

THE
REVOLUTION
OF
IRAKI
KURDISTAN

Institut Farde de Paris

US. VAN

by

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THE REVOLUTION OF IRAKI KURDISTAN

Part I

(from September 1961 to December 1963)

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CHAPTER I:

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

For nearly two years and especially after the fall of Kassem on February 8, 1963, the international press has been writing about a harsh war being fought in Iraki Kurdistan between the Kurdish people and the Baghdad government. If the European reader is more or less well informed about these events, it seems, on the other hand, that the Kurdish national question is on the whole unknown to the broad masses of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Although far from having reached its greatest dimensions, this very complex question is already, however, of great importance, because it concerns the future of an oppressed nation, its relations with neighbouring nations, the future of the Middle East and of peace in that region. Before discussing present events, it is therefore necessary to situate the Kurdish problem in its geographic and historical context, although the length of this booklet only permits a rapid survey.

Who are the Kurds?

The Kurdish people are one of the most numerous of western Asia and perhaps the most ancient. The *Anabasis*, the Greek classic of Xenophon, written in 401 B.C., speaks of

the Kurdish people under the name of "Kardu," and locates them in the same country as today, mainly in the valley of the upper Tigris and Zab rivers. The Kurds had been in this area well before then. After Xenophon, nearly 11 centuries passed before the Moslem Arabs arrived in Syria and Irak, and it was 15 centuries before the first Turks arrived in the country that was to become Turkey. Despite all the invasions of Kurdistan and western Asia, the Kurds maintained intact their language and their national characteristics, thanks to their fierce attachment to their independence and to the mountainous nature of their country.¹

The Kurds are a people of Indo-European origin and speak an independent language of the Aryan or Iranian family, related to Persian. Ethnically and linguistically, the relations between Kurds, Persians and Afghans are comparable to those that exist between Italians, Frenchmen, Spaniards, Catalans and Portuguese, or between Russians and Poles. The Kurds are considered the

¹ See *Encyclopédie de l'Islam and Encyclopedia Britannica*, articles "Kurdes" and "Kurdistan."

descendants and heirs of the ancient Medes of remote antiquity. Formerly of the Zoroastrian religion, they were converted to Islam after the Moslem conquest, but it is obvious that religious considerations are completely alien to the Kurdish national movement.

The Kurdish people constitute one single nation, in the scientific sense of the word, having one country, one language, their own historical development, internal economic relations, their own culture and national consciousness.

The Country of the Kurds

But, as is already known, it is a nation that has been outrageously oppressed and, like Poland before the First World War, politically divided. Kurdistan, which means "the country of the Kurds," is a vast country with an expanse of some 500,000 square kilometers, a country that is geographically continuous, but divided by political frontiers, mainly between Turkey, Iran and Irak. Turkish Kurdistan covers the eastern provinces of that State, Iranian Kurdistan extends over the western edge of the Iranian plateau and stretches from the Soviet frontier in the north to the oil region not far from the Persian Gulf, in the south; and Iraki Kurdistan covers the northern and northeastern provinces of that State, with the oil regions of Kirkuk, Ain-Zalah (near Mosul) and Khanakin. There are three Kurdish

enclaves in northern Syria, adjacent to the Turkish-Syrian border and Turkish Kurdistan, that is, the region of Northern Jazira, Arab-Pinar and Kurd-Dagh. In the Soviet Union, there are also Kurdish communities, but dispersed in the Soviet Socialist Republics of Armenia, Azerbaïdzhân and Georgia. Kurdistan is a mountainous country, rich in mineral resources, with green valleys and internal plains that are cultivated. The Kurdish mountains were very wooded during antiquity, but today there are only a few forests. The climate is severe, very cold in winter, with heavy snow, and fairly hot and dry in summer, except in the mountains. Water is abundant in Kurdistan. The Tigris and the Euphrates are Kurdish rivers in their upper reaches. The same is true of the Diyala (Sirwan) and the Karun. The Big Zab, Little Zab and the Bohtan are typically Kurdish rivers. Lake Van, six times larger than Lake Geneva, is found in Turkish Kurdistan. Oaks, walnut trees, poplars, mulberry trees and birches are the most commonly found trees in the Kurdiâh countryside.

The Kurdish People

Naturally, there is a dispute about the number of the Kurdish people. Those who oppress the Kurds want at any cost to minimize the importance of the question and put forward figures well below the truth: three to six millions. The most enthusiastic



General Mustafa Barzani, President of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan and Commander-in-Chief of the Revolutionary Army of Kurdistan.

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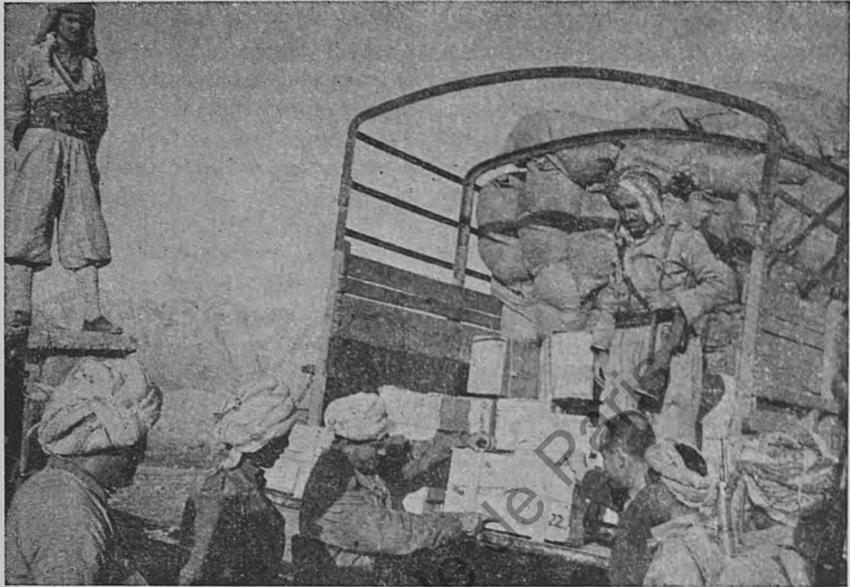
Kurds estimate around 18 million. Cautious observers in Europe put forward a total figure of 9 to 10 million. We believe that their number is around 13 million. The evidence in this respect cannot be reproduced here because of lack of space. Of

this figure, there are six million in Turkish Kurdistan, 4.5 million in Iranian Kurdistan and two million in Iraki Kurdistan. If the number of Kurds in Syria and the U.S.S.R. were added, one has the following table:

<i>Country</i>	<i>Total area in km²</i>	<i>Area of Kurdistan</i>	<i>Total population</i>	<i>Kurdish population</i>	<i>Per cent of pop.</i>
Turkey	760,000	220,000	26,000,000	6,000,000	23%
Iran	1,600,000	180,000	21,000,000	4,500,000	21%
Irak	440,000	80,000	6,500,000	2,000,000	30%
Syria	170,000	20,000	5,000,000	400,000	8%
U.S.S.R.	—	—	—	150,000	—
Kurdistan		500,000		13,000,000	

Physically, the Kurds are people of greater than average height, thin, and of great endurance. Rarely have an oppressed people been more slandered by their oppressors and by imperialism than the Kurdish people. Rather than speak of a people, the oppressors of the Kurds prefer to use the term "Kurdish tribes" when they do not purely and simply deny the existence of a distinct Kurdish nationality. They call the Kurdish national liberation movement a "movement of banditry." They claim that the Kurds are an agglomeration of "tribes without national consciousness," "semi-nomad" and "war-like," that Kurdistan is a "poor" country and that it could not be economically self-sufficient. The truth is quite different. Economically, exploited Kurdistan plays the role of a milchcow for the States that

divide it up. Ninety per cent of Iraki oil, a large part of Iranian oil and the little oil exploited so far in Turkey flow from Kurdish regions. The other mineral resources of Kurdistan are still generally untouched. Kurdistan supplies Irak, Iran and Turkey with its wood, tobacco, cereals and fruits, water and herds of livestock. The Jazira region is the breadbasket of Syria. The Kurds are a sedentary people, 75 per cent of whose number are peasants, who very often are also herdsmen, and 25 per cent urban dwellers. There are scores of Kurdish cities of 10 to 150 thousand inhabitants, such as, in Turkey, Diyarbekir, Van, Bitlis, Siirt, Mardin, Maden, Ourfa, Malatya, Erzerum, Erzinjan, Bayezid; in Iran, Khoy, Oshnu, Mahabad, Sakkiz, Sanendaj, Kirmanshah, Kasre-Shirin, Khurran-Abad; in Irak, Sulaimani, Erbil;



Arrival of Red-Cross aid in Iraki-Kurdistan.

Kirkuk, Koy-Sandjak, Dehok, Zakhko, Akra, Rowanduz, Amdiya; in Syria, Kamishli, Amuda. All these cities are centers of trading and handicrafts, with an old Kurdish bourgeoisie. The Kurds are not only one of the oldest peoples of the world, they have made a large contribution to the civilization of western Asia. And at present they are in no way inferior to the neighbouring peoples.

Medieval Kurdistan

In the Middle Ages, Kurdistan was composed of a large number of inde-

pendent Kurdish principalities of a feudal structure, as were the majority of European nations at that time. The father of Kurdish historians, Prince Cheref Khan of Bitlis, wrote in 1596 the first work, in two volumes on Kurdish history, entitled *Cheref-nameh, or Annals of the Kurdish Nation* (published for the first time in St. Petersburg, 1860, in the original version, by Zernof, then translated and published in French, also in St. Petersburg, by Charmoy, in 1875, with notes). Another basic text for the study of ancient Kurdistan is entitled *Evliya Tchelebi Siyahet na-*

mesi, written by the Turkish traveller and geographer of the 17th century, Evliya Tchelebi, published in Constantinople in six volumes.

If in the *Cheref-nameh* the author pays particular attention to the military history of Kurdistan, the genealogy and the military exploits of the "princes, kings, great chiefs and intrepid knights of Kurdistan," the work of Evliya Tchelebi, on the other hand, describes at length and with precision the conditions of each principality: the personality of the ruling prince, the size of his armed forces, his citadels, his vassals, the climate of the region, its agricultural products, the occupations of the population, the capital of the principality, its institutions, economy, handicraft industries, its various markets, schools, palaces, public baths, etc., giving a vivid and marvellous picture of Kurdistan. It should be noted that this Turkish geographer of the 17th century said that Kurdistan stretched from the north of Aleppo and from Malatya to Hamadan, in Iran, and from the country of Aran (Erivan, in Soviet Armenia) to the Persian Gulf, giving it the same ethnic limits as today.

This Kurdistan, independent, but divided into small States (some forty of them), withdrawn upon itself, had the misfortune, before the modern national idea unified it politically, of finding itself between two powerful neighbours: in the east, imperial

Iran, and in the west, an Ottoman Empire that was still being formed on the shores of the Bosphorus. From time to time, the Shahs of Iran made devastating incursions into the Kurdish country. Besides political problems, sharp religious considerations at the time opposed the Kurdish dynasties, who were Sunni Moslems, from the Shiite Shahs of Iran. But the Ottoman Turks were Sunnis, as were the majority of Kurds. In the 16th century, Sultan Selim I, swearing to "eradicate the Shiites and bring the Shah to his knees," proposed an alliance with the Kurdish princes. The majority of them hastily accepted it. There was an historic battle at Tchaldiran (in Turkish Kurdistan) in 1514, between Turkish and Kurdish allies and Shah Ismail. He was badly beaten and his capital, Tabriz, devastated. To reward the Kurdish princes, Selim I recognized by imperial *firmans* the independence of their principalities and gave them his protection against Iran. The Sultan recognized the hereditary rights of the Kurdish dynasties and the *lio*, the Kurdish customs and traditions that remained intact in Kurdistan. On the other hand, the Kurdish princes swore their allegiance to the Sultan and promised military aid whenever the empire went to war. Thus, the majority of the small Kurdish States became Ottoman protectorates. The shahs of Iran did likewise with a number of principalities of eastern Kurdistan.

A Clash of Allegiances

This situation made of Kurdistan a field of battle between sultans and shahs and, depending on their allegiances, the Kurdish princes, took part in these wars in both camps. The country was ruined and the population impoverished. Kurds took part in all the wars of the Ottoman Empire, from Vienna to Yemen. In 1639, a Turkish-Persian treaty fixed the frontier between the two empires, nearly that to be found today. It was then that began the division of Kurdistan between Persia and Ottoman Turkey.

Both sultans and shahs violated their agreements with the Kurdish States and sought to reduce them, one after the other, to mere provinces. The principalities defended themselves, but in isolation, the Kurdish aristocracy could never succeed in presenting a united front to the invader. They fell one after the other, the last, in Ottoman Kurdistan, in 1847, and in Iranian Kurdistan, under Riza Shah, in the 20th century². With the disappearance of the principalities, classical Kurdish literature, which flourished in the princely courts, declined. And the Kurdish people lost their independence.

The frequent wars in the Kurdish country between shahs and sultans, the growing intervention of Turkey and Iran in Kurdish affairs, the pro-

gressive reduction of Kurdish principalities into provinces, the heavy contributions that the Kurdish people had to make to the foreign wars of these two empires, in men and goods, in short, the substitution of Turkish-Persian domination for independence and poverty for the prosperity of the past, all favoured the modern Kurdish national idea. Something that might surprise many foreign observers, the Kurdish national idea, aimed at reconquering liberty is much older among the Kurds than the Turks, the Persians and the Arabs. It dates precisely from the 16th century. As evidence of that, the epic work of the great Kurdish poet of the 17th century, Ehmede Khanî (1650-1706). In his nationalist epic *Mem û Zîne*, the poet describes the misfortunes of the Kurdish people, laments their lost independence and dreams of a Kurdish State, before proposing ways of overthrowing the domination of neighbouring States and unifying Kurdistan.

Beginnings of the Kurdish Movement

In 1908, when the Ottoman Empire was granted a theoretically democratic constitution, the Kurdish movement began organizing on modern bases, creating political parties and revolutionary committees, as was done elsewhere by the Arab movement within the same empire.

² These two principalities were, respectively, that of Bohtan of the Bedir-Khan family, and that of Pushti-Kuh.

After the first World War, a Kurdish delegation, headed by General Cherif Pasha, former Ambassador of Turkey to Sweden, presented the Kurdish national claims to the peace conference in Paris. The Treaty of Sèvres in 1920, between the Allied Powers and defeated Turkey, recognized in its Section 3, entitled "Kurdistan," articles 62, 63 and 64, the autonomy of Ottoman Kurdistan, leaving the way clear for its complete independence if the League of Nations should ascertain that this was the desire of the Kurdish people. These international measures only concerned Ottoman Kurdistan (today Turkish, Iraqi and Syrian), with the exclusion of Iranian Kurdistan, because it was a question of dismembering the Ottoman Empire on the principle of nationality, and Iran did not take part in the war. This was the first time that the rights of the Kurdish people to autonomy and independence were recognized internationally.

But the Treaty of Sèvres was never applied, nor even ratified. The coming to power of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk left everything in doubt.

The Arrival of the British

British troops occupied Arab Irak in 1917, and only after the armistice of Mudros in 1918, southern Kurdi-

stan, or the ancient Ottoman *vilayet* of Mosul. According to the Treaty of Sèvres, article 64, this territory was to be part of the State of Kurdistan. For strategic and economic (oil) reasons, Britain wanted to annex it to Arab Irak, a State which it sought to create under its mandate, with an Arab king, Feisal I. But the republican Turkey of Mustafa Kemal claimed the same territory. This was the dispute that the Conference of Lausanne in 1922-23, to which the Kurds, the main party concerned, were not invited, was not able to settle. The Treaty of Lausanne of July 1923 between Turkey and the Allies superseded the Treaty of Sèvres, but the new treaty completely ignored the existence of a Kurdistan and a Kurdish question. The Kurds were shamefully betrayed and abandoned by the great powers. The only problem remaining was that of the *vilayet* of Mosul (southern Kurdistan, which was to be Iraqi). The Council of the League of Nations was presented with this problem.

In the meantime, the Kurds of this territory had twice risen in revolt against the British troops, the first time in 1919, in the Sulaimani region, and the second in 1920, in the Barzan region. To calm them and strengthen its international position in regards to Turkish claims for the *vilayet*, the British Government, act-

ing as the mandatory power in Irak, in a joint declaration with the Baghdad government, dated December 24, 1922 and officially communicated to the League of Nations, recognized in these terms the right of autonomy within Irak of southern Kurdistan:

“The Government of His Britannic Majesty and the Government of Irak recognize the rights of the Kurds living within the frontiers of Irak, to establish a Kurdish Government within these frontiers. They hope that the different Kurdish groups will arrive as soon as possible at an arrangement among them on the form they desire for this government and the limits within which they would like it to extend. They will send responsible delegates to discuss their economic and political relations with the Government of His Britannic Majesty and the Iraki Government.”

On September 30, 1924, the Council of the League of Nations sent a commission, headed by the former Hungarian Prime Minister, Count Teleki, to the *vilayet* of Mosul to enquire into the desires of the population. In its quite objective report to the Council, the commission of enquiry noted that the feeling of the population of the contested territory was “Kurdish” and not Turkish or Iraki, and that:

“If a conclusion must be drawn from the argument of ethnic isolation, it would lead to calling for the creation of an independent Kurdish State. The Kurds make up five-eighths

of the population. If such a solution were envisaged, one should add to the preceding figure the Yezidis, Kurds of Zoroastrian religion, and Turks, whose assimilation by the Kurdish element would be easy. In such an evaluation, the Kurds would then make up seven-eighths of the populations.”

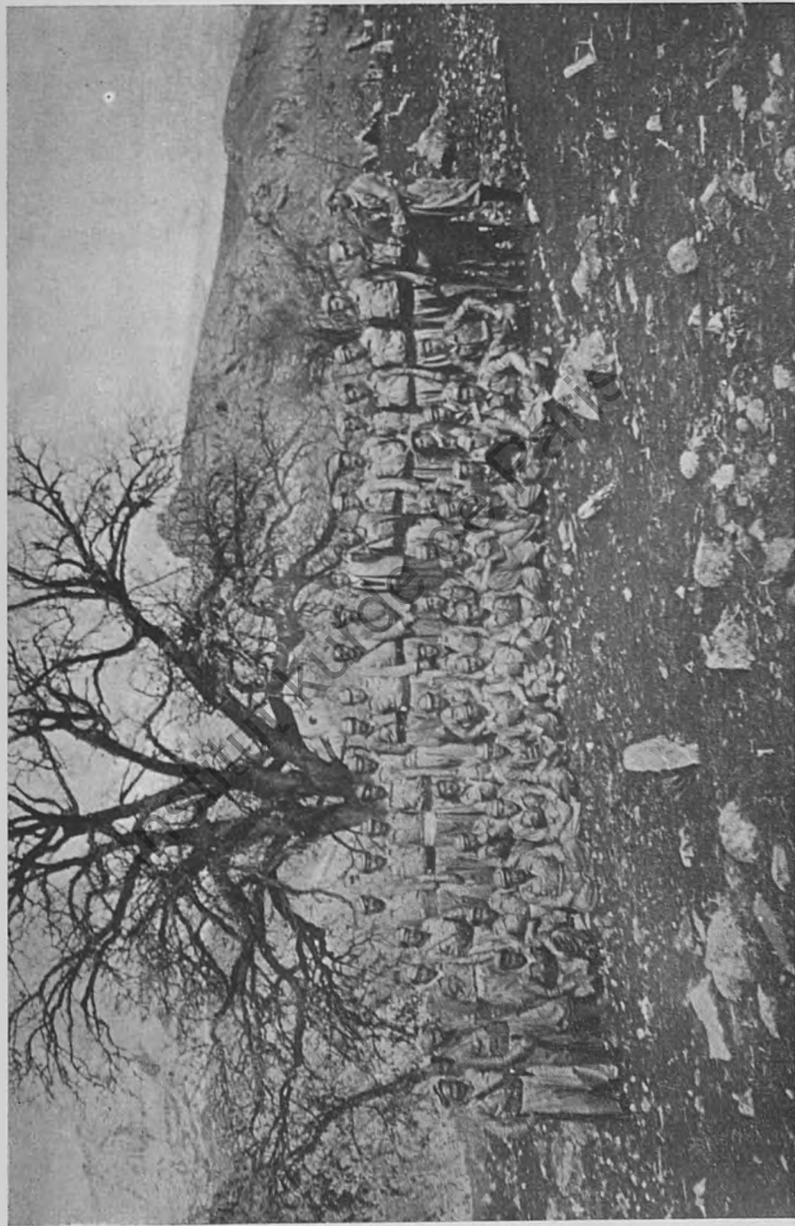
In giving justice to the Kurds, with an obvious concern for objectivity, the Teleki report had the misfortune to displease the two antagonists, the Turks and the British. In the absence of Kurdish representatives, Britain and Turkey arranged to send a second commission of enquiry, headed by General Laidoner, to southern Kurdistan, whose report superceded that of the first commission.

The Laidoner Report

The Laidoner report recommended attaching the contested territory to Irak, in conformity with the British position, but in regards to the Kurdish problem, it noted:

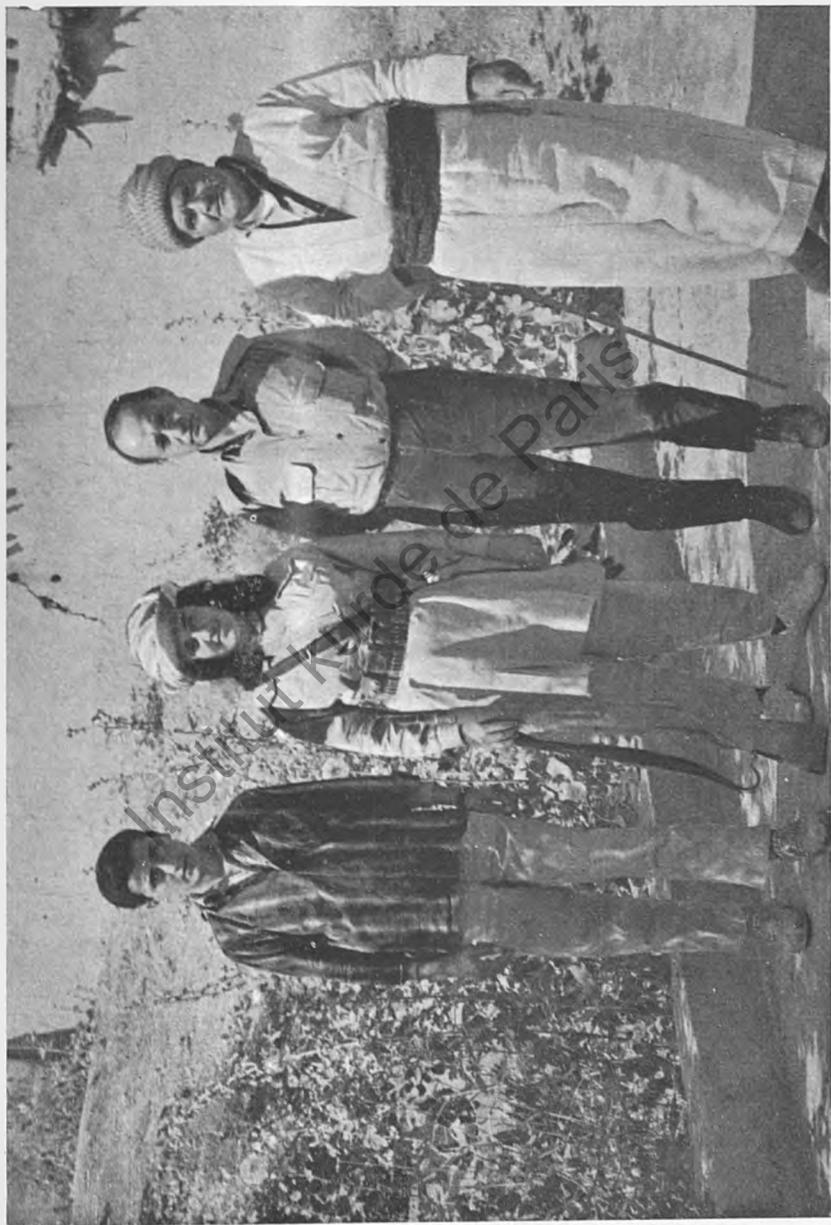
“The wishes of the Kurds, that officials of their race be appointed to the administration of their country, will have to be taken into account, as well as the use of the Kurdish language as the official language of justice and instruction in the schools.”

These international measures, in principle, govern the status of the Kurdish people within the Iraki State, because the Council of the League of Nations decided on Dece-



The first Officers' Course of the Kurdish Revolutionary Military School

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A Kurdish Christian woman-combatant with Ismet Cherif Vanly

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mber 16, 1925 to ratify the recommendations of the above-mentioned commission.

Despite everything, the Kurds, who were thus attached to Irak without being consulted, were granted an internal and cultural autonomy within the limits of "their country" and within the Iraki frontiers. These measures, having the value of an international guarantee on behalf of the Kurds, were added to the solemn Anglo-Iraki Declaration of December 1922, which we have already mentioned, and were followed by other similar Iraki declarations.

From this, it is clear that the creation of the Iraki State, by the union of the three former Ottoman *vilayets* (provinces) of Bassorah, Baghdad and Mosul (Iraki Kurdistan), had as a condition the recognition of such an autonomy for the Kurdish people. The demands for autonomy by the present Kurdish Revolution are thus nothing new, and in so far as the Iraki Government refuses to recognize this autonomy, it violates the international recommendations and the very bases of the creation of the Iraki State. In addition, after the disappointment of the Kurds at the non-creation of an independent Kurdistan in conformity with the Treaty of Sèvres, and in view of the juridical machinations that surrounded the ruling on the Mosul affair, when the Kurds, the main interested parties, were not consulted and their wishes were ignored, the achievement of Kurdish

autonomy remains the minimum demand of the Kurdish people for them to agree to continue to coexist with the Arabs within the same State. In this second half of the 20th century, when colonized and oppressed peoples are acceding to complete national independence, the desire of the Kurdish people in Irak to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination following a policy of co-existence with the Arabs in the same State, on the basis of autonomy, constitutes a very moderate and reasonable demand which is in the common interests of both Arabs and Kurds.

Betrayed Promises

But an even more exacerbating element in the patched-together ruling on the Mosul affair, was that Britain, as the mandatory power, and the reactionary and feudal government of the Iraki monarchy were charged by the League of Nations with the application of the clauses upholding the rights of the Kurdish people. One might as well ask a wolf to take care of a flock of sheep. None of the promises concerning autonomy were kept, and the international measures for ensuring Kurdish rights were purely and simply ignored. The Kurdish regions were absorbed into the very centralized Iraki administrative system in the same way as the other regions: Kurdish was not the official language of Kurdistan, and the civil servants, the systems of justice and education,

everything was Iraki and not Kurdish. The only concession was that Kurdish was taught in the primary schools of one region alone out of the four provinces of Kurdistan. As to the name "Kurdistan," it was banished from official usage and became "Northern Irak," and since Irak is considered as an Arab State and country, this portion of the Kurdish country, which is really an integral part of Kurdistan and the Kurdish nation, was taken by British imperialist circles and their Iraki proteges for an integral part of the Arab fatherland. This imperialist and unscientific conception was endorsed by the most chauvinistic nationalists in the Arab world, especially the Baathists.

A History of Revolt

We have seen how the Kurds revolted twice against British occupation; they rose up again in 1923 (in the Sulaimani region), in 1930 (in Sulaimani), in 1933 (Barzan region), and in 1943 and 1945 (Barzan region). During the course of the uprising in 1923, as they had in 1919, the Kurds formed an autonomous government under the presidency of Sheik Mahmud Berezendji of Sulaimani, refusing to submit to direct administration from Baghdad. In each case, as the Iraki Army was weak, the British Army, under General Fraser, undertook to destroy the forces of the Kurdish Government and to reestablish direct administra-

tion from Baghdad. The revolts in 1933, 1943 and 1945 were crushed, above all as the result of the systematic intervention of the British Royal Air-Force.

The 1930 revolt broke out because the Anglo-Iraki treaty of the same year did not contain a single measure concerning the existence of the Kurdish people within the Iraki frontiers. This is how Captain Philip Mumford, former British Army officer in Irak, described the event at a conference of the Royal Asian Society (R.A.S., vol. XX, January 1933, London):

"This protest became a revolt when the Iraki Army fired on a crowd of Kurds... Sheik Mahmud asked for a limited form of autonomy... protesting against direct control of the Baghdad government. It was hoped that the Arab government would be able to deal with the situation on its own. It was quickly obvious that this was not so. The Royal Air Force had to take over the biggest part of the operations... and even then, Sheik Mahmud only surrendered eight months later."

It must be emphasized that although Kurdistan, from the 18th century until the First World War, was only divided into two portions, between Ottoman Turkey and Persia, the judgment of the Mosul affair and the line drawn by the Syrian-Turkish border tore it into four parts, as we have seen above.

While the people in Iraki Kurdistan were rising up in the revolts

that we have just mentioned, Turkish Kurdistan was undergoing the most terrible national suppression. The Turkish Government sought nothing less than the assimilation and dispersal of several millions of Kurds living in their ancestral homeland. Several major revolts shook this northern portion of the Kurdish country in 1925, 1927-31 and 1937-38; all of them were drowned in blood. Not only did the Turkish Government refuse all the rights of the Kurdish people, but it even refused to recognize their existence as a people, referring to them as "Turkish mountain-dwellers" or "inhabitants of the East." The people of Turkish Kurdistan failed militarily in their revolts but they preserved their ethnic existence and refused assimilation³.

The situation of the Kurds in Iran was hardly better; their existence was recognized, but their rights were denied and, as in Syria and Turkey, all Kurdish schools were banned. National revolts took place there too, in 1918-24 (Shakak region), in 1930-33 (Luristan province) and in 1945-46 in the Mahabad region, where the Kurds created an autonomous republic, known as the Mahabad Republic, which was crushed by the

³ See *Les Kurdes et le Droit* by L. Rambout. Ed. du Cerf, Paris, 1947; *Les Kurdes*, B. Nikitine, Paris, 1956; *Kurds and Kurdistan*, Arshak Safrastian, Harvill, London, 1948.

Iranian Army with the aid of a foreign power⁴.

In Syria the Kurds were, and are, deprived of all national rights even in the cultural domain. Space is lacking for a longer analysis of the question of the Kurdish people in Turkey, Iran and in Syria.

Only the small Kurdish communities in the Soviet Union enjoy national, economic and social rights with their own schools and their own administration. Scientific studies on the Kurds are very advanced in the U.S.S.R., especially in the fields of philology, literature and history⁵.

Despite political repression, the people of Iraki Kurdistan have been able to develop an important cultural movement with the publication of literary journals and works in the Kurdish language. The Kurds in Syria also experienced a limited cultural development which has been forbidden since the end of the Second World War.

⁴ For references to the Mahabad Republic, see articles by P. Rondot in *Terre d'Islam*, issues of the second quarter of 1947 and May, 1948, Paris; also Archie Roosevelt in *The Middle East Journal*, July, 1947, Washington; also the book of William Eagleton, "The Kurdish Republic of 1946", Oxford University Press, London 1963.

⁵ For further information about Kurdish studies interested readers can contact the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences and the Oriental Institute at Leningrad.

CHAPTER II:
THE REVOLUTION OF IRAKI KURDISTAN



The Revolution in Iraki Kurdistan

The second portion of this study will examine the revolution now in process in Iraki Kurdistan.

A question that can be asked right away is why does the revolution solely concern Iraki Kurdistan, to the exclusion of the other parts of the Kurdish country? The reply is simple: despite the fact that the Kurds make up a single nation, and that their national question will only be finally resolved by an act of

self-determination — which could be exercised through a democratic union on the basis of absolute equality between Kurdistan and the neighbouring countries or even on the basis of Kurdish autonomies within the framework of the existing States — the question is evolving in an autonomous fashion within each of the States that Kurdistan is divided amongst. This autonomous evolution is explained by the different political and regional diffe-

rences prevalent in each of those States and in each region of Kurdistan. A look at the past reveals that the Kurdish national revolts did not occur at the same time in Turkey, in Iran and in Irak. But it is obvious that the entire Kurdish people are following very closely the bitter struggle of the Iraki Kurds for national liberation. This having been said, let us express our wishes that the Kurdish national question elsewhere be settled peacefully and democratically, in the spirit of our century, in friendship with all the neighbouring countries, and without the blood-baths that Irak is experiencing today as a result of the dictatorial, anti-democratic, fascist and aggressive policy of its governments.

One thing is sure: the revolution of Iraki Kurdistan concerns only Iraki Kurdistan and has nothing to do with the Kurds living outside Iraq.

The Revolution of July 14, 1958 which brought General Kassem to power, with the popular support of both Arabs and Kurds, made its debut under the best democratic auspices. The monarchy was abolished and Iraq became a Republic. For a while democratic liberties were restored to the people. A provisional constitution recognized (in Article 3) the bi-national character of the republic in the form of an Arab-Kurdish association which allowed equal national rights to the two principal nationalities whilst respecting the rights of minorities. General Musta-

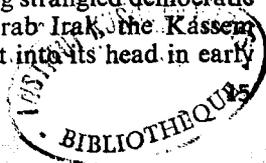
fa Barzani, hero of the Kurdish people and President of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan (D.P.K.) was able to return to Irak after spending 11 years in exile with 500 of his men, as a refugee in the Soviet Union. For the first time, the D.P.K. -Irak was given permission to engage in legal political activity.

Kurdish political newspapers, in particular *Khcbat*, the official organ of the D.P.K., and *Kurdistan*, came out of hiding, and these papers became prominent dailies, lighting the way to liberation for the Kurdish masses in unity with the Arabs. Nearly every day printers in the towns in Sulaimani, Erbil and Kirkuk put out a new book written in Kurdish on the most diverse subjects.

Kassem's Betrayal

Alas! this state of things was not to last for very long, since Kassem had chosen the way of personal and arbitrary dictatorial tyranny, betraying the hopes that had been nourished by the principles of the Revolution of July 14th. The Arab-Kurdish association remained a dead letter; not alone were the concrete applications lacking, but also the juridical texts specifying its form. This form, as is well-known, can only be autonomy of Kurdistan within the framework of a democratic Irak.

After having strangled democratic liberties in Arab Irak, the Kassem regime took it into its head in early



1960, to strike out against the Kurdish democratic movement, which was growing in strength and maturity. In the Spring of 1961, *Al Thawra*, regarded as the dictator's semi-official newspaper, published a series of articles demanding purely and simply the assimilation of the Kurdish people and, height of irony, stating that if this assimilation "had not been conducted with desired efficiency in the past, it was because British imperialism had supported the Kurds." Thus Kassem reversed the role played by the British in Irak, forgetting that it was the latter who had forced this fraction of the Kurd people under the rule of the puppeting Feisal I, who was not even an Iraki, and by virtue of their arms and soldiers had subjected Kurdistan to the direct control of the Baghdad government of Nuri Said and other British tools.

Kassem knew very well that there could be no question of "assimilating" a people whose national solidarity, against all odds, had only been further cemented by 30 centuries of history. The call to assimilate was nothing but a provocation with the purpose of providing a pretext for an attack on Kurdistan. The Kurdish papers were closed down, one after the other; democrats were imprisoned and numerous officials of the D.P.K. were arrested on the pretence that they had "incited racial hatred amongst the Iraki people," and other untruths.

Kurdish feudal lords, who were known to have been British agents, became the friends and allies of the regime. General Barzani, no longer safe in Baghdad, went back to his native region of Barzan where he waited patiently for the situation to develop and begged Kassem to return to reason. The notes addressed to the Prime Minister by the D.P.K. shortly before the outbreak of the Kurdistan war were extremely moderate and filled with the desire to safeguard the rights of the Kurdish people within Irakian unity and democracy.

But Kassem, attacked Kurdistan on September 9, 1961. It was a semi-colonial type of war, trying especially to terrorize the Kurdish people by systematic attacks by air and his army's heavy artillery. By doing this he thought he would soon bring the Kurds to their knees. On September 23, 1961 he even announced the simultaneous beginning of "the imperialist rebellion," its "end", and the "death" of General Barzani. He did not know that, by attacking the Kurdish people, he was condemning to death his own regime.

General Barzani, President of the D.P.K. and Commander-in-Chief of the Revolutionary Army of Kurdistan (R.A.K.—*Leshkiri Shurishguiri Kurdistan*), only had 700 old rifles at his disposal at the outbreak of the attack. But thanks to the military competence of the Kurdish chief and his universally respected personality, thanks to the revolutionary

organization of the movement and the extreme political awareness of the Kurdish masses, both brought about with great promptness by the D.P.K., in the advance guard of the Kurdish people, and thanks to the courage, the sacrifices and the solidarity of these people, what had begun as a mere unorganized resistance movement without any outside aid, changed into a war of liberation in the fullest sense of the term, starting from the New-Roj in the Spring of 1962⁶.

The Aims of the Revolution

The aims of this revolutionary movement, as has been explained in many documents, were the following: 1) To put an end to the personal dictatorship of General Kassem; 2) to re-establish democracy and the parliamentary system in Irak; 3) to obtain the autonomy of Iraki Kurdistan within the framework of the Iraki Republic.

That the Kurdish Revolution asks for, not secession and national independence of Kurdistan — although the right to self-determination of the Kurdish people is clear — but to the contrary, autonomy within the Iraki framework, is explained by the in-

terests that Kurds and Arabs have in common, by their historical friendship, and by the desire of the Kurdish leaders to contribute to the reinforcement of the democratic front in Arab Irak, in the Arab world and in the Middle East. By its moderation the Kurdish national liberation movement proves its political maturity, particularly refusing to fall into the excesses of nationalism, the decrepit weapon of its enemies. But autonomy remains the minimum demand of the movement and the right to self-determination must remain inviolate: no generation has the right to alienate or mortgage the future of the nation. Only the future and, more important, the attitude of the neighbours will decide upon how the Kurds will exercise this right.

Not only is the Kurdish Revolution democratic in its political aims, concerning all of Irak and the future status of Kurdistan, but also in its social content. The D.P.K. is, above all, a party of the working and peasant masses, the lower middle classes and Kurdish intellectuals, a national democratic assembly that put agrarian reform and industrialization of autonomous Kurdistan at the top of their programme.

After 17 months of war, the Kurdish Revolutionary Army had spread its control throughout the greater part of Iraki Kurdistan, with the exception of the big towns and some lines of communication. The num-

⁶ The *New-Roj* refers to the Kurdish "New Day." This is the oldest and most popular national holiday in Kurdistan and takes place on the first day of Spring each year.



General Barzani talking to a journalist

ber of troops had risen to 20,000 disciplined and trained soldiers, equipped with rifles and light automatic weapons taken from the Iraki Army. The vast liberated territory was administered by a politico-military framework, organized from village up to regional level by the D.P.K., which dealt with military, administrative and logistical problems, provisions, communications,

etc.⁷ The Iraki expeditionary forces, with some 30,000 men were at first

⁷ The Iraki Government had imposed an economic blockade, the Turkish and Iranian frontiers were closed leaving warring Iraki Kurdistan besieged and without access to the sea. In this respect, Algeria was in a far easier position during the war, since the Algerians benefitted from Moroccan, Tunisian and Arab assistance in general and also had access to the sea.

aided by irregular formations of Kurdish feudal lords; these traitors were cut to pieces and the Iraqi Army then found itself immobilized in and around the big cities. In some places the soldiers refused to continue the fratricidal battle, and in others, in the mountainous regions, they found they were completely encircled by units of Revolutionary troops.

Opposition to Kassem

The unjust war unleashed by Kassem and his military defeats gave rise to two principal currents of opposition in Arab Irak. The first, and by far the largest, was the democratic current, supported by the mass of the people.

Even the ambiguity of the Kassem regime — adopting a foreign policy which appeared to some people as quite progressive, and a catastrophic, anti-democratic domestic policy which was semi-colonialist regarding the Kurdish people — created some dissension in the heart of democratic Arab opinion, rendering its own position rather ambiguous towards the Kurdish Revolution. But after some hesitation and shuffling, and in the face of the tenacity of the Kurdish people, which made their cause clearer to the Arabs, the democratic current finished by taking the following positions concerning the three aims of the Kurdish Revolution:

1. They were of course, from the beginning, completely in agreement with the Kurdish point of view, which is also their own, in favour of a democratic Irak provided with a normal parliamentary system.
2. The entire democratic forces of Arab Irak were for the immediate recognition of the rights of the Kurdish people, but with further precision and clarity, the Arab extreme left, adopted the Kurdish point of view concerning the recognition of Kurdish autonomy within the cadre of the Iraqi Republic⁸.
3. The Arab democratic forces were divided on the precise point of putting and end to the Kassem regime, which was the primary and immediate objective of the Kurdish Revolution.

Whilst Kamel Tchadertchi, President of the National Democratic Party, clearly took a position against the regime, the Iraqi extreme left seemed to have a desire, not to put an end to the Kassem regime, but rather to “orient it democratically” towards a better understanding of democracy and the rights of the Kurdish people. The Kurdish Revolution was of the opinion that an unbalanced and cynical dictator, such as Kassem, was incapable of making

⁸ See the Report of the Central Committee of the Iraqi Communist Party, March 1962.

amends, restoring democracy, and above all, of reaching agreement with the Kurds over the autonomous status of Kurdistan. Kassem was vain, and having proclaimed that the Kurdish Revolution was "an imperialist rebellion" and that it had been "liquidated," he would have completely lost face.

The secondary current of Arab opposition, much narrower than the first, was what is generally called, nationalist. Their ideas concerning the future government of Irak are notoriously anti-democratic, and implacably hostile to Arab democratic opinion whose positions we have noted. This so-called nationalist wing declared themselves to be favourable to Kurdish rights, without any other details, but they were characterized in particular by their bitter opposition to the Kassem regime.

Now, it was the element farthest to the right of the nationalist — the mystical, fascist and extremist nationalists of the Baath Party, composed of Army officers made bitter and revengeful by their defeats in Kurdistan, who reaped the fruits of those very same Kurdish victories. They brought to an end a regime already mortally wounded by a long-protracted, hopeless war and took over power for the benefit of a sordid military putsch. This explains why that day was a day of terror and not a day of liberation.

For a while the Baathists collaborated with more moderate pro-

Nasserist "Unionist" nationalist elements. According to information from reliable sources, President Nasser immediately reproached the Baathists for the blood of thousands of Arab democrats of all tendencies, that they shed on the soil of Arab Irak, on February 8 and the days that followed.

It is indeed the Arabs' privilege to entrust their government to the party or parties of their choice. In regard to Irak, the Kurds would raise no objection should the government of Irak be in the hands of the so-called Arab Nationalist parties, if the following four precise conditions were fulfilled: 1) that such was truly the desire of the majority of Irakis and the Arab Irakis; 2) that these parties governed Irak democratically and not by terror; 3) that the Kurds, who represent 30 per cent of the population of the Republic, were associated in the Iraki Government; 4) that they recognized the autonomy of Kurdistan within the framework of the Republic. But none of these conditions have been fulfilled by the Baathists.

The Kurds and Pan-Arab Unity

It would also be completely false, in speaking of a democratic current and a nationalist current in Arab Irak, to suppose that the former is "less patriotic" in questions concerning the Arab aspirations to unity or union than the latter. On the con-

trary, we are convinced that a democratic group such as that of Mr. Tchadertchi, an eminent Arab patriot, is capable of bringing far more positive elements to the realization of these aspirations than a fascist group like the Baathists. In spite of the so-called "socialism" of the Baathists, and in spite of their demagogic "vocation" for Pan-Arab unity, we do not believe that this party is capable of realizing these aspirations. The reasons for this are simple: 1) an Arab Union built on a basis of terror and not of democracy would be immoral, against the interests of the Arabs themselves, and would damage the good reputation of the Arab nation and its democratic, liberal traditions in the eyes of foreign countries; 2) such a unity would not be viable because the Arab people themselves would rise up against it; 3) the State of Irak itself would not be able to participate in any Arab Union until the Kurdish national problem had been settled democratically, by the recognition of the autonomy of Kurdistan, within the framework of Irak or the Union.

When Colonel Taher Yahia, later on promoted General and Chief-of-Staff of the Iraki Army, entered into contact with the Kurdish Revolution during the winter at the beginning of 1962, soliciting its support or at least its friendly neutrality for the day when he and his friends were going to attempt a coup d'Etat against Kassem, he did so in the

name of the "Free Officers" of Irak, and not in the name of the Baathists. Mr. Ibrahim Ahmed, General Secretary of the D.P.K., consulted the president of the party and his colleagues in the Political Bureau and the Central Committee and then replied in writing to the colonel in question on April 2, 1962. In this letter the D.P.K. emphasized the democratic aims of the Kurdish Revolution and the necessity of governing Irak democratically; it also demanded that the Free Officers should recognize the autonomy of Kurdistan within the framework of the Republic as soon as Kassem was overthrown. Taher Yahia evaded a written commitment, contenting himself with verbal promises to include Kurdish ministers, acceptable to General Barzani, in the Iraki Government.

As soon as the coup d'Etat was over, General Barzani and his lieutenants lost all confidence in the regime; with the Baathists holding all the principal posts of command it proceeded systematically to massacre or arrest en masse democratic Arabs of all tendencies. But Radio Baghdad, without announcing the expected recognition of Kurdish autonomy, immediately hailed "the glorious Kurdish Revolution," and proffered a myriad of vague promises. Of the six Kurds previously chosen by the Political Bureau of the D.P.K. and approved by General Barzani to be ministers in the new government, only two were

retained by the Baathists, though they were indeed representative, Messrs. Baba Ali⁹, and General Fuad Aref¹⁰.

Baghdad Stalls

The Kurdish Commander-in-Chief did not want to take the responsibility for war against the new regime and tried by every means to find a peaceful settlement to the conflict; he ordered an immediate ceasefire. General Taher Yahia, headed a governmental delegation to General Barzani's central headquarters as a gesture of appeasement. He made many profuse apologies to the Kurdish chief, stating that the regime's delay in recognizing Kurdish autonomy was due to the fact that the Free Officers were not in power alone, since the group that brought about the coup d'Etat had been widened and that things no longer depended only on him; however, the Kurdish problem would be solved peacefully, by negotiations. The economic blockade of Kurdistan was lifted, but only for two weeks, and some of the Kurdish political

prisoners were released. The Kurdish forces set free the Iraqi prisoners that were still held, about 600 soldiers¹¹.

On the other hand, on the day of the putsch, Arab popular demonstrations carried slogans supporting Kassem. This was doubtlessly an error. Now it was impossible for the Kurdish Revolution to come to the aid of its overthrown enemy. This popular Arab resistance, as we know, only lasted for a day or two before being liquidated in a Hitlerite manner by the police and the so-called "National Guard," the S.S. men wearing the green arm-band of the regime. It would have been a complete waste of time for the Kurdish Revolution to come to the rescue of the Arab democrats in distress. It should also be mentioned that the lifting of the economic blockade on Kurdistan presented important strategic economic advantages in the case of renewed hostilities. Finally, it was very important that the Kurdish Revolution, by its observation of the truce, should give to the Arab world and other countries proof of its good will, moderations, and above all make clear its national demands.

However, we know that General

⁹ Baba Ali, son of Sheik Mahmud Berezendji (died in 1956) who had been President of the autonomous government of Southern Kurdistan in 1919 and 1923, when it was overthrown each time by British troops.

¹⁰ General Fuad Aref is of course, no relation to Colonel Abdul Salem Aref, who was promoted to "Marshal" and Chief-of-State after the putsch.

¹¹ During the war against Kassem, the Kurdish forces took several thousand prisoners that they mostly released immediately after disarming them, sending them back to their homes with the promise that they would never come back to fight against Kurdistan.

Barzani, faced with the procrastinations of the new regime and the blood that was being shed in Baghdad and other Arab cities, was on the point of taking up hostilities again as from March 1, announcing his decision to the foreign journalists who rushed to his headquarters. It was only the hasty arrival of the Iraqi governmental delegation at the headquarters, which we have mentioned above, heralded by a telegramme, that dissuaded him. The telegramme was dated March 1; Taher Yahia and the ministers arrived on March 4, at Kani-Maran (The Source of Serpents), at the foot of the snow-peaked mountains of Zagros, the place chosen by the Kurdish Commander-in-Chief.

“Full Democracy”

In its most critical hours, General Barzani, made no mystery of the intentions and democratic aims of the Kurdish Revolution. In a series of interviews given to a correspondent of the French daily newspaper *Le Monde*, who was his guest at the time when he received the Iraqi delegation at Kani-Maran, he stressed particularly:

“General Barzani would like, above all,” wrote the correspondent, “to re-establish full democracy” in the country.

“Autonomy of Kurdistan,” he said, “will not be sufficient to bring back peace and harmony to Iraq. We must put an end to the era of pronunciamentos, military coups d’Et-

ats that follow each other without doing anything to resolve the serious problems that undermine the country. I have never been an enemy of the Arabs, and I have no political ambitions for myself. That is why I allow myself to say to the Iraqi leaders: ‘if you seek the good of the people, you should proclaim a general amnesty, authorize the activity of all parties without exception, organize free elections and form a government representing all tendencies and all national and religious minorities’.” And General Barzani concluded: “For lack of true democracy, Iraq, which is a mosaic of peoples, will wallow in anarchy, and the present Baghdad leaders will be sooner or later eliminated by the same violence that they used to seize power¹².”

Nasser’s Approval

Very soon after the putsch, Baghdad stated that they could not recognize Kurdish autonomy without the approval of the principal leaders of the Arab world, in particular President Nasser. Mr. Jalal Talabani,

¹² Reported by Eric Rouleau on March 4, this statement was published in an article in the newspaper *Le Monde*, Paris, April 16, under the title *Le chasseur, le berger et le loup*, (The hunter, the shepherd and the wolf). It was the fifth and last of a series of articles on the Revolution, entitled *Le Kurdistan irakien à dos de mulet* (Iraqi Kurdistan on Muleback). The first four installments appeared in the same paper on April 10, 11, 13 and 14. It was a very interesting series.



A fortified cave amidst the snow

member of the Political Bureau of the D.P.K., who had been charged by General Barzani with the task of conducting the conversations with Baghdad undertook a trip to Cairo and Algiers in February, 1963. In the presence of an Iraqi governmental delegation he obtained the "approval" desired by the Baathists. Recognizing the fact of Kurdish nationality "just as there is a Nile in Egypt,"

and the legitimacy of the Kurdish demands so long as they were directed towards autonomy within the Iraqi framework, President Nasser recommended that the two parties concerned should on no account resort to force to solve the problem and stated that he entirely agreed in advance with any arrangement that could be reached by negotiation between them both. Mr. Ahmed Ben

Bella, Prime Minister of Algeria, was of a similar opinion, comparing the Kurdish Revolution to the Algerian Revolution, and emphasizing the futility of any attempt to "resolve the Kurdish problem by force"¹³.

On March 9, Radio Baghdad issued a communique announcing that "The National Committee of the Iraqi Revolution recognizes the national rights of the Kurdish people on the basis of decentralization"¹⁴. The word "autonomy" did not come into the proclamation. On March 11, Mr. Saleh al-Saadi, Secretary General of the Iraqi Baathists and Vice-President of the Baghdad Government, stated at Damascus that "The Kurdish provinces will have their own administration in all fields except foreign affairs, defence and finances, which will remain in the control of the central government." Proving their flexibility, the Kurdish Revolution even accepted the term "decentralization," on the understanding that this had the same content as autonomy.

¹³ This was reported to us personally by our friend and compatriot, Colonel Talabani.

¹⁴ A few days previous, on March 6, Mr. Taleb H. Chebib, Baathist Foreign Minister in Baghdad, declared to the correspondent of *Le Monde*, "There is no question of us according autonomy to the Kurds. It is already enough that we are negotiating with an outlaw. If General Barzani, doesn't show willingness to compromise, it will not take us long to crush the rebellion, once and for all. (*Le Monde*, April 16.)

A Kurdish conference was held during the same month at Koy-Sandjak, to establish the main lines of Iraqi Kurdistan claims. Presided over by General Barzani, it included 165 delegates representing the Central Committee of the D.P.K., the chief leaders of the Kurdish Army, representatives from towns and villages, youth and women's organizations, teachers and students, as well as, it should be noted, representatives of the Turkish and Christian minorities in Kurdistan. The resolutions taken at the conference were unanimous, the minority representatives solidly supporting their Kurdish compatriots¹⁵. A delegation of 14 members, including seven councilors, presided over by Colonel Talabani and representing all tendencies and categories of the population of Iraqi Kurdistan was chosen to go to Baghdad to conduct official negotiations with the government.

There were no real negotiations in spite of the official meetings; the Baghdad Government only wanted

¹⁵ The Christian Assyro-Chaldeans of Kurdistan participated actively in the Kurdish Revolution. A young Chaldean, Marguerite George, gained fame in the Kurdish Army, operating under the command of Assaad Khoshevi who commanded the military zone in the north of Kurdistan. The central military zone has been placed under the command of Mr. Omer Mustafa, member of the Political Bureau of the D.P.K., attached to the General Headquarters of General Barzani. The southern zone is commanded by Colonel Talabani.

to gain time, not to seriously commit themselves.

Baathist Plots

Immediately after the Iraqi coup d'Etat, the Baathists hastened to Cairo to propose to President Nasser the creation of a single military command for the Arab countries and plans for a union which would provide for the automatic use of united Arab forces in any "liberated" Arab country against foreign aggression, which is quite legitimate, but also against any armed movement within the country (like the Kurdistan Revolution) which is not at all. Nasser did not want to commit himself in the latter direction. Indeed the Baathists were much less interested, in the Arab Union than they were in consolidating their internal position, using the prestige of the head of the U.A.R. as a cover. After the overthrow of the Syrian regime on March 8, the talks in Cairo became tripartite and more decisive. On April 17, the creation was announced of a federal Arab State, under the name of the United Arab Republic, grouping Egypt, Syria and Irak which was to come into operation after a referendum to take place five months after that date.

The Kurdo-Iraqi negotiations dragged on in Baghdad. On April 8, Colonel Talabani presented a note on behalf of the Kurdish delegation to the members of the Cairo conference, itemizing the attitude of the

Kurdish Revolution to the Pan-Arab projects. The note asked, first of all, for the inclusion of Kurdish Revolutionary representatives amongst the Iraqi delegation to Cairo and emphasized that the Kurdish people would never be opposed to union between the Arab States, before putting forward the following points:

1) If Irak were to remain completely independent, the Kurdish people would ask only that their national autonomous rights be respected on the basis of a decentralization, as had been agreed upon.

2) If Irak were to join an Arab Federation, it would be necessary to accord a wide autonomy to Iraqi Kurdistan, in the classical meaning of the term.

3) If Irak were to be fused into a United Arab Republic, it would necessitate the creation of a Kurdistan territory distinct from Iraqi territory; this territory would also be attached to the central government of the U.A.R. (on the same footing as Arab Irak or Syria), and in a way that would fully preserve the personality of the Kurdish people.

The Kurdish people are thus not seeking to separate themselves from the Arabs even in the case of Arab Federation or of a closer Union, under the conditions already stated. This having been said, it must not be supposed that the Kurds consider their country as an "Arab country"; they are willing to unite the destiny of southern (Iraqi) Kurdistan to that of the Arab countries by an act of

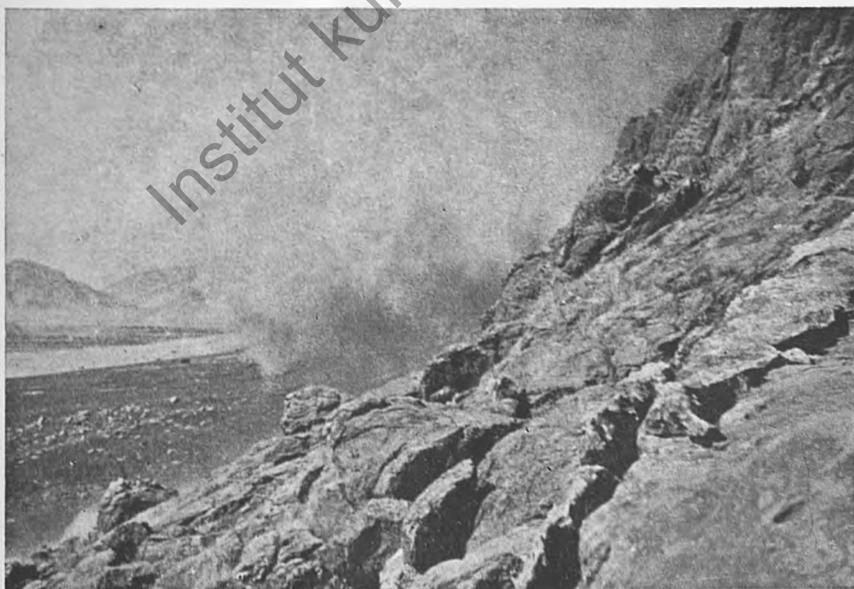


Monseigneur Paul Beidan, one of the two Christian members of the Revolutionary Command.

Institut kurde de Paris



A „Made in Kurdistan“ mine before being tried out.



Mine detonating.

Institut kurde de Paris

self-determination, by a union freely agreed upon; but the Arabs, or some of them, are asked to rid themselves of the idea they have inherited from British imperialism of considering Iraqi Kurdistan as an Arab country and an integral part of the Arab fatherland. Even if it be united in a United Arab Republic, Kurdistan is and will remain a Kurdish country, and it will never be an Arab country.

During this time the climate deteriorated in Baghdad, the negotiations were on the point of rupture. The economic blockade of Kurdistan had already been re-established. To the 3,000 political prisoners who had not been liberated after the putsch, many of them members of the D.P.K., others were added. The Kurdish negotiators were under surveillance and lost their immunity. And even more serious, Baghdad was concentrating troops in the principal Kurdish towns in the plains, particularly at Kirkuk¹⁶.

On April 24, while the Iraqi Government kept silent, the Kurdish delegation in Baghdad published the text of a memorandum which had been submitted that same day to that government, presenting the Kurdistan demands.

¹⁶ On April 15th, the Soviet trade union newspaper *Trud*, commented on rumours, according to which, the Iraqi Government was preparing to launch an attack against the Kurdish insurgents. (A.F.P., *Le Monde*, April 16, Paris.)

The Kurdish Plan

The Kurdish plan provided for a central Iraqi Government for the entirety of Irak, and a "national apparatus" to govern the autonomous territory of Kurdistan, within the framework of Irak. This apparatus was to include a freely elected Kurdish legislative assembly and an executive council appointed by the assembly and answerable to it. The central government would be responsible for the following matter: Chief-of-State, foreign affairs, national defence, finance, oil industry, customs, ports and international airports, postal, telegraph and telephone services, citizenship, organization of the national budget, supervision of central radio and television stations, and atomic energy. This list is definitive. The Kurdish authorities will be responsible for the following affairs within the boundaries of Kurdistan: law, the judiciary, internal affairs, schools and education, public health, agriculture, tobacco, townships, labour, social affairs, economic development, agriculture, and all matters not specifically entrusted to the central government. Kurdistan's part in the central government and administration would be proportionate to the size of population compared to the population of entire Irak.

Kurdish national revenues would be provided by: 1) local resources, taxes and levies payable to Kurdistan; 2) a share proportionate to the population of Kurdistan in relation to the total number of inhabitants of

Iraq from the oil revenues, customs, airports, ports, exchanges and national banks, postal, telegraph and telephone services, railways, but only after deducting, in the same proportion, the expenses of the central government for matters remaining under its jurisdiction; 3) Kurdistan's share, in the same proportion, of foreign loans and aid; 4) Domestic and non-military loans and assistance that Kurdistan will receive; 5) the revenues from tobacco, forests and summer resorts; 6) Kurdistan would participate in the same proportion as mentioned above in Iraqi projects, enterprises and services of mutual interest.

Kurdistan would be composed of the provinces of Sulaimani, Erbil and Kirkuk and the districts and communes with Kurdish majorities in the provinces of Mosul and Diyala. The vice president of the Iraqi Republic and the assistant chief of staff of the Iraqi Army would be Kurds with full rights. The Constitution establishing the national entity of Kurdistan would guarantee ethnic and religious minorities, such as the Turks, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Armenians, their cultural, social and economic rights, their democratic and religious liberties, as well as their representation, in proportion to their number, in the legislative assembly and executive council of Kurdistan. The Iraqi Army would maintain its present name, but Kurdish conscripts would be kept in their own divisions. This part of the Army, should the Iraqi

Army change its name (becoming Arab), would be given the name of *Failak* of Kurdistan). Kurdish conscripts would do their military service in Kurdistan. The central government would have the right to send additional troops to Kurdistan only in case of foreign aggression or a certain threat of aggression; in normal times any additional movement of troops to Kurdistan could only be made with the approval of the legislative assembly and the executive council of Kurdistan. The Iraqi Army could carry out repressive operations in Kurdistan only after approval by the legislative assembly or at the request of the executive council of Kurdistan. If the Iraqi flag were changed (becoming Arab), a Kurdish symbol must be added to it. If Iraqi nationality changed (becoming Arab), the word "Kurdistan" must be added to the passports and identity cards of all persons of Kurdish origin or from Kurdistan. Any legal measures to limit the national, economic, cultural, social and democratic rights of the Kurdish people would be null and void. One of the Kurdish ministers of the Iraqi government would be charged with forming a provisional executive council of Kurdistan to carry out provisionally the functions of the council.

The April 24th memorandum states, moreover, that these demands are presented as a "basis for discussion" with the Iraqi Government.

They can therefore be modified by mutual agreement.

The Reply: Aggression

The Baathist government has never replied to these proposals. The Iraqi Baathists, after eliminating from the government pro-Nasserist, Unionist elements, received in Baghdad during the first week of June a delegation of the Baathist government of Syria, including the cynical "theoretician" of the party, Michel Aflak. Without consulting the other Arab countries or even informing Nasser, who is, however, the president of the new Arab Federation, the Syro-Iraqi Baathists drew up their plan of aggression against Kurdistan, in particular planning the contribution of the Syrian Air Force.

On June 10th, the Baathist government sent an ultimatum to General Barzani, demanding that he surrender with his troops within 24 hours. As would be expected, the Kurdish Commander-in-chief rejected the ultimatum, and the Committee for the Defense of the Kurdish People's Rights, authorized to speak in the name of General Barzani and to represent the Revolution abroad, issued a communique on June 10th, which was carried by the news agencies. The communique placed the entire responsibility for the resumption of the war on the Baath party. Indeed, the aggression had begun three days before the announcement of the ultimatum. A campaign,

bringing into action some 60,000 heavily armed Iraqi soldiers, with the participation of the Iraqi and Syrian air forces, and enjoying undisguised military support by the British Government, could not be improvised within a few days. Five of the seven Kurdish negotiators were still in Baghdad as "guests" of the government on the eve of the ultimatum, still hoping to continue the "negotiations" for a settlement of the problem. They were treacherously arrested. Colonel Talabani was in Beirut, on his way back from Cairo where he had gone to make a report on the situation to President Nasser and to explain the Kurdish point of view to him. Instead of continuing to Baghdad, he went to Europe to make contact with Kurdish organizations and outstanding figures abroad, to alert world public opinion and international organizations. General Fuad Aref and Mr. Baba Ali, the two Kurdish cabinet ministers, presented their resignations on the day of the aggression and were arrested by their former "colleagues." Mr. Baba Ali was later released while General F. Arif was put under the house arrest. Armed aggression, a war of extermination against the civilian population, this was the answer of the Baathists to the desire of the Kurdish people to coexist with the Arab people within the same State, with respect for their rights and their own personality.

The Baathist "plan" for the "solution" of the Kurdish question pro-



Kurdish landscape

vides for the division of the whole Iraq into six provinces, of which one only was to be Kurdish. This province would cover hardly more than one half of the Kurdish areas, excluding in particular the Kurdish oil regions of Kirkouk and Khanakin and the rich plain of Erbil. Its administration, except for teaching Kurdish, would be as centralized as and similar to that of any Arab province, as if there were no particular Kurdish problem. Such a "plan" was completely unacceptable for the Kurds. But the Kurdish Revolutionary High Command had not even the time to "take notice" of it, because the Baathist government published its plan together with its ulti-

matum to the Kurdish Revolution, while the aggression was in process. But this "official plan", whatever absurd it may be, was nothing compared to the secret and effective plan of the Baathist Government: a hellish war of mass exterminations against the Kurdish people.

Reasons for the Aggression

The reasons for the aggression were numerous:

1. In the Baath "doctrine" Iraqi Kurdistan is considered an "Arab land" and the Kurds marked for "assimilation," which explains the hostility of this party to the effective recognition of the rights of the Kurd-

ish people and the autonomy of Kurdistan.

2. British military assistance to the Baathists. Baghdad had concluded an agreement with the British Government for the purchase of arms particularly for use in mountain warfare, including 250 Hawker Hunter planes, which are now being delivered. The total amount of the agreement is for 25 million pounds sterling.

3. The attitude of the Irak Petroleum Company (a non-Iraki company), encouraging the Baathist plots against the Kurdish national liberation movement.

4. The Baathist coup d'Etat of March 8th in Syria had provoked a dangerous complex of superiority among the Baathists of Baghdad. They belived themselves, like Don Quixote, capable of anything and permitted to do anything.

5. Since President Nasser refused to give his benediction to a war of extermination against a people who wanted to coexist in all friendship with the Arabs, the Baath hoped to further its aim of domination over the Arab world by isolating the President of the U.A.R.¹⁷. The dispute

¹⁷ Colonel Talabani tells me that it was the Baathist government of Irak that proposed that he make his second trip to Cairo, to bring "a written document" from President Nasser on behalf of Kurdish rights, which would have been used by the Baathists as evidence of Nasser's "treason" to the Arab cause.

between the President of the U.A.R. and the Baath party is not a concern of the Kurds, but it seems certain to us that it is not by attacking a friendly people that the Baath can win the confidence of the Arab masses. Moreover, Mr. Nasser could not support the crimes of the Baathists without betraying the high principles of the Afro-Asian peoples, among whom he is a leading figure.

6. The complete political isolation of the Baath party in Irak. By attacking the Kurds, this party hoped to be able to draw behind it, through ethnic chauvinism and racial hatred, a part of Arab opinion in Irak and abroad, and thus create a certain "popularity." But the contrary took place. The overwhelming majority of the Arabs of Irak is hostile to the Baathists and condemns their dirty war in Kurdistan.

The Military Situation

At the time of writing these lines, 23 days after the beginning of the new aggression, the military situation was as follows: the Iraki attack had been repulsed and broken everywhere. Fighting was continuing to rage across a broad front, stretching from the Syrian borders to the frontiers of Iran. Iraki units were encircled at Ranya, Rowanduz, Shaqlawa, Akra, Amadiya. All communications had been cut between Baghdad and the province of Sulaimani, where the Iraki Army was surrounded. The losses within the ranks of the

aggressors were high. Baghdad wanted to throw its reserves into the battle; the Arab conscripts of the classes of 1939, 1940 and 1941 called into the service, were fleeing. Not wanting to be sent to Kurdistan, they were hiding from the authorities. The government had to postpone this unpopular decision. Many Arab Iraqi soldiers and officers were deserting the Iraqi Army and placing themselves under the orders of General Barzani within the ranks of the Kurdish Army. But as during the Kassem regime and with even greater savagery, Iraqi and Syrian planes continued to bomb Kurdish civilians, killing women, children and old people. In the city and the plains of Kirkuk, 100,000 Kurdish civilians are being moved en masse in order to denationalize this oil region¹⁸.

Launched treacherously by Arab fascists, this war is not only Kurdistan's war, but also the war for a democratic Irak, the war of the Arab people themselves for national and social justice against dictatorship and tyranny.

With tanks and heavy artillery at their disposal, which the Kurds do not have, the Baathists can kill thousands of women and children. But they will surely lose the war. The British press has even expressed the opinion that "the young men now governing in Baghdad have launched

upon an adventure." This adventure will undoubtedly cost the Baathists their party and their regime, not only in Irak, but possibly also in Syria, since the Syrian Baath was willing to join with that of Irak in the responsibility for the conflict. Just as Kassem condemned his regime by attacking the Kurdish people so the Baathists are condemning themselves to dishonour and, as will be seen, to ultimate defeat.

World Public Opinion

It is infinitely regrettable that Marshall Sallal of Yemen yielded to the fallacious arguments of the Baathists of Damascus and Baghdad and issued official communiques against the just combat of the Kurdish people for their liberty, dignity and national existence. The Syrian-Algerian communique published after the visit made by Mr. Salah Bitar, the Syrian Baathist Premier, to Premier Ben Bella in Algiers, also condemns, in its last paragraph, "the Kurdish separatist and imperialist rebellion" (see *Le Monde* of June 25). After investigations, we learnt that it was the Syrian delegation that delivered the communique to the world press. In fact, some days later, the Algerian Government published the same communique, but without the last paragraph concerning the "Kurdish rebellion". But there was no official Algerian statement on this "mysterious" affair. It seems that, on this

¹⁸ See the London *Daily Telegraph* of June 19th.

point, the Syrian Baathists cheated the good faith of Algiers, as they possibly did with the Yemens' President. The Algerian people, for whom the Kurdish people have only admiration and friendship, have no interest to see their government turning against the national liberation movement of Kurdistan, linked to the cause of democracy in Irak.

A broad public opinion throughout the world condemns the aggression, in the West as well as in the East and the countries of the "Third World". The Western press has not ceased to support the Kurdish cause, since the day that Kassem unleashed his aggression in September 1961. Today, from right to left, the press is unanimous in supporting the same cause, in France, Switzerland, Germany, Italy, Spain, Austria, Scandinavia, Ireland, Iceland and other European countries¹⁹. Eminent men, such as Lord Russell in Britain, members of parliaments, senators condemn the Baathist aggression. In the socialist countries, public opinion and governments have already taken positions in favour of the Kurdish demands and against the aggression. On May 6th, *Pravda* made such a statement. On June 14th, in an official statement of the Tass news agency, the Soviet Government vig-

orously condemned the Hitlerite methods employed by the Baathists in their war against the civilian population, and also clearly supported the autonomy for Kurdistan.

British Arms and Iraki Oil

Contrary to Western public opinion, Western governments seem in general to have adopted a wait-and-see attitude. We hope that the Western press will oblige these governments to take a positive attitude, condemning the aggression and supporting Kurdish demands as the socialist governments have done. Only the British Government, directly or indirectly, supports the Baathists, supplying them with arms. We are certain that this is a bad bargain for London, because the Baathists will not remain in power. Kurdish forces have already destroyed the I.P.C. oil installations at Jambur, 32 kilometres south of Kirkuk, and this is only a beginning. The Kurdish people cannot permit Baghdad to use Kurdish natural resources to buy arms from the British to put into the hands of Baathist adventurers to destroy Kurdish cities and villages and massacre the unarmed population. If I.P.C. cares for its installations in Irak and wants oil to continue to flow through its pipelines, it would do well to stop paying for this dirty war by halting its financial aid to the Baathist government

¹⁹ For example, see the excellent editorial of M. René Payot, an eminent Swiss journalist, in the *Journal de Genève* of June 13th.

of Irak²⁰. And if the British Government continues to arm the troops of the criminal politicians of Baghdad, it may cost them on the day of the Kurdish victory, which is sure, the British part of the shares of I.P.C. Our people appeal to the British people, to their solid democratic traditions, to oblige their government to cease immediately the shipment of arms to Irak.

During the first phase of the war, under Kassem, the Turkish and Iranian governments maintained a strict attitude of neutrality. Today, in the second phase of the war, Turkey has military closed her frontier with Iraki Kurdistan. That is her right, but it is regrettable that the government of Ankara thought fit to arrest 12 Kurdish citizens for activity on behalf of the Kurdish cause. As we have said, this war was imposed upon the people of Iraki Kurdistan and it will remain in Iraki Kurdistan. On the other hand, the Kurdish plan for autonomy provides for the recognition of the cultural rights of the Turkish community living in Iraqi Kurdistan, appealed, furthermore, to have a share in the autonomous institutions. The Imperial Government of Iran had a humanitarian attitude towards Kurdish refugees from Iraq. Needless to say that the Kurds are sensitive and thankful for that attitude, which could be explained by the

²⁰ At present the Baghdad government receives almost 100 million pounds sterling yearly in oil royalties, plus loans.

ethnic and linguistic relations between the Persian and the Kurdish Peoples. The Kurdish people have not forgotten their long period of common history with the fraternal Persian people and the valliant Turkish people.

An Appeal to the World

To halt this terrible war, to save the lives of thousands of innocent women, children and old people, to end the shedding of blood of Arabs and Kurds, and to do justice to a people who also are worthy of enjoying freedom in this century of national liberation of oppressed peoples, our Kurdish people appeal to all the peoples of the world for active solidarity. Our Kurdish people, whose national liberation movement intends to remain neutral in international affairs, committed solely to peace and democracy, against colonialism and national oppression, our people call on all democratic governments, and in particular those of the Afro-Asian countries and the small democratic countries of Europe, to bring the conflict officially before the United Nations. This war outrageously violates the principles of the United Nations Charter, the convention for the prevention and repression of the crime of genocide, the right of peoples to self-determination, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and shakes the basis of peace in the Middle East, threatening world peace. Moreover,

it violates the specific international guarantees given on behalf of the Kurdish people by the League of Nations at the time of the difficult settlement of the Mosul affair and the admission of Irak to the League of Nations. The United Nations today are morally and juridically bound by these guarantees inherited from the defunct League of Nations. It also should not be forgotten that this conflict has already been internationalized by the Syrian military intervention on the side of the government of Irak, an intervention devoid of any juridical basis. All these points were recently brought up in a communique on June 28th of the Committee for the Defense of the Rights of the Kurdish People, expressing the views of the Kurdish Revolution.

Vigorously supported by the Kurdish people, led, organized, educated and to a large extent constituted by the Democratic Party of Kurdistan, vanguard of the Kurdish people, commanded and directed by General Barzani, president of the party, the Revolutionary Army of Kurdistan, which is also politically supported by the Arab democrats of Irak and abroad, will surely crush the Syro-Iraki aggressive military forces of the Baathists and make Kurdistan the tomb of the fascists, adventurers and criminals. But the outside world, and especially the United Nations, have no right to sit idly as spectators of the conflict, watching men's blood being spilt.

After the June Aggression: Soviet Diplomatic Support

Since writing this review at the beginning of July 1963²¹, several events have taken place in the evolution of the Kurdish question, that can be traced as follows:

On June 29th, a joint Iraqi-Kurdish declaration attested to the "identity of views" between the Kurdish movement and the Iraqi Arab democratic forces. Signed, on behalf of the Arab Iraqis, by Mr. Mohamed Mehdi al-Jawahiri²², in his capacity of president of the High Committee of the Movement of Defending the Iraqi People, and, on behalf of the Kurds, by Colonel Jalal Talabani and by the author of these lines, the latter representing the Committee for the Defense of the Kurdish People's Rights, the declaration makes it clear that both sides agree on the objective of Kurdish autonomy within the Iraqi Republic and on the necessity of a common struggle against the Hitler—like regime of the Baath in Baghdad. The Arab signatory recognizes the legitimacy of the armed struggle by the Kurdish people for Kurdistan autonomy, while the Kurdish signatories recognize that the Kurdish revolution-

²¹ Up to this point, this study was published, as an article. The following passages were written later.

²² Mr. Mohammed Mehdi al-Jawahiri is the greatest contemporary Arab poet, an eminent Arab and Iraqi patriot of deep democratic and humanitarian convictions.

ary movement is linked to the movement of all Iraqi parties and organisations "for a democratic and a parliamentary regime in Iraq."²³

On July 2nd, the People's Republic of Mongolia decided to bring the crime of genocide perpetrated by the government of Iraq against the Kurdish people, before the next (18th) session of the United Nations General Assembly.

On July 4th, President Nasser of the U.A.R. told a French journalist that he would "resist any movement of secession in Iraq" but said that the Kurdish movement "is not secessionist." He also said that "since the Iraqi Government had recognised the existence of a Kurdish nation in Iraq (...), all ways for a peaceful settlement of this question should have been explored (...), but I was surprised to hear, by a communique published in Baghdad, that the war had been resumed."²⁴

On July 9th, Mr. Andrei Gromyko, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R., addressed official notes of warning, handed to their ambassadors in Moscow, to the Governments of Iraq, Turkey, Iran and Syria, in relation with the Kurdish question. In the note to the

Iraqi Government, it was mentioned that "the bloody repressions exercised against the Kurds, who represent 25% of the population of the country, will weaken the Iraqi State and prove prejudicial to it in the international field" and that "according to information available to the Soviet Government, some States, namely Iran, Turkey and Syria began to interfere in the events going on in North Iraq, including taking measures of a military nature." The note adds: "The intervention of foreign powers in the events in process on the Iraqi territory does not concern only the Iraqi Government. The entry of other forces and other States into the conflict, the placing of external forces linked to military aggressive blocks at their disposal, and the placement of depots of arms in the proximity of the Soviet frontier, create a menace for the security of many States, including that of the Soviet Union." The note also said that "the tragedy of the Kurds has already become an international problem. All this raises the legitimate anger of a large section of world opinion."

At the same time, the Soviet representative at the United Nations, Mr. Nicholas Fedorenko, addressed a letter to the President of the Security Council, in which he drew his attention to "the repression exercised by the Iraqi Government against the Kurdish population" and reserved the right of his Government to convoke the Council with this

²³ This declaration is not a pact between the Kurdish nationalist movement and the Iraqi extreme-left, as presented by the French daily *Le Monde*, August 15, but one expression of solidarity between the former and all Iraqi democratic forces. Mr. al-Jawahiri is not a communist.

²⁴ See *Le Monde* of 5 July 1963.

respect. The notes addressed to Turkey, Iran and Syria were similar to the first.

The United Nations and the Kurdish Question

On July 9th, the head of the Soviet delegation at the 36th session of the U.N. Economic and Social Council (Ecosoc), held in Geneva requested in an official letter to place on the agenda of the Council "the policy of genocide which is being pursued by the Government of the Republic of Iraq against the Kurdish people."

On July 11th, the Ecosoc decided to reject the Soviet demand. i.e., not to place the problem on its agenda. Of the 18 members of this Council, two voted for the Soviet demand: the U.S.S.R. and Czechoslovakia; three abstained: Ethiopia, Senegal and Yugoslavia; and thirteen voted against, including the Western powers, India and the Arab States (Jordan).

It would be interesting to reproduce here some of the arguments used during that discussion:

The Western powers explained their negative votes by procedural considerations:

Mr. Depraz (France), speaking in explanation of his vote, said that "the Council had never had to do with problems of this kind, any more than had the Commission of Human Rights, which drafted general prin-

ciples, but which did not deal with particular cases."²⁵

Mr. Bingham (U.S.A.) said "his delegation's vote against the U.S.S. R. proposal had been based, not on the merits of the case, but on the procedural issue only." He did not consider that the Ecosoc was the appropriate forum for the consideration of that question at the present time.

Mr. Unwin (United Kingdom) said his delegation "voted against the proposal because it was convinced that the question at issue was a political matter, which did not fall within the competence of the Council. Moreover, a request had been made for the inclusion of the item in the agenda of the 18th session of the General Assembly."

But Mr. Al-Farra (Jordan) went further: he said that "there was no case of genocide being committed in Iraq. When any group or small segment of a population deemed fit, at foreign instigation of one kind or another, to defy law and order, it was the sovereign right of the State concerned to take measures for the preservation of law and order."

Mr. Nehru²⁶ (India), who also

²⁵ This and the following quotations are extracted from the official "Provisional summary record of the 1278th meeting" of the Economic and Social Council, the 36th Session held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, 11 July 1963.

²⁶ To be distinguished from the Indian Premier.

voted against the proposal — and that was a subject of disappointment for the Kurds — pointed out that “India enjoyed friendly relations with the Government and people of Iraq (...). It was undeniable, he also said, that a conflict existed, a purely internal conflict, and because of the friendship between the two countries, India was concerned about it (...). It was India’s desire and hope that the Government and people of Iraq would be able to overcome their difficulties (...) to solve their problems peacefully.”

Mr. Wakwaya (Ethiopia), who abstained, explained “that his delegation fully supported the opinion of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia that genocide was a matter of concern to the Council.” His point, however, was “that the Council could take no such stand as that advocated in the Soviet draft resolution until the facts concerning the Kurdish question were fully established.” He said that “his delegation had on purely procedural grounds abstained from the vote,” but that “Ethiopia attached great importance to prompt action on genocide whenever that crime against humanity raised its head.” He believed “that the Council had the duty to take up such cases,” but “it was regrettable that, despite continuing appeals, the Council had failed to take action year after year on the proven cases of genocide against the native population, as

practised by Portugal in Angola and by the Republic of South Africa.”

Mr. Kopcok (Yugoslavia) said “his delegation could not but condemn the use of force by the Government of Iraq and the launching of military operations which had already resulted in loss of life among the Kurds, and led to further serious aggravation of a problem that had been attracting the attention of the world public opinion for a number of years.” But he abstained because “he believed that constructive and patient negotiations, based on respect for mutual interests, was the only correct method conducive to a satisfactory solution of the Kurdish question within the framework of the Iraqi State.”

The text of the draft-resolution of the Soviet delegation was the following²⁷:

“The Economic and Social Council, Noting with concern that the Iraqi Government has undertaken, against the Kurdish population living in the Northern part of the Republic of Iraq, military operations which, by their nature, constitute an act of genocide against the Kurds,

Condemning resolutely those acts of the Iraqi Government as being contrary to the United Nations

²⁷ We translate the text into English from the French official version published by *Ecosoc* on July 9th. The original was Russian.

Charter and to the Resolution 96 (I) of the 11th December 1946 on the crime of genocide, as well as to the generally accepted principles of morals and humanity.

Considering that the military operations undertaken against the Kurds by the Iraqi Government also constitute a violation of the Convention of 1948 of the United Nations on the prevention and the repression of the crime of genocide, a Convention to which the Iraqi Republic has subscribed,

Urgently requests the Government of the Republic of Iraq to put an immediate end to all its military operations against the Kurdish populations."

Mr. Arkadiev (U.S.S.R.) remarked during the discussion that "the representative of Jordan was obviously using procedural tactics in an attempt to circumvent action by the Council on a matter that was of the utmost gravity and urgency (...); he was not concerned about the probability that while he was speaking hundreds of thousands of Kurds were falling victims to the Iraqi Government's bloodthirsty policy of genocide." On the item of Arab solidarity, as motive of the Jordanian attitude, Mr. Arkadiev said "that the idea was to demonstrate Arab solidarity (...), but there was a broader solidarity which took precedence over it, the solidarity of all the peoples of the world."

To the arguments used by Mr. Nehru, the Soviet representative replied "that he failed to understand the Indian representative's point: the Soviet Union was seeking none other than the use of peaceful means through immediate action of the Council, to induce the Iraqi Government to put an end to its military operations against the Kurds. That indeed would be the most peaceful means of all to settle a situation of strife." Mr. Arkadiev recalled that "year after year, in the General Assembly, the Government of India had been seeking redress for the acts of aggression and genocide committed against people of Indian descent by the Republic of South Africa. The Soviet Union had consistently given full support to those legitimate efforts to prevent the extermination of Indian people in South Africa, and he failed to understand why the Soviet attempts to protect the Kurdish people in similar circumstances were not receiving full Indian backing. That was a failure in humanity and justice, and was tantamount to giving the Government of Iraq India's blessing in pursuing its path of crime."

Replying to the arguments used by Mr. Wakwaya, Mr. Arkadiev "agreed with the Ethiopian representative's view that the Council was competent to discuss the subject of genocide in connexion with the policy being practised by the Portuguese Government against the

African inhabitants of its colonies and by the Government of South Africa against Africans and persons of Indian origin in its territory. However, the Ethiopian representative had criticized the Soviet draft-resolution on the ground that it contained an *a priori* condemnation of the Government of Iraq. If the Ethiopian representative wished to investigate conditions on the spot, he was at liberty to do so; the trouble was that he might be too late (...). Genocide was in fact taking place in Iraq when that was asserted to be indeed the case by such reputable newspapers as *Le Monde* and the *New York Herald Tribune*, as well as in the statements by the Governments of the U.S.S.R." The Soviet representative added "that the Ethiopian proposal for deferment was an astounding one (...). Surely the Ethiopian representative could not think that the Council should sit with hands folded until such time as evidence was forthcoming that the Iraqi Government had succeeded in its criminal object of exterminating the Kurdish people!"

Speaking of the attitude of the Western powers, Mr. Arkadiev said that "their apparent decision that silence was the most appropriate course was indeed unwise and might be open to misconception (...). The Western powers, which wielded undue influence in the Council (...), seemed to do the same (as against the Angola case) in the case of the

policy of genocide practised (...) against the Kurdish people."

Mr. Hajek (Czechoslovakia) said that "the Council was fully competent to intervene" and that "the Soviet proposal should be treated seriously and not rejected by what might be called a mechanical vote."

After the vote, the Soviet representative said that "other organs of the United Nations would not turn a blind eye to the extermination of the Kurdish people. The Government of the Mongolian People's Republic had already drawn the attention of the U.N. to the matter; and other Governments would undoubtedly do likewise. The Soviet Government had also warned the U.N. of the danger that the policy of the Iraqi Government was creating in the area inhabited by the Kurds."

Unfortunately, some hours before the opening of the 18th session of the U.N. General Assembly, New York, August 17th, the Government of the Mongolian People's Republic withdraw its complaint against Iraq, without any explanation. That was, wrote the French daily *Le Monde*, "the only surprise of the session, a surprise which nourished the unofficial conversations of the Assembly."²⁸

Colonel Talabani, who was about to fly to New York with the task of presenting the Kurdish case before the United Nations, then received in-

²⁸ *Le Monde* of August 18th.

structions from the Kurdish Revolutionary High Command to return to Kurdistan, which he did, where the war was raging. The Kurdish Revolutionary High Command later decided to send another official delegation to defend the Kurdish case.

Emir Dr. K. A. Bédîr-Khan, the well known Kurdish personality and figure²⁹, who had been in New York two weeks before the opening of the session, decided to remain there still for a while, in order to continue his contacts.

On the 1st of October 1964, the Mongolian delegation officially explained why its Government had decided to withdraw the complaint. Mr. Dugersuren, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Government of the Mongolian People's Republic, declared at the Assembly session that his Government had withdrawn its complaint against Iraq, concerning the crime of genocide committed by Baghdad against the Kurdish people, "chiefly because of its respect to Afro-Asian solidarity." The Minister added that his Government intended "to reserve its right to raise again this problem should the events oblige it to do so." The Iraqi representative, in his reply, went so far from reality as to declare "that

the Kurds were not persecuted in Iraq and they did not constitute a distinguished nationality from the Arabs." He also threatened Mongolia "of the hostility not only of Iraq, but also of the Arab world and the whole Afro-Asian block"... Mr. Dugersuren then reaffirmed that "he fully maintained his accusation that Iraq was practising a policy of genocide against the Kurdish people" and that he could produce proofs on it.

Between the East, the West and the "Tiers Monde"

1. Concerning the attitude of the socialist countries of Eastern Europe, the following points are noteworthy:

a) The Kurdish people and their national liberation movement are grateful to these countries who have started to defend the Kurdish case on a large scale, both diplomatically and in their press.

b) The objective observer may notice some change in the attitude of the socialist countries towards the revolution of Iraqi Kurdistan, before and after Kassem's fall in Iraq. Whatever may be the reasons of such a change, it should be noted that the Kurdish movement, did not change: engaged against Kassem's dictatorial aggression or against the Baath's fascist aggression, this movement remains the same, a national liberation one, and it will remain as such.

²⁹ Dr. Bedir-Khan is Director of the *Centre d'études kurdes* in Paris, and Professor of Kurdish at the National School of Living Oriental Languages, Paris.

c) The Kurdish movement is particularly thankful to the Soviet Union, the leader of these socialist countries, and to the Government of the Mongolian People's Republic, a friendly Asian nation, who have brought the Kurdish case before some organs of the United Nations. That contributed to the consecration of the case as an international problem, and this was an important aim of the Kurdish movement.

d) The Kurdish case was not only raised under the aspect of genocide. That there is a war of genocide criminally pursued by the Iraqi Government against the Kurdish population is a fact that can be ignored only by powers to which humanitarian considerations are of no concern. To put an end to the extermination of children, women and old peaceful people by the Iraqi and Syrian troops, is of course an aim of the Kurdish movement, but it is not the only one. The Kurdish movement is a political and military revolutionary one, with clear political objectives, such as the autonomy of Iraqi Kurdistan within the Iraqi Republic. For the Kurdish people and their leading Democratic Party of Kurdistan it is out of question to cease the battle before those objectives have been attained. The problem is not only humanitarian, but also, and primarily political. The Security Council would be surely competent to deal with the conflict.

e) According to the Lebanese press, a Syrian Baathist governmental

delegation was received in the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, last September, to conclude commercial agreements. The Lebanese press "believes" that purchase of arms for the Syrian Army was the task of the delegation. This is a matter of concern to the Kurds. But it does not seem plausible that the U.S.S.R., after having ceased its arm deliveries to Iraq, after the coup of 8 February, would sell arms to Baathist Syria. We have no doubt that any arms sold to Syria will be used against the Kurds in Iraqi Kurdistan, whether directly by the Syrian Army, or by the Iraqi Army. The latter, whose armaments under Kassem were Soviet and Czechoslovak made, is lacking ammunitions for these arms, as well as new arms, to continue the war in Kurdistan. The Iraqi Army has not yet finished its training on the British arms sold to the Baathists.

2. Concerning the attitude of the Western powers, the following points are noteworthy:

a) As stated before, the press and public opinion in most of the Western countries were, and still are, largely favourable to the Kurdish case, and to them, we are thankful.

b) But the Western governments, who ignored the Kurdish question under Kassem, are, in one way or another, supporting the Baathists:

— We know that Britain is selling huge quantities of arms to Iraq and that the I.P.C. is advancing money to the Iraqi treasury.

- Under British pressure, Kuwait granted an important loan to Baghdad³⁰.
- On August 28th, the U.S.A. granted a loan to Iraq of 6,856,000 dollars, and that was not the only one. American arms were also sold to Baghdad.
- The German Federal Republic granted Iraq a loan of 15 million sterling. But in Germany, the Kurdish case, and the Kurdish students, enjoy, however, much sympathy for which we are thankful to the Germans.
- Even France, whose public opinion is most favourable to the Kurdish case, is trying to re-enter the Middle East by supporting, morally and economically, inter alia, the Baathists regimes.

Whether such support is accomplished "against the Kurds" or in order to "consolidate" a regime which is considered "as good", the result, for the Kurds, is practically the same: consolidating their enemies and aggressors.

We do not think that it is in the interest of the Western governments to support such weak and instable governments as the Baathist regime in Syria and Iraq.

On the other hand, the Kurdish people are seeking the friendship of

all peoples and the comprehension of all governments, whether Eastern, Western, neutral or non-aligned. The Kurdish national liberation movement is a growing force in the Middle East, and it can no longer be ignored by wise or just men.

3. Concerning the Afro-Asian and neutralist countries, following remarks are relevant:

a) Until now, most of these countries seem to lack objective information on the Kurdish problem. According to confidential information, Pakistan is even selling arms to Baghdad; whether this was decided within the CENTO pact or not, is unknown, but the step is most regrettable. We know that the brotherly Pakistani people have a solid friendship for the Kurds.

b) The Kurdish case, in fact, has all the merits of deserving the full support of all the Afro-Asian nations, who knew, like the Kurds do now, how bitter and degrading national oppression and exploitation are.

c) The Kurdish movement, as stated above, is not against the Arabs, but is a defensive and liberation movement operating against the Baathist aggressors, against the oppressors, who resumed the aggressive war and represent the fascist, reactionary, racist and pro-imperialist wing in the Arab national movement.

d) The Afro-Asian countries should not believe the demagogic slogans of the Baathists and other

³⁰ This loan, paid immediately, after only three days of negotiations, was of 30 million sterling.

Arab oppressors on "democracy," "revolution" and "socialism" because the Baathist stand is in actual fact the opposite of this. Contrary to that, the Kurdish movement is, and will remain, democratic, progressive, against all kinds of colonialism and discrimination, and neutral.

The Kurdish people would like to see the Afro-Asian countries, all the neutral nations, the Western powers, and the governments of Latin America join with the U.S.S.R. and Mongolia in defending the Kurdish case before the United Nations. The Kurdish people would like to see and ask the Eastern and Western powers to stop delivering arms to Iraq, or to any other Arab State that would militarily help the government of Baghdad, before the complete solution of the national question of Iraqi Kurdistan.

In this matter, Afro-Asian solidarity should not be an obstacle, as it was feared by Mongolia, but rather the brotherly and protecting force willing to defend the case of so an oppressed West-Asian people like the Kurds.

Intervention of the Syrian Army

The intervention of the military forces of Baathist Syria against the Revolution of Iraqi Kurdistan began with the resumption of the war, on June 10th. Iraqis and Syrians denied it, but it was a fact well known by the Kurdish population. Syrian aircraft which bombed the Kurdish

front came, not only from their new bases in Iraq, but also from Syria. In a communiqué dated the July 14th, 1963, the Committee for the Defense of the Kurdish People's Rights denounced that foreign intervention, which internationalized the war, and invited the United Nations to send an Inquiry Commission to Kurdistan, in order to investigate the facts on the spot. But this appeal, like many others, remained unheeded.

The Syrian intervention was reported, however, in the world press, as early as the 4th of July³¹.

In an official note to the President of the Security Council, dated July 10th, 1963 the government of the Syrian Arab Republic affirms that only the Iraqi government has the right and duty to crush "the local and seditious movement of Barzani", that any foreign intervention in this affair "would endanger peace in the area"³², and that "the Syrian Government declares that no Syrian units or any arms were sent to Iraq in order to take part in the repression of a movement confronted solely by the Iraqi forces"³³.

³¹ See *Tribune de Lausanne* of that date.

³² Allusion (and warning) to the Soviet diplomatic intervention.

³³ We translated these quotations from the French text published in the *Revue des Nations Unies*, July 1963. The same issue contains a Soviet note and an Iraqi note on the same problem, under the title *La question kurde*.

During the last week of August, President Abdul Salam Arif of Iraq was the guest of President Nasser in Cairo, in an attempt to revive the project of the Arab Federation. The visit appeared to have been a failure, and on his way back to Baghdad, during a halt in Damascus, the Iraqi leader was hailed by the crowd of the Syrian Baath with cries of "Down with dictatorship" (that of Nasser)³⁴. Since that time, the Baathists of Iraq were involved in the quarrel between Nasser and Syria.

In a series of articles, Mr. Haykal, editor of the Cairo daily *Al Ahrām*, considered as the unofficial spokesman of President Nasser, launched a campaign against the Iraqi Baathist regime, accusing it having sought and obtained "the help of Persia and Turkey, and of the Western powers, in its war of extermination against the Kurds, in North Iraq." But Mr. Haykal also believed that "the Kurdish problem would be very different in an Arab united State of 40 million inhabitants, than what it is presently within Iraq, where it sets the Kurds of Iraq against the Arabs of Iraq"... The Egyptian journalist reproached the Iraqi Arab leaders for having resumed the war when the Iraqi Army was not sufficiently prepared and lacked ammunition³⁵.

³⁴ See *Le Monde* of August 29.

³⁵ See *Al Ahrām* of October 18, 1963.

The inevitable consequence of this break down was the reinforcement of the already close relations between the Baathist regimes of Damascus and Baghdad. On September 30, 1963 a project of Syro-Iraqi Federation was announced in Damascus: "A popular, socialist and democratic State, including Iraq and Syria, will be the historic turning point of the Arab struggle for unity and socialism," proclaimed an official declaration published in Damascus.

Before laying down the constitutional basis of such a State, and while a secret pan-Baathist Congress was held in Damascus, General Amin Al-Hafiz, the Syrian President and apprentice-dictator, proclaimed in an official joint communiqué, on October 8, that "a military unity has been established between Syria and Iraq." This unity, said the communiqué, includes all the Syrian and Iraqi armed forces, and is located in Damascus. General Saleh Mahdi Ammash, the Iraqi Minister of Defence, was designated as the commander-in-chief of the united Army.

Some Arabs may have believed that the new military unity would reinforce the Arab military positions along the northern frontier of Israel, but while the unity was proclaimed, fresh units of the Syrian Army had crossed the Iraqi frontier into Kurdistan.

Nothing officially was proclaimed but on October 21, marshal Arif of

Iraq revealed that he had been visiting the Syrian troops engaged near Zakho and the Turkish frontier, against the Kurds³⁶.

On October 28, the Syrian colonel Al-Shaer, in a declaration from Mosul, said that "the Syrian troops, together with the Iraqi troops, had mopped up the regions of Fish-Khabour and Bikhair, in North Iraq, from Kurdish rebels³⁷."

Preceding the Syro-Iraqi military unity, Colonel Al-Shaer, member of the "National Council of the Syrian revolution", had been the military commander of the Syrian forces of "Al Yarmouk," along the Israeli border. The Syrian and Iraqi Baathists admitted only to a Syrian brigade, five thousand men strong, taking part in the war in Kurdistan. This number is below the truth. We know that a complete Syrian division of 17,000 men was transferred to "North Iraq." Because of a blow to prestige, the officers of the Iraqi Army were not satisfied with the presence of Syrian support.

This support proves enough, should new proofs be still necessary, that the Iraqi Army had completely failed in its campaign in Kurdistan. But facing the determination of the Kurdistan Revolutionary Army, the Syrian troops had even less success. The free Lebanese press used to report that from time to time, Sy-

rian military lorries and trains arrived in Aleppo from Kurdistan, filled with Syrian officers and soldiers killed or wounded in their useless war against the Kurdish people³⁸.

We also know that large sectors of the Syrian and Arab public opinion were against the Syrian intervention in Kurdistan. In a commentary of the Lebanese newspaper *Al Nida*, a question was put "whether the Syrian Army of Al-Yarmouk was an Army for aggression or liberation."³⁹

The Syrian expeditionary division was later withdrawn from Iraqi Kurdistan, without any victory, after having suffered hundreds of casualties and lost important quantities of arms and tens of men who remained prisoners of the Kurdistan Revolutionary Army⁴⁰.

But at a pompous military parade held in Damascus, on January 10, 1964 and officially described as "the most glorious day ever lived by the Arab Syrian people", General Amin Al-Hafiz of Syria and his government received as victorious heroes the returning expeditionary Army. General Al-Shaer and his officers were publicly and abundantly decorated. In his reply to Al-Hafiz, Al-Shaer affirmed that his troops "had cleaned large areas of this eternal part of the Arab Fatherland

³⁸ and ³⁹ See *Al Nida*, Beirut, of 29 and 21 October 1963.

⁴⁰ See *Khebat*, organ of the D.P.K., No 473 of January 1964.

³⁶ and ³⁷ See *Le Monde* of 22 and 29 October 1963.

which is Northern Iraq, from the separatist Barzani bands", and that "the Kurds in the Arab Fatherland enjoy all rights of citizenship but could have no special rights"⁴¹.

Syria should recognize, democratically, the national rights, at least in the field of culture, of the 400,000 Syrian Kurds, should open Kurdish schools and allow Kurdish publications and a Kurdish press. These same rights should also be recognized and respected in an Arab Federation including Syria, the U.A.R., Iraq, and a largely autonomous Iraqi (Southern) Kurdistan.

With the International Red Cross

Strictly within its humanitarian preoccupations, the C.I.C.R. (International Committee of the Red Cross), in Geneva, was one of the rare international organisations willing, since the beginning of the war, to relieve the suffering population of Iraqi Kurdistan. The Committee for the Defence of the Kurdish People's Rights, representing the Kurdish Revolution, had submitted to the C.I.C.R., since November 1961, an invitation from General Barzani to visit the liberated territory of Iraqi Kurdistan. Between the C.I.C.R. and our Committee, the relations, since, have been regular and friendly

⁴¹ On this ceremony, see further details in the revue *Al-Jundi* (The Soldier), organ of the Syrian Army, No 636 of January 14, 1964.

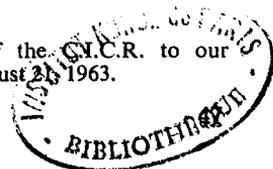
with an official exchange of correspondence. The lists of Iraqi prisoners of war in Kurdistan, that we received from the Kurdish Revolutionary High Command, were regularly transmitted to the C.I.C.R. and filed in Geneva. But, unfortunately, because the Government of Baghdad refused any cooperation with the International Red Cross, in respect of conditions of war in Kurdistan, the actions of the C.I.C.R., in this field, proved to be almost impossible.

In December 1962, Mr. Pierre Gaillard, official Delegate of the C.I.C.R. went to Baghdad, carrying several lists of Iraqi prisoners of war detained in liberated Kurdistan, acting as an intermediary in order to release them and to ask the Iraqi Government, in exchange, to allow the C.I.C.R. to send relief to the Kurdish population, via Baghdad, Iraqi Kurdistan having no access to the sea. Kassen's regime rejected the offer, with anger.

After the resumption of war by the Baathists, June 1963, the C.I.C.R. presented the new regime with another demand, which was also rejected⁴².

We then nourished the hope that the Iranian or Turkish Governments would allow the International Red Cross to use Iranian or Turkish territory to send relief and a medical

⁴² The letter of the C.I.C.R. to our Committee, of August 26, 1963.



mission to the population of Iraqi Kurdistan. Obliging enough, the C.I.C.R., wrote official letters to the Iranian Red Lion and Sun and to the Turkish Red Crescent⁴³, but until now, these letters have received no official answers.

Meanwhile, the C.I.C.R. handed us, in Europe, some quantities of medicines, with an amount of money to cover their transport. We tried to send them to Iraqi Kurdistan by special ways, underground. That is the tragic situation. It is tragic, because this is the word when we are obliged to try to send the humanitarian help of an international philanthropic organisation, by "underground" to relieve Kurdish children and women dying of enemy fire and of hunger. Tragic, also because the needs and the sufferings of the Kurdish civilian populations are tremendous, and the means to relieve them insignificant.

There is a total of 100,000 to 150,000 Kurdish civilian refugees, all from Iraqi Kurdistan, in Arab Iraq, Iranian Kurdistan and Turkish Kurdistan.

In his appeal to the Congress of the Centenary of the International Red Cross, held in Geneva, August-September 1963, General Mustafa Barzani requested the C.I.C.R. and all the national Societies of the Red

Cross and of the Red Crescent, members of the Congress, to do their best to relieve the civilian Kurdish population, who were victims of war. Our Committee which delivered the appeal to the Congress, spoke with, or wrote, since, to many of those national Societies. Our hope is that they will be willing to send medicines and other kinds of supplies to the C.I.C.R. in Geneva, from where they will be sent to Kurdistan⁴⁴.

We also hope that it will be possible for the C.I.C.R. to send a medical mission and a hospital to the liberated territory of Iraqi Kurdistan, as it is now doing in the Yemen. The C.I.C.R. has already publicly accepted the idea of sending observers to Iraqi Kurdistan, but is waiting for the possibility to accomplish it⁴⁵.

⁴⁴ Since then, thanks to the humanitarian comprehension of the donors and to the coordination work of the C.I.C.R., the contacts of our Committee proved to be fruitful. Various important consignments of relief, about ten thousand kilogrammes of medicines, medical instruments clothes blankets and tents for refugees, from the C.I.C.R. and from several national Societies of the Red-Cross, the Swiss, the Hungarian and the British in particular, have, in fact, been sent to the population of Iraqi Kurdistan. Our thanks to all of them. We have the complete lists of these contributions as prepared by the C.I.C.R..

⁴⁵ See a press declaration of the C.I.C.R. *Le Monde* of September 6, 1963.

⁴³ The C.I.C.R. informed us of these steps in its letter of August 21, 1963.

The International League for the Rights of Man and the Question

Here, without comment, is the text of the letter addressed by the League to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in protestation against the war of genocide pursued by the Government of Baghdad:

New York, October 1963.

U Thant, Secretary-General,
United Nations,
New York.

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

Our attention has recently been called to a most grievous case of violent oppression of a national minority by the present government of Iraq—namely, the Kurds, who are distributed throughout the mountains of four countries from Iran to Turkey. The persecution in Iraq is quite distinct from those other countries, and is based on the forcible suppression of their demands for provincial autonomy.

So desperate has the struggle become that Iraq Government has resorted, according to eyewitnesses, to a scorched earth policy in a warfare conducted from the air and on the ground. A British correspondent who spent eight weeks travelling through the region estimated that some 20,000 Kurds in the villages, mostly women, children and non-combatants, have been killed since the fighting began in 1961. The Kurdish tribesmen have, of course,

resisted with their own armed forces.

According to the account of the events that led up to this armed struggle under two recent regimes, the present government in March, 1963, after pledging autonomy, demanded that as condition, the Kurds give up all their arms within 24 hours. When they refused to do so, the military campaign was resumed.

The situation is not only one involving the rights of the Kurdish people, but their virtual genocide. The Iraqi government has refused all aid offered to the Kurdish people by the International Red Cross. All offers from other sources to send medical supplies and other aid to the Kurdish civilian population have similarly been rebuffed.

May we urge, Mr. Secretary-General, that whatever avenues are open for United Nations' intervention be explored since the proposal to put the matter on the current General Assembly agenda has been dropped.

Sincerely yours,

Roger Baldwin, Chairman,
Jan Papanek, Vice-Chairman,
Frances Grant, Vice-Chairman.

The War in its Third Year

In an appeal of the Political Bureau of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan, dated September 1963, on the occasion of the beginning of

the third year of the war, addressed to the United Nations, to the International Red Cross and to other international organisations, as well as to the principal Chiefs of State and Prime Ministers⁴⁶, it was noted that "in spite of all these acts of massacre, of dispersion of the civilian population and of destruction, results of this Hitler-like campaign, the government was unable to realize any military victory."

The appeal defines the policy of the Iraqi government towards the Kurdish people as being "a racist policy, practised by force, iron and fire." This policy "by its methods and scale, is even more odious than that practised by the government of South Africa against the native Africans." Examples: "In the town of Kirkuk alone, whole quarters were destroyed and their inhabitants, 40,000 persons, simply because they are Kurds different from Arabs by their tongue and their nationality, were dispersed by force. In the regions near the ethnic demarcation line between the Arab area and Iraqi Kurdistan, the peaceful Kurdish population was obliged to flee, leaving all its possessions to pillage. The government then constituted official committees to implant Arab tribes in the area and to distribute, among them, the Kurdish lands and posses-

⁴⁶ This appeal was published in *Khebat* of September 1963, then translated and transmitted to the interested international circles by the Committee for the Defense of the Kurdish People's Rights.

sions. Thousands of Kurdish civil servants and employees were dismissed by the government... According to this policy of racial discrimination, the Kurds are to be deprived of their national rights, before being arabized by force." The Political Bureau estimates that the United Nations should be competent to discuss the case.

This same policy, in the appeal, is also qualified as being a colonialist one: "The fact", said the Political Bureau, "that the oppressors of Kurdistan are non-Europeans, and that Iraq is a backward country economically, is not sufficient to absolve these oppressors from the accusation of being colonialist. Does the world know any other colonized country where the occupation Army has the right to kill, to plunder, to burn, to destroy and to detain anybody or anything, at whatever time, without justification, without any act of accusation or any judgment? It is this right, however, that Iraqi government allotted to its occupation Army in Kurdistan, by the presidential decree of June 9, 1963."

That is why the Political Bureau thinks that "The United Nations should intervene in order to re-establish the right in the spirit of our century, to let the Kurdish people enjoy their full liberty to reconsider the problem of their union with the Arabs in a same State, the liberty to accept or to refuse to live under the authority of the present Baathist government."

In his appeal of April 20, 1962, General Barzani, President of the D.P.K., had already demanded to internationalize the Kurdish question: "I request," he said, "the United Nations to intervene in the conflict, in order to put an end to the national oppression practised against our people. I request them to consult the people of Iraqi Kurdistan about their desires and their claims."

The Fall of the Baath:

On November 18, 1963, a sudden but expected coup d'Etat brought to power Marshall Abdul Salam Arif, President of the Iraqi Republic, backed by a small group of officers. Mr. Ali Saleh Al-Saadi, the "strong man" of the Baath and chief of its extremist wing, was expelled from Iraq. His "National Guard" was dissolved and ordered to lay down his arms and surrender. Mr. Shebib and Mr. Jawad, considered as the leaders of the "moderate wing" of the Baath, tried to join the conspirators, but were also expelled from Iraq. General Taher Yahia was designated Prime Minister, and general Tekriti Minister of Defence. General Ammash, the former Minister of Defence and chief of the "united Syro-Iraqi Army," known to be anti Nasserist, fled however to Cairo. The Baath bloody "experience" in Iraq was over.

The reasons of the coup may be summarized as follows:

Three immediate reasons:

1. Personal rivalry: A.S. Al-Saadi

was preparing himself to become some kind of "Führer," but other leaders were also too ambitious.

2. Rivalry between the Army and the "National Guard", constituted of young civilians, armed by Al-Saadi, thanks to loans granted by the I.P.C. and Kuwait.

3. The revulsion of Iraqis to being governed by non-Iraqis. Iraq was virtually governed, during the last days before the coup, by the Syrians Michel Aflak and General Al-Hafiz, representing what the Baath calls "the international directory of the party." These two persons had rushed to Baghdad, with the intention of putting the affairs of the Iraqi branch of the Party in order. They were arrested for some hours, before being allowed to fly back to Damascus.

But two other reasons lay at the root of the situation:—

4. The Iraqi people in their majority, and as a whole, were against the Baathist regime. The crimes committed by the members of the "National Guard" were badly endured by the population.

5. The failure of the Baathist regime to overcome the Kurdish Revolution.

Whereas this last reason, which was the only major one causing Kassem's fall, appeared superficially to have played a less important role, in actual fact, it was the most important. The Baath could assume power, and lose it, in a phenomenon of self-destruction, chiefly because the armed forces of successive

Iraqi governments were defeated by the revolutionary Army of the Kurdish people, or, in other words, because they were radically unable to defeat the Kurdish Revolution.

As announced by the Committee for the Defence of the Kurdish People's Rights, in its declaration of November 19, "during the last week that preceded the last crisis of the Baath party, the Iraqi forces suffered three decisive defeats in the regions of Kirkuk, Sulaimani and Harir. In the battle of Harir, the Revolutionary Army of Kurdistan, completely annihilated one regiment of the Iraqi Army, 2,000 men strong. Nearly half of these were killed, others wounded, and the remnants joined the Kurdish forces, which took all the arms of the regiment."

The declaration continued: "The fall of the Baathist regime, after only 9 months in power, is, like that of Kassem, intimately linked to the failures of the aggressive military forces of Baghdad in their semi-colonial war in Kurdistan. Today, in spite of the massive intervention of the Syrian Army, the Kurdish Revolution, militarily and politically, is twice more powerful than it was last February."

"The future, of the relations between the Kurdish Revolution and Baghdad, depends on the attitude of the new Iraqi leaders towards the Kurdish political objectives. These defined officially by the Kurdish delegation, last April, remain unchanged."

On November 28, Abdul Salam Arif addressed an appeal "to his fellow Moslem brothers the Kurdish rebels in the North," inviting them "to lay down arms and to surrender," "because Kurds and Arabs are all moslem and brothers, and have a common history." He promised "to pardon the rebels and to rebuild the areas of the North."

Mr. Arif's appeal contains nothing about Kurdistan autonomy and democracy, and bears no comparison to the relative strength of his government.

Mr. Arif's regime is probably the weakest that Baghdad has ever known, and one of the most reactionary. Even more than the Baath itself, it is completely estranged from the Iraqi people, who are either hostile or indifferent. Its governing team is heterogeneous and instable. Such a regime, with such dispositions towards the Kurdish Revolution, cannot remain in power for long. As the above-mentioned declaration states, "any Iraqi government that will not recognize the autonomy of Kurdistan, will be, as its predecessors, swept out by the Kurdish revolutionary movement."⁴⁷

Too much blood has been shed because of the persistent refusal of the successive Iraqi government to grant proper status to the Kurdish people. It is up to the world, to the East and to the West, to the neutral

⁴⁷ See *Le Monde* of December 17, 1963.

and to the Afro-Asian countries, to assume responsibility in order to shorten the period of bloodshed, in order to bring this genocide and semi-colonial war to an end, by prevailing upon the Iraqi government to recognize the full autonomy of its part of Kurdistan. Otherwise Iraq will completely lose its Kurd-

ish "colony" just as the Ottoman Empire had lost its Arab ones.

Ismet Cheriff VANLY
(Secretary-General of the
Committee for the Defence
of the Kurdish People's Rights.)

*Completed on December 17, 1963,
Lausanne*

Institut kurde de Paris

Annex No. 1

BARZANI STATEMENT ON THE SITUATION IN IRAQI KURDISTAN

Ranya, December 1964

When we concluded the ceasefire agreement of Feb. 10, 1964 with the Iraqi government, at a time when the Baathist aggression had just collapsed, and our military situation was excellent, we were above all animated by the sincere desire to solve the Kurdish national problem peacefully, to spare the Kurdish people and the Arab people of Iraq, the horrors of a fratricidal war.

We put our confidence in the regime of Marshal Arif whose accession to power was made possible by the defeat of the Baathist forces in Kurdistan. We wanted to give this regime a chance, a chance to prove by its acts its good intentions towards the Kurdish people and to bring to the whole of Iraq a life of peace, prosperity and democracy, which constitutes the profound aspirations of the Iraqi people.

The ceasefire agreements provided, among other things, for the withdrawal of Iraqi troops to their positions they had occupied before September 1961; the dissolution of formations of mercenary traitors; the reconstruction of Kurdistan; the payment of compensation to those who had suffered in the war; the liberation of all political prisoners; and above all for the formal recognition of Kurdish national rights. These rights were to be defined by negotiation.

In return it was agreed that we would liberate all the Iraqi prisoners, which we did, and that the Kurdish forces would be partly converted into a police force. The remaining Kurdish forces were to be dissolved and reintegrated into the civil life of Kurdistan.

However, although ten months went by since these agreements were concluded, the Baghdad government has not kept its word. On the contrary.

Thus, the new provisional constitution, apart from the fact that it was drawn up in a non democratic manner, without consulting the Iraqi people, represents a step backward by comparison with the constitution of 1958. In its first article the new constitution says the the Iraqis are an integral part of the Arab nation, although it is evident that the Kurds are not part of that nation. The nineteenth article reminds the Kurds of their duty to the Republic without at all defining their national rights. A single Arab party, excluding all others, the Arab Socialist Union, has been created by the regime. But there can be no question of our adhering to an organization which by definition has no room in it for us. Nor can there be any question of our dissolving the Kurdistan Democratic Party.

Furthermore the Iraqi government concluded an accord with the United Arab Republic on an Arab union without consulting the Iraqi people, without consulting us and without previously solving the Kurdish national question.

In all this Arif regime completely ignores the national existence of the Kurdish people and the very fact of our revolution. It wants to see in the Kurdish national question only what it calls the "problem of the reconstruction of the North". But this is beside the point. For the reconstruction of the "North" of which Baghdad makes so much was not the objective of our revolution and should be the task of the autonomous authorities of Kurdistan with the assistance of the central government. In any case the reconstruction announced by Baghdad has proved illusory. Only military posts have been rebuilt.

Arab tribes continue to occupy the Kurdish villages of certain regions near the oil fields. The Baathists drove out the peasants of the region of Kandinawa, near Arbil; they drove out 40,000 Kurdish inhabitants of the Kirkuk suburbs and bulldozed their houses. The present regime has quite recently also used armed force to drive the Kurdish peasants out of their villages in the region of Doubs, near Kirkuk. A plan of "diskurdification" by force, even in time of peace, seems to be in process in the plains of Arbil and Kirkuk.

In the face of this situation we have on one hand reorganized our revolutionary movement, on the other undertaken conversations with the Baghdad government and exhorted that government to resolve the Kurdish question peacefully.

As concerns the first, a Command Council for the Revolution was formed on October 9, 1964. As supreme organ of the revolution the responsibility of this Council is to define its objectives, to outline its policy, to rule on questions of war and peace and to act as legislative body. It has already drawn up the necessary laws in constitutional, financial, administrative, judicial and military matters. These are the laws which will rule the affairs of Kurdistan during the revolution until autonomy is won. The Council represents all elements of our people participating in the revolution including representatives of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, of the Revolutionary Army of Kurdistan, of the people, and certain persons who bear special responsibilities.

The Executive bureau elected by the Council is applying these laws in the liberated territory. A Kurdish administration is at work as is a Kurdish judicial and fiscal system. Our army has been reorganized. Thus Kurdish autonomy is becoming a fact.

As concerns the second point, we have presented to the president of the Iraqi Republic and to the Prime Minister a memorandum dated Oc-

tober 11, 1964 setting forth our demands. We have asked that Kurdish national rights be recognized in the form of autonomy to be accorded to Kurdistan within the Iraqi Republic. Consequently we have proposed that modifications be made in the provisional constitution and have invited the Baghdad government to name a delegation to undertake serious negotiations.

Unfortunately, there have been no negotiations. The notes and messages received from Baghdad, in particular those of November 27, of December 3, 9 and 11, showed that the hopes we placed in this regime were vain. Baghdad asked us simply to dissolve our armed forces, to put an end to our administrative system, and categorically denied us any form of autonomy.

However, as we replied on Nov. 27, Dec. 6 and 13, our people have not fought and made so many sacrifices for nothing. We demand our autonomy as a right of self-determination, our minimum right.

A whole series of recent local military engagements provoked by the government military forces have created an atmosphere similar to that which preceded the Baathist aggression of June, 1963.

Our attitude is clear and we consider it just. We do not want war. We will never start it. But we shall continue building our autonomy, consolidate our own administration. And if we are attacked we shall defend ourselves with the same deter-

mination as when we were attacked by Kassem and the Baath. We do not have any doubt on the issue of our struggle for liberty.

We hope that friendly countries and the United Nations will intervene in time to prevent another war and to resolve our national question peacefully on the basis of autonomy. We will in the immediate future address ourselves to the great powers and to the Secretary General of the United Nations.

We appeal to all powers to refrain from delivering arms to Iraq until the Kurdish question is solved. We appeal to all liberty-loving peoples to help us in our just fight.

We thank the International Red-Cross, the Swiss Red-Cross, the Hungarian Red-Cross and the British Red-Cross for their humanitarian and most useful assistance which was organized by the Committee for the Defence of the Kurdish People's Rights. We thank all the journalists who have visited us and who by their reports helped make the truth known. They and their colleagues are always welcome in our country.

BARZANI MUSTAFA

President of Kurdistan Democratic Party, President of the Command Council of the Revolution, Commander in Chief of the Kurdistan Revolutionary Army.

N.B. — This text was published for the first time, and developed in a press conference given by Ismet Cheriff Vanly at the Association of the Foreign Press in Lebanon, Beirut, January 22, 1965. Translated and distributed by the Committee for the Defence of the Kurdish People's Rights.

Annex No. 2

Télégramme

Lausanne, le 6 février 1965

AU COMITE PREPARATOIRE DE LA DEUXIEME
CONFERENCE AFRO-ASIATIQUE
A L G E R

AU NOM DU CONSEIL DE COMMANDEMENT DE LA REVOLUTION DU KURDISTAN IRAKIEN NOUS VOUS PRIONS DE NOUS ADRESSER INVITATION POUR PARTICIPER A LA PRO-
CHAINE CONFERENCE AFRO-ASIATIQUE A ALGER AU MOINS A TITRE D'OBSERVATEUR
stop COMME IL N'EST PAS QUESTION QUE NOUS METTIONS FIN A NOTRE ADMI-
NISTRATION AUTONOME REVOLUTIONNAIRE DEJA ETABLIE DANS LE KURDISTAN
IRAKIEN LIBERE ET COMME LE GOUVERNEMENT IRAKIEN REFUSE DE RECONNAITRE
NOTRE AUTONOMIE ET MENACE DE REPRENDRE SA GUERRE AGRESSIVE AU KURDIS-
TAN, NOTRE REVOLUTION TIENT A ETRE REPRESENTEE A LADITE CONFERENCE
POUR Y EXPOSER SES POSITIONS ET SOLLICITER LE CONCOURS DE LA CONFE-
RENCE POUR UN REGLEMENT PACIFIQUE DE LA QUESTION stop LES KURDES
ETANT UN PEUPLE D'ASIE OCCIDENTALE OUTRAGEUSEMENT OPPRIME ET DANS LA
QUATRIEME ANNEE DE LEUR REVOLUTION DE LIBERATION NATIONALE, NOUS ESTI-
MONS QUE VOUS NE POURRIEZ NOUS REFUSER L'ACCES DE LA CONFERENCE SANS
TRAHIR VOS HAUTS PRINCIPES stop LETTRES SUIVRONT AUX 22 PAYS DU
COMITE PREPARATOIRE =

ISMET CHERIFF VANLY

REPRESENTANT OFFICIEL DE LA REVOLUTION KURDE A
L'ETRANGER, PORTE-PAROLE DU GENERAL BARZANI ET
SECRETAIRE GEN. DU COMITE POUR LA DEFENSE DES
DROITS DU PEUPLE KURDE .

N.B.

Le texte de ce télégramme a été diffusé le soir du 6 février 1965
par AFP et AP de Genève . Le Comité préparatoire de la Conférence se
réunit à Alger le 9 février .

N.B. — The text of this telegram was circulated during the night of 6 February 1965
by AFP and AP of Geneva. The Preparatory Committee of the Conference met in Algiers
on 9 February.



Annex No. 3

Lausanne, February 8th 1965

**His Excellency the
Minister of Foreign Affairs of**

Sir,

Attached hereby, please find the text of our telegram of February, 6th 1965 addressed to the Preparatory Committee of the Second Afro-Asian Conference demanding that the Revolution of the Iraki Kurdistan be represented at that Conference.

The Revolution of Kurdistan, which has been in existence for over four years, is a movement of national liberation, the purpose of which is autonomy and, as such is to be allowed to be represented at the forthcoming Afro-Asian Conference. We intend to present its positions and to ask for aid from the Conference for a peaceful settlement of the grave conflict which exists between us and the Iraki Government.

Paragraph B, article 5, of the final communiqué of the meeting of the Ministers of the Preparatory Committee admitting the participation of the national movements of Asia and Africa is quite obviously to be applied in our case.

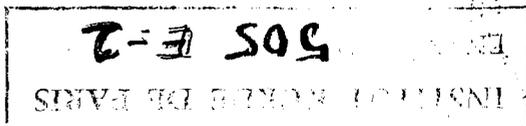
For your information, please find attached hereby the text of the statement of December 64, of General Mustafa Barazani, President of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan, President of the Council of the Revolutionary Command and Commander in Chief of the Revolutionary Army of Kurdistan.

Hoping that your Government, being a member of the Preparatory Committee of the Conference, will approve our participation, along with that of all the other national movements of Africa and Asia, we remain Sir, your devoted servant.

Ismet Cherif Vanly

Official Representative of the Kurdish Revolution abroad, spokesman of General Barzani and Secretary General of the Committee for the Defence of the Rights of the Kurdish people.

Address — 141, Chemin du Levant,
Lausanne/Suisse



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