte den Himmel. Es war wie am jüngsten Tage. Das Heer sucht auf allen Wegen nach Amîr Khân".<sup>7)</sup>

Von diesem Unternehmen wurde Khân Ahmad benachrichtigt : Er soll sich gut verschanzen, die ganze Welt scheint sich gegen ihn erhoben zu haben". Der Khân erwidert :

"Er ist Schah, ich bin Khân. Ich bin Führer einer Herde Löwen".<sup>8)</sup>

Eines Tages, noch am frühen Morgen, zog das Heer des Schahs heran. Verdeckt hatte es Bäume und Steine. Die Heerscharen gelangten zum Fuße der Festung Dimdim :

"Sieben Tage und sieben Nächte regnete es Feuer. Es war wie am jüngsten Tage".<sup>9)</sup>

In den letzten Versen wird vom Verrat eines kurdischen Khâns und von der Einnahme der Festung Dimdim erzählt :

"Vier Winter und fünf Sommer sind her, daß Khân in seiner Festung lebt. Es gelang noch keinem, ihn zu besiegen".<sup>10)</sup>

Bis eines Tages ein kurdischer Khân zu den Angreifern überlief. Es war Hamad Bag von Lêtân "Sein Antlitz möge schwarz werden".<sup>11)</sup> Er lief über und zeigte den Leuten des Schahs die Wasserzuführungslöscher. Die Leute des Schahs füllten diese Löscher mit Gift und Arzneien. Die eingeschlossenen wurden vergiftet. Jetzt kamen Tage der Not. Die Weiber weinten viel. Khân sprach zu seinen Kriegern : Es steht jedem frei, mich zu verlassen". Seine Krieger antworteten : "Unsinn und dummes Zeug hast du geredet. Wir ziehen mit der Hand am Schwerte gegen das feindliche Heer".<sup>12)</sup>

So kämpften Khân Ahmad und Khân Abdâl sieben Tage und sieben Nächte. Die Schwerte sahen die Scheide nicht. Überall lagen Leichen, wie Hügel. Blut floß gleich einem Kanal. Die Schwertgriffe zerbrachen. Endlich wurde der Khân erschlagen, "Hâwâr u roro Dimdimâ, Jammer und Wehe Dimdim".

Ein zweites Beispiel für die Widergabe der historischen Vorgänge durch die kurdische volkstümliche Literatur ist das Heldenepos von Abdurrahmân Pascha, dem Baba, der sich in den Jahren 1803-04 gegen die osmanische Herrschaft erhoben hat. Der Text des Epos wurde von einem gewissen Alî Bardaschânî verfaßt und gesungen. Er begleitete persönlich den Pascha auf seinen Kriegszügen und ermutigte seine Krieger durch seinen Gesang.

In der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts versuchten die türkischen Osmanen des öfteren das Fürstentum Bâbân zu zerschlagen, was ihnen erst im Jahre 1850 gelang. In dem Heldenepos des Bardaschânî wird von dem Widerstand des Paschas gegen den türkischen Wâlî von Bagdad erzählt :

*"Der Pascha der Bâbân, der Welteroberer,  
Wunder über seinen Verstand und seine Einsicht!  
Er will nicht in Niedrigkeit leben :  
'Ich leiste den Wâlî von Bagdad keine Dienste,  
den Lebensunterhalt nehme ich mit dem Schwert!  
Wenn nicht mit dem Schwert ist, so kommt es nie  
zustande!  
Aufrührerisch werde ich gegen Bagdad!  
Gehorsam leiste ich nicht'".<sup>13)</sup>*

Die Beseitigung der kurdischen Fürstentümer im 19. Jahrhundert, der Widerstandskampf der Kurden gegen die osmanische Herrschaft waren Themen vieler Dichter. Sâlim (1800-66) schilderte in mehreren Kassiden die Auseinandersetzungen zwischen dem türkischen Heer und den Kurden. Er beschrieb den türkischen Überfall auf Sulaimaniya im Jahre 1850, den Widerstandskampf der Kurden und die schlechten Zustände, die in Sulaimaniya unter den Turken, nach der Beseitigung des Fürstentum Bâbân herrschten, ausführlich und genau.<sup>14)</sup>

Einer der bekanntesten kurdischen Widerstandsdichter im 19. Jahrhundert ist der Aufklärer Hâdjî Kâdir-i Koyî (1817-1897), der sich nicht nur gegen die Fremdherrschaft, sondern auch gegen die Feudalherren und die Religionsoberhäupter wandte. Er griff die Scheichs, die unter dem Deckmantel der Religion das Volk ausbeuteten und der Fremdherrschaft dienten, heftig an :

*"Die Klöster, die Scheichs und ihre Ruhestätte,  
sagt mir, welchen Nutzen haben sie doch,*

Außer Lehren der Faulheit und  
Sammeln von Besitz und Geld?

Man prüft sie nicht einmal,  
damit festgestellt wird, ob sie Gift oder Gegengift sind.  
Prüft sie mit dem Prüfstein, wie Gold,  
ihr versteht dann, ob sie Räuber oder Wegweiser sind".<sup>15)</sup>

Hādġî glaubte an den bewaffneten Kampf, um die Freiheit zu erlangen:

"Bewegt euch wie die Bienen, berated euch leise,  
Schafft Kriegsmaterial an, Kanonen, Gewehre und Mörser,  
Fürbitte und Zuversicht nutzen in dem heutigen Zeitalter  
nicht;

Der Pfeil ist das gesegnete Kettenhemd, der Speer ist  
Schutz auf dem Schlachtfeld".<sup>16)</sup>

Er forderte die Kurden auf, sich die Welt anzusehen, weil "ein  
herumreisender Fuchs tapferer ist als die Löwen".<sup>17)</sup>

"Jeder Scheich, dem ein-zwei arme Leute folgen,  
hält den anderen für dumm und sich für den Propheten  
Salomon.

Keiner von Euch reiste herum; ihr denkt daß in der Welt  
nur der Türken-Sultan und der Perser-Schah existieren".<sup>18)</sup>

Die Kurden müssen sich ein Beispiel an den anderen Völker nehmen,  
die bewaffnet gegen die osmanische Herrschaft kämpften und sich befreiten:

"Es war erst gestern, als die Sudanesen sich erhoben,  
wie die Löwen;  
sie sind nun unabhängig, wengleich sie mehr als die  
anderen unter Druck standen.

Die Bulgaren, die Serben, die Griechen, auch die Armenier  
und Montenegro;  
alle fünf zusammen haben nicht so viele Bewohner wie Bâbân.

Alle sind unabhängig, jeder ist ein Staat,  
Besitzer von Heer, Fahne und Marschallstab".<sup>19)</sup>

Hādġî verstand die Entwicklung und trat deshalb für Modernisierung  
und technische Zivilisation ein. Er rief die Kurden, Männer und Frauen,  
auf, sich der Zeit anzupassen und zu versuchen, überall zu lernen :

*"Komm du, lerne Wissenschaft, was geht es dich an,  
wenn der Lehrer ein Christ, ein Inder oder ein Jude ist.*

*Die Männer und die Frauen sind hier betroffen;  
wenn der Mulla es verneint, so hat er selber keine  
Religion.*

*Du mußt dich wie die Mühlsteine drehen;  
jedes Zeitalter verändert den Lebensunterhalt".<sup>20)</sup>*

Im Jahre 1898 erschien in Kairo die erste kurdische Zeitschrift "KURDISTÂN". Seitdem werden neben Poesie auch literarische Prosa in kurdischer Sprache geschrieben. Die Zeitschrift selbst war eine Exil-Zeitschrift und gegen die türkische Herrschaft gerichtet. Sie richtete offene Briefe an Sultan Abdulhamîd(1842-1909) über die Lage der Kurden innerhalb des osmanischen Reiches und veröffentlichte die Memoiren des türkischen Reformisten Midhat Pascha(1822-1883), der von Sultan Abdulhamîd beseitigt wurde. Vier Jahre lang sorgte die Zeitschrift für die Aufklärung der Kurden und erregte ihre Aufmerksamkeit auf ihre nationalen Rechte.

Nach der osmanischen Revolution von 1908 bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg erschienen in der Türkei(hauptsächlich in der Hauptstadt Istanbul) verschiedene Zeitschriften in kurdischer Sprache. Die bekannteste unter ihnen ist "Rozh-i Kurd, Sonne der Kurden"(3 Nm. 1913), Organ der kurdischen Organisation "Hêvî, die Hoffnung". In den literarischen Beiträgen wurden die Kurden zum Kampf um ihre nationalen Rechte aufgerufen und die Parole "Kurdistan der Kurden" propagiert. Die Zeitschrift wurde durch die türkischen "Unionisten", die nach der Revolution an die Macht kamen, verboten. Kurdische Veröffentlichungen wurden 1909 beschlagnahmt und verbrannt.

Gedichte der Kriegsjahre waren hauptsächlich gegen die Mißstände, die durch den Krieg entstanden, gerichtet. Bekannte Dichter in dieser Periode sind Malâ Hamdûn(1850-1918) und Ârif Şâib(1889-1923). Hamdûn beschrieb die Vorgänge des Krieges, obwohl blind geboren war, sehr genau :

*"Die Gendarmen laufen wie hungrige Sperber herum,  
nach den Leichen des Volkes unter dem trügerischen Vorwand  
des heiligen Krieges,*

*Die Flugzeuge ausgerüstet mit Kriegsmaterial,  
bewegen sich ständig wie die Wolken durch den Wind.*

*Blitz und Zorn der Patronen, Granaten und Bomben  
streuen Feuer aus dem Himmel auf die Erde herunter".<sup>21)</sup>*

Unter dem Titel "Zustandsklage" beschrieb Şâib in einem Gedicht sein Alltagsleben als Soldat an der Front.

Nach der Aufteilung des osmanischen Teil Kurdistans, als Folge des Ersten Weltkrieges zwischen der Türkei, dem Irak und Syrien, der Entstehung einer kurdischen Verwaltung in Sulaimaniya (1918) unter Scheich Mahmûd (1882-1956) und die Verkündung des Vertrages von Sèvres 1920), in dessen Artikeln 62, 63 u. 64 das Recht der Kurden auf einen eigenen Staat festgelegt wurde, verstärkte sich die kurdische Nationalbewegung. Die Sehnsucht des kurdischen Volkes nach einem unabhängigen Kurdistan wurde in den literarischen Beiträgen vieler kurdischer Dichter und Schriftsteller zum Ausdruck gebracht. Einer der bekanntesten Dichter dieser Ära ist Ahmad Hamdî (1878-1936), der mit Begeisterung den Widerstandskampf des Scheich Mahmûd gegen die Engländer und die proenglische irakische Monarchie beschrieb. In einer längeren Kasside schilderte er die letzte Schlacht Scheich Mahmûds gegen die von England unterstützte und ausgerüstete irakische Armee in Awbarîk (1931). Hamdî verschonte aber Mahmûd nicht mit seiner Kritik. Er tadelte ihn wegen seiner Sippenpolitik und der Ausschaltung der Intellektuellen in seiner Verwaltung. Ein anderer nennenswerter Dichter dieser Zeit ist Schukrî Fazlî (1870-1926), der schon früher durch seinen Schmähsstreit mit dem berühmten Dichter Scheich Rizâ (1836-1910) bekannt war. 1922 richtete Schukrî ein Gedicht an Scheich Mahmûd. Er warnte ihn, die Gefahren um seine Verwaltung nicht gering einzuschätzen und nicht allein dem Gebet und Gottessagen zu vertrauen :

*"Die Angelegenheit geht nun aufwärts, kippe sie nicht um.  
Sie braucht ernstes Nachdenken, vertraue nicht allein dem  
Gebet und Segenswünschen".<sup>22)</sup>*

Das Massaker an das kurdische Volk in der Türkei (1925) unter Atatürk, löste überall Empörung unter den Kurden aus. Neben Hamdî brachten Ahmad Mukhtâr Djâf (1898-1935), Pîramêrd (1867-1950) u.a.m. dieser Empörung in mehreren Kassiden zum Ausdruck :

*"Ich möchte mit meinem blutigen Hemd,  
mit meinem verbrannten Herz, mit meinem Nationalgefühl,  
den Tod begegnen;*

*Das Feuer, das aus meinem Herz aufflammt,  
werde ich sie nicht löschen, bis es unsere Mörder  
in Brand setzt".<sup>23)</sup>*

In den zwanziger Jahren wurden neben Poesie auch Prosastücke und vor allem Novellen geschrieben. In der Poesie und Prosa herrschten zuerst romantische Tendenzen. Später traten revolutionäre Romantik und kritischer Realismus vor.

Zwei bekannte Novellen stammen aus dieser Zeit. Sie sind die politisch-kritische Novelle des Djamîl Şâib (1887-1956) "La Khawmâ, Im Traum", geschrieben 1924, veröffentlicht in Bagdad 1977 und die sozial-kritische Novelle des Ahmad Mukhtâr Djâf "Masala-y wizhdân, Eine Gewissensfrage", geschrieben 1927, veröffentlicht in Bagdad 1970.

Şâib kritisierte in seiner Novelle die herrschenden Zustände in Sulaimaniya unter Scheich Mahmûd, insbesondere seine Sippenpolitik.

Ahmad Mukhtâr Djâf zeigt in seiner Novelle die Intrigen und krummen Wege eines Kleinbürgers, der durch Bestechung und Heuchelei zu einem hohen Posten im Staatsorgan kommt.

Ahmad illustrierte weiter in seinen Dichtungen Kurdistan der Zukunft, einheitlich, unabhängig und modern. Er trat für die Ausbildung der Jugend und Modernisierung des Landes ein, wandte sich gegen die Arabisierungspolitik des irakischen Regimes und gegen Korruption in den Staatsorganen:

*"Heute sind die Kurden rechtlos, unterdrückt und aufgeteilt.*

*Es kommt aber der Tag in dem die Jugend unserer  
Heimat*

*Die kurdische Nation vereinen.*

*sie werden Kirmanschah und Urmiya mit Wân und Djazîra  
zusammenschließen*

*Sowie Akrê, Zâkho mit Botân, Khânakîn, Mandali, Luristaân  
und Bâdjâlân.*

*Ein kurdisches Heer, ausgerüstet mit deutschen Waffen,  
sorgt für die Verteidigung und Gerechtigkeit.*

*Eisenbahn wird bis in die hohen Berge Hawrâmâns ein-  
gerichtet,*



*Touristen kommen aus Europa und bewundern unser  
schönes Kurdistan".<sup>24)</sup>*

Unter den vielen Dichtern und Schriftstellern, die in den dreißiger Jahren hervortraten und ihre literarischen Leistungen der kurdischen Befreiungsbewegung gewidmet haben, sind neben Pîramêrd, Fâyîq Bêkas (1905-1948) und Abdullâ Zêwar (1875-1948) besonders zu erwähnen.

Pîramêrd gilt als unbestrittener Meister der kurdischer Literatur in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts. Er ist Verfasser von umfangreichen Dichtungen und Prosastücken, verschiedenen Inhalts. Unter anderem übertrug er die kurdischen Sprichwörter in Verse. Nach seiner Rückkehr aus der Türkei (1925) bis zu seinem Tode war er als Journalist tätig. Nach dem blutigen Aufstand vom 6. September 1930 in Sulaimaniya, gegen die proenglische irakische Monarchie, begab sich eine Delegation, bestehend aus Kollaborateuren nach Bagdad. Sie nannten sich "Kurdistan delegation": In Bagdad bekräftigte diese Delegation, im Namen der ahnungslosen Kurden, ihre Loyalität dem von den Engländern eingesetzten König Feisal I. (1883-1933). Daraufhin verfaßte Pîramêrd sein berühmtes Gedicht "Wafd-i Kurdistan, millet froschân, Delegation Kurdistans, verkäufer der Nation", das bis heute seine Gültigkeit nicht verloren hat.

Bêkas spielte in dem Aufstand vom 6. September eine führende Rolle. Er wurde verhaftet. Vom Gefängnis aus richtete er an das Volk sein bekanntes Gedicht "Ay watan, O Heimat", das bis heute von Kurden gesungen wird, in dem heißt es u.a.:

*"O Heimat! Denk nicht, daß die Gefangenschaft, die Ketten  
und die Folter  
dich von meinem Gedanken entfernt hat.*

*Deine Liebe ist in meinem Herz so stark entflammt,  
wenn tausend Jahre mit Wasser übergossen werden, wird  
es nicht erloschen sein.*

*Tadle mich nicht, ich bin dein damaliger Sohn,  
warte nur bis meine Hände und Füße von Ketten befreit  
sind.*

*Ich werde dann deine Feinde zur Rechenschaft ziehen".<sup>25)</sup>*

Kurz vor seinem Tode verfaßte er im Jahre 1948 sein letztes Gedicht "Dârî âzâdî, Freiheitsbaum", in dem heißt es u.a.:

*"Wenn du deine Nation und Heimat wieder herstellen  
möchtest,*

*sei sicher, daß es ohne Revolution unmöglich ist.*

*Niemals behaupten, daß der Feind stark und im Besitz  
von Kanonen und Flugzeuge ist,  
wenn ihr einig seid, ist es unmöglich, daß er stand-  
hält.*

*Wenn die Männer und die Frauen für die Heimat nicht  
gemeinsam kämpfen,*

*ist ihre Freiheit unerreichbar; der Vogel fliegt nicht  
mit einem Flügel".<sup>26)</sup>*

Zwar verfaßte viele Schullieder und Hymnen patriotischen Inhalts. Er war jahrelang als Lehrer tätig und machte sich als vaterländischer Erzieher einen Namen.

Parallel zum Aufschwung der nationalen Befreiungsbewegung in Kurdistan, beeinflusst von der internationalen demokratischen und antifaschistischen Bewegung während des Zweiten Weltkrieges und in der Nachkriegszeit, besonders nach der Entstehung der kurzlebigen Republik von Mahâbâd (1946), traten die realistischen Tendenzen in der kurdischen Literatur stark hervor. Der Alltag in den kurdischen Dörfern, die Ausbeutung der Bauern durch die Feudalherren, der Kampf um die nationale Identität und Gleichberechtigung, Internationalismus und Solidarität mit den unterdrückten Völkern sind daher Hauptthemen der meisten kurdischen Dichter und Schriftsteller geworden.

Hierbei spielte die Zeitschrift "Galâwêzh, Sirius" (Bagdad 1939-1949) eine führende Rolle. Neben den literarischen Beiträgen kurdischer Dichter und Schriftsteller veröffentlichte sie reichlich Übersetzungen aus der revolutionären Weltliteratur. Sie diente zehn Jahre lang der Gestaltung einer kurdischen Schriftsprache und bildete eine Generation mit fortschrittlichen Ideen aus. 1949 wurde die Zeitschrift verboten und ihr Herausgeber Ibrahim Ahmad festgenommen.

Im westkurdischen Bereich spielte die Zeitschrift "Hâwâr, Aufruf" (Damaskus 1932-35, 1941-1943) eine ähnliche Rolle wie Galâwêzh. In den 57 Nummern der Zeitschrift findet man zahlreiche Beiträge bekannter kurdischer Schriftsteller und Dichter, die die kurdische Sprache und Literatur pflegten und die Sehnsucht des kurdischen Volkes nach der

Freiheit zum Ausdruck brachten.

Unter den vielen Dichtern und Schriftstellern, die sich in den dreißiger, vierziger und funfziger Jahren einen Namen gemacht haben und ihre literarischen Leistungen der kurdischen Befreiungsbewegung widmeten, sind folgende besonders zu erwähnen :

Djalâdat Badirkhân(1892-1951), Dr.Kamrân Badirkhân(1894-1978), Djagar-khün(\*1903), Malâ Ahmad-i Nâmî(1906-1975), Osmân Sabrî(\*1906), Qadrîdjân(1914-1972), Mûsâ Antar(\*1920), Dr.Nûraddîn Zâzâ(\*1922) aus dem türkischen und syrischen Teil Kurdistans;

Malâ Mârif-i Kokayî(1873-1946), Abdurrahmân Hazhâr(\*1920), Muhammad-Amîn Hêmin(\*1921), Hasan Qizildjî(1919), Dr.Alî Galâwêzh(\*1928), Dr.Rahîm-i Qâzî(\*1929) aus dem iranischen Teil Kurdistans;

Abdulkhâliq Athîrî(1890-1962), Schêkh Salâm(1892-1959), Malâ Muhammad Qâni'(1901-1965), Abdullâ Gorân(1904-1962), Alâdin Sadjâdî(\*1910), Schâkir Fattâh(\*1912), Ibrâhîm Ahmad(\*1914), Yûnis Raûf Dildâr(1918-48), Muhammad Alî Madhosch(\*1919), Muharram Muhammad Amîn(1920-1980), Ahmad Dilzâr(\*1920), Ahmad Hardî(\*1920), Muhammad Husayn Barzindjî(Ayn Hêbê, \*1923), Muhammad Rasûl Hâwâr(\*1923), Djamâl Abdulqâdir Bâbân(\*1927), Muhammad Sâlih Dîlân(\*1927), Kâkay Fallâh(\*1928), Kâmarân Mukrî(\*1929) aus dem irakischen Teil Kurdistans und

die sowjetisch-kurdischen Dichter und Schriftsteller Arab Schamo(1896-1978), Ahmadê Mirâzî(1899-1961), Djamîlê Djalîl(\*1908), Hâdjî Djindî(\*1910), Amîn Avdâl(\*1906), Kâchâkhê Mirâd(1914-1979), Mîkâyîlê Raschîd(\*1925), Sîmoyê Schamo(\*1928).

Die Brüder Badirkhâns gaben in den dreißiger und vierziger Jahren verschiedene Zeitschriften heraus ("Hâwâr, Aufruf", Damaskus 1932-35, 1941-43; "Ronâhî, das Licht", Damaskus 1941-46; "Ster, Stern", Beirut 1943-45; "Rozhâ Nû, der neue Tag", Beirut 1943-46). Neben Gedichten schrieben sie zahlreiche Beiträge, die den Alltag in den kurdischen Dörfern darstellen. Beide Brüder veröffentlichten viele Artikel und Broschüren sprachwissenschaftlichen und politischen Inhalts auch in europäischen Sprachen.

Djagarkhün ist der bekannteste westkurdische Dichter seit Jahrzehnten. Er ist Verfasser von umfangreichen Dichtungen patriotischen Inhalts. Unter anderem schrieb er auch eine Reihe von Novellen und Anekdoten aus dem kurdischen Alltag.

Osmân Sabrî schildert in Prosa und moderne Poesie die schwierige Situation, in der sich die Kurden befinden, und ruft zum Kampf um die nationalen Rechte und um Gleichberechtigung auf.

Qadrîdjân widmete seine Dichtungen dem Befreiungskampf des kurdischen Volkes und der Freundschaft zwischen Kurden, Arabern, Türken und Persern.

Mûsâ Antar beschreibt in seinen Novellen in kurdischer und türkischer Sprache das Leben in den kurdischen Dörfern in der Türkei (Armut, Ausbeutung und Analphabetentum) und macht die Kurden auf ihre schwierige Lage aufmerksam.

Unter dem Titel "Şer-ê azadî, Kampf um die Freiheit" schrieb Dr. Nûraddîn Zâzâ ein längeres modernes Gedicht über den kurdischen Aufstand im irakischen Kurdistan. Zuvor gab er 1956 in Damaskus das Volksepos "Mam-ê Âlân, Mam aus Âlân" heraus.

Kokayî, Hazhâr und Hêmin traten in der Zeit der Republik von Mahâbâd (1946) hervor. Ihre Dichtungen widmeten sie, der zum ersten Mal in der kurdischen Geschichte entstandenen Republik und dem Widerstandskampf der iranischen Völker gegen das Schah-Regime und dessen Repressalien gegen das kurdische Volk. In diesem Sinne schrieben auch Qizildjî, Galâwêzh und Qâzî ihre literarischen Beiträge (Prosastücke und Novellen).

Athîrî ist Verfasser von wenigen aber ausdrucksvollen Gedichten, romantisch-patriotischen Charakters.

Durch seine satirischen und sozialkritischen Gedichte verspottete Salâm die herrschenden Zustände in Kurdistan unter Fremd- und Feudalherrschaft.

Qâni' gilt als Verfasser von umfangreichen Gedichten, sozialkritischen und patriotischen Inhalts. Seine Gedichte sind, wie Djagarkhûns, allgemeinverständlich.

Als Verfasser ausdrucksvoller Gedichte tritt Abdullâ Gorân in erster Linie hervor. Er gilt als Begründer einer eigenen Schule in der kurdischen Dichtkunst. Keiner hat so schön und wirkungsvoll wie Gorân Kurdistan beschrieben. Gorân begann seine literarische Karriere als Romantiker und entwickelte sich nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg zum Realisten. Neben schönen Gedichten, lyrischen Inhalts, verfaßte er zahlreiche Kampflieder, kurze sozialkritische und satirische Theaterstücke. Seine Kampflieder werden von den Kurden mit Begeisterung gesungen :

*"Es ist Zeit sich zu erheben,*

*wie lange sollen wir noch in der Not und Elend leben.*

Wenn wir uns nicht gemeinsam, wie ein Mann, erheben,  
 wie erreichen wir unsere Ziele,  
 Wie erlangen wir unsere Rechte,  
 wie können wir ein menschenwürdiges Leben führen".<sup>27)</sup>

Verfasser von zahlreichen Werken ist der Theologe Alâdîn Sadjâdî. Er ist Schriftsteller, Publizist und Literaturhistoriker. Sein bekanntestes Werk ist "Mêzhû-i adab-i kurdî, Geschichte der kurdischen Literatur" (Bagdad 1952 u. 1971).

Die meisten Werke des Schriftstellers Schâkir Fattâh sind sozialkritischen und didaktischen Inhalts und gegen die Unwissenheit, Rückständigkeit, schlechte Sitten und Gebräuche in der kurdischen Gesellschaft gerichtet.

Ibrâhîm Ahmad ist der beste kurdische Prosaist der letzten vier Jahrzehnte. Seine Gedichte, Prosastücke, Novellen und Romane sind politischen Inhalts. In seinem Roman "Zhân-i gal, die Wehen des Volkes" (geschrieben 1956, veröffentlicht 1972 in Sulaimaniya) erzählt er uns die harten Lebenswege der kurdischen Patrioten und ihren Kampf um die Freiheit unter einem Terrorregime. Sein literarisches Prosastück "Baraw rûnâkî, zum Licht" (1945) schildert die Schwierigkeiten des Kampfes um die Freiheit. 1949 schrieb er auf dem Wege zum Gefängnis, in dem er anderthalb Jahre verbrachte, sein bekanntes Gedicht "Duwâ tîrî kawân, der letzte Pfeil aus dem Bogen", in dem er die Terrormaßnahmen der damaligen irakischen Regierung als "der letzte Pfeil aus dem Bogen" bezeichnete und die Überzeugung vom baldigen Sieg des Volkes über die Monarchie und die proimperialistische Macht in Irak aussprach :

*"Schau Hitler an, er war Gott des Krieges auf dieser Erde,  
 er war wie eine eiserne Festung der Kapitalisten,  
 er war wie die chinesische Mauer vor den Freiheitsliebenden,  
 das ganze Nazi-Deutschland lag in seinen Händen.*

*Wo blieb die erschreckende Wehrmacht,  
 wo ist die tötende Luftwaffe,  
 wo sind ihre Kanonen, ihre Panzer, ihre beispiellose Flotte?  
 Alle verschwunden, spurlos wie er selbst.*

*Gemeinsam gehen wir mit der Freiheitskarawane der Völker weiter,  
 von dem langen Weg, die harten Bedingungen, die Grausamkeit der  
 Feinde fürchten wir uns nicht.*

*pausenlos schreiten wir weiter,  
solange bis alle Arten der Unterdrückung und  
Ausbeutung entwurzelt werden".<sup>28)</sup>*

Unte anderem verfaßte er "Srûd-i peshmarga, Lied der kurdischen Partisanen" (1963), in dem es heißt :

*"Mit meinem schönen Kurdistan schwöre ich,  
sowie mit dem rechtlosen kurdischen Volk:  
Nie lege ich meine Waffe nieder,  
entweder siege ich oder ich werde sterben".<sup>29)</sup>*

Gedichte sozial-kritischen Inhalts sind charakteristisch für Dildâr, Verfasser der kurdischen Nationalhymne "Ay raqîb, O Feind" (1945), in der sagt er :

*"O Feind, die kurdische Nation existiert,  
die Kannonkugel des Zeitalters brechen sie nicht  
zusammen:  
Wir sind Söhne der roten Farbe und der Revolution,  
schau unsere blutige Fahne an".<sup>30)</sup>*

Hardî verfaßte wenige aber ausdrucksvolle Gedichte, sowohl lyrischen wie politischen Inhalts. Sein Gedicht "Azâdîkhuwâyn, wir sind die Freiheitsliebenden" (1948) gilt als zweite Nationalhymne der Kurden :

*"Jedes Volk, das wie unser Volk unterdrückt wird,  
mit ihm fühlen wir uns gemeinsam.  
Wir sind Feinde der Unterdrückung und Ausbeutung,  
wo sie in Erscheinung treten".<sup>31)</sup>*

M.M. Amîn und J.A. Bâbân stellen in ihren Novellen die kurdische Gesellschaft realistisch dar und rufen die kurdischen Volksmassen zum Kampf gegen Rückständigkeit und Ausbeutung auf.

Madhosh, Dilzâr, Barzindjî, Hâwâr, Dîlân, K. Fallân und K. Mukrî verfaßten neben schönen Gedichten lyrischen Inhalts, auch politische Gedichte, die der kurdischen Befreiungsbewegung gewidmet sind.

Die zeitgenössische kurdische Literatur behandelt vorwiegend aktuelle Fragen. Form und Inhalt der Dichtungen und der Novellen sind weitgehend modernisiert. Die chauvinistischen Kriege gegen das kurdische Volk im Irak seit 1961, im Iran seit 1979 und die Reressalien im türkischen Teil Kur-

distans, sind Hauptthemen der meisten kurdischen Dichter und Schriftsteller, deren Zahl in den letzten zwanzig Jahren stark angestiegen ist. Nenneswerte unter ihnen sind :

Muhammad Amîn Bozarsalân (\*1930), Hamrasch Rascho (\*1933), Rizâ Topâl (\*1934), Kamâl Burkây (\*1937), Mahmûd Baksî (\*1944), Rozhan Barnâs (\*1945), Saldjâm Zilfî (\*1949), Tayfûn Mâlmîsânîzh (\*1952), Farzend Bârân (\*1952), Firât Djawarî (\*1954) aus dem türkischen Teil Kurdistans;

Suwâra-i Ilkhânî (1937-1975), Salâhaddîn Muhtadî (\*1939), Djalâladdîn Malakschân (\*1941), Fâtih Schêkhulislâmî (\*1942), Alî Hasanyânî (\*1944), Muslih(Rêbwâr) Schêkhulislâmî (\*1949) aus dem iranischen Teil Kurdistans;

Dr.Maruf Khaznadâr (\*1930), Muhammad Mawlûd Mam (\*1930), Dr.Kâwus Qaftân (\*1932), Dr.Jamâl Nabaz (\*1933), Dr.Izzaddîn Rasûl (\*1933), Amîn Mîrzâ Karîm (\*1933), Dr.Ihsân Fuâd (\*1935), Djalâl Mîrzâ Karîm (1935), Raûf Bêgard (\*1938), Muhammad Nûrî (\*1939), Husayn Arif (\*1940), Schêrko Bêkas (\*1940), Mam Botânî (\*1940), Djâmâl Schârbâzhêrî (\*1941), Ahmad Muhammad Ismâîl (\*1943), Abdullâ Abbâs (\*1945), Latîf Hâmid Barzindjî (1944-1973), Raûf Hasan (\*1944), Muhammad Hama Bâqî (\*1946), Salâh Schuwân (\*1947), Latîf Halmat (\*1947), Abdullâ Paschêw (\*1946), Rafîq Sâbir (\*1950), Muhammad Mukrî (\*1949), Muhammad Farîq Hasan (\*1950), Ahlâm Mansûr (\*1950), Faryâd Fâzil (\*1950), Anwar Qâdir Muhammad (\*1950), Anwar (Farhâd) Schâkalî (\*1951), Salâm Muhammad (\*1954), Schîrîn Kamâl (\*1953), Umar Khidir (Havâl Kuwêstânî) (\*1953), Nadjîba Ahmad (\*1954), Muhammad Badrî (\*1937), Dr.Badirkhân Sindî (\*1943), Sâmî Schorisch (\*1950) aus dem irakischen Teil Kurdistans;

Husayn Kalasch (\*1930), Sabghatullâ Rîzânî (\*1939), Khalîl Yûnis (\*1944) aus Syrien und viele andere, die ihre literarischen Leistungen im Dienste der revolutionären Bewegung und dem Kampf der kurdischen Volksmassen um Selbstbestimmungsrecht gestellt haben.

Volkstümliche Dichtungen und Gesänge politischen Inhalts werden wieder in den Bergen Kurdistans gehört. Im Sommer 1981 registrierte ich unter den kurdischen Partisanen (Peschmargas) verschiedene Gesänge, die ihr Alltagsleben, ihre Gefühle und Aspirationen zum Ausdruck bringen :

*"Meine Geliebte, oh du, die mit Zärtlichkeit erzogen  
worden bist!*

*Sogar die Bäume und der Schamâl (Nordwind) sehnen sich  
nach dir.*

Schade, daß du kein Brno(Waffen) bist,  
 ich hätte dich dann auf meinen Schultern getragen,  
 Seit Jahren durchquere ich Kurdistan hin und her,  
 meine Fuße begannen sich zu pellen.

Solange, daß ich am Leben bin,  
 bleibt Kurdistan meine Heimat.

Ich lehne es ab ein Stiefel tragender Soldat zu werden,  
 mir ist lieber ein Peschmarga mit Kułabał (typisch kurdische  
 armlose Jacke aus Filz) zu sein.

Die Sterne am Himmel erschienen vollständig,  
 allein der Kurdenstern ist ausgeblieben.

Als ob unser Seufzen zu Nebel wird,  
 aufgehalten von Dämonen auf den Bergen".<sup>32)</sup>

(gesungen von Dlêr Hasan Raschîd, ca 16 Jahre alt, auf einem  
 Fest der Pêschmarga am 28.8.1981 in Mâlîmos, ca 20 km östlich  
 von Sardascht an der iranisch-irakischen Grenze).

Kamal Fuad

Amsterdam, 15.10.1983

\*) Das Kurdische wird von etwa 20 Millionen Menschen, hauptsächlich in der Osttürkei, im Nordwestiran, Nordirak und zum Teil in Nordsyrien und in den mittelasiatischen und kaukasischen Sowjetrepubliken gesprochen. Es bildet zusammen mit dem Belutschi, Talischi, Gileki und Masendarani den nördlichen Zweig der westiranischen Gruppe innerhalb der indo-europäischen Sprachfamilie.

Zur Niederschrift des Kurdischen werden heute drei Schriftarten verwendet : die lateinische in der Türkei und Syrien, die arabisch-persische im Irak und Iran und die Kyrillische in der Sowjetunion.

\*\*) Bei der Übersetzung ins Englische und französische bitte folgendes beachten : dj = englisches j

sch = " " " sh

zh = französisches j



Institut kurde de Paris