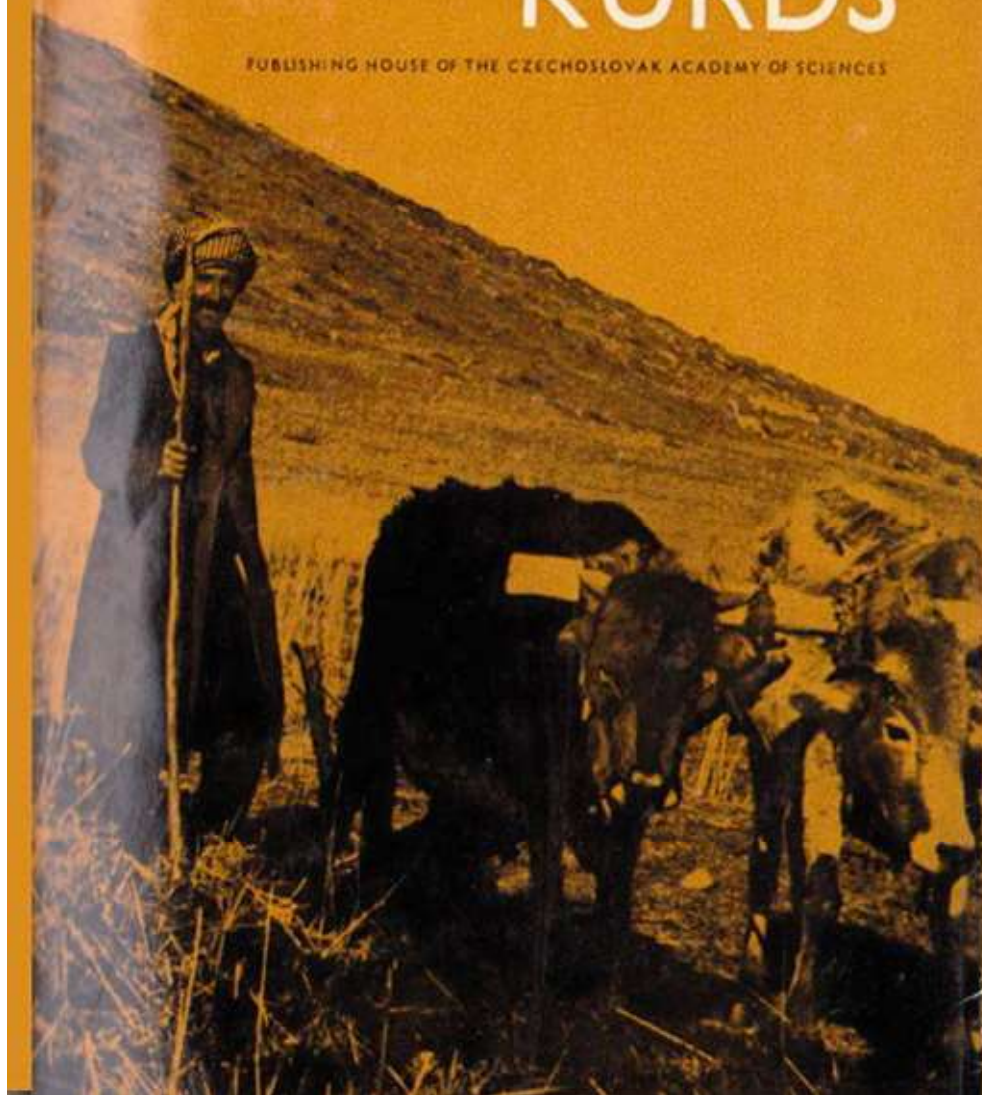


ABDUL RAHMAN GHASSEMLOU

KURDISTAN AND THE KURDS

PUBLISHING HOUSE OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK ACADEMY OF SCIENCES



ABDUL RAHMAN GHASSEM LOU
KURDISTAN AND THE KURDS

This book is concerned with one of the most topical and at the same time the least known problems of the Middle East.

The first part supplies the reader with many-sided information on the life of the Kurds on the geographical setting of Kurdistan (the mother land of Kurds) and the number of population, and the religion, language, literature and history of the Kurds who belong to one of the most ancient nations of the Near East. It furthermore relates of the struggle waged by the Kurdish people for freedom and national independence, of the countless uprisings which constitute the main feature marking the history of the Kurds in the 19th and 20th centuries. The author gives an analysis of the consequences following the penetration of the imperialist powers and the petroleum monopolies into Kurdistan and underlines the influence of the Great October Socialist Revolution on the Kurdish national-liberation movement. This part of the book contains also an analysis of the circumstances that brought about the final splitting of Kurdistan's territory among a number of states. The policies of the Turkish, Iranian and Iraqi governments towards the Kurdish people and the Kurdish problem are explained too.

The second part, analyzing the economic problems, pays considerable attention to the agrarian relations. On the basis of vast factual material the author explains not only the historical development of these relations but exhaustively also the irrigation system, the forms of land-tenure and land rent, the position of the Kurdish peasant and the social structure of the present-day Kurdish society. The causes of stagnation and slow progress of agricultural production are treated as well. This part is concluded by an analysis of the situation in industry, commerce and finance. A separate chapter is devoted to oil and its significance for economic development.

The third, last chapter deals with the various aspects of the Kurdish question. Proceeding from an explanation in the first section and the analysis in the second section the author points out the specificities of the Kurdish problem and the nature of the Kurdish national-liberation movement. On the basis of a concrete analysis of the Kurdish question from both internal and international viewpoints the author explains the theoretical and practical problems connected with the

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FOREWORD

The Kurdish problem as part of the present-day world-wide stream of national-liberation movements is undoubtedly one of the generally recognized and highly stringent issues of the struggle waged by the oppressed people for national self-determination and independent political, economic and social development; at the same time, however, it remains in its essence almost unknown.

Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou's book "Kurdistan and the Kurds" thus constitutes an exceptionally valuable contribution to the general knowledge of the complicated Kurdish problem as a whole, and some of its decisive aspects in particular.

The condensed geographical and historical outline in the first part - drawn in a limited extent, yet with sufficient profundity, in my opinion absolutely essential for the correct understanding of the Kurdish question in its entire width - is followed by an analysis of Kurdistan's economy, covering the whole second part. It is the setting of this particular task, namely the investigation of the economic aspect of the Kurdish question, which is indeed a merit of this book. The correct conclusions for the political solution of the Kurdish question require a thorough understanding of the economy of the future Kurdish formation, which is, furthermore, inevitable for the settlement of another, equally significant problem - the future development and progress in the stage of world-wide transition from capitalism to socialism.

It is an advantage of this work that the economic analysis, made on the basis of broad knowledge of the concrete material combined with the knowledge of marxist political economy and marxist theory as such, is sufficiently profound, because only truly profound knowledge of the economic problems creates prerequisites for a correct settlement of the whole question. Evidently, the problem is extremely complicated and difficult: for example the mere splitting of the territory inhabited by the Kurds into four state units, resulting

in the lack of a single, however insufficiently developed, economy, gives rise to a number of problems which will have to be tackled for the sake of future development and progress. The politically separated areas of comparatively large extents have economically become parts of four different countries dependent on the economics of other countries, especially the imperialist powers. In addition, due to the uneven development, the Kurdish territories in all these countries constitute typically backward marginal areas - a kind of underdeveloped areas of underdeveloped countries.

The entire second part dealing with economic problems thus forms a very solid foundation of this exceptionally successful book.

The third part called "The Kurdish Question" deals, first, with the problems concerning the nature of the national-liberation struggle of the Kurds, and second, with the problems of economic development. Here again I find a great merit of the book. The author justly proves that the attainment of political independence is an essential, yet by far insufficient precondition for further development and the contradiction between the newly created state and the economic backwardness of the country has to be urgently solved by correct methods aiming at a truly proportionate economics, which would protect itself from any form of neocolonialism.

I should like to add that Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou's book abounding with suggestions will serve not only as an excellent source of information on the Kurdish problems, but also as an incentive to further considerations of correct conclusions to all the problems which, as a result of the previous complicated development, will have to be faced in the course of the creation of Kurdistan.

Prof. Dr. Jaroslav Martinic
Rector of the University of 17th November

Prague, May 18th 1965.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Kurdistan and the Kurds - until recently almost unknown terms - have lately become discussed all over the world. This work aims at making these notions even more familiar to the reader.

The book is a political and economic study; nevertheless, it was indispensable to dedicate the introductory part to a geographical and historical survey. It was not my intention to write a geography or history of Kurdistan but merely to inform the reader about different aspects of the life of the Kurdish people; this is essential for a comprehension of the economic and political problems.

The second part concentrates upon the agrarian relations in Kurdistan. Some of the sections might seem rather detailed, yet I hold the opinion that a detailed analysis of agriculture in Kurdistan as the chief branch of the country's economy would help to elucidate a number of economic, as well as other, problems.

In the third part I set out to explain the following two questions: firstly, to clarify the national and political aspects of the Kurdish problem in the light of Marx-Leninist teaching and suggest a solution. Secondly, to point out some of the problems of economic development which the economically less advanced countries are bound to face, and compare which way of development guarantees full and rapid growth of productive forces, whether it is the capitalist way, or socialist development without capitalism altogether.

As a member of the Kurdish nation I have had the possibility of compiling extensive original material from various sources. It is on this point, however, that I encountered serious difficulties: Material on the economy, particularly statistical data on Kurdistan, does either not exist at all or is inaccurate and distorted. In passages dealing with agriculture, in case no sources are quoted, the data have been ascertained by myself or my helpers on the spot.

I take the liberty of adding one further remark: No one who writes about his own nation, its life and struggle, can remain un-

biased; I have tried hard, however, not to betray the principles of an objective approach to the facts under examination. It was my aim to present to the reader the face of the Kurds and Kurdistan as it is in reality, no more, no less.

It was not my intention to suggest a solution for all the problems discussed, though it might seem so at first sight. On the contrary, I have followed the Kurdish proverb which says: "The pursuit of science is like digging a well with a needle." It is up to the reader to judge whether I have accomplished my aim.

May I be permitted to use this opportunity and express my most sincere thanks to all who have contributed towards creating this book and enabled its publication. I am particularly indebted to the staff of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences Publishing House for the attention and care they have devoted in the course of the publication.

March 1965

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PART ONE -
GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL SURVEY

CHAPTER I

KURDISTAN AND THE KURDISH NATION

1. GEOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE

Kurdistan,¹ the land of the Kurds, is situated in the western part of Asia, in the Middle East.

It does not constitute a state, and the territory known as Kurdistan is divided among Iran, Turkey, Iraq and Syria. The term Kurdistan, having no legal or international recognition whatsoever, is not being employed in maps and geographical atlases; it is officially used only in Iran, and here for that part of Iranian Kurdistan corresponding to the Sinna province only.²

¹ The word Kurdistan was employed for the first time in the 14th century during the Seljuq period. It can be found in the book *Nuzhat al Qulub* written by Hamdullah Mustoufi in 1335-1340. "Kurdistan comprises 16 vilayets, has a moderate climate and borders on the vilayets of Arabian Iraq, Khuzistan and Persian Arak, Azerbaijan and Diarbekr." H. Mustoufi, *Nuzhat al Qulub*, Teheran 1957, p. 127. The quotation implies that in those times Diarbekr was not officially regarded as part of Kurdistan, but as an independent province (A.).

Evliya Chelebi, a well-known Turkish traveller of the 17th century, having travelled through all Kurdistan states that: "The vilayets of Erzerum, Van, Hakkari, Diarbekr, Jazire, Amadia, Mosul, Shahrizor and Ardalan form Kurdistan, and it takes 17 days to traverse it." Quoted from M. Fany, *La Nation Kurde et son évolution sociale*, Paris 1933, p. 129.

"Kurdistan is the western part of the country (Iran) inhabited by Kurds... It must be added firstly, that in the western region the territory which is inhabited by Sunnis is called Kurdistan, and secondly, that the town of Sanandaj (Sinna) is named Kurdistan by the common

It is therefore rather difficult to determine the borderline of all Kurdistan. As a result of an investigation of the territory inhabited by Kurds, which both historically and objectively forms a single unit, the borders can be delimited approximately in the following way:

A straight line starting at Mount Ararat in the north-east leading southward and reaching as far as the southern part of Zagros and Pishtkuh; from this point, we draw a straight line westward as far as Mosul in Iraq; then a straight line westward from Mosul to the area of the Turkish port of Iskandarun; from this point a line in the north-eastern direction as far as Erzerum in Turkey, from Erzerum eastwards as far as Mount Ararat.

The entire area of Kurdistan would thus cover approximately 409,650 km²,³ i. e. larger than the territories of Great Britain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland and Denmark put together. Out of this number, 194,400 km² are part of Turkey, 124,950 km² lie in Iran, 72,000 km² in Iraq, and 18,300 km² in Syria.⁴ The length of Kurdistan measured from north to south is 1,000 km, the average width being 200 km in the southern part, increasing northwards, where it amounts to 750 km.⁵

Kurdistan is situated between 33°–40° east longitude and

people." *Geographical Dictionary of Iran*, Vol. 5, published by Military Headquarters (in Persian), Teheran 1949–1954, p. 356. It may be of interest to mention that Kurdistan is officially called "West" in Iran, "North" in Iraq, "Eastern and South-eastern Anatolia" in Turkey and "Jazire" in Syria. (A.)

³ Certain Kurdish circles declare the territory of Kurdistan to exceed 500,000 km², embracing the whole area from Mount Ararat to the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean Sea. Cp. map published by Centres d'Etudes Kurdes, Paris 1949. L. R a m b o u t gives the figure 530,000 km² in his *Les Kurdes et le droit*, Paris 1947, p. 12.

⁴ The peculiarity of the Kurdish regions in Syria lies in the fact that they do not form a compact territorial unit within the territory of Syria, being separated from each other by Arab regions. Yet, they are a continuation of Turkish and Iraqi Kurdistan. (A.)

⁵ *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* states the length of Kurdistan as 600 miles, the width 150 miles. The Turkish dictionary *Kamus al Aalam* (Vol. 5, Istanbul 1896, p. 3, 840) states the length 900 km and the width ranging between 100 and 200 km.

37°—48° north latitude.⁶ It is a mountainous country with varied climate. In the west of Kurdistan there is Mount Taurus and the upper Mesopotamian area of Al Jazire and the lower Mardin Mountains. In the east, in the area between the lakes Urmia and Van, lies the Kurdish mountain-range. In the south-west lies Mount Zagros. The highest mountains of Kurdistan are Great Agri (Great Ararat) 5,156 m, Rashko in Jilo-Dagh 4,168 m, Little Agri (Little Ararat) 3,925 m.

Generally speaking, not only the mountains of Kurdistan but the average altitude of the whole country is high, ranging from 1,000 to 1,500 m above sea level. There exist towns situated far higher than that (e. g. Bijar at 1,920 m), and on the other hand, there are towns situated much lower, such as Arbil (430 m) lying on the verge of the Iraqi desert.

The climate: The plains of Kurdistan have a subtropical climate, the yearly rainfall ranging from 200 to 400 mm. In the lowlands located between the mountain-ranges, the average yearly rainfall amounts to 700—2,000 mm, sometimes even 3,000 mm. These lowlands are usually covered with woods with a number of rivers flowing through them. The climate in the valleys of central Kurdistan is, to a certain extent, continental even arid (the average yearly rainfall being 300—500 mm).

The highest and lowest temperatures occurring differ by 80 °C. At Karaköse in northern Kurdistan, the temperature in winter drops to —30 to —35 °C, occasionally even lower (—43 °C in January 1940). The summer temperature in southern Kurdistan rises to 35—45 °C in Kirmanshah and to 40—45 °C at Khanekin.

Table No. 1 illustrates the climatic conditions of different towns in Kurdistan.

Rivers: The majority of Kurdish regions possess an abundance of water courses, only some parts in Iraq and Syria - those bordering on the desert - lack water, not only for the needs of agriculture, but even for household use.

⁶ *Boʻshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya and Kamus al Aalam:* 34°—39° and 37°—46°. *The History of Mardukh:* Teheran 1953, p. 11 (in Persian) 32°—39° and 39°—50°.

Table No. 1

	Average Temperature in July (°C)	Average Temperature in January (°C)	Yearly Rainfall (mm)
Malatya	26.5	-1.5	440
Van	22.5	-3.5	380
Urfa	32	4.5	440
Diarbekr	31	2.5	470
Sinna	35	-15*	500
Kirmanshah	37.5	-10-15*	489
Kirkuk	43	14.5	334.2
Khanekin	41.8	2	385.2

* Lowest temperature taken.

Four large rivers have their springs in the mountains of Kurdistan.

The *Aras* rises in the region of Bingöl; during its 435 km course through Turkish Kurdistan it forms the joint borderlines of Turkey and the USSR and the USSR and Iran; then it enters the Caspian Sea. The total length of the *Aras* amounts to 920 km.

The *Tigris* starts at the Göl-cuk Lake in the central area of the southeast Taurus mountains, north of the city of Diarbekr. Its length in Kurdistan exceeds 600 km (450 km in the Turkish part, and over 150 km in Iraq), the total length being 1,900 km.

The *Euphrates* flows from Dümlütepe north of Erzerum (the river Karasu - 460 km) and from Aladag situated in the area between Lake Van and Agri (the river Murad - 615 km). The Murad and the Karasu meet northwest of the city of Elazig, thus forming the *Euphrates* which flows through Kurdistan for another 647 km as far as the borders of Turkey and Syria. The total length of the *Euphrates* is 2,800 km, flowing through Kurdistan for 1,110 km. The *Euphrates* meets the *Tigris* at the town of Basrah, their joint course, called the Shattal-Arab, then enters the Persian Gulf. The *Kizil Uzan* springing southwest of the town of Divan Darreh in

Iranian Kurdistan, flows through the Zanjan and Mianeh regions south of the town Rasht, where it is known as Sefidrud and falls into the Caspian Sea.

Of other significant rivers of Kurdistan we wish to mention the Great Zab (450 km in Turkey and Iraq), the Lesser Zab (200 km) which discharge into the Tigris, furthermore the Bitlis and the Botan in Turkish Kurdistan, the Sirvan in Iranian and Iraqi Kurdistan, the Gamasiab, the Jaghatu (240 km) and the Tatu in Iranian Kurdistan.

Lakes: The north-western part of Kurdistan is situated between two lakes: Lake Van and Lake Urmia; the former covers 3,765 km², its average depth being 100 m; it is situated 1,120 m above sea level. Due to its large contents of salt, the lake is not suitable even for sea fauna.

Lake Urmia, the western shores of which form part of the eastern borders of Kurdistan, is situated eastward of the town Urmia (Rizayeh), it is 130 km long and its width reaches 50 km, the extent being 6,000 km². Its average depth is 6 m, sometimes amounting to 15 m. The biggest of the islands in the lake is the Shahi-Island - approximately 25 km².

The smaller Lake Khazar (or Göl-cuk Lake) lies north of Diarbekr, near the source of the Tigris. It is situated 1,155 m above sea level. The Zrevar Lake lies in the Sinna region near Marivan, it measures 4 and a half kilometres in length and 1,7 km in width, the average depth being 13 m.

Forests: While the mountains of Kurdistan are rarely wooded, the valleys abound in both virgin and cultivated forests surrounding the towns and villages. The majority of the mountains in Iranian Kurdistan, to the southwest of Lake Urmia as far as Luristan, are covered with woods in an area exceeding 4 million hectares,⁷ most of them formed by oak-trees (*quercus*). In Turkish Kurdistan, forests cover about 6 % of the whole territory, in Iranian Kurdistan 32 %, and 8 % in Iraqi Kurdistan. The total wooded area in Kurdistan

⁷ The area covered by forests in western Iran extends over 11.3 million hectares. T. Bahrami, *An Economic Geography of Iran*, p. 47 (in Persian).

covers approximately 6 million hectares, e. g. about 14 % of the country's territory. However low this percentage is, compared with the other countries of the Middle East, it is quite high, as is evident from Table No. 2.

Table No. 2

Wooded Area in thousands ha	Iran	Iraq	Turkey	Syria	Kurd- istan
	19,000	1,540	10,548	449	5,740
Percentage of the Entire Area	11.6	3.5	13.8	2.4*	14

* Indices of the *Economic Development Abroad* in 1958, Prague 1959, p. 633 (in Czech).

The forests of Kurdistan are comparatively thin, and are gradually becoming thinner still, receiving no protection from the government and being most uneconomically used by the population that has no other fuel supply.

Mineral resources: Geological exploration of the territory of Kurdistan has so far been very inadequate; presumably there exist various deposits, the exploitation of which would completely change the complexion of the country.

Oil forms the most important part of Kurdistan's underground wealth; approximately 2,600 million tons of crude oil i. e. about 8 % of all the oil reserves of the capitalist world have been ascertained on its territory.

Oil is being mined at Kirkuk (Iraq), at Shahabad near Kirmanshah (Iran) and Siirt (Turkey). There are, of course, further oil deposits in other parts of Kurdistan; new large ones have recently been discovered in the Kurdish region of Jazire in Syria.

The largest deposits are situated in Baba Gur-Gur at Kirkuk, their exploitation being in the hands of an imperialist monopoly, the Iraq Petroleum Company. The yearly output of oil in Kurdistan surpasses 30 million ton - approximately 1/90 of the ascertained reserves of the country.

Other mineral wealth hitherto ascertained in Kurdistan are: iron ore in Divrik (in Turkish Kurdistan), copper at Ergan (Turkish Kurdistan) and in Luristan, chromium north of Diarbekr, sulphur in the Sinna region (Iran), lead at Kaban (Turkish Kurdistan) and at Maku (Iran), gold south of Kirmanshah, and silver at Kaban. Furthermore, there are numerous deposits of coal, salt, zinc and mercury throughout Kurdistan.

2. POPULATION

We have already mentioned the difficulties connected with delimiting the borders of Kurdistan, and it is even more difficult to determine the number of its inhabitants. In order to form a true estimate of the number of Kurds residing in different countries, we shall first devote our attention to three sources, each of which offer somewhat different figures. First, we shall consider the official sources of the respective countries, which either do not acknowledge the existence of the Kurdish nation at all, or deliberately lessen the number of its members to the minimum.

Following the widespread massacres in the 1920's and 1930's in Turkey, which is the mother land of about a half of all Kurds, the word "Kurd" was completely removed from the Turkish language. A certain Turkish "scientific" dictionary regards them as Turks living in the mountains, who have "forgotten their original mother tongue - the Turkish language." In 1930, Ismet Inönü, a well-known leader of the Popular Republican Party, then Premier, declared, when referring to the Kurdish revolt in Turkey: "The revolt, now continuing in our eastern provinces (i. e. in Turkish Kurdistan - A.) for the fifth year, having been incited by foreign intrigues, has by now lost half of its original strength... It is only the Turkish nation that has the privilege to claim ethnic and racial rights in this country, and no other element is entitled to do so."⁸

⁸ *Millet*, Aug. 31, 1930, No. 1,636.

In the same year, Minister of Justice Mehmut Essad, when mentioning the Kurds in his address to voters, said: "We live in Turkey, the freest country in the world... The Turk is the sole ruler and the only master of this country. Those not belonging to the pure race of Turks have one and only right here: the right to be servants, the right to be slaves. Let both our friends and our enemies comprehend this fact, let the mountains comprehend it, too."⁹

It is thus evident that we can obtain no reliable data concerning the number of the Kurdish population in Turkey from the authorities of this country.¹⁰ We encounter a similar situation in the ruling circles of Iran, who regard the Kurds as Iranians, even native Iranians, possessing "pure Iranian blood".

The chauvinism of the pan-Turkists and pan-Iranianists, longing for ancient glory, makes it impossible for us to acquire any correct official figures giving the number of Kurds in these countries.

It is not without interest that the U. N. Demographic Yearbook presents these data concerning Turkey from the viewpoint of the language spoken by the respective population. In 1945, when Turkey had a population of 18,790,173, this figure included 1,476,562 Kurds, while in 1950, when the population of the country increased to 20,974,188 people, this included already 1,854,569 Kurds. According to these statistics, in the five years from 1945 to 1950, the Turkish population grew by 11,5 %, while in the same period the Kurdish population was supposed to have increased by 25,5 %, which is not acceptable. A footnote to these statistics in the U. N. Yearbook explains the manner in which these data were ascertained, when stating that the language is mentioned only in case it is spoken by 10 or more people; and at the same time, these statistical data "... mask the fact that persons using the dominant language of the country in which they reside will usually include a diversity of ethnic groups."¹¹

⁹ *Millet*, Sept. 19, 1930, No. 1,655.

¹⁰ B. Darkot, Professor at the University of Istanbul in his work *A Geography of Turkey* (Moscow 1959, p. 57, Russian ed.) in order not to mention the Kurds, gives merely a general statement of 98 % of the population of Turkey being Mohamedan. (A.)

¹¹ *U. N. Demographic Yearbook*, New York 1956, p. 34.

Doubtless, many Kurds dare not declare their mothertongue in a country where the word Kurd is prohibited. Yet, even according to the above mentioned statistics, there should be at present more than 2 million acknowledged Kurds.

The following official statistics indicate different facts. In 1935 there were 13,899,100 Turks and 1,480,200 Kurds, while in 1945 already 16,590,500 Turks but only 1,362,900 Kurds, i. e. 117,300 less than in 1935.¹²

The next group of sources is composed of estimates made by scientific bodies, travellers, and orientalists of various countries. Western scientific publications do not differ markedly from the official statistics offered by the respective countries (where such statistics exist). For instance, the *Encyclopaedia Americana* states the total number of Kurds to be 1,700,000 and the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 1,500,000. It is, however, quite interesting that already in 1892 the French government in its Yellow book spoke about 3,012,897 Kurds, this figure applying to Turkey alone (i. e. the present-day Turkish, Iraqi and Syrian Kurdistan).

The commission despatched to Kurdistan by the League of Nations in 1925 to investigate the Mosul question, states the figure of 3,200,000 as the population of the entire Kurdistan.¹³

W. Douglas, Justice of the American Supreme Court, declared in 1952 that nearly one fourth of the sixteen million inhabitants of Iran are Kurds.¹⁴

The most reliable of the materials are the Soviet sources: The Great Soviet Encyclopaedia of 1952 presents a figure closest to reality - 7 million Kurds (2-3 million in Turkey, 2-2,5 million in Iran, 1,2 million in Iraq, 300,000 in Syria, 200,000 in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and 45,866 [1939] in the U. S. S. R.).¹⁵

The last group of sources is formed by original Kurdish publications. It must be admitted that some of them, due to their authors'

¹² *Sovremennaya Turtsia*, Moscow 1958, p. 28.

¹³ Ch. A. Hooper, *L'Iraq et la Société des Nations*, Paris 1928, p. 75.

¹⁴ W. Douglas, *Strange Lands and Friendly People*, London 1952, p. 55.

¹⁵ *Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopedia*, Vol. 24, p. 91.

indignation with the attitude of the authorities of Iran and Turkey, present somewhat exaggerated figures. Yet, as a rule, they are accurate.¹⁶ The Memorandum presented in 1948 to the United Nations by a group of Kurdish intellectuals offers the figure of 8 million Kurds residing in Turkey, Iran and Iraq. The figure delimiting the number of Kurds, as presented by most of the Kurdish publications, is usually 9 to 10 million.

We have mentioned several examples in order to indicate the discrepancy between the numbers of Kurds as estimated by different sources, and it is evident that none of these data are, nor can be, exact. When examining the areas inhabited by the Kurds and making a precise calculation of the population of *all these areas* according to the statistics of the respective countries, we ascertain the following results: Turkey - 4 million 600 thousand,¹⁷ Iran - 3 million,¹⁸ Iraq - 1 million 400 thousand,¹⁹ Syria - 400 thousand, i. e. altogether 9,400,000 Kurds residing within the territory of Kurdistan. More than 1 million are settled in various areas outside the country: 300,000 in Iran (in Khorasan, in Quchan and Darigaz²⁰ and around Qazvin), 200,000 in Afghanistan, in Gurian in the Herat region and near the borders between Iran and Afghanistan,²¹ also in Baluchistan in the Sarhad region²² 59 thousand in the Armenian, Azerbaijan, Georgian and

¹⁶ E. g. A. Sajady in his book *Kurdish Revolts*, Baghdad 1959, p. 12, declares that there are 15 million Kurds, and together with those who had forgotten the Kurdish language altogether 18 million, which, in the author's opinion, is a minimum estimate. (A.)

¹⁷ The Kurdish areas are reckoned according to *Sovremennaya Turtsia*, p. 63, Moscow.

¹⁸ *Sovremennyi Iran*, Moscow 1957; *A Geographical Dictionary of Iran*, Teheran 1949-1954.

¹⁹ *Statistical Abstract*, Baghdad 1958.

²⁰ According to the "Roudhatussafa" history, in 1796 there were 50 thousand Kurdish families living in Khorasan. These Kurds formed a compact settlement and had been transferred to this area by Shah Abbas at the beginning of the 17th century in order to protect the borders of Iran against the raids of north-eastern tribes. (A.)

²¹ *Sovremennyi Afghanistan*, Moscow 1960, p. 69.

²² M. G. Pikulin, *Beluch'i*, Moscow 1959, p. 32. These Kurds were transferred to this area by Nadir Shah in the 18th cent. (A.)

Turkoman Republics of the U. S. S. R.;²³ the remaining sections live in Turkey near Ankara, in Baghdad and in Damascus. This implies that the total number of Kurds is about 10,450,000. In Kurdistan there furthermore reside approximately 1,200,000 members of other nationalities and national minorities; when added to the total number of Kurds settled in Kurdistan, it can be ascertained that the population of Kurdistan amounts to 10,600,000 people.

Thus we can fix the following detailed tables of the extent of Kurdistan and the number of Kurds residing both within and outside its territory:

Table No. 3

	Area (km ²)	Popula- tion per km ²	Population in Kurdistan		Kurdish Population in the Country
			Total	Kurds only	
Turkey	776,980	33	5,100,000	4,600,000	4,900,000
Iran	1,640,000	12	3,500,000	3,000,000	3,300,000
Iraq	444,442	15	1,600,000	1,400,000	1,550,000
Syria	184,479	22	—	400,000*	—

* This figure includes also the Kurds settled in Damascus and Aleppo. (A.)

Table No. 4

	Kurdish Area in the Respective Country (km ²)	Popula- tion in Kurd- istan per km ²	Percentage of Popul. of Kurdistan in the Country's Population	Percentage of Kurds in the Country's Population	Territory of Kurdis- tan to the Territory of the Country (%)
Turkey	194,400	26	19	18	25
Iran	124,950	28	17	16	7.5
Iraq	72,000	22	23	22	16
Syria	18,300	21	—	10	10

²³ According to the latest census of 1959. *Yezhegodnik BSE 1960*, Moscow 1960, p. 7.

The Kurds constitute over 85% of the population of Kurdistan, the remaining part comprising approximately 400,000 Turks, 300,000 Azerbaijanians, 150,000 Persians, 250,000 Arabs and 200,000 members of other nationalities: Turkomans, Assyrians and Armenians. Of the total population of Kurdistan 85 % live in rural areas and only 15 % in towns, the most important Kurdish towns being: Kirmanshah in Iran (125,000 inhabitants), Kirkuk²⁴ in Iraq (78,648 inhabitants), Diarbekr in Turkey (63,108 inhabitants).

3. RELIGION

The religion of the majority of Kurds is Islam, an overwhelming part of the Moslem Kurds being Sunnis; the small number of Shiis live mostly in southern Kurdistan, in the area of Kirmanshah and Luristan,²⁵ in the area of Dersim in the north.

²⁴ The endeavours of pan-Turkists to prove that Kirkuk is a Turkoman or Turkish city are absolutely futile, as it is well known that Kirkuk is an ancient Kurdish town which always had a majority of Kurdish population. "Three quarters of Kirkuk are formed by Kurds, the remaining part comprising Turks, Arabs etc." The Turkish dictionary *Kamus al Alam*, vol. 5, Istanbul 1896, p. 3.802.

²⁵ Luristan and mainly Lurs are a constant subject of disputes both among orientalist and among Kurds. There are two leading conceptions: one, prevailing among Kurds, considers all Lurs and also Bakhtiaris to be Kurds. The second group regards them as separate nationalities, which are related to Kurds, nevertheless do not belong to them. There are altogether 650,000 Lurs and 400,000 Bakhtiaris. Even though we do not intend to treat this problem in detail, we consider it essential to take up a distinct attitude. Having examined the arguments of both conceptions and the objective situation in this area, it seems correct to distinguish the Lurs from the Bakhtiaris. The Lurs live north of the river Ab Diz in the direction towards Kirmanshah, the Bakhtiaris populating the area south of the river towards the east. We regard the population residing north of the Ab Diz, the Lurs, as Kurds.

It has been historically proved, that from time immemorial the Lurs and Kurds have been living side by side. The Kurds are considered to be descendants of the Guti tribe and the Lurs to be descendants

In the Mosul region (in Iraq and Turkey), there are about 100,000 believers of the Yezidi religion known as "worshippers of the devils"; their prophet is called Malik Tawus (the Peacock King). Originally, it was Zarathustrism - the religion of the Iranian nations, which, however, incorporated many Islamic and Christian elements as a result of the influence of these two religions.

Among the Kurds, there are, furthermore, members of other

of the Lulubit tribe, two Zagros tribes that lived in close neighbourhood and compactly in the southern Zagros area at about 2,500 years B. C. (Rashid Yasami, *The Kurd and his Race*, Teheran 1956, p. 23.) This area had in history formed a unit. Until the 13th cent. Iranian Kurdistan, including Luristan, was part of the district known by the Arabs as Jibal. (B. Nikitine, *Les Kurdes*, Paris 1956, p. 23.) The dialect of Lurs is so similar to the Kurdish language that there is, in fact, no difference between the dialect of the Kirmanshah region and the Luri dialect.

This also applies to the national psychology of the Lurs and to their culture. *Sheref-nameh* written in the year 1596.* Divides the Kurds into four branches: 1. Kermanj, 2. Lur, 3. Kalhur, 4. Guran. The fact that the Kurds and the Lurs were, in the past, identified, is evident from the following two quotations: "Karim Khan was leader of the Lur tribe of Zand." (*Narody Prednei Azii*, Moscow 1957, p. 266.) - the next: "The most significant of the Kurdish speaking tribes in the 18th century was the tribe of Zand..., which seized the crown and the throne of the Iranian kingdom." [Dr. H. Hedayati, *A History of Zand*, Teheran 1956, p. 78 (in Persian)], or "in Khoramabad (i. e. the capital of Luristan - A.) several of the Kurdish speaking tribes..., welcomed Karim Khan with open arms". (Ibid.)

Rousseau, when enumerating the Luri tribes in the 18th century, includes the Kalhur, Mukri, Zangana tribes, which are, at present, generally acknowledged as Kurds. (J. F. X. Rousseau, *Notice historique sur la Perse ancienne et moderne, et sur ses peuples en général*, Marseille 1818.)

It might thus be presumed, that, during the future development of economic relations, after the completion of the consolidation process of the Kurdish people, the Lurs will most likely become part of them. (A.)

* This work by the Kurdish prince of Bitlis on *Kurdish history*, the first of its kind, was the first time published in Petersburg in 1860.

religious groups and sects, such as Christians, Ali Allahi (Alavi or Ahle Haq) and Jews.

Leaders of the different Sunni sects (*tariqat*), the so-called shaikhs, still exercise a strong influence throughout Kurdistan. Of the main *tariqats* chiefly the *qadiri* and *naqshbandi* still remain in existence. Each shaikh of importance has a great number of supporters (*murids*, dervishes, *soufis*) among the people, especially in the country, who are subjects to the so-called caliph, the actual representative of the shaikh. Every *murid* must pay at least one yearly visit to his shaikh and deliver presents to him, for which he then receives blessing. Otherwise, there is no clerical hierarchy among the Kurdish Sunnis. On completing his studies, a priest (*mulla*) receives a licence (diploma) from a generally acknowledged high priest to perform his office. A priest beginning his office has no other income than that which he receives from the believers. In the rural districts, where the people are extremely poor, the priest often has to make his living by farming or cattle-breeding. Thus the priest lives and works together with the common people, and being usually the only educated person of the village (in Iranian and Iraqi Kurdistan), occasionally plays a positive role in the national-liberation movement. On the other hand, the sheikhs of present-day Kurdistan mostly hinder the endeavours of the working people and some of them even support the reactionary policy pursued by the ruling authorities of the respective countries and that pursued by the imperialist powers.

4. LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

The Kurdish language belongs to the group of the Iranian languages, which form one branch of the Indo-European family of languages, and includes namely Kurdish, Persian, Afghan and Tajik. Although the Kurds had for a very long time been ruled by Turks and Arabs, and the ruling circles of Turkey and Persia who especially after World War I, were practicing the policy of assimilating the Kurdish population, the Kurdish language, though banned, succeeded in

preserving the original word stock and was influenced by Arabic and Turkish to a limited degree only.²⁶

The Kurdish language does not, as yet, have a unified literary form, and for the time being, there remain two prevailing dialects: 1. Kermanji, 2. Sorani. The Kermanji dialect is spoken in the north-western part of Kurdistan, where the majority of Kurds live, comprising practically all the Kurds settled in Turkish Kurdistan (around Dersim the Zaza dialect is used) in Syria, in the Mosul area in Iraq and north of Urmia in Iran. The Sorani dialect²⁷ is spoken by Kurds of the south-eastern part of Kurdistan: by the majority of Kurds living south of the imaginary line connecting Rawanduz in Iraq with Urmia in Iran.

The Kermanji dialect prevailed in literature until World War I, but after the prohibition of the Kurdish language in Turkey, and, at present also in Syria, and due to the simultaneous growth of the national-liberation struggle of Kurds in Iran and Iraq, it was the Sorani dialect that began to prevail in the Kurdish literature.

Sorani made remarkably rapid progress during the existence of the Mahabad Republic in 1945—1946 in Iran. Following the victory of the revolution of July 14, 1958, Kurdish literature began to develop at a great speed in Iraqi Kurdistan, where the existence of Kurds was acknowledged by the Constitution. In this way, Sorani is becoming the chief dialect used in the present-day Kurdish literature.

It should be pointed out that there is no substantial difference between these two dialects; basically, they form a single language:

²⁶ "Although the Kurdish language is divided into numerous dialects, it shows a remarkable stability in its characteristic features". B. N i k i t i n e, *Les Kurdes...*, p. 9.

²⁷ Instead of Sorani, the expressions Kurdi, Mukri or Sulaymani are used; Sorani is the most correct term, as it includes all dialects except Kermanji, while Mukri stands for the dialect spoken in the area of Mahabad, and Sulaymani for that spoken around Sulaymania. The term Kurdi is universally used for the Kurdish language. In the area between Mahabad and Sulaymania, the word "*kermanj*" is used in the meaning of "farmer", "peasant", whose language is then called "kermanji", which has no connection with the Kermanji dialect. (A.) (For this problem cp. *Sovremenniyi Iran* p. 61).

they have a similar word stock and the same grammatical structure. "It must be noted that in spite of certain differences between Kurdi (Sorani) and Kermanji, it is quite easy for the Kurds from the north-western and south-eastern areas to understand one another."²⁸

In Iran and Iraq, the Kurdish language is written in Arabic script, whereas in Syria the Roman alphabet and in the U. S. S. R. the Russian alphabet are used; in Turkey, where the Roman alphabet is used for the national language, there do not exist any Kurdish publications. Undoubtedly, the fact that there is no uniform writing for the Kurdish language affects the development of the language most unfavourably and, in fact, constitutes a serious obstacle to the unification of a Kurdish literary language over the whole territory of Kurdistan. It is evident that the most suitable script for Kurdish would be the Roman alphabet.

The Kurdish language is comparatively easy; were the Roman alphabet adopted, the elimination of illiteracy would be a far easier task, and at the same time, the language much more accessible to foreigners.

The Kurdish language is prohibited in Turkey, Iran and Syria, where there are no Kurdish schools; all education and even legal evidence is carried out in Turkish, Persian or Arabic respectively. Only in Iraq a Central Office for teaching Kurdish was established after the revolution in 1958 that planned to realize the teaching of Kurdish throughout all Kurdish elementary schools.

At the University of Baghdad a section for the Kurdish language, literature and history was established, the purpose of which is to educate teachers in these fields.

Kurdish is taught at Kurdish schools in the Armenian S. S. R., where the "*Reya taza*" journal, the organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia, has been published in Kurdish for a whole number of years, and great care is being devoted to the development of the Kurdish language and literature and to general Kurdo-logy. Furthermore, several scientists in Moscow, Leningrad and Baku devote themselves to studies in this field.

²⁸ *Sovremenniy Iran*, ..., p. 34.

The Kurdish nation prides itself of an ancient and rich culture, but "numerous foreign occupants, namely Turks and Persians, who hold the disgraceful plan of assimilating the Kurds, have either confiscated or completely ruined the products of the material and spiritual culture of the Kurds."²⁹

Nevertheless, the ancient culture has been preserved, and even nowadays we come across remains of ancient cultures in every part of Kurdistan. The heritage of the past proves that the "savage" Kurds of today used to have a highly developed culture and led an independent life free from foreign rule.

All orientalists who devote themselves to the study of Kurdology are agreed that Kurdish folklore is one of the richest. Due to the illiteracy of the people, the poems and songs narrating the histories of ancient battles or love tales have been preserved by oral tradition from one generation to another. For example, throughout Kurdistan it is possible up to this day to hear songs relating, sometimes for more than an hour, the heroic deeds of the Kurdish people in their struggle against foreign invaders. The well-known song about the fight of the Kurds in the fort of Dim-Dim against the forces of Shah Abbas at the beginning of the 17th century is sung in all parts of Kurdistan.

Kurdish literature abounds in popular legends; we can come across poems originating as early as the 17th century, which describe the resistance of Kurds against the Arab usurpers, and, strangely enough, these poems written in the language of those times are still comprehensible.

Pire Shaliar, a Zarathustrian scholar left behind "Counsels" (in verse) which are read and admired by the people up to the present. The "Counsels", not mentioning their social significance, are written in beautiful and pure Kurdish.

Similar to Persian, Kurdish is a language of poets. Old prose works are very rare, but there have been numerous outstanding poets from old times up till nowadays, the greatest of which are the following: *Baba Tahir* (935—1010), who wrote in the Luri dialect and whose tetrastichs are famous far beyond the borders of Kurdistan;³⁰ *Mala*

²⁹ *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopedia.*

³⁰ "A representative of anti-feudal tendencies of the people... In his poems

Jazire, an eminent poet of the 12th century; the greatest classic of Kurdish national literature *Ahmade Khani* (1650—1706) whose excellent work "Mam u Zin" constitutes the epos of Kurdish literature of the feudal era; *Maulavi* (1806—1882), a great lyric of south Kurdistan; *Koyi* (1815—1892), the inciter of the Kurdish people's struggle for freedom and independence.

Of the most important Kurdish poets of the 20th century we should like to mention: *Piramerd* (1867—1950), *Ahmade Mukhtar* (1897—1935) and *Bekas* (1905—1948). At present, *Hazhar* (Iran), *Kadri Djan* (Syria), and *A. Avdal* and *A. Shamo* (U. S. S. R.) belong to the most renowned.

No doubt, *A. Goran* (d. 1962 - Iraq) was the greatest modern Kurdish poet, who achieved the climax of present-day Kurdish literature both by the contents of his poems and by introducing a new form, freed from the restrictions of the classic Kurdish verse, and also by the purity of his language. In this way he opened new paths for the further development of Kurdish poetry.

Modern Kurdish literature and art have been making promising progress since the revolution in Iraq in 1958, and an inflow not only of new poets but of new writers and other artists too, might be expected to take place.²¹

5. EDUCATION

In Kurdistan, there still exists a large percentage of illiterate population, amounting to more than 80 %. The authorities of Turkey and Iran have taken no steps to establish modern education of Kurds;

we find outspoken protest against social inequality in society, against the high lord and rulers". *Vsemirnaya istoria*, Moskva 1957, Vol. III. p. 502—3.

²¹ It must be pointed out that many significant Kurdish poets and prose-writers, scientists etc. have been writing their works in Arabic, Persian or Turkish, and still continue to do so. In this treatise we have mentioned only those writing in Kurdish. (A.)

there are no university-level schools in Kurdistan, the number of secondary schools is very small and also the number of elementary schools is on the average highly insufficient with regard to the number of population. To quote an example - the Mahabad region (Iran) has a population of 250 thousand, while the number of schools, as evident from Table No. 5, is only 17.

Table No. 5
School-Year 1954-1955*

School	Elementary		Secondary	
	boys'	girls'	boys'	girls'
Number of schools	8	4	4	1
Number of pupils	1,650	558	339	56

* *The Cultural Calendar of Mahabad, 1954-1955, p. 145.*

That means, altogether twelve elementary schools with 2,208 pupils and five secondary schools with 395 pupils. In the whole of Kurdistan there are about 300 elementary schools and 30 secondary schools, i. e. 1 school for a population of more than ten thousand.

Throughout Kurdistan there is not a single permanent theatre, and cinemas exist only in large towns. In Iranian Kurdistan, for example, there are altogether ten cinemas, i. e. one for 300 thousand people.

The situation in the education of women is worse still, even if we take into consideration that Kurdish women are allowed greater freedom and enjoy more respect in the family than the women of the neighbouring Moslem nations. Not speaking of towns, in the country too they are not veiled, and take part in all the work connected with agricultural and animal production. Yet the literacy of town women reaches 5 %, whereas the country women are completely illiterate.

6. MEDICAL CARE

The Kurdistan climate, when compared to that of the surrounding countries, is quite favourable, and clean water is available in the villages - usually from wells - yet, many people suffer from various diseases, and tuberculosis, trachoma, malaria and the like are widespread in many parts of the country. A doctor visits a Kurdish village very rarely, and even in the towns there are only few; for the Kurdish working people, doctor and medicines remain a luxury. As to hospitals the situation is no better; in all Iranian Kurdistan there are about 250-300 hospital beds, that means one hospital bed for more than ten thousand people.

SHORT HISTORICAL OUTLINE

1. THE ORIGIN OF THE KURDS

The Kurds belong to the oldest nations of the Middle East, which is generally recognized as an area of ancient civilization. The study of Kurdish history has so far been very insufficient, that is why there exist different opinions concerning the origin and the historical development of the Kurds.¹ Certain „historians“ deliberately misrepresent historical facts and, by means of baseless speculations, try to prove the Semitic or Turkish origin of the Kurds, from which they conclude that the Kurds constitute a mere offspring of either Arabs or Turks. Others, misusing the linguistic affinity between Kurdish and Persian, regard the Kurds as Iranians, meaning Persians. They do not recognize

¹ There are many legends describing the origin of the Kurds; one of them, turned into verse by Ferdōsi about a thousand years ago in the famous *Shahnameh*, narrates the following: Once upon a time there was a king called Azhdehak. He was merciless to his subjects and the cup of his cruelty was constantly filled by two snakes growing out of his shoulders, and twisted around them. Each of them required the brain of one young human being every day. People suffered greatly under this burden, and there was no house or hut throughout the whole country where someone would not be mourning for a victim of the hated king. Many people wondered how to do away with this cruelty, and thus it happened that Armaiel and Garmaiel, two witty friends, invented a trick which would help to lessen the people's suffering. They conspired with the king's cook and instead of two human brains a day they prepared only one which the cook mixed together with one brain of a sheep and presented to the voracious snakes. The saved person was always sent far away into the mountains and plains so that he would never be seen again. Every month thirty young people left for the mountains, and whenever they reached the number of two hundred, the cook gave them some goats and sheep to take to the mountains with them. The Kurds are descendants of these people who were saved from the snakes of king Azhdehak. (A.)

the existence of an independent Kurdish nation and falsify its historical development.

By now, it has already been scientifically proved that Kurds are descendants of the Zagros tribes (Guti, Lulubit and others), ancient residents of the Zagros area, and of the Indo-European tribes that had entered this territory during the second millenium B. C. Historical documents of the Akkad era prove that more than two thousand years B. C. the Lulubit and Guti tribes established contact with the Akkad rulers and even ruled in Akkad themselves.²

The origin of the word "Kurd" is also subject to disputes. Some connect it with the old Kardukhoi mentioned by Xenophon, others with the Kyrtys who used to live west of Lake Van. Already in 400 B. C. Xenophon, in his well-known work "Anabase", writes about the heroism of the Kardukhoi and describes in detail the war against them, after having led the return of 10,000 Greek soldiers from Persia to Greece.

2. THE KURDS IN ANTIQUITY

The Kurds are generally regarded as descendants of the Medes, and the conquest of Niniveh in 612 B. C. by Kyaxar, king of the Medes, marks the beginning of their history.

During the Mede Empire (7th century B. C.), which embraced a vast territory, the Mede nobility grew mighty and influential, and at the same time, became rich to an unprecedented degree. Nabonid, ruler of Babylonia, called the representatives of the Mede nobility "kings". The richer the nobility became, the poorer grew the common members of the tribes and the number of slaves increased. Further growth of inequality of wealth and the growth in the number of slaves then caused the transformation of the Mede tribal union into a slave state. Even though the Mede Empire fell under the sway of the Per-

² R. Yasami, *The Kurd...*, p. 30-31. It is generally presumed that "Kurd" is a modification of the old Persian word "Gord" meaning "brave".

sians (in 550 B. C.), the Kurds never ceased to lead an independent life in their inaccessible mountains.

Xenophon in his "Anabase" states that the Kardukhoi "living in the mountains, are brave and will submit neither to the rule of king Xerxes nor to Armenian rule".

Presumably, already in the Sassanian Era, before the Arab invasion (in the 7th century), the Kurds were known under this name and were settled in the area corresponding approximately to the territory of present-day Kurdistan.

The Arab invasion dealt a heavy blow upon the further independent development of the Kurdish people. The Kurds put up a brave defence against the Arabs, of which there is rich evidence, including some verses inscribed on leather, recently discovered in Sulaymania: "The shrines were destroyed, the fires had gone out and the Greatest of the Great concealed himself. The Arab oppressor demolished all the villages as far as Shahrizor.³ Women and maidens were taken into captivity, the men drowned in their own blood. The faith of Zarathustra was left without support. Hurmuzu⁴ shall have mercy on no one."⁵

Nevertheless, Islam, which proclaimed the equality of all men, gradually came to be the religion of the majority of Kurds.

3. THE KURDS DURING THE MIDDLE AGES

In the period beginning with the advent of the Arabs, who had put an end to the rule of the Sassanians, one of the greatest dynasties that had ever ruled Iran, lasting until the subsequent pernicious invasion of the Mongols in the 13th century, many dynasties followed in succession. Most significant of them were the Shaddadids, who established their rule in the north of Kurdistan in 951. They were followed by the Maravanids (990—1069) who ruled over Diarbekr and

* The present-day region of Sulaymaina (A.).

* Ahurmuzda, "Hurmuzu" (in Kurdish) - god of Virtue, the opposite of the god of Evil. (A.)

* R. Yasami, *The Kurd ...*, p. 120.

several towns of Armenia. The victorious struggle of Salahaddin Ayyubi against the European crusaders formed one of the most glorious chapters in Kurdish history; Salahaddin, who had come from the Kurdish tribe of Rawand settled in the Dvina district of the Yerevan region, built up a large empire extending over Egypt, Syria and Mesopotamia. The rule of the Ayyubite Dynasty continued for 81 years (1169—1250), thus constituting the greatest era of this period. From then until the Mongol invasion, the Kurds, due to their outstanding militant spirit, often played an important role in the services of non-Kurdish rulers. Yet, it was as early as those times that the disastrous policy towards the Kurds was put into practice, consisting in the exploitation of their services and heroism in the battles and wars waged against other nations and often also in inciting warfare among the Kurdish tribes themselves. This policy, though gradually losing its effectiveness, is being exercised even nowadays.

Three big invasions strongly impaired the standing of the population in Kurdistan and in the whole area of the Near East: the Seljuq Turks who entered in 1051, the Mongols in 1231 and Tamerlane in 1402, who, in succession, occupied and ravaged the countries and were the cause of immense, and for a long time irremediable, economic and social difficulties.

By the beginning of the 16th century, there existed powerful and for those times comparatively centralized states on both Iranian and Ottoman territories.

Ismail I. (1502—1518), the founder of the Safavid Dynasty, supported the Iranian Islamic sect of Shiis against Sunnis, the official Mohammedan sect. He rejected the services of the Kurdish chieftains, who had offered him assistance in his struggle against the Sublime Porte, and had them imprisoned.⁶

The Ottoman Sultan Selim was more efficient in inciting the religious feelings of the northern Sunni Kurds and provoke them against the Safavids. Due to this the Turks, together with the Kurds, defeated the forces of Shah Ismail in a great battle that took place on August 23, 1514, in Chaldiran, north-west of Lake Urmia. The year

⁶ Sh. Bitlisi, *Sheref-nameh*, Cairo 1930, p. 168.

1514 proved fateful for the Kurdish people; as a result of the battle, Kurdistan was, in fact, divided between Iran and the Ottoman Empire, a larger part remaining under the sway of the Ottomans. The division was incorporated in an agreement concluded in 1639 by Shah Abbas and the Ottoman Sultan Murad IV., and as a crucial point, influenced all the further happenings in Kurdish history.

Hakim Idris, by origin a Kurd from Bittlis, was after 1514 ordered by the Turkish sultan to form the Kurdish vassals. In order to consolidate the new frontiers of Turkey, Idris resettled Kurdish tribes along the borders, freeing them from all obligations. These tribes were freed from taxation, on the condition that they form a permanent militia for the needs of the Turkish state.

The era beginning with 1514 until the latter half of the 19th century constitutes a period during which small principalities were formed, that enjoyed a certain amount of independence within the limits of the empire. Some of them even retained contact with the Persian shah and the Turkish sultan simultaneously.

The most powerful of the feudal lords could go as far as to usurp the rights of the sovereign, e. g. issue coins, and in the openings of religious ceremonies (the khutba), when the sovereign was to be quoted as supreme secular authority, they had his name replaced by their own.

As already mentioned, not only the feudal lords but entire dynasties and principalities, too, though they had some independence, were not united, but remained in a state of continuous warfare, and sometimes to seek the support of the shah of Persia, on other occasions, of the Turkish sultan.

Following a period of strenuous warfare, a great Kurdish dynasty of Zand led by Karim Khan Zand was established in Iran in the period 1752—1795. The era of Karim Khan, namely the years from 1752 to 1779, meant a splendid chapter in Kurdish history. This, of course, was a great opportunity for declaring the independence of the Kurds, yet, just as Salahaddin became ruler of other nations, Karim Khan came to be the leader of Iran. He was the first king whom the people named Wakil the people's representative.

The French Consul in Baghdad wrote about Karim Khan in a letter to Paris in 1763: "It seems that the country has once again

found its greatness and prosperity under the leadership of Karim Khan and his sensible conduct and personal authority. Frightful anarchy and endless warfare were replaced by peace and security.⁷ Furthermore the French Consul wrote: "The roads are safe, trade has been resumed, many caravans are travelling from here⁸ to Iran, and the fifteen or twenty thousand Iranian families that had come to seek asylum in Baghdad are gradually returning to their mother land."⁹ "Karim Khan was a generous supporter of science and culture and at the same time a great builder."¹⁰ Malcolm, a well-known English traveller, wrote of Karim Khan: "He lived a happy life; his death was that of a father, who died surrounded by his family."¹¹

The last principality to remain in existence in Iranian Kurdistan was the Principality of Ardalan, the most important of its rulers being Amanullah Khan, 1800—1820, and his son Khasrow Khan. "Ardalan retained its independence almost until the era of Khasrow Khan, a well-known warrior, celebrated in this region up to this day."¹²

In 1865 Ghulam Shahkhan became the vali (governor) of Ardalan. After his death, the Iranian king abolished this principality and appointed a governor himself; thus the last comparatively independent area in Kurdistan was deprived of its freedom.

4. THE KURDS IN MODERN TIMES

After having suffered a defeat at Vienna in 1683, the Turks turned their attention to their eastern borders and gradually began to interfere in the affairs of the Kurdish principalities. By the 1830's, they had already begun to form actual military centres in Kurdistan,

⁷ *Archives nationales de France*, Consular correspondence, Baghdad, Vol. I, No. 175, quoted from Persian text.

⁸ i. e. from Baghdad.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Dr. Hedayati, *A History...*

¹¹ J. Malcolm, *Histoire de la Perse*, Vol. III, Paris 1821, p. 229.

¹² B. Nikitine, *Les Kurdes, ...*, p. 168.

which provoked a particular feeling of resistance among the Kurds, which gradually became stronger and found its reflection in their revolts, aimed at gaining independence; these uprisings followed one after another until the end of the 19th century.

One of those who most courageously fought the Turks was Muhammad Pasha known as "Miri Rawanduz", who started to call up troops and had weapons - daggers, guns and even cannons - manufactured directly at Rawanduz. More than 200 cannons were made, some of which have been preserved at Rawanduz, some in the Baghdad Museum.¹² Muhammad Pasha assembled an army of over thirty thousand men and declared the country independent in 1826. He was a brave man and achieved a number of notable victories in the course of a very short time: occupied the regions of Mosul, Mardin and Jazire Bin Omar, and his territories extended from Baghdad as far as the present-day Iraqi-Syrian and Iraqi-Iranian borderlines. Mir established contact with Ibrahim Pasha, son of the Viceroy of Egypt, fighting the Turkish Sultan, in order to propose joint action against the Ottoman Empire. Having learned this, the Sultan launched a mighty army against Mir, yet, the expedition was of no avail. Mir himself, however, influenced by a mulla (mohammedan priest), who regarded war against the Caliph as a great sin, surrendered voluntarily to the Sultan and left for Constantinople. During the return journey, he was perfidiously assassinated by Turkish mercenaries at Trabozan.

Badir-khan, the prince of Jazire, was the next to give strong resistance to the Turks. By 1842 he had created a territorial unit including the entire region between Lake Van and Lake Urmia in the north, and Mosul and Rawanduz in the south. The Turks, however, succeeded in turning against him the Christian population, who then refused to pay taxes, for which Badir-khan had them severely punished. Thereupon Britain and France made an urgent appeal to the Sultan to protect the lives of the Christians. Later, due to the treachery of one of his relatives, Badir-khan suffered a defeat and was taken prisoner.

The greatest revolt of this period occurred during the Turko - Russian War (1853—1856), under the leadership of the national hero

¹² A. S a j a d y, *Kurdish Revolts*, Baghdad 1959, p. 65 (in Kurdish).

Yazdansher. The uprising broke out in the Hakkari and Botan districts and spread rapidly so that in the course of a very short time Yazdansher managed to liberate the whole area between Lake Van and Baghdad. One of the notable features of the revolt was the vast support it received from the broadest sections of the people, and in contrast to that led by Badir-khan, also the Christian population rendered active help and participated in the uprising. "By January 1855 the forces of Yazdansher numbered a total of 30,000 men, by February already 60,000, and later 100,000 including Greeks and Arabs."¹⁴ Yazdansher tried to join forces with the Russian army, but was, unfortunately, unsuccessful.

The revolt continued for two years. Then Britain sent forces to support Turkey and through mediation of their emissary Nemrud persuaded Yazdansher to make his reconciliation with the Sultan. As in the above cases, Yazdansher also, relying on the promises given, travelled to Constantinople, thus bringing the revolt to an end. It had, however, a deep influence on the further stages of the Kurdish people's struggle, and the name of Yazdansher has been remembered and celebrated in Kurdish folklore down to the present.

Another notable Kurdish revolt was that led by Shaikh Obaidullah of Shamzinan, which broke out in 1880. The Shaikh made use of his authority to unite the Kurdish tribes and liberated the whole area between Lake Urmia and Lake Van. He was fully aware of the fact that only the unification of the Kurds, and at the same time, a friendly policy towards other national minorities could enable him to attain his goal. When in 1885 he was advised to massacre the Christian population, he answered: "The Turks need us only as a counterbalance to the Christians, and when there are no Christians, they will turn the reprisals on ourselves."¹⁵

In this case too, the agents of the British colonial policy played their inauspicious role. In a speech made at Naw Chia the Shaikh said, when referring to the British Consul in Van: "... I did not give weight to the words of the foreigner, I am simply of the opinion that now, at

¹⁴ P. I. Averianov, *Kurdy v voynakh Rossii s Persiei i Turtsiei v techenie XIX stoletia*, Tiphlis 1900, pp. 148—148.

¹⁵ B. Nikitino, *Les Kurdes, ...*, p. 189.

such a suitable moment, when the Kurdish chiefs have been attacked by the Iranian government, we cannot miss the opportunity that has arisen before us to seize from Turkey and Iran all the territories settled by Kurds, which come under my authority, and establish an independent Kurdish principality."¹⁶ It is notable that this time, having learned about the Shaikh's intentions, the Turkish and Iranian governments suppressed this last important Kurdish revolt of the 19th century together, through their joint forces.

Following this revolt, the Sublime Porte began to employ a more "flexible" policy towards the Kurds. In 1892 the "*Ashirat Maktablari*" clan schools were established with the purpose of training the future members of the Kurdish hussar troops, named Hamidia after Sultan Hamid ruling during that period. The Turks needed these troops during the war against Russia but employed them mostly for massacring the Armenian population. The Hamidias did not play any significant part in the war itself, nevertheless, it was due to them that the Kurds remained on the side of the Turks. The Hamidias remained in existence, and it is typical that not even the Ottoman government itself trusted them. Article 28 of the 1895 Act states: Carrying of weapons and wearing uniforms by hussars of the Hamidias outside training time is forbidden. Outside this time, hussars of the Hamidias shall be summoned before a regular court."¹⁷

5. THE PENETRATION OF IMPERIALIST POWERS INTO KURDISTAN

The beginning of the 20th century in the Middle East was a period of fierce struggle between the Russian, the British and the French, and it turned even more fierce with the entry of another rival - the Germans. The struggle took place also in Kurdistan which became the meeting place of different agents of the imperialist powers, ranging from diplomats to missionaries.

¹⁶ B. Nikitine, "Les Afchares d'Urmuyeh", *Journal Asiatique*, Jan-Mars 1929, p. 100.

¹⁷ M. Fany, *La Nation Kurde et son évolution sociale*, Paris 1933, p. 171.

Czarist Russia began to take interest in the fate of the Kurds already in the time of the wars with Persia, as two thirds of the Persian troops consisted of Kurds.¹⁸

Russia paid much attention to the Kurds during the Russo-Turkish War in the years 1828—1829, and particularly at the time of the Crimean War of 1853—1856. The Czarist government was mainly interested in employing the Kurds, who had become famous as a militant nation, against the forces of the sultan and the shah, or at least, neutralize them so that they should not fight against Russia.

The governments of Czarist Russia and Britain showed "Christian" concern for the fate of the Armenians settled in Turkey, mainly in Turkish Kurdistan; but their chief concern was to use the issue of guaranteeing the rights of the Armenians in the name of Christianity as a pretext for exerting political pressure on the Sultan. As regards the Kurds, they were not considered by these "Christians" to be human beings at all. On September 7, 1880, the governments of Russia, Britain, France and other European countries sent a joint note to the Ottoman government in reply to a previous Turkish statement about the Armenians in the eastern part of Turkey constituting no more than 17% of the population; the note reads as follows: "Neither should the Kurdish nomadic element, living in the mountains and coming to the valleys settled by Christians only to cause anarchy, be included in the statistical reports that fix the majority population in each locality."¹⁹ Yet, during World War I, the imperialist powers felt it necessary to count with the "Kurdish element". Russian and English agents were active in the North, German and English agents started to penetrate into southern Kurdistan. Wasmus, the German Consul to Bushehr, even succeeded in preventing a meeting of British and Russian troops, with the help of Kurds, namely the Sanjabi tribe.²⁰ The British agents managed to bribe the tribes of Kalhur, Goran and Hauraman with gold and promises, and provoke them against the Sanjabi tribes.²¹

¹⁸ K u r d o g l u, "Kurdy i imperializm", Bulletin pressy srednevo vostoka, Tashkent 1932, No. 13, 14, p. 94.

¹⁹ Quoted in M. F a n y, *La Nation Kurde*, ..., p. 161.

²⁰ K u r d o g l u, "Kurdy i imperializm", Bulletin..., p. 110.

²¹ Ibid.

The first American agents to penetrate into Kurdistan at the beginning of the 20th century were missionaries, who later, during World War I, played an important part in the areas around Urmia and Mahabad. The main wave of American influence, however, came during the period between the two World Wars and especially after World War II.

Already in the course of World War I, in May 1916, the representatives of Britain and France, anticipating the defeat of Germany, concluded a secret treaty concerning the future arrangement in the countries of the Middle East. The treaty, denominated as "Sykes-Picot" - after the names of the Foreign Ministers of Britain and France - divided the entire vast territory of the former Ottoman Empire into two spheres of influence: the British and the French zones. The British "red" zone included mainly Mesopotamia (Iraq) and extended from Khanekin in the north (southern Kurdistan) southward beyond Kuwait. The "blue" French zone consisted chiefly of the territories of present-day Syria and Lebanon and the south-eastern part of Turkey (north-western Kurdistan).

Palestine - the "brown" zone - was to receive international status.

Sazonov, the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, having been informed of the treaty before, announced his consent on April 26, 1916, on the condition that the north-eastern districts of Turkey, including mainly Trabozan and the north-eastern part of Kurdistan, would be annexed to czarist Russia.

Thus the major part of the territory of Kurdistan was to be split among three imperialist powers.

Prince Shakhovskii, Consul of czarist Russia to Damascus before World War I and chief czarist agent in Kurdistan during the war, wrote that he had "performed a splendid task, the outcome of which had been annihilated through the February coup d'état",²² (Meaning the Russian bourgeois-democratic revolution of February 1917). Kurdoglu writes: "Truly, it was only the Russian Revolution and the subsequent October Revolution that put an end to the czarist diplomacy and marred the blood-stained gamble with the fate of the Kurdish people,

²² Ibid., p. 109.

carried on in the interests of imperialism".²³ The Soviet government had, in fact, made the "Sykes-Picot" treaty, and other treaties too, public, and thus helped the nations of the Middle East to see through the intrigues of the imperialists.

The Russian Revolution of 1905 was followed by revolutions in Iran and in Turkey. As in Tabriz, headquarters of the revolution in Iran, Anjumans (Soviets) were formed in Iranian Kurdistan - in Mahabad, Sinna, Saqqiz and Kirmanshah. The Mahabad Revolutionary Anjuman was established under the leadership of a notable Kurdish public personality and poet Qazi Fattah. In Kirmanshah, about ten Anjumans were formed. As the same time, an uprising of the Kurdish tribe of Shikaks, settled around Urmia, broke out under the slogan of Kurdish autonomy.

The Kurds in Turkey made use of the victory of Young Turks and began to take steps for promoting the idea of an independent Kurdish state. The periodical "Kurdistan" appeared already in 1898, first published in Cairo, later in Geneva. In 1908 "*Hatawi Kurd*" (The Kurdish Sun) was launched as bulletin of the Society for Aid and Progress. The periodical "*Roja Kurd*" - the organ of the "Kurdish Hope" association appeared as the last in this series of journals, all of which were edited by Kurdish intellectuals of feudal origin and nationalistic groups for the purpose of spreading the idea of struggle for the national rights of the Kurds and their liberation.

World War I meant a break in the activities of the Kurdish associations and periodicals. The Turkish authorities used the war as a pretext for declaring the "jihad" (the sacred war of Mohammedans against unbelievers) into which they also entangled the Kurds, thus greatly impairing their own struggle for national independence which might have intensified during the war. Not only did the Turkish government exercise a policy of extermination of Kurds, but they also assassinated numerous Kurdish leaders. On the other hand, under the pretext of retreat before the advancing Russian troops, 700.000 Kurds were moved out of their settlements; many of them did not outlive this forced migration.²⁴ In the course of World War I, numerous

²³ Ibid., p. 109.

²⁴ B. Nikitine, *Les Kurdes...*, p. 196.

Kurdish villages and herds of cattle were destroyed and thousands of peace-loving inhabitants were killed by Turkish troops, not in Turkish Kurdistan alone, but also in Iranian Kurdistan.²⁵ As far as the working people of Kurdistan are concerned, the war meant nothing but poverty and oppression, massacres and humiliation.

6. KURDISTAN AFTER THE GREAT OCTOBER SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

On October 30, 1918, an armistice agreement was signed in Mudros, embodying the unconditional surrender of Turkey, which, at the same time, meant the fall of the Ottoman Empire.

Right after the war, the Kurdish organizations and press resumed large-scale activity directed toward the forming of an independent state, which became their primary slogan.

During this period following the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution, the Soviet authorities made fruitful efforts to strengthen their position in Trans-Caucasia, and established a great and manysided influence upon the course of events in the neighbouring countries. As early as December 3, 1917, the well-known Soviet declaration was published: To All the Moslem Working People of Russia and the East. The declaration, and the Soviet solution of the nationality problem, as it was later applied in practice, demonstrated to the Eastern nations, and particularly to those of the neighbouring countries, the enormous significance of the October Revolution for the future destiny of the oppressed nations. The response in Iranian Kurdistan to this historical event was so great that - through the initiative of Russian revolutionary soldiers - several soviets with Kurdish participation were founded in Kirmanshah in 1918. Ever since that time there can be perceived a profound influence of the Great October Socialist Revolution and the nationality policy pursued in the Soviet Union upon the Kurdish national-liberation movement.

²⁵ *Narody Prednei Azii*, ..., p. 246.

In 1919, the national-liberation struggle headed by Mustafa Kemal spread over the whole of Turkey, and in July of that year a meeting of national-bourgeois and patriotic organizations was held, called "Society for the Defence of the Rights of Eastern Anatolia". The meeting took place in Erzerum and was actively attended by all the politically conscious sections of Kurds who spared no effort to support the Turkish national-liberation struggle against imperialism, the victory of which, they believed, would lead to the realization of their own national rights. When the Great National Assembly of Turkey met in Ankara in 1920, it was attended by 72 Kurdish deputies, who collaborated with Mustafa Kemal as representatives of Kurdistan.²⁶

In August 1920 the Sèvres Agreement, which was part of the Versailles Treaty, was forced upon Turkey. Participants of the agreement were: Great Britain, France, Greece, Italy, Rumania, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Belgium, Japan, Hidjaz and Dashnakyan Armenia on one side, and Sultan Turkey on the other. A Kurdish delegation lead by Sherif Pasha was also present at the conference. As to Kurdistan, the following articles were embodied in the Treaty: Section III, Article 62: A commission sitting at Constantinople and composed of three members appointed by the British, French and Italian Governments respectively, shall draft within six months from the coming into force of the present Treaty a scheme of local autonomy for the predominantly Kurdish areas lying East of the Euphrates, South of the Southern boundary of Armenia, as it may be hereafter determined, and North of the frontier of Turkey with Syria and Mesopotamia, as defined in Article 27, II (2) and (3). If unanimity cannot be secured on any question, it will be referred by the members of the commission to their respective governments. The scheme shall contain full safeguards for the protection of Assyro-Chaldeans and other racial or religious minorities within these areas and with this object, a commission composed of British, French, Italian, Persian and Kurdish representatives shall visit the spot to examine and decide what rectifications, if any, should be made in the Turkish frontier

²⁶ N. Dersimi, *Kurdistan tarihinde Dersim*, Aleppo 1952, 125, (in Turkish).

where under the provisions of the present Treaty, the frontier coincides with that of Persia.

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

Article 64: If within one year from the coming into force of the present Treaty, the Kurdish peoples within the areas defined in Article 62 shall address themselves to the Council of the League of Nations in such a manner as to show that a majority of these areas desires independence from Turkey, and if the Council then considers that these people are capable of such independence and recommends that it should be granted to them, Turkey hereby agrees to execute such a recommendation, and to renounce all rights and title over these areas.

The detailed provisions for such renunciation will form the subject of a separate agreement between the Principal Allied Powers and Turkey.

If and when such renunciation takes place, no objection will be raised by the Principal Allied Powers to the voluntary adhesion to such independent Kurdish State of the Kurds inhabiting that part of Kurdistan which has hitherto been included in the Mosul Vilayet.²⁷

A question arises as to the fact that Britain and France, the leading imperialist powers in the Treaty of Sèvres, gave their consent to the forming of an autonomous Kurdistan, which might later have become independent. Were they really concerned with securing the right to self-determination of the Kurdish people according to "Wilson's 14 Points" as they declared with such great emphasis?

Their greatest real concern was to prevent the spreading of the response awakened by the Great October Socialist Revolution. They intended to create a backward and highly feudal state that would serve as a buffer between Turkey and Soviet Russia and potentially as a strategic point against the latter in the vicinity of the oilfields of the Caucasus. Through this act, the imperialists,

²⁷ Ch. A. Hooper, *L'Iraq...*, pp. 99, 100.

alarmed by the active co-operation between the Kurds and the Kemalists, aimed at separating "Eastern-Anatolia", i. e. Kurdistan, which was supporting the Kemalists, from Mustafa Kemal, and thus at impairing their standing. The British, having the biggest say in the Treaty, also believed that once this state had been formed, it would exist as a direct British protectorate, and they evidently tried to separate the Mosul region, where oil had been discovered, from Turkey and make it a domain of their own.

The Treaty of Sèvres, in fact, foresaw a complete split of the Ottoman Empire so that the states which were to be created would come either directly or indirectly under the sway of the imperialist powers.

Clémenceau, leader of the French delegation in the talks on the division of Turkey, explained later: "Well, yes. I did give up Mosul, but I used it as a bait, so as to get Kilikia. Kilikia and Alexandretta are by no means bad. That's why I said to the English: What would you prefer - Mosul or Kilikia? They answered - Mosul. I said all right, you may have it and I shall take Kilikia."²⁸ With such striking cynicism the imperialists determined the future of nations. Clémenceau in his parliamentary speech confessed that he had been informed about the value of the oil deposits in the Mosul vilayet he would never have signed the agreement.²⁹

The Treaty of Sèvres was very frail from the beginning. The Sultanate government, one of the signatories, had lost its authority in the majority of central and eastern Anatolia. The Great National Assembly in Ankara, together with its elected government headed by Mustafa Kemal, rejected the agreement. Poincaré was right when saying: "The Turkish Treaty was signed at the Sèvres National Manufactory (a china-manufacturing enterprise in Sèvres) and is as fragile as the products, as breakable as a vase."³⁰

And, in fact, it did break; the victory of Turkish Kemalist forces over the Greek army on the river Sakarie at the end of the

²⁸ A. F. Miller, *Blízký východ po první světové válce, 1918—1923*, Prague 1951, p. 22.

²⁹ Ch. A. Hooper, *L'Iraq...*, p. 18.

³⁰ A. F. Miller, *Blízký východ...*, p. 23.

Summer of 1921 turned it into a scrap of paper. By September 1922, almost all of Turkey had been liberated from foreign troops, and on November 1, 1922, the Sultanate was abolished. In July 1923 an agreement was signed at the Lausanne Conference, according to which the original territories of Turkey were basically preserved. The Kurdish question was not mentioned here at all, the agreement stating only that the cultural and religious rights of minorities must be respected.

It proves that, in so far as the Kurds were concerned, the Treaty of Sèvres had mere declarative significance in the sense that their rights had been mentioned for the first time in an international treaty. And this, too, was the sole positive phenomenon that remained to the Kurds of this dead-born Treaty.

THE FINAL DIVISION OF KURDISTAN

1. THE KURDS IN TURKEY

The Lausanne Agreement did not end the Kurdish people's struggle; extensive revolts broke out in Turkey as well as in Iran and the newly created Iraq.

It did not take the Kemalists long to forget all that they had promised the Kurdish people, including even the solemn declaration that was part of the "National Pact" of 1920, where the respect for the rights of the minorities was pointedly emphasized. The firmer their own position became, the sharper were the Kemalists' attacks on the democratic rights of all the population of the country and mainly on the national rights of the Kurds and Armenians. Furthermore, the Turkish government introduced a chauvinistic assimilation policy against the Kurdish population.

In 1925 a revolt broke out in Kurdistan under the leadership of Shaikh Said and spread over large areas. Several committees in Aleppo, Erzerum and other places took part in the preparation of the revolt: the Aleppo committee whose member was also Shaikh Said was the most active, the Erzerum committee was the most consistent one.¹ "The creation of independent Kurdistan under Turkish protectorate and restoration of the Sultanate",² figured as the chief slogan of the revolt. The slogan itself demonstrates the backwardness and lack of orientation on the side of the leaders. However earnest was their endeavour to liberate Kurdistan, they were finally misused by the reactionary powers in Turkey and particularly by the British, both unwilling to accept the new republican government.

¹ This committee published a declaration freeing the population of taxing.

² M. Pogorelov, *Kurdskii vopros „Vojna i revoliutsia“*, vol. III, May 1925, p. 147.

After a series of bloody battles, the revolt was suppressed, Shaikh Said, Dr. Fuad and other leaders brought to court and executed. The president of the court, who had sentenced 53 leaders of the revolt to death, declared during the trial, on June 28, 1925: "Some of you have made the administrative misuse of government authority, others the defence of the caliphate, a pretext for the revolt, but all of you were at one in the matter of creating independent Kurdistan."² Nehru writes rightly: "So the Turks who had only recently been fighting for their own freedom, crushed the Kurds, who sought theirs. It is strange how a defensive nationalism develops into an aggressive one, and a fight for freedom becomes one for dominion over others. In 1929 there was another revolt of the Kurds, and again it was crushed, for the time being at least. But how can one crush forever a people who insist on freedom and are prepared to pay the price for it?"³

It should be added that the attitude shown by the Turkish bourgeoisie when taking the course of cruel dictatorship towards all democratic elements could not have been different. If the nationalism of an oppressed bourgeoisie struggling against imperialism is of a general and "defensive" nature, it assumes a reactionary and chauvinistic character when applied towards an oppressed nation, and becomes "aggressive".⁴

² L. R a m b o u t, *Les Kurdes...*, p. 27.

³ J. L. N e h r u, *Glimpses of World History*, Vol. II, Allahabad 1935, p. 1108.

⁴ The Kurdish people are really paying a high price for their liberty as described ardently by a well-known Turkish communist S. Üstünel: We observe villagers returning from police and gendarme stations unshattered though many of them are covered with wounds. As to violence towards people, the Kemalists have surpassed even that of the bloody sultans; they excel in cruelty practiced on the national minorities which they Turkify by force. They have expelled the lazars from their districts and kill Kurds on a mass scale, just as they did in the case of the Armenians. They have murdered already one hundred thousand Kurds, set fire and ravaged thousands of Kurdish villages. The villages that have been razed to the ground were declared "prohibited territory", yet these "prohibitions" cannot help the Ankara government trying to conceal the traces of their bloody policy.

The revolt of 1925 constituted a heavy blow to the Turkish government, a sufficient proof of which is that 35,000 soldiers and twelve aircraft were needed for its suppression.⁶ "The revolt was very serious and threatened the very existence of Turkey. Thus the Turks had to concentrate 80,000 soldiers in Kurdistan."⁷ Turkish troops began to devastate all Kurdistan in the manner of a colonial army. Thousands of peaceful inhabitants including women and children were murdered. Altogether 206 villages were destroyed, 8,758 houses burnt and 15,200 people killed.⁸ The revolt cost the Turkish government 20 million pounds.⁹

Such cruel means were employed in order to quell the revolt and the Turkish paper "Vakit" could then make the following cynical statement: "There is no Kurdish problem where a Turkish bayonet appears."¹⁰

The Turkish authorities also used the revolt as a suitable pretext for oppressing all democratic, and especially working class, movements throughout the country. "Ismet's government, employing the peace preservation law, discontinued the partly illegal communist periodicals, broke up the trade union organizations working in Istanbul and made mass-scale arrests."¹¹

In this way, the reactionary powers themselves linked the fate of Kurds struggling for their national rights and freedom with the

Ibrahim Tallig was the first general inspector and governed in Kurdistan. His punitive expeditions ravaged the whole area. We were several communists imprisoned in one of the fortresses lying within the area of the general inspectorate. Gendarmes were leading Kurds out of the prison, shot them and then returned. Afterwards they sold the silk belts of the shot Kurdish boys in the prison.

⁶ M. Pogorelov, *Kurdskii vopros...*, p. 151.

⁷ M. Forughî (the Iranian Prime Minister during World War II, then Iranian Ambassador to Ankara), A confidential letter to the Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs, from Ankara Nov. 24, 1927. *Yaghma*, No 8, Teheran, 1958.

⁸ L. Rambout, *Les Kurdes...*, p. 28.

⁹ K. Vasiliev, *Agrarnye problemy*, books 9-10, Moscow 1931.

¹⁰ *Vakit*, May 7, 1925.

¹¹ *Sovremennaya Turtsia...*, p. 146.

fight of the working class against imperialism, for the liberation of their country and for democracy.¹²

a) The Kurdish Problem and the Armenian "Dashnaktsutyun"
Counter-Revolution

In 1927 all Kurdish nationalistic organizations united in the Khoiboun party founded mostly by representatives of the Kurdish emigrants living abroad, mainly feudals, landlords and intellectuals. The first congress of the party was held in Bihamdun (Lebanon) where also a leader of the Armenian Dashnakians V. Papazian took part. Due to the limited interests of the leadership, the party did not and could not seek its actual allies but relied on the support of the imperialist powers, to whom the Kurdish problem constituted a means of political pressure on Turkey. For this reason the activities of the Khoiboun did not pass the British unnoticed, the latter being anything

¹² Üstünel, a Turkish communist, presents a wonderful record of this fact: "The oppressed national minorities have a special inclination towards the communists. We had been imprisoned in one fortress together with some Kurds for a number of years. However strictly separated we were, the Kurdish prisoners managed to find a way of contacting us. It is no lie, if I say that without them we would have died of thirst and starvation, as in the Turkish prisons, the communists often do not receive their daily ration. A person with no one to support him from outside is most badly off."

"In the time we were imprisoned there (i. e. in Kurdistan - A.) not a single bird visited the area, not a single caravan passed through. After all, this is Kurdistan devastated by blood, fire and sword... And still, even under these circumstances we were able to make contact with the Kurdish villagers not only within the prison itself, but outside too. Just imagine, through the seven locked gates and thick walls of this fortress we could obtain Stalin's works "Problems of Leninism" and "Principles of Leninism". S. Üstünel The Road of Struggle, pp. 17 and 46.

In this way, in spite of all the massacres and torturing, executions and humiliation, the Kurdish people distinguished Turks from Turks, the Turkish working people and fighters from their torturers and oppressors. (A.)

but satisfied with the policy of the Turkish government; neither were they overlooked by the French who had especially sharp disagreements with Turkey. The Khoiboun lay also under a direct influence of the Dashnakians, the Armenian extreme nationalists, whose entire efforts were directed chiefly against the Soviet Union. Dashnaksutyun "the organization of Dashnakians" rendered to the Khoiboun political, organizational and material support, and at the same time, assumed the role of the protectors and defenders of Kurds and not in front of their British and French masters only, as we shall observe later.

In 1930 the Khoiboun succeeded in organizing an armed revolt in the Ararat region led by Ihsan Nuri. The Iranian authorities gave the Turkish troops their permission to use Iranian territory in order to attack the rebels from the rear. After long and strenuous fights, the revolt was finally crushed with the help of a great number of troops, artillery and aircraft. According to incomplete statistics 165 villages and 6,816 houses were destroyed.

An explanation should be given as to why Dashnaksutyun supported the Khoiboun. The chief reason was that the Dashnakians themselves were not capable of organizing any armed movement on Turkish territory and therefore made use of the revolt of the Kurdish population directed against Turkey, whom the Dashnakians regarded a sworn enemy. At the same time this revolt, which according to the Dashnakians broke out in Turkish "Armenia", aimed at liberating this territory from Turkish rule. It must be said that Dashnaksutyun considered most of the Turkish Kurdistan territory to be part of greater Armenia; it might also be of interest to mention that the delegation of Armenian nationalists at the Paris conference of 1919 delimited the Kurds merely to the southern part of Diarbekr and regarded all the remaining vilayets of eastern Turkey as Armenia. Besides, the Dashnakians supported the Kurdish revolt, hoping it would weaken Turkey and create a suitable opportunity for the future struggle of the Armenians. In case an independent Kurdish state were formed, new prospects would arise for the future struggle of Dashnaksutyun both against Turkey and against the U. S. S. R. The independent Kurdish state was to become a base of the Dashnakians for creating a great and independent Armenia.

In short, the Armenian counter-revolutionary powers of Dashnaksutyun attempted to make use of the Kurdish people's longing for independence for their own anti-Soviet ambitions. These endeavours having been unsuccessful, they withdraw their support to the Kurdish national-liberation movement, and to a certain degree, even stood against it. Completely different relations had been formed between the Kurdish and the Armenian national-liberation movements. Many a time in history had these two nations fought hand in hand against a common enemy and a clear proof of this long-lasting friendship can be observed in the present position of Kurds in Soviet Armenia, where for the first time in history, they have achieved their national rights and are living in close friendship with the Armenian people.

b) The Kurdish Problem and the European Social Democracy

The Dashnakyans, as defenders of the Khoiboun, had to struggle in the Second International, and the attitude of the European social democracy towards the Kurdish problem is of particular interest. In a paper presented at the plenum of the Second International in Zurich in August 1930 it is stated: "For our International, the Kurdish problem is most important in that should it remain unsettled, this question threatens peace in the Near East... The agents of the Third International are trying to bring the Kurdish movement under their sway... These attempts are quite realistic, as the Kurds are now feeling deserted by the whole world. A demonstration of sympathy with the Kurds from our side would mean a great support to those people in Kurdistan who maintain a hostile attitude towards the Moscow International."¹³ It is obvious that the leaders of the Second International were by no means concerned with defence of the rights of the Kurdish people but with confusing the Kurdish national-liberation movement and bringing it under the influence of the supporters of imperialism, thus giving it an antipopular and anti-Soviet

¹³ *Bulletin pressy Srednevo Vostoka*, No. 13, 14, Tashkent 1932, p. 119.

character, which attempt was in full concord with the aims of the imperialists themselves.

The chairman of the executive committee of the Second International de Brucker revealed the shameful attitude of the European social democracy towards the Kurdish national-liberation movement in full light by saying: "Before opening the discussion on the Kurdish problem I should like to present a few remarks concerning our attitude on this dispute. The first difficulty consists in the fact that the Kurdish question is new to us and... it must be admitted that we, however experienced in European affairs, find it very hard to understand the problems of non-European matters. Besides, the Kurdish problem as far as the character of the struggle is concerned, has completely different methods and circumstances."¹⁴

"The next difficulty lies in the fact", continued de Brucker, "that we fear the Kurdish dispute might spread from a mere Turkish problem to one which would concern Iraq, Persia, and Syria, and cause international complications among the countries in question. True, in the paper presented by the Armenian party, Dashnaktsutyun, it has been stressed that the Kurdish movement is directed against Turkey, yet, no one can guarantee that it will not spread to the above mentioned countries and bring about the danger of war in extensive areas of the Near East."¹⁵

The above indicates that the social democracy support the struggle of the Kurdish people, but only in Turkey, and not in Iran and Iraq ruled by British imperialism, nor in Syria which was under the sway of France.

Let us pay more attention to de Brucker: "For us, the second difficulty is furthermore of a particular and principal significance. The International, following the principle of self-determination of nations, simultaneously declares that this right should not be realized by means of arms and blood, as this might bring about a danger of war in the respective countries and in the whole world, too. At present we are faced with the fact that the Kurds are fighting for their independence. Are we not abandoning our principal position in the national-

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 119.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 119

liberation question when fomenting the sanguinary fights of the Kurds?"¹⁶ A leader of the social democracy is afraid ... of the struggle of the Kurdish people, for fear it might grow into an armed struggle against imperialism in the Middle East. At the same time, according to him, in the League of Nations "there does not exist a single state to which a request for help could be made. Were this the only real way possible under present conditions, I do not see what effective significance our interference into the Kurdish affairs could have."¹⁷ Finally, the notorious theoretician of social democracy, Otto Bauer, read the resolution, where the executive committee of the Second International "calls the attention of the world to the massacres of Kurds by the Turkish government" and first of all emphatically declares that "the Second International is against the right of nations for self-determination being attained through weapons and bloodshed."¹⁸

Following the defeat of the 1930 uprising, the Khoiboun party gradually lost its influence. In the meantime the imperialists of Britain and France, on one side, and the Turkish government, on the other, had settled the chief disputes and subsequently lost their interest in the party of Dashnaktsutyun, not speaking of the Khoiboun, which unable to play any significant part, was gradually disbanded.

c) The Kemalist Policy of Assimilation of Kurds

After the revolt in 1930, the Turkish government intensified its policy of exterminating and assimilating the Kurdish population. Already in 1925 the law establishing "the general inspectorate" was passed. The inspectorate included a larger part of Turkish Kurdistan and had the right to declare martial law and summon troops from the adjoining regions. A new law was passed in May 1932, according to which hundreds of thousands of Kurds were deported into areas where they were to constitute 5 % of the population. By this law, "those

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 119.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 119.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 120.

speaking a mother tongue other than Turkish were forbidden to rebuild villages and districts, and restore craftsmen, clerk, or other groupings. "According to the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers, the Minister of the Interior will have the right to dissolve these groups, including those existing till nowadays"¹⁹

In what contradiction to the Lausanne Agreement this law is, is obvious from article 38 of this agreement which says: "The Turkish government promises to guarantee fully the lives and rights of all inhabitants of Turkey", and from article 39, where we read: "No limitations shall be made to free usage of any language by a citizen of Turkey, whether in private relations, in trade, religion, press, publications of any kind, nor in public meetings."²⁰

The Turkish authorities, dissatisfied with the results of this policy of violence, began to apply also ideological methods for the assimilation of Kurds. Recep Peker, general secretary of the People's Republican Party, declared in his lecture delivered at the university in 1931: "We thus accept among us those of our fellow-citizens who live among us and belong to the Turkish nation both politically and socially, on whom the ideas and sentiments of Kurdism have been inculcated...". The general secretary, who explained the existence of the Kurdish nation to be a result of inculcation of ideas and sentiments, then continued: "Present-day science denies that a nation of a few hundred thousand members and even that of a million members could exist as an independent nation."²¹ Such present-day "science", however, exists only in the vocabulary of the blinded Turkish nationalists.

A certain Dr. Sekban proceeded still further and said directly: "Sincerely, why be afraid of becoming assimilated; the position of the weak, assimilated by the powerful, has always proved better. It is enough if force is not applied." And elsewhere: "We must be honest enough to admit that our conviction about the necessity of educating the Kurds in their own language lacks firm grounds."²²

¹⁹ L. Rambout, *Les Kurdes...*, p. 33.

²⁰ L. Rambout, *Les Kurdes...*, p. 25.

²¹ M. Tekinalp, *Kemalismus*, Prague 1938, p. 224.

²² Dr. Ch. Sekban, *La question kurde*, Paris 1933.

Ahmet Rechid, also a Turk and a professor at the Academy of International Law at the Hague, in his brochure "On the Rights of Minorities in Turkey in the Past and the Present" deliberately and completely ignored the Kurds when declaring: "History has given proofs that, as to Turkey, from the very beginning, permanently and unchangingly, the respect for the rights of the minorities has never been violated nor disputed." The professor had the impudence to conclude as follows: "It often occurs that facts do not agree with the text. It has, however, never been so in the case of the rights of minorities in Turkey." And this is what our professor was trying to persuade us in the year 1935. But being well aware that rumours had gone round the world about the massacres of Kurds in Turkey, he felt obliged to add: "The bloodshedding conflicts which had taken place between the government of Turkey and certain communities (sic!) have nothing in common with the rights of minorities that we have been discussing"²³

Nevertheless, neither the policy of violence nor the "persuasion campaign" of the Turkish authorities were of any avail.

The strength and extent of the Kurds' resistance to the reprisals made by the Turkish authorities is well illustrated by the following statement of Mustafa Kemal in the Turkish National Assembly in 1936: "The most important issue in our internal situation is the Dersim problem (Dersim is a region in the western part of Turkish Kurdistan - A.) Therefore, in order to remove and eradicate this deterrent ulcer and to enable immediate decisions to be taken, it is essential to give the government absolute and extensive authority."²⁴

What this "deterrent ulcer" really was, becomes obvious from a letter sent to the League of Nations by the inhabitants of Dersim on November 20, 1937, in which they protest against the measures taken by the Turkish government, which "closes Kurdish schools, prohibits the usage of the Kurdish language, removes the words Kurd and Kurdistan from scientific works, uses barbarous methods when forcing the Kurds, including women and girls, to work on military projects in Anatolia, deports the Kurds in groups of ten people into Turkish

²³ Ahmed Rechid, *Les droits minoritaires en Turquie dans le passé et le présent*, Paris 1935, pp. 4, 15, 17.

²⁴ N. Dersimi, *Kurdistan tarihinde...*, p. 258.

districts where they are supposed to form a mere 5% of the population, etc."²⁵

The consequences of the great crisis of 1929—1933 strongly affected and impaired the economic standing of the working people in Turkey and particularly in Kurdistan. Poverty and unemployment, further reduction of the already low living standard of the peasantry, all this, together with the cruel persecution and the chauvinistic policy undertaken by the Turkish authorities, incited in 1937 a big rebellion in the Dersim region, which was led by Seyed Reza. The Turkish government employed a large number of troops against the Kurdish rebels, and again, thousands of people were killed. In some regions mass-scale massacres took place, entire villages and districts were destroyed. In the name of civilization even women, children, old people, and all the civilian population were killed. The revolt was cruelly suppressed and Seyed Reza together with ten other leaders was executed for robbery. I. Romanette mocks at the terminology of the Turkish ruling classes in whose language the Kurdish leader struggling for the unity of his land is a "robber" while the Turkish leader who expels foreigners from his country is a "patriot".²⁶

How successful the Turkish government was in pursuing its civilizing mission, is described by Osman Mete, editor of "Son Posta" who visited Dersim in 1948, ten years after the revolt had been quelled: "... and I have spoken with people living in this district. They have seen no government official except the tax-collector and the gendarme... I tried to get to know the people, their inner lives and their spirit, but found nothing to prove our past work. There is no industry, nor agriculture, nor trade... there is no doctor, the people do not know the meaning of the word medicine. There are no roads to connect the villages."²⁷

The Turkish government began to take unprecedented exterminating measures against the Kurds, even after the rebellion had been crushed, under the pretext of army manoeuvres.

In 1925, the Turkish authorities declared the Kurdish revolt to

²⁵ Ibid., p. 296.

²⁶ I. Romanette, *Le Kurdistan et la question Kurde*, Paris 1937, p. 12.

²⁷ N. Dersimi, *Kurdistan tarihinde...*, p. 325.

be a result of activities exercised by British agents. It should be admitted that the revolt was welcome to the British imperialists, as their dispute with Turkey, concerning the Mosul issue was presently to be discussed in the League of Nations. Pogorelov was right when stating that "... any disturbances among the Turkish Kurds in this period of tension, caused by the Mosul problem, better the position of Great Britain". He continues as follows: "We can hardly doubt the fact that the idea of the national unification of Kurdistan, although it did not spread among the broad sections of the population, had played a role in the outbreak of the revolt."²⁸

The role of religious fanaticism must not be ignored nor underestimated. Nevertheless, the motive power of the 1925 rebellion similarly to that of all the other Kurdish revolts, which had taken place from the beginning of the 20th century until World War II, was the endeavour to create an independent Kurdish state and secure the national rights of the Kurdish people.

"It is not possible to say," writes Nehru, "if British agents had anything to do with the rebellion, though it was obvious enough that Kurdish trouble in Turkey just then was welcome to the British government. It is clear, however, that religious orthodoxy had much to do with the rising, and it is equally clear that Kurdish nationalism had also much to do with it. Probably the nationalistic motive was the strongest."²⁹

During the 1937 revolt, the Turkish government side by side with the organs of the imperialist powers started spreading false informations about the Soviet Union supplying the Dersim rebels with money and weapons. The aim of this propaganda was, on the one hand, to show that the revolts in Kurdistan had been incited from outside, and in this way to persuade the public opinion of Turkey and the world that the cruel measures taken by the Turkish authorities were justified, and, on the other hand, to deter Iran and Iraq in order to gain their co-operation, and thus to clear a path for joint action against the Kurds.³⁰ At the same time, the Turkish government wanted to

²⁸ M. Pogorelov, *Kurdskii vopros...*, p. 152.

²⁹ J. L. Nehru, *Glimpses of World History...*, Vol. II, p. 1108.

³⁰ "The essential points of their (of the Turks - A.) request was to bring both

create an anti-Soviet atmosphere, which they needed for rapprochement with Nazi Germany.

As a result of this, the Saadabad Pact was concluded on June 8, 1937, between Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan, under the auspices of Great Britain, of course. The pact, besides its chiefly anti-Soviet character, was directed against the Kurdish national movement. Article 7 says: "Each of the high signatories vows itself to make provisions in its respective sphere against the forming or functioning of armed gangs, societies or organizations that aim at overthrowing the present institutions responsible for guaranteeing order or security of any section of the opposite party's borderline."²¹

Together with a number of other pacts, this one, too, was buried by the outcome of World War II. The Turkish government, nevertheless, never dropped its chauvinistic policy, having learned no lesson from the war, which had so fundamentally altered the political image of the whole world.

The "Son Posta" journal of April 11, 1946 categorically declared: "In Turkey no Kurdish minority ever existed either nomadic or settled, with national consciousness or without it." This is the fatal principle which has been leading the pace of the Turkish government up to our days.

2. THE KURDS IN IRAQ

It has been mentioned above that already in the course of World War I, the Sykes-Picot Agreement had split the Middle East into a number of spheres of influence attached to individual imperialist

states into co-operation, so that on the one hand, the Kurds of Iran should not make trouble for Turkey, and on the other hand, the Kurds themselves should not be able to make Iran a center of asylum and a potential base for attacking Turkey." M. Forugh i. A confidential letter...

²¹ S. S. Gavan, *Kurdistan, Divided Nation of the Middle East*, London 1958, p. 35.

powers. Mesopotamia became part of the British zone. During the war, a large part of Iraq was occupied by British troops, including Baghdad from March 11, 1917, where the troops remained even after the war had ended. Lord Curson's words were the motto of British imperialist policy in the Middle East: "The Euphrates forms the western border of India."

After World War I, the Kurdish people in Iraq began to move, and in the years 1918—1919 the liberation movement in Iraqi Kurdistan developed at a considerable speed. The Kurds of the Sulaymania area declared the Kurdish independence under the leadership of Shaikh Mahmud Barzinji, and the English gave their consent to his becoming governor of this region. The British imperialists needed the Shaikh to scare both Turkey, whose troops were still in action in the Mosul area, and also the chiefs of the Arab part of Iraq in case of their disobedience. Yet, Shaikh Mahmud was concerned with the independence of the Kurds, and for this reason his relations with the British soon took a turn for the worse, and consequently a fierce struggle against the British colonial army broke out. The decisive battle took place on June 9, 1919, at Darbandi Bazyan near Sulaymania. After the heroic struggle of the Kurds, Shaikh Mahmud suffered an injury, was taken prisoner and on July 25, 1919 sentenced to death by a British court. The sentence was changed to life imprisonment and Shaikh Mahmud was exiled to India.

In this struggle against British colonialism, the Kurdish people fought to a man. The revolt was crushed, but the Kurds gained faith in the possibility of fighting the strongest colonial power - British imperialism. It was the peasantry who constituted the decisive power of the revolt and went into battle headed by their religious leader Shaikh Mahmud. They expected not only national and political liberty for all, but also an improvement in their social standing. Obviously, the religious character of the leadership embodied by Shaikh Mahmud played an important role, too, which explains the vigorous nature of the peasantry's participation.

At the conference held at San Remo on April 25, 1920, Iraq was officially placed under British mandate, though all the Iraqi people opposed this colonial measure. Both the masses of peasantry in the

country and the members of the bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia in the cities began to take action: demonstrations and acts of protest took place. These activities turned into an armed uprising on June 30, 1920, and having spread over the whole of Iraq, continued until the end of October 1920.

By holding the foremost position in the national-liberation movement of the Iraqi people during 1918—1919,³² the Kurdish people had played an important role in the preparations for the Iraqi revolt against the British in 1920. Yet, during the revolt itself, the Kurdish movement, strongly impaired by the cruel reprisals of the colonialists, was not closely linked with the general struggle in Iraq. Simultaneously, the colonial administration was making use of the national frictions between the Kurds and Arabs with the purpose of weakening the feeling of solidarity of the two nations. After a series of battles, the British troops, applying extremely bloody methods, finally succeeded in suppressing the revolt.

The colonial administration, by means of a Referendum conducted on August 23, 1921, managed to place Faisal of the Hashemit Dynasty on the throne of Iraq. It is of significance that Kirkuk rejected Faisal as a successor to the throne and Sulaymania boycotted the "Referendum" altogether.³³

The antipathy of the Kurdish people toward the British gradually strengthened; the Turkish authorities and army tried to make use of this tendency and to win the Kurds over. The British colonial administration, in order to preserve at least some of their influence among the Kurds, gave their consent to the return of Shaikh Mahmud, who reentered Sulaymania in September 1922.

The British were in such a hurry that already by September 14, 1922, a Kurdish conference was held in Sulaymania, and in November of that year the Shaikh was proclaimed King of Kurdistan. The Shaikh himself was, however, far from contented with the Sulaymania pro-

³² D. N. K o t l o v, *Natsionalno osvoboditel'noe vosstanie 1920 goda v Irake*, Moscow 1958, p. 187.

³³ Sulaymania rejected almost unanimously any form of attachment to the territory controlled by the Iraqi government. *Report on Iraq Administration*, October 1920 - March 1922, p. 12.

vince alone, and intended to liberate all Kurdistan, and in the first place the Kirkuk region, where oil deposits had already been discovered. For this reason the English opposed his intentions but this time did not succeed in seizing Sulaymania. On March 4, 1923, the Shaikh was finally forced to abandon the city due to heavy air-raids by the R. A. F., and Sulaymania was occupied by British forces until June 11, 1923, when the Shaikh liberated it again.

On July 24, 1923, as a result of lengthy negotiations, the Lausanne Agreement was signed, annihilating once and for all the resolutions of the Sèvres Agreement. The Kurdish people now recognized the value of the promises made by the imperialist powers headed by Great Britain.

Shaikh Mahmud appealed to the Soviet government; on January 20, 1923 he wrote to the Soviet Consul in Tabriz (Iran): "In the year 1917, when the world heard the voice of true freedom and learned about your people being liberated from the clutches of oppressors and criminals, all the nations and nationalities of the entire world felt great joy."

"Now, at least," continued the Shaikh, "we have the prospect of realizing the legal and national rights of the Kurdish people, who hold out their hands to you and wish most sincerely with all their hearts to live with you in friendship and brotherhood."

The Shaikh concluded his letter as follows: "You are acquainted with the problem of armistice, and against whom the revolt in southern Kurdistan was directed. You also know the attitude of the neighbouring countries to these questions.

"It is not possible to write to you in detail about everything, as there are no diplomatic contacts between us and the Soviet government, whom we trust and consider to be our support. Yet, I can tell you one thing: All the Kurdish people regard the Russian people as liberators of the East, and are therefore resolved and prepared to unite their fate with that of the Russian people. What is at present in the centre of our attention is support for our cause... Our people are impatiently awaiting the establishment of mutual contacts."

The above letter is further evidence of the great response the Great October Revolution received in Kurdistan and also of the fact

that the Kurdish people, as one of the first nations struggling for their independence, grasped the impact and the role of the Soviet Union in the fight for freedom and self-determination of nations.

The struggle of Shaikh Mahmud encountered more and more difficulties until finally Sulaymania was occupied by British and Iraqi forces on July 19, 1924, and the Shaikh himself had to withdraw to the mountains. After a time, he concluded a treaty with the Iraqi government and settled in the country.

a) The Mosul Question

The Lausanne Agreement left the problem of the Turkish-Iraq frontier unsettled. Article 3 stated: "The borderline between Turkey and Iraq shall be decided in a friendly way between the governments of Turkey and Great Britain within a period of 9 months. In case an agreement between the two governments shall not be reached during the given period, the issue shall be forwarded to the Council of the League of Nations."²⁴

The question was, of course, not merely that of determining the frontier between Turkey and the newly created Iraq, but it concerned the whole of Iraqi Kurdistan, and, what was most important for the imperialists, it concerned oil. And the fate of the Iraqi Kurds depended directly on the settlement of this dispute.

The negotiations between Britain and Turkey led to no positive result. The question of the borderline became an issue of the League of Nations whose Council decided on September 30, 1924, to appoint a three-man commission to investigate the matter and present to the Council all the information and propositions which would enable a due resolution to be adopted. Members of the commission were: Colonel A. Paulis from Belgium, Count P. Teleki, then ex-Premier of Hungary, and Minister Plenipotentiary E. af Wirsén from Sweden, with Wirsén as chairman. The commission decided that investigations would have

²⁴ Ch. A. Hooper, *L'Iraq...*, p. 70.

to be conducted at the place itself and arrived in Mosul in January 1925.

Turkey proposed a referendum³⁵, which would express the will of the people, but Britain opposed this, as the matter concerned a borderline and not a territory. Both parties offered completely differing figures of the various nationalities inhabiting the area. The English regarded the Kurds as Aryans with nothing in common with the Turks, the Turks declared there was no difference between the Turks and the Kurds and that the two had been living side by side in friendly relations for several centuries.

The statistical data offered by Britain, Turkey and Iraq were as follows:

Table No. 6

	Turkish (1923)	British (1921)	Iraqi (1922-4)
Kurds	263,830	424,720	494,007
Arabs	43,210	185,763	166,941
Turks	146,960	65,893	38,652
Jews	31,000	62,255	61,336
Yezidis	18,000	30,000	26,257
Nomads	170,000	—	—
total	673,900	785,468	801,070

The commission arrived at utterly different conclusions: "The Kurds are neither Arabs, Turks nor Persians, though they are most nearly related to the Persians. They are different and clearly distinguishable from the Turks, and still more different and remote from the Arabs."³⁶

³⁵ *Question of the Frontier between Turkey and Iraq*, League of Nations, Geneva 1925, p. 46.

The majority of the population being illiterate, the Turkish government proposed that the voting should be conducted by means of cards with the English or the Turkish flag imprinted.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

The report then continued: "If the ethnic argument alone had to be taken into account, the necessary conclusion would be that an independent Kurdish State should be created, since the Kurds form five-eighths of the population. Moreover, if such a solution were to be considered, the Yezidis, who racially are very like the Kurds, and the Turks, who could easily be assimilated by the Kurds, should be included in estimating the number of the latter. They would then form seven-tenths of the population."²⁷ This means that the official document of the League of Nations recognized the existence of Kurds as a separate nation as well as their right to an independent Kurdish state.

b) Oil Monopolies in Kurdistan

The final settlement of the Mosul question itself was, however, made in the interests of the British imperialists. Iraqi Kurdistan was separated from Turkish Kurdistan and became part of present-day Iraq. At that time, Lord Curson swore he was not in the least interested in the existence of oil in this area.²⁸ On June 5, 1926, a treaty was signed by Britain, Turkey, and Iraq, settling the Mosul question in benefit of Britain. This treaty provided the definitive delimitation of the present-day frontier between Iraq and Turkey, but previously, on February 14, 1925, a treaty had been signed granting the concession for oil-mining in Iraq to the Turkish Petroleum Company, which changed its name to Iraq Petroleum Company (I. P. C.) in 1929. This concession concerning Iraqi Kurdistan in the Kirkuk area is valid for 75 years, i. e. till the year 2000. Later, in 1932, a treaty concerning Mosul oil was concluded between Iraq and the I. P. C., valid till 2007. In 1938, another treaty on the oil in the Basrah area was signed to be valid till 2013.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 57.

²⁸ Lord Curson himself was the chief shareholder of the Turkish Petroleum Company. That is why he thought it necessary to declare that "...he personally is not interested at all whether there is any oil in this area or not." *Dějiny diplomacie*, Vol. III, p. 155 (Czech ed.).

Nowadays, the I. P. C., with its branches Mosul Petroleum Company and Basrah Petroleum Company, are mining oil mainly in the three following areas: Kirkuk, Mosul and Basrah. Nevertheless, Kirkuk still remains the chief area of oil-mining, being the source of no less than two thirds of all Iraqi oil. Each of the partners, i. e. Royal Dutch Shell, British Petroleum Company, Standard Oil of New Jersey, together with Socony Mobil Oil and Compagnie Française des Pétroles, owns 23.75% of the capital, and the remaining 5% belong to the Participation and Exploration Corporation, the owner of which is a British financier of Armenian descent K. Gulbankian.

Considering that the Dutch capital in Royal Dutch Shell is subordinated to British capital, the British oil companies appear to hold more than half (52.5%) of the entire capital, and thus secure the supremacy in the I. P. C.²⁹

This situation corresponds to the balance of powers which existed in the Near East in those times (year 1925). Before World War I, the situation in the Turkish P. C. was different: The Anglo-Persian Petroleum Company (50%), Deutsche Bank (25%) and Royal Dutch Shell (25%). After the defeat of Germany in World War I, France, in the spirit of the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement on the division of the Middle East (1916) replaced Germany and thus gave up Mosul. The U. S. A. and the American petroleum companies headed by Standard Oil enforced their participation in the Turkish Petroleum Company as a result of prolonged secret negotiations. K. S. Gulbankian (a British agent), who was the first to inform the Turkish Sultan about the existence of oil in this area (in 1890) and who was the financial adviser to the Sublime Porte, gained the right to 5% after repeated postponement, which earned him the nickname "Mr. Five Percent".

The principal question - the question of oil - had been solved so as to correspond to the interests and the balance of powers of the

²⁹ By this we do not imply that the interests of Dutch monopolists in Royal Dutch Shell can be ignored. Developments, however, indicate that Royal Dutch Shell has nearly always acted in concord with the other British oil monopolies. So it has been in the international oil consortium in Iran, where the British Petroleum Company (40%) together with Royal Dutch Shell (14%) own 54% of all the shares. (A.)

great imperialist powers. Once again did the British and the French "forget" about the Kurds, just as at Lausanne. The British and the French, as well as their new partner in the Middle East, American imperialism, arrived at the conclusion that the Kurds living in the Mosul area must not come under Turkish rule.⁴⁰ In 1925 when Mustafa Kemal ruled Turkey, it might have meant jeopardizing oil-mining in this area. Great Britain, France and the U. S. A., after having secured their concessions for oil, subsequently lost all interest in the creation of a united Kurdish state and agreed that the Kurds must not create any such state. Naturally, the states inhabited by Kurds, i. e. Turkey and Iran, were also opposed to the idea of any such state.

The British, however, did not intend to do away with the Kurdish problem in Iraq once and for all. Of course, the imperialist policy could not accept the idea of guaranteeing absolute autonomy to the population of so vitally important an area as Mosul.⁴¹ On the other hand "the hostile attitude of the Kurds towards the new Iraqi government was not, in fact, altogether unwelcome; it was a constant reminder to Faisal and his friends that ... Britain might express her consent with Kurdish independence, in case the situation in Iraq took a course of development that would not be consulted and agreed to previously with His Majesty's Government."⁴²

The attitude of the British imperialists towards the Kurdish question was properly expressed by Harold Nicolson: "The Kurds, who had refused to show any will to become a nation when we encouraged them to do so, have in 1922 suddenly started demanding their 14 articles, a very late moment indeed." In other words, the Kurds "must" become a nation only if it is the wish in London, or else it would be an unpardonable sin!

And Turkey? - Turkey finally agreed with the "Brussels Line" determining its southern frontier by the decision of the League of

⁴⁰ "The United States adopted the British standpoint that the 500,000 Kurds living in the Mosul area must neither come under Turkish rule nor become an independent nation." M. B r o o k s, *Nafta a zahraniční politika*, Prague 1950, p. 80 (Czech ed.).

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

Nations Committee taken in October 1924 in Brussels on condition that it would receive 10% of the shares of the Turkish Petroleum Company⁴³, that the Assyrians, who had left Turkey during the war, would not be permitted to come back and "according to the wish of the Turks the agreement said nothing about Kurdistan and its independence."⁴⁴

The only result of the Kurds' struggle in Iraq was that Kurdish started to be taught in elementary schools, but in the Sulaymania region only.⁴⁵ The Kurds, however, were not going to put up with this state of affairs. In June 1930, according to the agreement with Great Britain, the period of the British Mandate expired and Iraq became a formally independent state. Elections were to take place in the Summer of 1930 so that parliament would be able to assemble in Autumn and confirm the signed agreement.

The people of Sulaymania refused to take part in the elections and large-scale demonstration broke out on September 6, 1930. Collisions occurred between the population and the army and police; 45 people were killed and about 200 injured. September 6th entered the history of the Kurdish people as the day of struggle against imperialism and reaction. It marked the beginning of further fierce struggle. Shaikh Mahmud, who had until then been observing the events, again took up arms. The armed struggle continued till March 1931 and the Shaikh achieved certain positive results. He even made an attempt at liberating Kirkuk, but due to the treachery of Kurdish feudals, had to give up the struggle in the end.

In 1932, another rebellion occurred in Barzan in the northern part of Iraqi Kurdistan, under the leadership of Shaikh Ahmad. In this rising, Mustafa Barzani, a younger brother of Shaikh Ahmad, played an important role for the first time. The rebellion was suppres-

⁴³ This decision was later changed in the way that Turkey would receive £ 500.000 in cash from the Iraqi government.

⁴⁴ G. Lenczowski, *The Middle East in World Affairs*, Teheran 1958, p. 137 (Persian ed.).

⁴⁵ According to the Act of May 23, 1931, Kurdish became the official language in the whole of Iraqi Kurdistan. Ali Seydo al Gorani, *From Amman to Amadia*, Cairo 1939, p. 114 (in Arabic).

sed, chiefly by the R. A. F., which bombed the villages of Barzan, destroying 1,365 houses.

Another revolt broke out in Barzan in 1943, this time headed by Mustafa Barzani, who had just escaped from exile in Sulaymania. The revolt spread at great speed. The Iraqi government entered into long negotiations with Barzani, sometimes making promises, sometimes threatening, but with no positive outcome whatsoever, so that by Spring 1945 the insurgents resumed armed struggle, which was also joined by Kurdish officers in the Iraqi army. The Kurdish nationalist political party Hiva (Hope) closely co-operated with the revolt.

The struggle continued until October 1945, when the fighters of Barzan crossed into Iranian Kurdistan, where in those days preparations for the establishment of a democratic republic were being made in the area of Mahabad.

3. THE KURDS IN IRAN

After World War I, there occurred risings in Iranian Kurdistan, the most notable of them being led by Simko in the Urmia region (from 1920 till 1925). Simko liberated a large part of Iranian Kurdistan, and after having established contact with Shaikh Mahmud, visited him personally in Sulaymania in 1923. British agents, however, managed to goad him against the Assyrians, as a result of which he murdered their chief M. Shamun. This, of course, led to the weakening of his own position.

Reza Khan became ruler and dictator of the country in 1925 and from then on adopted in practice a strict centralizing and assimilating policy towards all nationalities, including the Kurds. For this reason he also thought it important to do away with Simko.

Until 1930 Simko led several fights against Persian, Turkish and Iraqi troops, attaining success in most of the cases. On June 21, 1930, he was invited to the town of Shno to negotiate with the spokesman of the Iranian forces, who, however, had him murdered.

The next significant rebellion directed against the oppression of the central government broke out in the south in the autumn of 1931, under the leadership of Jafar Sultan of Hamadan. As in other cases this rising, too, was cruelly crushed, after which the representative of Kurdistan in the Iranian Parliament declared that for Iran there existed no Kurdish problem. The Kurds were alleged to regard themselves as Iranians and think of nothing else but Iran.

As in Turkey, the Iranian Kurds, too, were deprived of all national rights: the Kurdish language was banned, and the Kurds were not even permitted to wear their national costume. Many of them were imprisoned for disobeying, some of them were even exiled. This state of affairs lasted until World War II.

From all that has been said it follows that the history of the Kurdish people from the second half of the 19th century until the Second World War is marked with a string of revolts aiming at freedom and independence. Beginning with the 20th century, namely with World War I, the struggle is led with the goal of creating an independent Kurdish state.

4. THE CAUSES AND AIMS OF KURDISH REVOLTS

What was the chief cause of these extensive revolts which, in most cases, assumed a nation-wide character? The main cause, of course, was national oppression. The national consciousness of the Kurds gradually strengthened, and simultaneously the national discrimination exercised by the ruling classes of the respective countries increased. The struggle against national oppression created a link between all sections of the Kurdish society: the peasants, members of the petty bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia, and the feudals.

Heavy exploitation of the people, and mainly of the peasantry, by the governmental authorities, high taxation, economic pressure exercised by the army and the gendarmerie on the rural population, all this added to the national oppression incited large masses of the

peasantry to rebel under the leadership of the clan chiefs, religious leaders and the feudals.⁴⁶

The struggle against foreign oppressors considerably diminished class antagonism in rural Kurdistan. The class struggle in Kurdistan was weaker due to the prevailing clan tribal relations, together with the fact that the Kurdish feudals were often shaikhs, the religious leaders, which enabled them to conceal their own share in the exploitation of the peasantry and direct the struggle against the foreigners. The feudals and landlords who regarded the intensification of governmental power as an impairment of their own standing and were not willing to give up a share of their power in the Kurdish village, always strongly opposed the centralization measures of the central government. It is, therefore, quite natural that they supported the national movement and armed revolts in Kurdistan.⁴⁷

The young Kurdish bourgeoisie were not satisfied with the splitting up of Kurdistan after World War I, as it reduced their sphere of influence and limited their contact with trade centres and important harbours. Thus the Kurdish bourgeoisie was virtually isolated and suppressed by the Turkish, Persian and Arabic bourgeoisie. This explains the support the Kurdish bourgeoisie and intelligentsia rendered to these revolts, which aimed at creating an independent Kurdish state.

Following the Great October Socialist Revolution, in the period of the general crisis of capitalism, the Kurdish society was strongly influenced by the ideas of struggle against imperialism and for the liberation of nations.

Kurdistan lies in the immediate neighbourhood of the U. S. S. R. and a section of the Kurds, although small, remained on the territory of the Soviet Union, where for the first time in their history, Kurds were granted human and national rights. All this supported the influence of the ideas of the Great October Socialist Revolution upon the Kurdish people.

⁴⁶ For a characteristics of the Kurdish feudal, see Chapter VI, 1. (p. 118).

⁴⁷ "Not so much the national idea as this fact alone provided the stimulus for the vigorous struggle of the Kurdish feudal stratum against governmental officials, the gendarmerie and the military authorities." K. Vasiliev, *Agrarnye problemy*, book 9-10, Moscow 1931.

The weakness of the bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia together with the absence of a proletariat caused the leading part in all the revolts to be taken by the feudal lords chiefs of the tribes and religious leaders. Even later, when the young Kurdish bourgeoisie made attempts to penetrate into the leadership of the movement, the feudal lords retained their hegemony in the Kurdish national movement until the Second World War, due to the backwardness of the Kurdish semi-feudal society, where the tribal relations still preserve their significance.

"It is one of the deadlocks of Kurdish nationalism, that while not only its leaders but almost the entire rank and file should have their origin among the more educated burghers, its military force always had to come from the tribes and their chiefs, who have neither erudition nor other ideas but expectations of gaining profit and booty by impairing the government's authority."⁴⁸

The leadership and the hegemony of feudal lords in the Kurdish national movement led to fatal consequences. It was often sufficient to do away with the leader of the revolt, and consequently the revolt itself was suppressed. It very often happened that the leaders, due to backwardness and lack of education, themselves became victims of imperialist intrigues, were cheated, and unconsciously became instruments of imperialist politicians.

It occurred quite frequently, too, that the feudal leader began to slow down the movement as soon as the course of events surpassed his own interests; the peasants were willing and resolved to continue the fight, but the feudal lord, for the sake of his own benefit, would make a compromise with the central government or the imperialist agents.

The main force in all the revolts was the peasantry driven into the struggle, first of all, by unbearable exploitation, poverty and national oppression. Due to the existing tribal relations and the fact that the leader, very often the shaikh, enjoyed enormous moral authority, the revolts though of peasant and class character and directed against foreign oppression, acquired a nation-wide character.

⁴⁸ A. Roosevelt, "The Kurdish Republic of Mahabad", *The Middle East Journal*, New York 1947, p. 268.

5. THE MAHABAD REPUBLIC

In the year 1941, the Allied Forces, including Soviet troops, entered Iran, and thus did away with the dictatorship of Reza Shah and re-established democratic rights. By 1945, the popular movement had achieved great victories: In December 1945, Iranian Azerbaijan, led by the Democratic Party of Azerbaijan, proclaimed an autonomous democratic government. The Azerbaijan national government introduced political and social reforms, distributed the land of the big landowners and traitors among the peasantry and in this way increased the peasants' share in the yield from rented land. The government also introduced an eight-hour working day and began to realize further administrative and social reforms. Azerbaijanian, which was hitherto prohibited, became the official language of the country.

The northern part of Iranian Kurdistan with its centre Mahabad, was, in fact, never occupied by the Allies throughout the war. After the last troops of Iranian police had been expelled from Mahabad in 1944, the people themselves became the ruler of this district. At this time, a nationalistic organization, the Kommalay Zhiani Kurd (the Party of Kurdish Revival) began to be active in Kurdistan.

On August 15, 1945, the Kurdish Democratic Party (K. D. P.) was founded in Mahabad with Kommala as its basis. The party soon attained great popularity and gained the support of large sections of peasantry, town working people, petty bourgeoisie, middle landowners and the patriotic tribes.

The programme of the K. D. P. included as its main points: Freedom and self-government for the Kurdish people within the limits of the Iranian state; the Kurdish language to be used in education and to become the official language in administrative affairs; election of the provincial council of Kurdistan, which was to become the leading body in the district; the establishment of unity and fraternal links with the people of Azerbaijan in joint struggle with the other national minorities; improvement of the economic situation through the exploitation of Kurdistan's natural resources, the advance of agriculture and commerce, hygiene and education; efforts to enable the Kurdish people to strive freely for the happiness and progress of their country.

The K. D. P. did not declare a new distribution of land and limited itself to the statement that endeavours shall be made in order to improve the distribution of the crops from rented soil between peasants and landlords.

On January 23, 1946, the establishment of the Kurdish National Government (republic) was proclaimed with Qazi Muhammad, leader of the K. D. P. and an outstanding fighter and public personality, as president.

The Kurdish National Government remained in existence for less than one year; nevertheless, during this time it did a great deal for the benefit of the Kurdish people. Kurdish became the official language - for the first time, the Kurdish children were taught their mother tongue. The number of Kurdish newspapers, journals and books increased to an unprecedented degree. The first Kurdish theatre was established, and Kurdish women for the first time took part in the political and cultural life of their country. Due to immediate contact with the U. S. S. R., commerce underwent a quick development. Wherever the landlords had left, the peasants became virtual masters of the land. Yet, a land reform did not take place, not even to such a degree as in Azerbaijan. Basically, the feudals and landowners in Kurdistan retained their former privileges. Kurdish clerks filled the posts formerly occupied by Persians and Azerbaijanians, and national military forces and militia were established to replace the former government police and army.

The most important achievement of the democratic government was national liberty attained by the Kurdish people after such a long time. Revolutionary centres were established in Kurdistan and Azerbaijan, which later became the pillars of the democratic movement of all Iran. On April 23, 1946, an agreement was concluded between the Democratic Government of Azerbaijan and the Kurdish National Government, which confirmed their unity and friendship.

Yet, as we have already said, the democratic governments in these areas remained in existence for only one year and was subsequently most brutally suppressed by the Iranian reaction, who received direct support from the American and British imperialists. In Azerbaijan and Kurdistan more than 15,000 democrats were massacred.

After a formal secret trial, the leader of the Kurdish people Qazi Muhammad, together with his brother Sadr Qazi, member of the Iranian Majlis, and his cousin Saif Qazi, Minister of War of the Mahabad Republic, were executed on March 31, 1947. The Iranian army and gendarmerie started to ravage Iranian Kurdistan.

Nevertheless, the Barzanis, who were a notable support to the Kurdish National Government, did not give up, and headed by Mustafa Barzani, the commander of the armed forces during the Mahabad Republic, began a strenuous and unequal fight against the Iranian army. The Americans directly provided the Iranian troops with experts and armament, and the American Ambassador to Iran G. Allen even paid a personal visit to the front in Kurdistan together with the Head of General Staff Razmara.⁴⁹

The resistance shown by the Barzanis was courageous and powerful, so that even the Head of General Staff declared that the modern Iranian army had never fought such a strong enemy. At the same time, the Shah ordered most drastic measures to be taken against them; his order of March 3, 1947, reads: "To bomb with aircraft and artillery all the centres of the Barzani families (i. e. women and children-A), complete the whole campaign by April 4, 1947, so that the Barzanis will not escape, and thus do away with this situation, so shameful for the army."⁵⁰

After causing the Iranian army heavy casualties, the Barzanis entered Iraq, where the Nuri-Said forces awaited them with swords and fire. The old people, women and children remained in Barzan, and about 500 warriors led by the legendary Kurdish commander Mustafa Barzani, crossed Turkey and the borders of Iran once again. In order to crush them the Iranian government mobilized a vast army (about 10,000 men) equipped with all kinds of armament including aircraft and cannons but the support rendered by the Kurdish people to their warriors - the Barzanis, who heroically withstood an unequal struggle, enabled them to proceed for another 300 km continuing their victorious fight and, after a decisive battle, cross the river Aras into the

⁴⁹ V. Stipanov, "Visiting the Kurds", *New Times* No. 24, July 8, 1949.

⁵⁰ N. Persian, *From Bloody Mahabad to the Shores of the Aras*, Teheran 1948, p. 103 (in Persian).

Soviet Union. Only after the victory of the revolution in Iraq in 1958 did these warriors return to their mother land.

The Mahabad Republic existed for no more than one year, yet was of great historic significance. It was not without reason that A. Roosevelt wrote: "The origin and the substance of the small Kurdish Republic, its brief and stormy history and its sudden extinction constitute some of the most brilliant events of the modern history of the Middle East."⁵¹

The importance of the 1945—1946 movement consists in the fact that it was the first national and democratic movement in Kurdish history. It was directed against imperialism, pursued the interests of the people, and fought against national oppression and for the national liberation of all the Kurdish people. At the same time, it was directed against the reaction, strove for a general democratization and for securing equal rights for the broadest sections of the people, the petty bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia, the peasants and the working people in the towns. All these masses of people were set in motion.

As indicated above, the Great October Socialist Revolution was followed by several revolts and organized movements throughout Kurdistan; the Mahabad movement of 1945—1946 was, however, the only one to become an immediate part of the struggle of nations against fascism and imperialism. And more than that - this movement became not merely a significant part of the democratic struggle waged by the working class in Iran, but through this, also a part of the international democratic movement of the proletariat. Throughout the movement, a strong spirit of internationalism can be perceived, combined with friendship towards other nations, and respect and devotion to the great neighbour, the U. S. S. R. That is why not only revolutionary forces in Iran, but those of the whole world too, stood in defence of the movement in Kurdistan and Azerbaijan.

The further significance of this movement lies in the fact that it

⁵¹ A. Roosevelt. "The Kurdish Republic ...", p. 247.

had attained victory, and that a Kurdish National Government was created for the first time in the history of Kurdistan. In the course of its short existence it gave a clear proof to the Kurdish people that only a government that originates in the people can really serve the people and its interests. Even today, the Kurdish people, including those outside Iran, remember the Mahabad Republic with great respect.

In the later stages, the Mahabad movement was joined by Iraqi Kurds - the Barzanis; several delegates from Turkish Kurdistan and the Kurdish districts in Syria visited the Republic, which attained an all-Kurdish character and embodied the unity of the Kurdish nation, thus contributing to the national consolidation of all Kurds and especially the Iranian Kurds.

All the achievements resulted from the fact that the movement of the years 1945-1946 was directed by the Kurdish Democratic Party which was a progressive organization pursuing a democratic programme and uniting the best and most progressive people from all sections of the population, mainly of the petty bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia and the small landowners. The party realized that the struggle of the Kurdish people in Iran could achieve victory only as a result of unity and co-operation with the other nations and their organizational vanguard, the Tude party and the Democratic Party of Azerbaijan, and therefore regarded the establishment of this unity and co-operation as one of their chief tasks. Today the K. D. P. is leading the Kurdish people and uniting the most progressive sections of the population of Iranian Kurdistan. The spirit of Mahabad gradually prevailed in the Kurdish national movement - the spirit of national unity and democratization within and the spirit of friendship with the U. S. S. R. and the socialist camp without.⁵² Even today this

⁵² The strong influence of the spirit of Mahabad and of the executed leader of the movement can be perceived in the following episode narrated by William Douglas: "... a young Kurd and his wife came down the shaded road. He rode a donkey; she walked proudly by his side. We exchanged greetings.

'Where is your home?' I asked.

'Near Khoy, way up north', he replied.

'What are you doing down here?'

spirit in the Kurdish national movement throughout all parts of Kurdistan constituting a new stage in the history of the Kurdish people's struggle, initiated by Mahabad.

American imperialism, relying on the monopoly of atomic weapons, incited the reactionary Iranian government to military campaigns against the democratic governments in Azerbaijan and in Kurdistan, and thus gave the impetus to the first provocation on the Soviet borderline, which, in fact, marked the beginning of the so-called "cold war" era. The Soviet Union, having by then just undergone the most ruinous war ever, did not have the possibility of undertaking the defence of the democratic forces in Iran; unfortunately also, it was the unrealistic evaluation of the situation in Iran, rooted in the subjectivistic approach as practised in the period of the personality cult, which had an unfavourable effect upon the course of events. There were, of course, serious internal reasons that facilitated the enemy's attack; the inability to create unity of action between the democratic forces in Iran contributed to the easily-won victory of reaction. In Kurdistan, the Mahabad government proclaimed no revolutionary slogan to benefit the peasantry which formed 80% of the population. Not even the land of the biggest feudals, who had fled from Kurdistan and showed hostility towards the democratic government, became subject to official division. In this respect too, Kurdistan stayed far behind the democratic government in Azerbaijan.

This kind of agrarian policy in Kurdistan corresponded not only to the general spirit of the movement, which did not surpass the limits of a nation-wide and democratic movement, but also to the social

'We are Kurds,' he said. 'We are making a pilgrimage. We come to pray at the grave of Qazi Muhammad.' There was a note of defiance in his voice; and his eyes, as well as the dagger in his belt, conveyed a resolution to meet any challenge to his mission.

The grave of Qazi Muhammad is indeed a shrine; hundreds of Kurds flock there each week to worship. The hanging of this Kurdish hero killed only the man, not the idea of Kurdish independence. His death, in fact, gave the idea new impetus. In the eyes of the simple peasants, who walk hundreds of miles to pay homage to this memory, Qazi Muhammad was a good man who gave his life that their dream might come true." W. Douglas, *Strange Lands...*, pp. 63, 64.

structure of the founders of the K. D. P. It should be admitted that a great part of the landowners in Iranian Kurdistan played a positive part in the fight against reaction and imperialism; it is sufficient to note that over 50% of the founders of the party was formed by middle and small landowners and the chiefs and members of the tribes.

There was one more factor that played a function here: A great part of Iranian Kurdistan had not been liberated yet. For tactical reasons, for the sake of gaining the middle and small landowners and the tribes of southern Kurdistan the Kurdish Democratic Party could not introduce a basic agrarian reform. We must keep in mind the fact that in those times the class struggle in the Kurdish village was not sufficiently developed.

The legal authority of the Kurdish National Government was limited to the northern part of Iranian, Kurdistan (which covers about 30% of Iranian Kurdistan). The southern part of Kurdistan, which extends over a larger area, remained in the hands of the reactionary central government, whom this enabled to carry out a quick military attack on the positions of the Kurdish National Government.

Groundless confidence in the promises of the central government, and both political and organizational incapability of the majority of the leading cadres, too, contributed to the extinction of the Mahabad Republic.

6. THE KURDS IN SYRIA

Syria, which belonged to the Ottoman Empire, was placed under French mandate after World War I, but for a long time after that, and even after the settlement of the Mosul question (in 1925), disputes between France and Turkey remained unsolved. As already mentioned, the French imperialists had gone as far as to support the Khoiboun party in their struggle against Turkey and wanted to make use of the Kurdish national movement to suit their own intentions. In fact, Syria became the asylum of the Kurdish refugees from Turkey after the defeat of the movement of Shaikh Said in 1925. But later the

disputes between France and Turkey concerning finance and the frontiers were settled, and an agreement was signed in Ankara in 1929, assigning a part of the Kurdish territory to Syria.

The Kurds in Syria are now concentrated mostly in the area of Jazire on the Iraq-Turkey-Syria border. Their economic and social position is about the same as that of the Kurds in the other countries as mentioned above.

Before and after World War II the Kurds in Syria had certain publications of their own, but during the postwar years their position underwent several changes. There has, of course, never been any radical improvement in the situation of the Kurdish people, but whenever the democratic forces achieved any success and democratization was taking place in the country, the prospects for a guarantee of their own national rights improved. On the other hand, every attack on the democratic forces by reaction was always followed by an attack against all the Kurdish organizations demanding the acknowledgement of national rights for the Kurds in Syria. At present, when the Baasists are in power, the Syrian Kurds have no national rights whatsoever. Any such demand on their part is counteracted with violence and terror, and Kurdish organizations and personalities are being cruelly persecuted.

7. THE KURDS IN THE U. S. S. R.

Some Kurdish territories became part of Russia as early as 1813 after the Gulestan Agreement between Iran and Russia. These were the Kurds living in the Elizabetpol Gubernia. Later, part of the Kurds were included in the Yerevan Gubernia, by the Turkomanchay Agreement of 1928, and finally, the Kurds of Kars and Ardahan were annexed to Russia.

After the Great October Socialist Revolution, according to the agreement concluded between Soviet Russia and Turkey on March 21, 1921, Kars and Ardahan were returned to Turkey and only a few thousand of Kurds remained in the U. S. S. R. Most of them live in the Armenian S. S. R. (26,000) in the areas of Talin and Alagöz.

In spite of their small number the Kurds in the U. S. S. R. are recognized as a nation, have their own schools and publications and their living standard is much higher than that of the Kurds in the neighbouring countries. In the U. S. S. R. the Soviet Kurds have their writers and poets, scientists and artists, for the first time enjoy true freedom and their national rights and therefore rank among the active builders of communism in the land of the Soviets.

PART TWO

ECONOMIC SURVEY

CHAPTER IV

GENERAL OUTLINE
OF KURDISTAN'S ECONOMY

1. GENERAL FEATURES OF THE ECONOMIC SITUATION

Kurdistan is an agrarian country with strong feudal relations; in a large part of the Kurdish countryside even tribal relations are still preserved. At the same time, in the period between the two world wars, and especially after World War II, capitalism and capitalist relations began to develop and thus gave rise to large towns and commercial and industrial centres.¹

The existence of crude oil in Kurdistan attracted the imperialist petroleum monopolies; extraction was commenced and a great petroleum industry, the only heavy industry in Kurdistan, established. Oil is extracted mainly in Kirkuk, where the exploitation is in the hands of the Iraq Petroleum Company. In Iranian Kurdistan, in the Kirmanshah area, in Turkish Kurdistan in the Siirt area and in Iraqi Kurdistan in the Khanekin area it is the state sector which organizes the exploitation of oil instead of foreign companies.

It is a peculiar feature that the Kurdish industrial proletariat arose without the simultaneous rise of a Kurdish National industrial bourgeoisie; this phenomenon can be explained by the above indicated

¹ From the beginning of the 20th cent., the population of the towns of Kurdistan increased 2.5times. E. g. Kirmanshah then had 50,000 inhabitants, at present 125,000. (A.)

fact, namely that the exploitation of oil is exerted either by imperialist companies or by a state sector.

Other industries including mining are developed to a very low degree and include light industry producing consumer goods only. Of the traditional home-made products, only the manufacture of carpets is of greater significance. As a result, so rich a country remains one of the poorest and from the economic aspect the least developed area in the Middle East.

Agriculture remains the chief branch of Kurdistan's national economy, cattle-breeding constituting the most important part. Agriculture provides 64% of the national income, 26% coming from industry, of which the petroleum industry provides 20%.³ 10% of the national income come from the remaining branches of the national economy (building industry, transport, commerce).

As to agriculture, plant production constitutes 30% and animal production 34% of the national income. Cattle-breeding is practised through all parts of Kurdistan. Although capitalist relations underwent a more rapid development in Turkey as compared to Iran or Iraq, the situation in Turkish Kurdistan remains basically unchanged, with cattle-breeding as the main branch of production. "The chief income in Eastern Anatolia (i. e. Kurdistan - A.) comes from cattle-breeding; from cattle, butter and wool," says B. Darkot, professor at the Istanbul University.³

Livestock production is the occupation of both the semisettled population, for whom cattle-breeding constitutes the sole means of livelihood, and of the peasants who are engaged in plant production as well. It should be noted that the number of nomads is steadily diminishing and that completely nomadic tribes in Kurdistan are actually only an exception. In those cases where cattle-breeding has a semi-nomadic form, plant production is almost non-existent. The land comprises mostly pastures and forests, and where there is a lack of pastures, tree-leaves are used as the basic forage for sheep and goats.⁴

³ We are considering only that part of the income from the oil production which remains in the country and not the total profit from the entire oil industry, the larger part of which goes to the imperialist countries. (A.)

⁴ B. D a r k o t, *A Geography of Turkey*, Moscow 1959, p. 102 (Russian ed.).

In those places where besides cattle-breeding crops and other agricultural plants are being cultivated, plant production is, in fact, of second-rate importance only and constitutes a subsidiary factor of animal production helping to satisfy solely local needs. Only in the districts with vast lowlands and fields, plant production plays an important role so that a certain part of the produce is even exported. Agricultural methods are extremely primitive and strong feudal relations prevail among the rural population, the majority of the land being owned by wealthy landowners.

Means of communication in Kurdistan are very limited and in winter most of the towns are isolated from one another. Snow blocks the roads, the majority of which are in any case narrow and in bad condition. There are still fewer railways: there are none at all throughout Iranian Kurdistan and in other places they are more or less of strategic significance. Some transport takes place on the lakes (on Lakes Urmia and Van) but it uses out-of-date means; some of the boats crossing Lake Urmia were in use already before World War I, when they belonged to Russia. Air traffic exists only for military needs.

Both the working people in the towns of Kurdistan and the peasantry, which constitute 80 % of the population, bear a threefold yoke: they are being exploited by American and British imperialists, by the Turkish, Persian or Arab ruling class, and Kurdish feudal landowners. This is the basic outline of present-day Kurdish society.

A special feature of Kurdistan's economy is to be perceived in the fact that it does not constitute one whole, but is split between four countries. The political frontiers of these countries not only divide the territory of Kurdistan but also its economy, so that the individual parts of the territory are economically isolated from one another, each of them being dependent on the economy of the respective state. Nevertheless, the mountainous borderlines of Kurdistan are practically beyond control, and for this reason contraband trade is widespread, particularly between Iranian and Iraqi Kurdistan, where it even plays a certain economic role.

* The sheep and goats are so accustomed to oak-tree leaves, that no other forage has to be sought for them. F. B a l s a n, *Les Surprises du Kurdistan*, Paris 1945, p. 85.

The countries, among which Kurdistan is split, are economically dependent on others, mainly the imperialist powers, and the different parts of Kurdistan are again dependent on the countries themselves, which explains why their economic progress is so irregular and disproportionate. Kurdistan forms the marginal areas of all the countries, which for their part are regarded as less advanced. The different parts of Kurdistan itself (with the exception of Iraqi Kurdistan) constitute the underdeveloped areas of these countries.

We have given a general outline of the economic situation of Kurdistan. It is evident that it is beyond the scope of this work to treat in detail the economic situation of all the individual parts of Kurdistan which, in fact, do not differ materially in their degree of social and economic development. For this reason, we shall proceed to a detailed analysis of the economic situation of Iranian Kurdistan, and all that will be said in this section applies, generally speaking, also to Iraqi and Turkish Kurdistan. It will, therefore, in the end of the treatise cause no substantial difficulty to apply the general conclusions not merely to Iranian, but to all Kurdistan. This procedure, of course, has its negative aspects, too, for besides the chief features, the economic conditions of the individual parts of Kurdistan differ in a number of specific points, connected mainly with the economy of the respective country of which they are part. Yet, these differences, some of which we intend to mention later, do not affect the general outline of the economic situation of Kurdistan.

The population of Iranian Kurdistan is 3,5 million, i. e. 17% of the total population of Iran. As has already been stated, the area of Iranian Kurdistan covers only 7,5% of the territory of Iran which implies that the population density of Iranian Kurdistan (28 per km²) is twice that of all Iran (12 per km²). Yet, from the economic viewpoint, the situation does not correspond in proportion: only 4% of the industrial enterprises and 4,5% of the industrial workers of all Iran are found in this part of the country.⁵

⁵ *Sovremennyi Iran*, ..., p. 140. This includes also the Hamadan area, but not the part of Kurdistan north of Mahabad. Considering that these areas

Iranian Kurdistan, producing more than 20 % of all agricultural products in Iran, has an important position in agriculture.⁶

About 3 million people, i. e. 85 % of the population live in villages, and according to the statistics of 1958, only 32 % take part in productive labour.⁷

The population of towns is formed by the remaining 15 %, i. e. approximately 500,000 people, and out of this number less than 30 %, i. e. about 150,000 people are engaged in industry or other productive activities.⁸

If we take into account the fact that the instruments of production are primitive in the extreme, both in agriculture and manufacturing, it is easy to explain the low level of the national income in Iranian Kurdistan, which we estimate as 80 dollars per person a year. As in all Kurdistan 80 % of the national income is provided by agricultural production, 10 % come from oil and manufacturies.⁹

In Iranian Kurdistan, too, animal production holds a foremost place in agriculture, providing about 45 % of the national dividend, the remaining 35 % being derived from vegetable production. Likewise in foreign trade, agricultural produce constitute the majority of articles exported. (Of other products, only a small percentage of crude oil is exported from Iranian Kurdistan). The largest of quantity products are those of cattle-breeding, mainly wool, butter, skin and cattle. Thus

equal each other economically, we might regard the given statistic data as approximately adequate. (A.)

- * The amount of agricultural products supplied by Turkish Kurdistan as a part of Turkey is comparatively low (about 15 %); whereas Iranian Kurdistan provides a considerable amount of grain for the other parts of Iran, it is in fact only livestock products that are exported from Turkish Kurdistan. The situation in Iraqi Kurdistan is somewhat better due to the fact that the proportion in the production of certain plants as parts of the total production of Iraq is comparatively higher: E. g. Iraqi Kurdistan produces more than 50 % of wheat and over 30 % of Iraq's production of barley; furthermore, the entire production of tobacco is concentrated in this part of the country (in the year 1958 it exceeded 5,000 tons). (A.)
- † Iranian Daily Papers of 1959.
- * Ibid.
- * The oil production in Iranian Kurdistan (0.1 t per person) is negligible in comparison to that of all Iran (3t per person). (A.)

Iranian Kurdistan continues to play the role of an agricultural and raw-material producing appendage for the imperialist block and even for Iran itself.

2. THE LEVEL OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

Of the entire 124,000 km² of Iranian Kurdistan about 5 million ha, i. e. 40 %, are suitable for cultivation. Approximately 4 mil. ha are covered with forests (32 %), the remaining part comprising mostly pastures and mountains. Nevertheless, only 24 % of the suitable land, i. e. 1,200,000 ha are being tilled, which means a mere 9.6 % of the whole territory.¹⁰

The technical level of agriculture is unusually low, the main implements having remained unchanged for several centuries. Soil is tilled with the traditional plough drawn by cattle (mostly an ox, sometimes a horse). In the course of the year a pair of oxen drawing a plough (*jut*) tills about 3 to 5 ha of soil.

Manure is being used only for the cultivation of technical plants in areas surrounding the cities, otherwise, fertilizing of the chief crops, such as wheat, barley, leguminous plants or rice, is completely unknown.

New technology is employed to a small degree only. In Kurdistan there are a few dozen tractors, concentrated mostly in the Kirman-shah area. It should be noted that the application of agricultural machinery, especially of tractors, increases the privation of the peasantry; it is only the landowner who can afford to buy a tractor, and he employs it in order to replace the work of several peasants, who are thus forced to leave the village in search of employment in the cities where they only increase the mass of the unemployed. In other cases, the peasants are either forced to work for the landlord as agricultural labourers for a meagre wage or leave to the landlord the best land for

¹⁰ The statistical data concerning Iranian Kurdistan have been computed according to various Iranian sources and U. N. O. materials. (A.)

mechanized cultivation, themselves toiling on the worst soil and paying higher rent. In this way a tractor in the hands of a landowner becomes a means of exploiting the peasant, who is right when regarding it as a "rival". This is another proof of the fact that mechanization in agriculture is impossible when most of the land is in the hands of landlords and unless the mechanization is based on industrialization of the country. In Kirmanshah, where the landlords have mechanized the agricultural production, peasants are being dismissed and forced to escape into the city.¹¹ Notwithstanding this tendency, the productivity of labour in Kurdistan's agriculture in general remains very low.

In Iranian Kurdistan yield is reckoned not per hectare cultivated but per amount of grain sown. For example, in the case of wheat, from 100 kg of seed a yield of 400 to 2,000 kg can be obtained depending on the fertility of the land, the usual yield, however, being 500—700 kg.

Table No. 7 indicates the yield rate in different areas, stating the yield from 1 q of grain sown.¹²

Table No. 7

Area	Irrigated Land	Daym (-Unirrigated Land)
Urmia	5—15	5—8
Mahabad	5—10	4—6
Sinna	5—6	8
Divan Darreh	4—6	4—6
Kirmanshah	10—20	—

The average yield of wheat is 600—800 kg¹³ per hectare.

In Iranian Kurdistan wheat, barley, rye, peas, rice and beans are being grown - of the technical plants - tobacco, sugar-beet and

¹¹ K. Zarnegar, *The Future of Our Villages and Towns*, Teheran 1952, p. 17 (in Persian).

¹² The data have been obtained from A. Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia*, London 1953, p. 365 and other sources.

¹³ *Teheran Economist*, 17. XI. 1962 and 6. XII. 1962.

cotton. Gardening and fruit-growing are also wide-spread, the chief products being pomegranates, almonds, nuts, pistachios, melons, sweet marrows, grapes, apples etc. In the southern parts of Kurdistan citrus fruit is being grown, too.

3. IRRIGATION

According to approximate data, 60 % of the 1,200,000 ha of land under cultivation are irrigated, the remaining 40 % being tilled as "daym", i. e. without irrigation. This indicates that a fairly adequate amount of water is available in Iranian Kurdistan,¹⁴ particularly in the northern areas but, at the same time, it implies that the problem of water is of great significance.¹⁵ For this reason it also plays an important part in the assessment of rent, because the water, as a rule, belongs to the landowner.

According to the rules of the Islam, still in force nowadays, water as "a gift from God" cannot be purchased or sold, nevertheless, where there is lack of it, there applies the right to the use of water in the canals or streams.¹⁶

It is quite obvious that such a right cannot exist nor does it exist in areas with abundance of water and that it is virtually a result of the circumstance that water is a limited factor in agriculture and the construction and upkeep of an irrigation project is a task

¹⁴ In Iran irrigated land covers a mere 28 % of the tilled land. In Kurdistan there is a sufficient water supply, yet, the irrigation system is developed to a low degree only. In the mountain regions, where water is plentiful, there is lack of soil, and in the lowlands with sufficient extent of fertile land there is but little water. A Kurdish proverb goes: "Where there is water, there is no soil, where there is soil, there is no water." (A.)

¹⁵ The importance of water is truthfully expressed in the word "awadani" - settlement, (aw - water) and in the saying "soil lacking water is no soil." (A.)

¹⁶ An owner of such a right cannot refuse water to travellers or cattle, but it is not admissible to use it for irrigation purposes unless his permission is granted. (A.)

impossible to accomplish for an individual, and sometimes even for a group of people.

According to the Islam, the large rivers, such as the Tigris and the Euphrates, having abundance of water, belong to all Muslims, each of whom has the right to make irrigation trenches from the river to his plot, without any special right to usage being issued. In regard to the large number of rivers which do not have sufficient water, the land situated higher up the river has preference over that situated lower in the direction of the mouth of the river. In Iranian Kurdistan, a village situated higher up the river has an absolute preferential right. By this is understood that the inhabitants of the village can use as much as they need, the lower village being entitled to use only what is left over. In such instances, of course, chronological priority plays an important role, too; the village situated higher is not entitled to build a dam or sluice-gate, and no one may alter the flow or the direction of the canal,¹⁷ in case the pieces of land belonging to the lower village have been cultivated earlier than those belonging to the upper village. These can be cultivated for the first time only after a new dam or sluice has been built. The Civil Code, article No. 159 states: Land bordering a river can be cultivated for the first time only if there is surplus water, and the owners of existing plots will not be hampered.¹⁸ Article No. 158 declares: Land first cultivated has prior claim to land cultivated later.¹⁹ In cases where, however, the priority appears debatable, land nearer the source has priority over land lower down, as stated in article No. 156 of the Civil Code.²⁰

The right to use the water in the canals taken off the river belongs to those who had built it. In case the canal is to lead to a plot belonging to the landlord which has not been rented, the landlord often forces the peasant to build the channel as *corvée-labour*. If, however, the land is worked by the peasants themselves, they usually build the channel as a collective work "*haravaz*" and are then entitled to use it.²¹

¹⁷ One Kurdish proverb says: "The water flowing through the canals must continue to flow there." (A.)

¹⁸ A. Lambton, *Landlord...*, p. 211.

^{19, 20} *Ibid.*

²¹ Sometimes the peasant has the right to use the water but owns no land

As a rule, water is distributed from the canal on a time scale, each peasant being entitled to a certain amount of hours or days a week, depending on the local conditions. The official in charge of the irrigation, called "*miraw*", is in most cases appointed by the landlord, but sometimes also elected by the peasants themselves. Generally, in summer and in dry years particularly, the water problem becomes acute: Land more distant from the source of water not only receives generally less but a part of the water evaporates before reaching the soil. As such a state of affairs might often affect the whole year's crop, a minor dispute can sometimes develop into a largescale incident, and occasionally entire districts turn against one another and the disputes end in bloodshed.

The landlords make use of these disputes and make the scarcity of water a means for exerting pressure upon the peasants. It is enough if the crop is left without water for a single summer week and the proceeds of one year's toil is ruined. Thus the peasant is virtually tied not only to the soil but to the water as well. The landlords and also the state authorities, particularly the gendarmerie, misuse the disputes over water in order to weaken the solidarity of the peasants and goad them one against the other.

In Iranian Kurdistan irrigation is being realized mostly by exploiting the rivers and channels. Due to the abundance of water, qanats (underground canals) and wells are used only rarely. In some regions, such as Miandoab and Kirmanshah, motor pumps and Artesian wells have been employed recently, but the extent of these is limited. Little effort would be sufficient to provide Iranian Kurdistan with adequate water for the cultivation of such products as rice.

Water as one of the factors determining the rates of agricultural rent will be discussed later.

suitable for cultivation, or does have the land and not the right to use the water, in which cases the right to the water becomes an object of sale. (A.)

OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY OF THE KURDISH SOCIETY

1. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF LANDOWNERSHIP

Before proceeding to an analysis of the present-day agrarian relations in Kurdistan, we shall present a brief outline of their historical development.

Little is known about agrarian relations in the pre-Islamic period. Slavery, as we find it in the Mede Empire (7th century B. C.) did not acquire the classical form, but, similarly to the majority of Eastern countries, acquired the form of a slave state with two kinds of landownership, namely that of the state and communal ownership. Agriculture was based on irrigation which was closely connected with the two forms of tenure. The enormous labour expenses needed for the irrigation system could only be defrayed by the state or the communities. "The primary condition of agriculture", writes Engels "is the system of artificial irrigation which is managed either by the communities, the provinces, or the central government".¹

The state benefited from the existence of the communal property and was interested in receiving regular taxes; for this purpose mutual agreements on reciprocal obligations were established with the communities, obliging both, the communities and their individual members, to till the land, which at the same time, enabled the state to prevent the community members from abandoning their plots. Naturally it also meant that the peasants, being bound to the soil, were not, in fact, completely free, but simultaneously, the tying of communities and their members furthered an increase of agricultural production.²

¹ F. Engels, *Letters about Capital*. Prague 1957, p. 54 (Czech ed.).

² "According to documents from the 1st century B. C. concerning the sale of vineyards of Iranian Kurdistan (Western Medes), the grant or its part belonging to a member of the community, was merchantable, the approval

The two forms of ownership were preserved until the 3rd century, when, at the beginning of the Sassanian rule, there appeared the first signs of a feudal economy. Nevertheless, the commons still remained in existence. "It is clear that a certain communal organization was in existence at the time of the Islamic conquest."³

It is a specific feature of the rise of feudalism in Kurdistan, that the slavery out of which it arose was insufficiently advanced, which naturally influenced the further development of communal ownership. The communal form of landownership did not disappear with the rise of feudalism, as it did in the countries where feudalism grew out of classical, fully advanced slavery but was preserved for several centuries later. The village communal system remained to be based largely on collective ownership of land.

The fact that the means of irrigation (in Kurdistan the canals) were in the possession of the state or the big feudal lords, constituted one of the factors which enabled the expropriation of peasant land and thus furthered the development of feudalism.

Feudal economy gradually became consolidated before the Arab invasion, cultivated land being owned by the following groups: 1. the monarch, 2. the royal family, 3. the clergy, 4. army commanders, 5. officials, 6. landed proprietors (then called free), the mass of the working and exploited population was formed by peasants, slaves,⁴ and small artisans.

of the neighbours conditioning the purchase. The purchaser became member of the community with full rights and had to make a vow that he was going to till the land well. In case a member of the community did not keep this promise, he became subject to severe penalty." *Vsemirnaya istoria*, Vol. II, Moscow 1955, p. 433.

³ A. Lambton, *Landlord...*, p. 2.

⁴ C. A. Egiazarov in his article *Kratkii etnograficheskij ocherk Kurdiv Yerevanskoi gubernii*, Tiflis 1891, p. 18 states: "...there is no trace of slavery among the Kurds." Yet, according to various materials and documents it is obvious that there existed certain features of slavery, which was practised in two forms: 1. slaves acquired in wars, 2. local slaves (who were not, by tradition, subject to trade during later development). Nevertheless, slavery did not exist in Kurdistan as an economic formation. (A.)

These feudal landed estates originated largely in such a manner, that the sovereign assigned a grant of land to the army commanders, officials or others, as a reward for their services. "The normal way for the ruler to maintain his troops and pay his officials, was to provide them with grants of land."⁵

Those who had obtained land in this way enjoyed the occupation rights but not those of proprietors.⁶

In those times the peasants paid two kinds of taxes: First, they had to deliver $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of the yearly proceeds to the state or the proprietor and secondly, all tributaries of the age between 20 to 50 years had to pay poll-tax to the state.

This implies that in case the state owned a larger portion of land, taxes and rent virtually coincided. "In case they (the peasants - A.) stand not against private landowners but face the state as a direct landowner and at the same time as sovereign, as is the case in Asia, the rent and the taxes coincide, or rather there exist no taxes that would be differentiated from this form of land rent."⁷

The aristocracy, the clergy, the military and the officials were exempted from these taxes.

The peasants, however, had further obligations: Similarly to the still existing large number of slaves, the peasants were obliged to toil (in the form of *corvée*) on large irrigation projects and other constructions (roads, bridges, etc.). In this way, the peasants were subject to great exploitation and bondage. We thus observe that besides rent in kind, there existed labour-rent, yet, already, by this time, rent in kind constituted the chief form of exploitation of the peasantry.

At the time of the Arab invasion in the 7th cent. there still remained in the Kurdish village a certain form of village community with tribal relations firmly preserved.

* A. Lambton, *Landlord...*, p. 10.

* In the second millenium B. C. in Nuzi (17 km southwest of Kirkuk) "In return for the use of this land each subject owed some type of service to the king, but he had no right to dispose of or transfer his property to any person other than a male relative of his immediate family." F. R. Steele, *Nuzi Real Estate Transactions*, Philadelphia 1943, p. 15 (quoted by A. Lambton, *Landlord...*, p. 11).

* K. Marx, *Capital* Vol. III, Prague 1956, p. 2.

In the time of the Baghdad Caliphate (8—10th cent.) the peasant paid rent to the state, i. e. to the Caliph. In that period, all land originally belonging to the state (the Sasanians), to the king, the royal family and all those landed proprietors who had fought against the Arabs, was transmitted to the caliphate. Simultaneously that which was owned by the clergy and the Zarathustrian fire-temples, was converted into property of the Muslim community, which means that it actually became property of the caliph, too.

In this way the state, embodied by the caliph, became the chief proprietor of land, which, in a way, is already a form of feudal ownership of land. The feudals virtually constituted the ruling class, and everything the state received from the peasants was distributed among the aristocracy, the officials, etc.

Besides the state form of ownership, there existed a private feudal ownership of land. This land belonged mainly to the Arab aristocracy, a greater part of it having been usurped after the conquest, and to the local landowners that had collaborated with the Arabs in order to retain their possessions. These owners had the right to transmit their land by sale and heritage. During the period in question another feudal form of land-holding was introduced, known as "*vaqf*", comprising the land granted to Muslim mosques, religious schools, etc.; it was neither merchantable nor transmittable to another person.

In the 11th century we come across the first "*iqta*"⁸ form of land-holding, which, at the beginning, was based on the principle that a part of the land's revenue was assigned by the state to certain persons for life or temporariness. It recalls, to a degree, the system existing long before the Islamic era. It is obvious that the assigning of *iqta* supported the feudal order.⁹ The *iqta* system gradually expanded until the 12th century, and simultaneously the landowners began to aspire after the remains of communal land, seizing it by various means, so that by the end of the 11th century, the commoners were actually converted into peasants as the dependent part of the feudal system. At the same time,

⁸ "*iqta*" - an Arabic word meaning a plot of land.

⁹ Justly does the Arabic word "*iqta*" stand for the feudal lord and "*iqta'iya*" for feudalism. (A.)

the tendency to confirm the iqta system gradually weakened the centralism of the state: Whereas before, taxes (or crops) were collected through special organs directly from the population, particularly from the peasants, this right was gradually transferred to the most powerful feudal lords and governors.

During the 12th and the beginning of the 13th cent., i. e. in the Seljuq period, the iqta system was altered with the effect that the land assigned to certain persons, remained property of the state, the assignees having the land at their disposal and being permitted to transmit it by heritage. This new form of the *iqta* resulted in certain progress of agricultural production due to the fact that the owners were not under a constant threat of confiscation any more, and therefore were not forced to exploit the soil in the extreme. They had more interest in production and thus tried to manage the land more rationally. This, of course, did not prevent the feudal lords from intensifying the exploitation of the peasants, who became completely dependent on them. The peasants not only had to pay feudal rent in the form of $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of the yield, but were burdened with further duties and payments.

The situation underwent a certain change with the Mongol invasion: A large part of land was seized by the Mongol khan (sovereign) and his relatives.¹⁰ There arose new Mongol feudal lords, who mercilessly exploited the peasants.

In this period the iqta system reached its height, feudalism became established and the peasants completely tied to the soil. The feudal lords of this period can be divided into four groups:

1. Military aristocracy comprising Mongol, Turkish and Kurdish khans (tribal chiefs).
2. Local feudal lords outside state service.
3. Higher clergy.
4. State officials.

The peasants became subject to especially cruel exploitation and in some cases they were made to deliver as much as 80 % of the yield to the state.¹¹

A decline in agriculture and a consequent decrease in the revenue

¹⁰ These landed estates were called "inju". (A.)

¹¹ *Vsemirnaya istoria*, Vol. III, Moscow 1957, p. 581.

of the state¹² led Ghazan Khan (towards the end of the 13th and beginning of the 14th cent.) to adopt a number of measures. An extensive reform in the system of taxation was introduced, consisting in the assessment of the rates and terms of collecting taxes in money and kind.¹³ Certain provisions were made in order to diminish the ruthless exploitation of the peasants by the militaries and to reduce, in some cases even repeal, taxes on trade and crafts.¹⁴

At the same time, a large amount of land belonging to the state was distributed among the soldiers and officers of the Mongol army, graded according to the rank of the person concerned; the land itself remained property of the state, being hereditary but not merchantable. The peasants paid all the taxes and rent to the possessor of the *iqta*, who delivered part of it to the state.

The reforms of Ghazan Khan substantially restored the country's agriculture, contributed to a rise in the production and in the income of the peasants. In this way the revenue of the state increased, nevertheless, as can be observed on table No. 8, it remained lower than in the pre-Mongol period.

Table No. 8
State Income per Annum in Ilkhan Dinars.

Area	Before the Mongol Invasion	During 1350-1340
Diarbekr and Diarrabia* at the beginning of the 13th cent.	10,000,000**	1,925,000**
Kurdistan	approximately 2,000,000*** at the beginning of the 12th cent.	201,500***

* This area forms the southern part of present-day Turkish Kurdistan and the northern part of Iraqi Kurdistan. (A.)

** H. Mustoufi, *Nuzhat al Qulub*, p. 120.

*** Ibid., p. 127.

¹² I. P. Petrushevskii, *Zemledelie i agrarnye otnoshenia v Irane XII.-XIV. vekov*, Moscow 1960, p. 55.

¹³ Ibid., p. 58.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 59.

The decay of agriculture in the Mongol Era was most serious, in some regions the extent of cultivated land became reduced as much as ten times.¹⁵ The reforms adopted by Ghazan Khan improved the situation in part only and further measures were taken in order to consolidate the feudal relations: For example, it was not permissible for any peasant to abandon his plot, and in case he did so, he was searched for and pursued for thirty years and when caught, brought back by force.

Tamerlane's invasion in the 15th century marked the beginning of further decay in the economy. The *iqta* assumed a new form - the "*soyurghal*",¹⁶ which was heritable. The owner became, at the same time, master of all matters in his area, and similiary to the owner of the *iqta*, was exempted from tax and enjoyed legal and administrative immunity. This, of course, brought about further decentralization and increased the power of the biggest feudal lords.

As a result, the large Kurdish landed estates had confirmed their position, and by the 16th century enjoyed full prosperity, which is evidenced also by Sheref-nameh. Crafts had separated in part from agriculture, which supported the development of home trade and market relations; taxes were partly paid in cash. Building was then going through a period of flourishing prosperity: New cities and palaces of the feudal lords and princes arose. In brief, it was a period when feudal ownership of land became consolidated and feudal relations prevailed throughout Kurdistan.

In the Safavid Era we come across a new form of the *iqta* then called the "*tuyul*". Its principle lay in the system of the state assigning the right to the whole rent or its part. Sometimes the *tuyul* was attached to certain state service and the right to it lasted only during the time the service was being performed. Another form of *tuyul* was being assigned to a person for life, but without the right of inheritance.

In the era of King Abbas I, in the 17th cent., new reforms were instituted in order to increase agricultural production: Some of the taxes were reduced. Yet all reforms resulted in an increase of the extent of the landed estates owned by the state and the royal family.

¹⁵ Ibid, pp. 55 and 80.

¹⁶ Mongolian: "rights" (A.)

Likewise, the number and size of the *vaqf* estates increased to the benefit of the Shii sect. In general, the economy of the country greatly improved and so did the living standard of the peasantry. During this era the king distributed land and pasturages to the tribes in the form of "yurts".¹⁷

The end of the Safavid rule and the Afghan invasion (18th cent.) mark the beginning of a new period of economic decline which brought to the peasants poverty and suffering. The situation became unbearable and resulted in a strong resistance on the part of the peasantry and the tribes. In 1743 the Kurds of the Salmasa and Khoy districts revolted against the increase in taxation.¹⁸

The era of Karim Khan Zand (1752—1779) constituted a short period of agricultural revival and relief to the peasants; during the following period, however, the decay of the economy continued and beginning with the 19th century, in the Qajar era, when the country gradually fell under indirect rule of the colonial powers, the decay steadily deepened. As seen from Table No. 9, this situation is connected with a reduction in the state revenue.

Table No. 9
State Income in Iran during 19th cent. in Millions of Francs¹⁹

Year	
1803	159
1815	75
1850	57
1889	40
1899	41

The chief object sought by the possessors of the *tuyul* in this century was to convert it into private property, of which they could no more be deprived.

The state, or rather the king, needed more money, the life in

¹⁷ Mongolian: "land".

¹⁸ I. P. Petrushevskii, *Ocherki po istorii feodal'nykh otnoshenii v Azerbaidzhane i Armenii*, Leningrad 1949, p. 335.

¹⁹ M. P. Volonter, *Ekonomicheskoe rozvitiie i agrarnyi vopros v Persii XX. v.*, Gosizdat 1921.

luxury led by the courtiers and king Nasraddin's journeys to Europe added to the deficit in the state revenue. The king took various steps in order to improve the situation of the treasury, he granted concessions to foreign powers, borrowed enormous sums, mainly from czarist Russia, and what is most important in this context, began to sell the state estates (*amlakeh khaliseh*). This gave a great opportunity to the possessors of the *tuyul* to become owners of the land.

Thus the private property of the big feudal lords grew at a great speed. As a result of this trend, by the end of the 19th century there existed the following forms of land-holding: landlord, state, *vagf*, tribal, and peasant ownership. The last could assume one of the following two forms: Either several peasant households a village (*khordah malik*), or one peasant, owned a plot of land. In Kurdistan these forms of ownership came into existence in such a way that the land originally granted by the king, or later purchased from the state, became inheritable property of the individual households and was distributed among the heirs, the pieces of land gradually becoming diminished simultaneously with the growing number of descendents. In this way the descendents of wealthy landowners slowly turned into peasants, owners of small plots of land.

In some cases these estates originated when nomadic tribes settled on "free" land and took it into their possession, the members of the tribes choosing separate pieces of land and thus becoming independent peasants.

2. KURDISTAN AS PART OF THE WORLD MARKET

Beginning with the latter half of the 19th century, outside elements began to influence the development in the country, including the agrarian conditions. The foreign powers, British colonialism from the south and czarist Russia from the north, started penetrating into Kurdistan and intensifying their political and economic influence on the country.

During this period and at the beginning of the 20th century

Kurdistan became part of the world market. For example, the development of Iran's foreign trade took a swift course, in the second half of the 19th cent. its volume had grown ten times²⁰ and in the 20th cent. it further increased from 370 million *grans* (-rials) in 1900 to 1,100 mil. *grans* in 1913.²¹

Kurdistan's attachment to the world market affected the entire economic and social structure of the Kurdish society, market relations began to spread, and cities were built at an unprecedented speed. There arose a great demand for certain export goods, namely products of forestry and agriculture. This concerned especially animal production, such as wool, skins, cattle, eggs and furthermore black nuts, Araby gum, cotton and carpets. In 1863 Kurdistan exported 455 thousand roubles worth of wool,²² technical plants and forestry products in the value of 5 million roubles.²³ Over 3 million sheep and goats a year were exported to Istanbul, Aleppo, Baghdad and Tiflis. At the beginning of the 20th cent. 20 million eggs a year were exported from Kurdistan to the port of Samsun by the Black Sea.²⁴ According to the British Consul's report of 1903, 20,000 to 22,400 pieces of gut were sold from the Kirmanshah region.²⁵ At the beginning of World War I, over 636 thousand *grans* worth of fat, skin, wool and other products were exported to Russia from Savujbulakh, the present Mahabad, every year.²⁶ The export from the Kirmanshah, Sinna and Mahabad areas was estimated at 3 million roubles per annum.²⁷ The above indicates the rapid progress of Kurdistan's foreign trade.

The essential prerequisite for the transaction with land was given by the existence of peasant ownership. "The full free ownership of

²⁰ L. F. Tigranov, *Iz obshchestvenno-ekonomicheskikh otnoshenii v Persii* Tiflis 1905, p. 11.

²¹ *Revolutsionnyi vostok*, 1927 No. 3; then 3.5 *grans* = 1 rouble. (A.)

²² A. G. Akopov, *K voprosu o natsional'noi konsolidatsii Kurdiv v Irane*, Moscow 1952, p. 225.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 251.

²⁴ Foreign Office, No. 62, *Armenia and Kurdistan*, London 1920.

²⁵ M. Jamalzadeh, *Ganje Shaigan*, Berlin 1917 (in Persian).

²⁶ A. G. Akopov, *K voprosu...*, p. 227.

²⁷ M. Vasilkovskii, *Otchet o poezdke po gubernatorstvam zapadnoi Persii*, Tiflis 1903, pp. 274, 268, 652.

land implied not only the possibility of possession, but also possibility of alienating it."²⁸ Land was bought and expropriated mainly by feudal lords, merchants, by the clergy and high officials. From the second half of the 19th cent. on, due to the penetration of foreign capital, the local merchants were gradually deprived of the opportunity of investing their money into home industry; on the other hand, together with the spreading of foreign markets, their capital rapidly increased. As a result of this situation, the merchants began to buy land on an extensive scale, purchasing both the estates belonging to the state and privately owned land. Yet, the fact that commercial capitalists turned into landowners, did not alter the feudal relations in agriculture.

Kurdistan's attachment to the world market speeded up the process of differentiation in the village: On the one hand, land became concentrated in the hands of a small number of people, and, on the other, thousands of peasants were reduced to poverty and turned into shuvans, gavans and sepans²⁹ in the country or formed the semi-proletariat in the cities, where they went in search of employment. "Commercial expansion, money, usury, landed property and mortgage were thus accompanied by the rapid concentration and centralization of wealth in the hands of a small class, on the one hand, and the increasing impoverishment of the masses and a growing mass of paupers, on the other."³⁰

It should be added that in Kurdistan, just as in other countries, some of the peasants, due to differentiation, became merchants or businessmen; this, however, occurred in a few cases only. This confirms Lenin's thesis, in which he states: "When comparing different areas, we notice in some of them as an outstanding feature the forming of village undertakers from the peasantry, while in others, the forming of the village proletariat"³¹.

²⁸ F. Engels, *The Origin of the Family*, Vol. II, Moscow 1955, p. 315 (English ed.).

²⁹ shuvan-shepherd, gavan-herdsman, sepan-agricultural labourer.

³⁰ F. Engels, *The Origin...*, p. 315.

³¹ V. I. Lenin, *The Capitalist Development in Russia*, Prague 1952, p. 110 (Czech ed.).

3. THE KURDISH TRIBE AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

In the middle of the 19th century the nomadic tribes constituted one third of the population of Kurdistan. In order to be able to follow the influences they and their further development underwent as a result of the country's attachment to the world market, it is necessary to give a brief outline of the tribal relations.

In the case of tribes, land (in the case of nomadic tribes pasture) is collective property belonging to the whole tribe; it had either been assigned to the tribe by the sovereign, in which case the tribe was under his protection, or it is the land on which the tribe had settled during colonization. It sometimes happened that the land had been forcibly appropriated at the expense of other tribes.

The tribe (*ashirat*) in Kurdistan is composed of clans (*taife*, *bar*, *tira*), which again can be divided into *hoz*, *khel*, or *bnamal*.

The head of the tribe was the chief, *mir* or *bag*, the head of the clan was the *agha*. The *bag* and the *agha* enjoyed unlimited legal and administrative authority; the *bag's* opinion was decisive in all matters, yet the aldermen (the white-bearded) had a great influence upon his decisions. His tent was the largest and was prominently marked. After his death the eldest son became his successor and in case the *bag* had no male ancestors, a new chief was elected by the aldermen. In some tribes every chief was elected as a ruler: The Juvandro tribe elects its sultan (chief) through a council of aldermen at a public meeting.

Sometimes even a woman can become head of a tribe.³² The chief decides all matters at issue, gives permission for marriages, etc. He owns no land nor pastures, but has the position of "*primus inter pares*." At the same time he enjoys certain privileges - receives a certain share of the wool, butter, cheese and meat³³ and agricultural products from the peasants. Within the tribe itself we can distinguish

³² For example, Adila-khan, who led the numerous and outstanding tribe of Jafs before and during the First World War (A.)

³³ M. S. I v a n o v, *Ocherk istorii Irana*, Moscow 1952, p. 119.

three main groups: the chief and his relatives³⁴ who form the privileged part of the tribe. The next and considerably more numerous group is formed by their servants (*khulams*) performing different functions; the third and most important is the group consisting of the mass of common members of the tribe. It should be noted that this classification cannot be considered precise and complete in all cases. In each tribe there is furthermore the clergy, divided into shaikhs (representatives of the sects), priests (*mulla*) and *seyeds* (the Prophet's descendants). In comparison with the peasantry and the shepherds, the clergy enjoys certain privileges. There are considerable differences among the common members, of which inequality of wealth (reckoned by the number of cattle) is the main criterion.³⁵

It is obvious that the disparity among the tribe members is given by the difference in size of the privately owned flocks; even where private ownership does not yet exist, these differences play an important part. While some members possess only a few sheep, the chief and other persons can own large flocks of goats and sheep. This inequality existed among the Kurds as early as the 16th century: Sheref-nama distinguishes "black" and "white" Kurds. Until today there exists a living saying of an agah telling a peasant: I am noble, but you are a black-headed *kermanj* (peasant).³⁶

Besides giving presents to his chief, a member of a tribe also had to pay tax to the state. Two kinds of taxes were levied on every Kurdish tribe: In addition to the tax levied on cattle and pastures, soldiers had to be provided for the army, often including the full equipment, e. g. hussars with horses and clothing, in many cases the soldier's expenses during the service had also to be covered by the tribe.³⁷ The Kurdish tribes paid tax in cash as shown on Table No. 10.

³⁴ Not always does kinship play the role of the decisive factor in the structure of the tribe. (A).

³⁵ "The cattle is not justly distributed among the Kurds. We come across persons owning much cattle and people who do not own a single goat." K. N. S m i r n o v, "Poezdka v severnii Kurdistan v 1904 godu", *Izvestiya Kavkaz, Otdela XVII, IRGO 1904.*

³⁶ A. Z. S h a m i l o v, *K voprosu feodalizma u Kurdov*, Yerevan 1932, p. 32.

³⁷ In the Russo-Iranian wars at the beginning of the 19th cent. two thirds of the troops of Abbas Mirza, formed by conscripts, comprised only Kurds.

Table No. 10

Tax on one sheep or goat	0.5 to 1 qran (rial) ²⁸
donkey	1— 5 qran
cow or bull	1— 7 qran
horse or mule	1.5— 10 qran
mule	2— 15 qran
camel	5— 50 qran ²⁹

At the beginning of the 20th century when the tribes provided soldiers, instead of tax on land they paid tax according to the number of cattle:

on every sheep or goat 0.75 - 1 qran
on a donkey or a cow 10 qrans

Exchange was considerably developed, both among the semi-nomadic and the nomadic tribes, the more so because "these pastoral tribes had ... not only milk, milk products and meat in greater abundance than the others, but also skins, wool, goat's hair, and the spun and woven fabrics which the increasing quantities of the raw material brought into more common use. This, for the first time, made regular exchange possible. Within the tribes, besides cattle-breeding, developed also crafts, such as joining, smithy, and weaving of tents, clothing, carpets, etc. Exchange enabled every tribe to possess its own summer station, a "havar" or "kōstan", and a winter station, called "garmian". On the route to the station and in its neighbourhood the tribe was entitled to sell products and obtain the goods needed in exchange. The money-form of exchange was widespread among the Kurds, and the property of the wealthiest chief was often reckoned not merely by the number of flocks, but according to the amount of gold and silver money he owned.

"Nomad races are the first to develop the money-form because all their worldly goods consist of moveable objects and are therefore

Abbas Mirza exempted them from taxation. P. I. Averianov, *Kurdy v vojnakh...*, p. 10. In 1885 of the 35,000 members of the Iranian conscript army 20,000 were Kurds.

²⁸ Then 3.5 qran = 1 rouble.

²⁹ L. F. Tigranov, *Iz obshchestvenno...*, p. 49.

directly alienable, and because their mode of life, by continually bringing them into contact with foreign communities, solicits the exchange of products."⁴⁰

The attachment of Kurdistan to the world market led to significant changes inside the tribes. The demand for animal products encouraged further exchange relations of the tribes with the surrounding world, which brought about further differentiation of private property within the tribes.⁴¹ At the same time there increased the demand for pastures, and as the growth of large flocks caused the feeling of want of pasturing land, it gradually led to hostility and warfare among the tribes. The limited extent of pastures was the cause of the process during which the tribal chief occupied the pastures applying proprietary rights on them.

The progress of exchange relations and the scarcity of pastures resulted in the gradual tendency of nomadic tribes to settled. At the turn of the 19th and the 20th centuries the process of the settlement of Kurdish nomadic tribes took an abrupt course together with a rapid growth of the number of villages and their inhabitants. A commission of the League of Nations stated already in 1925 that almost all Kurds are already settled.⁴² Except in a few cases on the borders of Iran and Iraq, the Kurds are not even semi-nomadic."⁴²

In the period between the two World wars the Iranian government began to exercise the policy of settling the Kurdish tribes by force. This measure had disastrous consequences for the Kurds: It frequently happened that entire tribes were completely exterminated: Of the 10,000 members of the Jalali tribe (living on the borders of Iran, Turkey and the U. S. S. R.) deported to the central areas of Iran, only a few hundred returned in 1941, all the rest having died.

⁴⁰ K. M a r x, *Capital*, London 1920, Part I, p. 61.

⁴¹ Preliminary statistics indicate that "towards the end of the 19th cent. 32.5 % members of the nomadic tribes owned no cattle and 17.5 % had no animals at all." A. G. A k o p o v, *K voprosu....*

Question of the Frontier...., p. 55.

⁴² A. L a m b t o n, *Landlord....*, p. 290.

Vilchevskii states incorrectly that only in the Mahabad area (among the Mukri Kurds) there are some 100—140 thousand nomads. *Perednoaziatskii etnografieskii sbornik I*, Moscow 1958, p. 183 (A.).

Overnight they were locked in hundreds in mosques and stables and in the daytime forced with bayonets to work.⁴⁴ General Ahmed Agha Khan became so "famous" through this manner of settling Lurs that he was given the nickname "the butcher of Luristan". Similar treatment was given to the members of the Galbaghi tribe, who were moved from Kurdistan to Hamadan and Isfahan and as far as Yazd, the central part of Iran, their original territory being resettled with Turkish-speaking groups: "Such was the pressure brought to bear upon them in the course of this move that they took to the hills and fought as rebels for many months".⁴⁵

Such a way of settling had evidently nothing in common with any true concern for the future of the Kurdish tribes. The forced migration corresponded to the interests of the Iranian bourgeoisie which needed a "stable" population that could form a "stable" and firm market. The prohibition of frontier trade and the centralising measures of the Iranian government forced the tribes to buy all their needs inside the country as it was made impossible for them to obtain them elsewhere.⁴⁶ The settlement benefited the Iranian landowners possessing land in Kurdistan, and the Kurdish landlords in enabling them to gain peasants and attach them to the soil. The ruling circles were also interested in increasing the incomes of the state through taxes and customs dues, and it was by far more convenient for the collectors to collect the taxes in villages than pursue the tribes through the unsafe mountain-ranges of Kurdistan. The prohibition of frontier trade and the control exercised over the migration of the tribes limited contraband trade and smuggling with foreign goods, which meant an increase of state revenue derived from customs dues. Furthermore, it was much easier to register and gain young people for the newly introduced military service among a settled population than among nomads.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ A. Gala we z h, *Agrarian Relations in Present-day Iranian Kurdistan (in Azerbaijanian)*, Baku 1955, p. 66.

⁴⁵ A. L a m b t o n, *Landlord...*, p. 285.

⁴⁶ It should be noted that until World War I the boundaries held no significance for the Kurdish nomadic tribes. (A.)

⁴⁷ The Kurdish tribes were not in favour of three factors of modern civilization: compulsory military service, taxes and customs dues. H. M o l t k e,

The final splitting up of Kurdistan and the closing up of the frontiers, particularly between Turkey and Iran, precluded the traditional summer and winter migration. These measures having been realized, the semi-nomadic tribe was either completely deprived of the right to cross the borders to the other country (the summer station being on the territory of one state, the winter station on that of another) or was bound to pay enormous sums. It sometimes even happened, after the borderline had been finally delimited that a tribe was split between two or more countries (e. g. the Harki tribe between Iraq, Iran and Turkey or the Shikak tribe between Iran and Turkey). Certain objective factors, however, deterred the settlement of the Kurdish nomads for some time: First of all, the existence of favourable conditions for cattle-breeding (good pastures, favourable climate, etc.) which encourage the nomadic way of life. Furthermore, lack of irrigated land and an insufficient irrigation system, which is an essential condition for the cultivation of land in Kurdistan. In addition to that, there functioned also a non-economic factor - the inclination to avoid obligations towards the state and to continue the nomadic way of life; nevertheless the last factor tends to lose weight in the process of centralization and consolidation of the state: The above explains why, before World War II, it was only a few tribes on the Iranian-Iraqi borders that led a nomadic life.

Table No. 11*

Area	Number of the Villages in the years		Village Population** in the years	
	1851	1951	1851	1951
Baneh	8	161	1,125	15,000
Marivan	14	111	1,040	17,800
Hauraman	9	121	605	29,500

* A. Galawezh, *Agrarian Relations...*, p. 68.

** Every family has been estimated at 5 people: the original data gave the number of families. (A.)

Briefe über Zustände und Begebenheiten in der Türkei aus den Jahren 1835-39, Berlin 1841, pp. 277, 279, quoted in B. Nikitine, *Les Kurdes...*, p. 186.

At present, the nomadic tribes constitute mere exceptions; as shown on Table No. 11, the number of villages and their population grew very quickly in the course of the past one hundred years.

Nowadays, there are over 7,500⁴⁸ villages in Iranian Kurdistan, most of them very small (consisting of 5 to 10 families, while the large ones reach up to 1,000 to 2,000 families), and the average village comprises about 50 to 100 households. If we take as a basis, a village of 363⁴⁹ inhabitants (which is the average throughout all Iran) then an overwhelming majority of the population of Kurdistan - 2,760,000 people, i. e. 92 % - are settled.

This does not imply that the tribal relations inside the tribes have ceased to exist - they remain in existence as well as the tribes themselves, yet the settlement gradually splits them up. The chiefs take into their possession not only pastures but arable land too, and thus turn into feudal lords. The land that had originally been granted to the whole tribe by the sovereign is gradually being converted into the private property of the chief.

This process started much earlier than the second half of the 19th cent.; it was rooted in the feudal relations existing already in the 16th cent. Yet, as we have observed, the following stage of the process was marked by new factors affecting and promoting it. During the centuries when the process of settlement was taking place there existed side by side three forms of feudal relations:

1. the agricultural form of settled tribes,
2. the combined form of semi-nomadic tribes,
3. the pastoral form of the nomadic tribes.

All these forms were based on a natural economy founded on domestic production. The transition from the nomadic to the semi-nomadic form is a prolonged process, and in Kurdistan, the nomadic form appears to be of great stability. On the other hand, the transition from the semi-nomadic to the settled form is comparatively rapid, the former being considerably less stable.

The process of transition takes approximately the following

⁴⁸ *Sovremennyi Iran*, Moscow 1956.

⁴⁹ This average has been reckoned by the data of *Sovremennyi Iran*, Moscow 1956.

course: A nomadic tribe either alienates the land of other tribes or purchases it for both the winter and the summer stations. Until then it was usual for the tribe to rent the land for these purposes either from private owners or from the state. Gradually one part of the tribe remains on the winter station also during the summer, while the other part continues to migrate. Thus the tribe acquires a semi-nomadic character. A semi-nomadic tribe can sometimes assume a different form: One part of the tribe settles on the winter station, the other remains on the summer station. In this case, the flocks of the whole tribe move from one area to the other, according to the season, without requiring migration of the tribe itself. In both cases only a small number of people take charge of the flocks when moving from one station to the other. In the following stage the number of persons in the migrating group gradually diminishes, until finally all the animals of the tribe are tended only by a very small number of shepherds, while the rest of the tribe become completely settled. Thus the original nomadic tribe splits into three main sections:

1. the feudal lords, owners of the land, pastures and cattle;
2. the peasants, who become settled and work the feudal land;
3. the shepherds.

The tribal relations remained very firm in the nomadic stage even during the 19th cent., they loosened in the semi-nomadic stage and are preserved only in remnants in the agrarian stage, where the feudal agrarian relations begin to prevail.

4. CHANGES IN THE ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

The division of labour and private property split the tribe into the propertied and the poor, the exploiting feudal lords and the exploited peasants and shepherds. The ideas of "liberty, equality, fraternity" characteristic of the original relationship inside the tribe had become discredited, the unity of rights and duties shattered. The relations disintegrated, and the differentiation and splitting up of the peasantry continued mercilessly. Rights became possession of the

chief - the feudal lord, duties becoming the matter of the common members of the tribe.

When Kurdistan became part of the world market, the original tribal ownership of arable land was, in fact, abolished, replacing the tribal ownership of land by private ownership also in the case of those tribes that had been settled already before and engaged in agricultural (vegetable) production, the chief turned into a feudal lord and the other members of the tribe became subject peasants.

However, the dependence of the peasant on his tribe did not cease; the peasant was not an object of trade, but was not permitted to leave the village freely.⁵⁰

Another significant phenomenon appeared requiring the division of labour - a complete separation of crafts from agriculture. Crafts concentrated in the cities where the craftsmen gradually became an important section of the population. On the other hand, the influx of foreign goods led to the ruin of some of the traditional Kurdish crafts, yet, on the whole, the division of labour promoted the development of the home market. "The gradual advance of social division of labour", writes Lenin, "constitutes the fundamental moment in the process of creating the inland market for capitalism."⁵¹

The process of attaching Kurdistan to the world market was marked by specific features, similarly to other economically underdeveloped countries. Trade with the world market was carried on indirectly, through the mediation of Persian, Turkish, and also Russian and Armenian merchants; a wholesale dealer in Istanbul, Aleppo or Tiflis bought the local products from small Kurdish merchants, or sometimes through his own agents directly from the manufacturers, and sold them on the world market. Analogically, the small Kurdish merchants imported goods for the home market. Although the Kurd-

⁵⁰ Until the revolution of 1907-1911 the peasant in Iranian Kurdistan who wished to leave the village had to pay a certain sum in return for his freedom.

"In the regions of Garrus and Kurdistan (meaning Sinna - A.) it was a custom for a subject to pay 30-80 grans to the state or the tax collector in case he wished to move from one plot of land to another." M. J a m a l - z a d e h, *Ganje Shaygan...*, p. 121.

⁵¹ V. I. L e n i n, *The Capitalist...*, p. 26.

ish commercial bourgeoisie expanded quite rapidly, it remained dependent on the merchants of the dominant nations. This state of affairs applies even to the present.

It must also be noted that the progress of domestic trade has been impeded by the influence of the strong feudal relations: Firstly, the natural mode of production still had a great share in the total production and exercised a negative influence upon the development of the market, because "during natural economy, society comprised numerous homogenous economic units (patriarchal peasant families, primitive village communities, feudal estates); each such unit performed economic tasks of all kind, beginning with extracting various sorts of raw materials and ending with their final processing for consumption."⁵² In fact, a very small number of industrial products were imported, and those too in a limited volume only. For instance, textile and footwear were largely products of domestic industry. The exceptionally low purchasing power on the part of the peasantry and the nomads, caused by their extreme exploitation, did not permit the broad section of the population to purchase products imported from abroad. Long wars between Iran and czarist Russia and between Turkey and czarist Russia, the continuous disputes among the tribes, together with the insecurity of caravan routes, greatly hampered the progress of the domestic market and trade connections with other countries, not to mention the negative effect of the insufficient communication system, especially roads and railways, particularly in the mountainous areas forming the largest part of Kurdistan with the largest sources of traditional export articles. No wonder that in the Kirmanshah, Sinna and Mahabad regions, the total population of which numbers about one million,⁵³ the volume of trade per person was only 3 roubles per annum.

Despite all the negative factors, the attachment of Kurdistan to the world market marked the rise of a new class of small Kurdish merchants and money-lenders, i. e. the new Kurdish bourgeoisie, although weak and dependent on the bourgeoisie of the nations dominant in Kurdistan.

⁵² Ibid., p. 25.

⁵³ M. Vasilkovskii, *Otchet o poezdke...*, pp. 271, 465, 650.

The above mentioned changes - the settlement of a larger part of the nomadic tribes, the separation of crafts from agriculture, an unprecedented development of trade and growth of towns, the production of a large amount of agricultural produce for the market, the differentiation in the village - constituted the new elements brought into the Kurdish society at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. Nevertheless, these changes, however weighty, did not succeed in shattering the feudal agrarian relations in rural Kurdistan.

The revolution of 1907—1911 had not attained its goals and the developments that followed were neither profound nor could they transform the basis of the agrarian relations. The revolutionary mood and the various uprisings following the First World War altered nothing in this situation. Thus for instance a law was passed in Iran in 1928, concerning official registration of all landed estates, which reads: "The price of land corresponds to ten times one third of the value of the entire crop in the preceding three years." This means that the price of land is defined by the total revenue obtained from it in the course of ten years.⁵⁴ Evidently, no peasant could buy land for such a price.

In this way the king, the biggest feudal lords and the tribal chiefs became legal proprietors not only of the land they originally possessed, but also of that alienated from the peasants or gained from them by means of all sorts of intrigues and deceit. It was sufficient if a person provided a fake certificate or document signed by a cleric (who was usually bribed) and the land could be officially registered in his name. It happened, too, that a feudal lord persuaded the illiterate peasant to sign with his fingerprint a document declaring that the land in the latter's holding is property of ... the feudal lord. The peasant obeyed having no idea of what he was signing, as at the time the new law was introduced the peasants were not even informed about its meaning. When they found out, it was already too late, the land being by then

⁵⁴ *Laws Passed by the Iranian Majlis*, Vol. VI, pp. 30—40 (in Persian). It is not without interest that the price of land in Iran was fixed according to the rent it provided in ten years. This custom is still in practice in Kurdistan, where banks and the interest granting system have not gained grounds yet (A.)

registered as property of the feudal lord. The same practice was applied to tribal property by the tribal chiefs. They had the land ascribed to themselves without informing the members of the tribe.

The communal form of ownership as one of the forms of land-holding disappeared, with only remnants of the original village common being preserved in certain areas.

In present-day Iranian Kurdistan we can find the following forms of land-holding:

1. landlord property,
2. crown property,
3. state property (*khaliseh*),
4. *vagf* tenure (clerical),
5. peasant property.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ The situation in the Turkish and Iraqi parts of Kurdistan is somewhat different: Naturally, Crown ownership does not exist and state ownership is much more powerful. Although the peasants in Turkish Kurdistan possess comparatively more land than the Kurdish peasants in Iran, landlord ownership remains to be chief form of land-ownership in both the Turkish and Iraqi Kurdistan. (A.)

FORMS OF LAND HOLDING

There do not exist precise data on the distribution of land among the different sections of the population. Data obtained from various regions of Iranian Kurdistan offer the following approximate results:

Table No. 12
Percentage of the Entire Area of Cultivated Land

Landlord Property*	State and Crown Property	Vaqf Holding	Tribal Holding	Peasant Property
78	10	2	2	8

* According to Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya (66-70 % entry Iranian Kurdistan) and other sources.

According to the data concerning all Iran, which apply to entire Kurdistan to a higher degree still, over 60 % of the peasant households have no land at all, and another 23 % own less than one hectare each.¹ The first group of table No. 13, the landlords, who own 78 % of all the cultivated land constitute 5 % of the population. 1 % of the inhabitants of the villages (a majority of the landed proprietors do not live in the villages) own over 56 % of the land and the number of people who own 33.8 % of the land forms a mere 0.2 % of the rural population.

1. LANDLORD OWNERSHIP

As already noted, the land in landlord ownership embraces 78 % of all arable land. This holding is based on feudal relations and obviously forms the chief form of landholding in Kurdistan. We can distinguish two main groups among the landed proprietors:

¹ *Iran Today, An Economic and Descriptive Survey*, Teheran 1950, p. 61.

1. The large landed proprietors owning more than one village (sometimes even more than a hundred); the majority of soil owned by landlords (about 80 %) in Iranian Kurdistan belongs to this section of the landed class.

2. The middle landowner owning usually no more than a single village.

Both the entire percentage of in landownership soil and the percentage of soil owned by the section of large landed proprietors in relation to the entire area of cultivated land differ in Kurdistan from one district to another; e. g. in the Urmia, Sardasht and Baneh regions, where a large portion of lands is owned by rich peasants (*wurdeh maliks*), this percentage is considerably lower. On the other hand, in the Miandoab, Sinna and Kirmanshah areas, the percentage is higher, sometimes amounting to 90 % of all land. In almost all these areas the land owned by the large landed proprietors, who also possess the best sources of water, includes the most fertile soils.

Not always can a person in possession of a single village be reckoned as a middle landowner, as the village might be very small, comprising a few families and a few dozen of hectares only. Such villages are plentiful throughout all the districts of Iranian Kurdistan. In this case the landowner should be regarded as a *wurdeh malik* rather than a middle landowner. It might, however, happen that the owner of a single village can be considered a large landed proprietor, in case e. g. the village numbers 500 to 2,000 families and covers 500 to 1,000 hectares of land. Neither is this kind of village rare in Kurdistan. If we attempt to draw a line between the large landed proprietor and the middle landowner, we might regard as large landed proprietor a person owning at least 300 ha of cultivated land.²

The wealthiest landlords in Iranian Kurdistan form a small group consisting of a few families which include also Persians and Azerbaijanians. In the Maku district "most of the rich low lying lands

² Different criteria must be applied to different areas. An owner of 200 ha might in a district where a wealthy landlord owns thousands of hectares of land even be regarded as a middle landowner, and in another district where a majority of the land is possessed by rich peasants we might consider him to be a large landed proprietor. (A.)

are owned by a few men who are not Kurds, and who live in Teheran, Paris, London."³ To the wealthiest landowners of central and southern Kurdistan belong: Qubadian, Asef Vaziri, Sanandaji, Amir Ehtevshami, Palizi, Zangana and Afshar. Each of these families possess from 100 to 400 villages, approximately 10,000 to 50,000 ha of land. As early as the end of the 19th cent. of the 250 villages in the Kirmanshah area over 100 villages belonged to a single feudal lord.⁴

The feudal lords exercise enormous power in Iranian Kurdistan and regard the peasants as their subjects. They misuse their positions of tribal chiefs or religious dignitaries (shaikhs) for cruel exploiting of the population. The tribal relations enable them to conceal intensive exploitation of the members of their tribes under the pretext of "paternal care" and "concern for the welfare of the tribe". The common member of the tribes still continues to regard the feudal lord as his chief and leader whom he is to respect and obey. The landlord makes use of his privileged position as a religious dignitary, shaikh and leader of a sect (tariqat), to pacify the peasants and to suppress class conflicts. It should be added that the feudal lords are the main supporters of the reactionary central government and imperialism; they control the state administration and hold high posts in the government. It is therefore natural that they misuse all this against the people and, first of all, against the peasantry.

Through the development of market relations the feudal lord in Kurdistan has acquired one more role: He has become a money-lender. It is he who lends the peasant money or grain on extremely hard conditions. Sometimes the feudal landlord engages also in trade in which case it is he again who mediates the sale of animal products in the city in the name of the whole tribe. To sum up, we often find a feudal lord, a tribal (clan) chief, a religious dignitary, a money-lender and merchant enjoying political power, all incorporated in a single person, - here is the source of the immense authority of the Kurdish feudal lord! It does not depend on the extent of the rent he receives but in his being the actual economic and political ruler over

³ W. Douglas, *Strange Lands...*, p. 68.

⁴ H. Binder, *Au Kurdistan, en Mesopotamie et en Perse*, Paris 1887, p. 351.

the subjected peasants; he is thus master of the whole area, of the individual farming peasant and the small landowner too. "The might of the feudal lord like that of every sovereign, depended not on the length of his rent roll, but on the number of his subjects, and the latter depended on the number of peasant proprietors."⁵

We should like to point out one more specific phenomenon, namely that the tribal relations enable the feudal lords heading individual clans within a single tribe to join forces against the peasants. They are consistent and united in applying joint measures against the peasantry, e. g. in the Mahabad region, the feudal lords of the Gawrik tribe possessing several dozen villages have made a mutual agreement that none will let a peasant expelled by one of them settle in his village. This shows that the chiefs, the feudal lords, are united in the economic and political actions against the peasants.

The authority of the feudal lords is most effective in hampering the advance of the class struggle and the progress of Kurdish society in general.

In Kurdistan the class of large landed proprietors does not comprise feudal lords alone, but includes also merchants and money-lenders, who have succeeded through various machinations to expropriate the peasants or purchase their land for a very low price.

A common feature of all these landowners amongst whom we may find, as stated above, the former feudal lord, the tribal chief, the sheikh, the money-lender and the merchant in one person is the fact, that they are absentee landowners; (this does not apply to the sheikh). A part of them come personally in summer and in autumn to superwise the harvest, but a larger part never appear in the village and live in big cities, mostly in Teheran, often even abroad, in Europe and in the U. S. A. During his absence the landowner's estates are in charge of his agent, the "mubashir" or the village headman called "katkhoda".

The mubashir strives to the utmost to exploit the peasants; his chief concern is to acquire as much rent as possible, although he delivers to the landlord no more than a rent corresponding to the revenue of an average yield, and keeps the remainder for himself. This explains the

* K. M a r x, *Capital*, London 1920, Part VIII, p. 741.

common phenomenon in Iranian Kurdistan, namely that after some time the mubashir turns into a landowner himself.

Another frequent practice is for the large landed proprietor to put his estates on a 3—6 year lease to merchants and mediators in the cities, which, of course, alters nothing in the feudal character of the rural relations. The rent which is to be delivered to the owner is usually assessed with regard of the previous year's yield, and thus the new tenant tries to make the most money and squeeze all he can out of the soil and the peasants, without investing any capital or introducing new technology.

Another kind of tenants come from the country, comprising mostly middle landowners or rich farmers who usually take the land on a lease of one year counted from the spring until the autumn of the same year. In this case it is only the yield which is concerned, and the tenant often suffers a loss due to the bad crop.

On rare occasions the land is rented to capitalists who cultivate the land through wage labour, a large number of the labourers being hired from distant areas, mainly from Iranian Azerbaijan. In the Miandoab and Urmia regions such practice occurs in the case of lands for growing technical plants, such as tobacco and particularly grapes. In these cases artificial fertilizers and modern agricultural machinery are being employed.

2. STATE OWNERSHIP (KHALISEH)

State ownership in its present form did not exist until the revolution of 1907—1911. Until then the sovereign ruler held all the power, and state land was, in fact, owned by him alone. Land in state ownership in Iranian Kurdistan originates from the confiscated property of those feudal lords who had fought against the government or against the king.⁶

⁶ For example, in Margivar and Targivar westward of Urmia, the land (about 100 villages) which belonged to the Shamzinan shaiks (ancestors of Obaidullah) was converted into state property. (A.)

Reza Shah (1925—1941) took into his possession large state estates in the whole of Iran, in Iranian Kurdistan a part of the best land around Kirmanshah. Another part of state land was appropriated by the chiefs of settled tribes and by the big feudal lords. Land, as indicated above, had originally been assigned to nomadic tribes as *tuyul* and was later converted into state property. In return for the land the tribes provided the state with soldiers. Later in the 1930-ies, when compulsory military service was introduced also in Iranian Kurdistan (called "ijbari" - enforced), a great part of the land was usurped by the tribal chiefs, who had become settled, and by the feudal lords.⁷ At present about 4 % of all cultivated land in Iranian Kurdistan is property of the state, most of the estates being located in Margivar, Targivar (about 100 villages), six villages in Miandoab, and in the Kirmanshah area. Until 1933 there were 145 villages in the Pishtkuh area which belonged to the government, later confiscated by Reza Shah. Other villages in the neighbourhood of Nafteshah, owned by the state, were transferred into the holding of the Sanjabi tribe.

The agrarian relations and the rate of land rent levied on the government landed estates are similar to the situation on private landed properties. The authorities run the estates in the following way: 1. A governmental agent supervises the work as a *mubashir* and presents to the state a part of the proceeds with regard to the customs and traditions of the respective district. 2. The state sells its share from the proceeds in advance every year and after that takes no more interest in the estates. 3. The government offers the estates for lease for a longer period (3—6 years); for this period the tenant may act as proprietor of the land, and consequently, he does everything to squeeze the land to the utmost, which results in merciless exploitation of the peasants. Very often, when the tenant happens to be a descendant of the original owner, a special contract is concluded. These tenants, enjoying great respect of the people due to their ancestors' deeds or as religious dignitaries, are granted the lease of those pieces of land for a mere tenth of the rent, and sometimes even less, in order that their

⁷ "In Kurdistan, where there were formerly considerable areas of *khalisch*, some of this has been sold and some usurped by neighbouring landowners. A few areas only remain." A. Lambton, *Landlord...*, p. 256.

obedience to the state and the abandonment of the ambitions of their ancestors is guaranteed. At the same time the government tries by all means to avoid returning them the land, so that they might not constitute a potential menace, because the estates are mostly situated in the border regions, and the tenants, whose fathers and relatives had been executed, might take a suitable opportunity to revenge themselves.

In the southern part of Iranian Kurdistan (on the borders of Iran and Iraq) where there are rich oil deposits, British imperialism played a highly negative role. Under the pressure of the Foreign Office state land was rented for an extremely low price (sometimes for one hundredth of the rent) to feudal lords who then co-operated with the British imperialists. Most of the land has been appropriated by a mighty Kurdish feudal Qubadian, well known for his submissiveness to British policy in Iran.⁸

In general, state land functions as a means of pressure on the Kurdish population and a forewarning to all other owners of land who would dare to show resistance against the government: Their land would be confiscated and converted into state property.

It would be possible for the government to make use of its land for building up exemplary estates and introducing new technology into agriculture and thus give an example to the peasants; yet nothing of the sort has ever taken place, and since 1955 the government has been making attempts to sell the lands, without even considering the possibility of distributing them among the poor peasants. In this way, the government expands the private ownership of the landed proprietors.

3. CROWN OWNERSHIP

Following the forced occupation of the land and appropriating an area covering thousands of hectares, Reza Shah became one of the biggest feudal lords of Kurdistan. The lands he took into his possession

⁸ *The Rahbar*, June 27, 1946.

during the 1930-ies belong to the best and most fertile in northern Iran and Iranian Kurdistan.

In 1941, after the Allied Forces had entered Iran, Reza Shah had to vacate the throne and quit the country. The anger toward him was so strong that it made the Majlis pass, as early as June 1942, an Act according to which all the Shah's landed estates were to be returned to their original owners. Later, under the pretext of an attempt on the King's life in February, 1949, the reactionary government succeeded in suppressing the popular movement for a certain time and prohibit all democratic institutions in the country. This formed a favourable opportunity for the King to acquire the land back. And so, by July 11, 1949, according to a new law, all the estates were returned to the Crown; nevertheless, the revenue was to be used for religious and social purposes.

When in 1951—1953 the national-liberation movement of the Iranian people attained great achievements, Mossaddek's government established an office in charge of state land and the Crown estates. However, after the victory of the reactionary pro-imperialist coup d'état in August, 1953, all these estates were once more returned to the Crown. They included over 1,277 complete villages (each comprising 6 dangs),⁹ 706 incomplete villages (comprising less than 6 dangs each), 1,975 pastures, 2,381 buildings of various purpose, palaces, factories, stores, hotels etc.¹⁰ The extent of all the land belonging to the Shah exceeded 2.5 mil. ha, inhabited by 233,000 people. While the total income of peasants on Crown lands was 175 mil. rials, the rent received by the Crown amounted to over 550 mil. rials.¹¹

In Iranian Kurdistan large areas in Pishtkuh and in the Kirman-shah area were owned by the king. Until World War II Reza Shah possessed lands in the petroleum area of Nafteshah and plots through

⁹ Each village in Iran, regardless of its size, is divided into 6 equal parts "dangs". (A.)

¹⁰ *Ettelaat*, 24. 7. 1953.

¹¹ *Ettelaat*, 13. 5. 1953; it might be of use to note that according to these statistics, the yearly income from the Crown estates is 750 rials, i. e. 10 dollars per person. (A.)

which leads the oil pipe-line to the refinery in Kirmanshah.¹² At present, the Crown estates in Iranian Kurdistan cover about 4 % of the total area of cultivated land.

Beginning with 1953, the Shah started selling his estates to the peasants, which served as a large-scale propaganda as if a land reform and distribution of the land among the peasantry were being carried out, yet it was in fact nothing but ordinary sale. A peasant (belonging mostly to the wealthier groups) received 5—20 ha of land for which he had to pay up 460—2,000 rials in the course of 25 years,¹³ the average price of every hectare being 3,000 rials. Up to the present the Shah has sold about 250,000 ha, i. e. 10 % of his land for which he is receiving about 10 million dollars.¹⁴ The money obtained through this sale and the rent levied from the remaining land, is partly being deposited in banks in Switzerland and in the U. S. A., and partly invested into some of the most profitable branches of industry. In this way the Crown during the recent years not only concentrated all political power in its hands, but also became a mighty economic magnate penetrating into all branches of the country's economy. No wonder that the king heads the feudal clique, ruling the country, and is a stronghold of American and British imperialism.

¹² "Reza Shah was not willing to sell his land to the Anglo-Iranian Oil Comp. and demanded the Company pay a yearly rent. After several years of negotiations a treaty was signed, according to which the A. I. O. C. paid 12,000 £ (although the land was worth less than £ 6,000 - A.). This agreement was in force until 1941 when the A. I. O. C. finally succeeded in cancelling it and bought the land for a price assessed by the government." M. F a t e h, *50 Years of Iranian Oil*. 1956 Teheran, p. 308 (in Persian). It is quite interesting that exactly in those years (the 1930-ies) when Reza Shah fought so stubbornly with the A. I. O. C. in order to gain some few thousands pounds for himself, he kept silent about the fact that the A. I. O. C. was making a profit of several million out of Iranian oil and in fact constituted a state inside a state. (A.)

¹³ *Ettelaat*, 24. 11. 1957.

¹⁴ H. Arsanjani, Minister of Agriculture, said to a correspondent of *Le Monde* in May 1961 that the distribution of the Crown landed estates among the peasants was a mistake, as the peasants, due to lack of agricultural implements, had to sell the land to the landlords. *Le Monde*, 24. 5. 1961.

4. VAQF LAND-HOLDING

As was already pointed out, the vaqf land originated in the grants assigned to mosques, religious schools, and to the clergy in general; it is neither merchantable nor transmittable to another person. In the following periods the clergy often forcibly expropriated large portions of land belonging to the peasants and declared it vaqf land. At present there exist two forms of vaqf land-holding: 1. Farm land has been granted with the intention that the rent will be used for religious and social purposes, such as building of schools and mosques, establishing irrigation canals, etc., which is the responsibility of the higher clergy in charge of the vaqf land. 2. Farm land is placed at the disposal of a religious dignitary on the condition that after the benefitter's death the rent will be transmitted to the latter's descendents. In this case the giver is concerned with preserving the land unsold for his children, and in the proper distribution of the rent among them.

It is obvious that in both these cases the higher clergy (in Iranian Kurdistan the shaikhs) have the possibility of appropriating the vaqf land through various tricks; we therefore now come across a state of affairs where the majority of vaqf areas belong directly to religious dignitaries. Only a small portion of vaqf land throughout Iranian Kurdistan (only a few villages) which until the revolution of 1907 were controlled by the clergy, has been transmitted to the Ministry of Education. All over Kurdistan a large amount of land is in the possession of the shaikhs (the representatives of the tariqat): The Nehri shaikhs owned several hundred villages in the district bordering upon the frontiers between Iran, Iraq and Turkey, the Tavela and Biara shaikhs owned about 400 villages in the Sulaimanya district on the borders of Iran and Iraq.

About 50—60 villages formerly in the vaqf holding (Miandoab district) have been appropriated by the family of Shaikh Burhan. Otherwise, each tariqat has its own khanqahs (sacred buildings for special religious ceremonies, where to the supporters of the tariqat, the dervishes and the murids, bring presents). These khanqahs, for example in Mahabad, own several dozen shops, caravanserais, etc. It is an established practice in Kurdistan to give mills, vineyards and

fruit orchards as vaqf grants. The vaqf land in the Mahidasht and Kirmanshah districts has for a whole 300 years been in the possession of the Shii sayyeds (decendants of Mohamed) of Samerra in Iraq. Thus the vaqf form of land-holding has, in fact, been converted into private property of the members of the clergy, which took place particularly at the occasion of the above mentioned registration of lands in 1928; the process continues up to this day.

Vaqf land is exempted from taxation as the rent is supposed to serve for social and public purposes, yet this privilege is being made use of by the clergy of higher ranks, partly also by the large landed proprietors for freeing their own land from taxation. In so far as the peasants toiling on the vaqf estates are concerned, they are exploited just as mercilessly as those working on feudal lands, besides, religion functions as a powerful factor, which incites the peasants to toil much harder and more intensively for the sake of religious needs, and suppresses at the very beginning in the name of the Islam and public welfare any attempt on the part of the peasants to improve their living conditions.

5. PEASANT OWNERSHIP

In Iranian Kurdistan only 8 %, i. e. 96,000 ha are in peasant ownership. The landed peasants constitute about 10 % of the population of rural Kurdistan. As to this form of ownership in Iranian Kurdistan, certain peculiarities have to be pointed out.

First of all, a majority of the peasants in question own about 1—3 ha per household, i. e. an extent of land corresponding to one jut;¹⁵ only a small percentage owns 5 to 20 ha of land and represent the section of rich farmers.¹⁶

¹⁵ Jut means a pair, a plough. In this context it means the area of soil cultivated with the help of one pair of draught beasts drawing a plough in the course of one season. (A.)

¹⁶ See Chapter VIII, section 1. The Social Structure of the Village in Kurdistan.

In some areas (Urmia, partly also Miandoab and Saqqiz) the peasant landed property comprises not so much farm land but vineyards and fruit orchards.

The land owned by the middle peasant proprietors belongs to less fertile soil, either unirrigated or distant from the village.

Very often the plots surrounding the cities belong to the *wurdeh maliks* (the rich peasants), who live in the city and are engaged in trade and craft, or are in government service. This is the case around most cities in Iranian Kurdistan.

The middle peasant proprietor encounters difficulties not only in obtaining water, despite the fact that he has the right to it, but also in acquiring agricultural implements. Occasionally it occurs that the proprietor owns land but possesses no cattle. If one pair of oxen becomes old or drops, the peasant finds himself in a desperate situation. In the Mahabad area a pair of oxen costs about 6,000—8,000 rials and a pair of buffalos 8,000—12,000 rs. In order to replace a single ox or buffalo the peasant would then have to be able to offer about 1—2 tons of wheat for sale, besides the amount needed for his family's consumption (in case the price of wheat was 3 rials per kilogram). This amount, however, constitutes $\frac{1}{2}$ — $\frac{1}{2}$ of the yield harvested from 3 hectares of well cultivated soil in an especially good year. When drought or a calamity destroying the crop occurs during the season, which is a comparatively frequent phenomenon in Kurdistan, the middle peasant becomes reduced to poverty; he can do nothing else but sell the land and become converted into a peasant dependent on the large landed proprietor, or become an agricultural labourer who owns neither land nor the *jut*, or go to town in search of work. In recent years this process has grown even more intensive, the large landed proprietors and money lenders seize the land of the middle peasants (due to the debts which the peasant could not pay off.).

FORMS OF GROUND-RENT

As stated above, an overwhelming proportion of land (70 %) in Iranian Kurdistan is in the holding of large landed proprietors. This, however, does not mean that there exists largescale production in agriculture; the feudal and tribal relations being still prevalent, the entire production is based chiefly on small-scale agricultural production. The main factor of production in agriculture, i. e. land, belongs to those who do not work on it, while those who do, possess no land. This is a specific feature of the agrarian relations in Iranian Kurdistan.

The large landed proprietor leasing the land to the peasant who tills it is concerned with nothing but the highest possible rate of rent; being in most cases an absentee landlord he takes no interest in the state of production, which also implies that he makes no investments and leaves the peasant to procure all the equipment and the draught beasts. This is the mode in which most of the land is being cultivated.

The rent is paid to the proprietor in kind, which has been the main form of exploitation in the Kurdish village for the past centuries. Apart from it, there exists labour rent to a considerably large extent. In Iranian Kurdistan it does not acquire the classical form, where the peasant would work part of the week on his own plot and the remaining part of the week toil on the estate of the feudal lord. Labour rent does not as a rule concern the tilling of land but other auxiliary work attached to and supplementing the rent in kind. "To whatever extent rent in kind is the prevailing and dominant form of ground-rent, it is furthermore always more or less accompanied by survivals of the earlier form, i. e. of rent paid directly in labour, *corvée*-labour, no matter whether the landlord be a private person or the state."¹

We might summarize that the main form of rent in Iranian

¹ K. M A R X, *Capital*, Vol. III, Moscow 1959, p. 775.

Kurdistan is rent in kind, which corresponds to the existing agrarian relations which mark the transition from feudal to capitalist relations of production when the natural form of economy prevails. "This rent in kind, in its pure form, while it may drag fragments along into the more highly developed modes of production and production relations, still presupposes for its existence a natural economy."²

Rent in kind can and does further differentiation in the village. The differences "in the economic position of the individual immediate producers"³ increase. This possibility is due to the fact that in the case of rent in kind, "compared with labour rent, the producer rather has more room for action to gain time for surplus-labour whose product shall belong to himself, as well as the product of his labour which satisfies his indispensable needs."⁴ As will be indicated later, the situation in Kurdistan is somewhat different. The peasant, at the same time, has heavy obligations to perform in the form of labour rent which do not permit him to devote time to surplus-labour. Thus the existence of labour rent, apart from rent in kind, impedes the increase of agricultural produce, i. e. perpetuates the poverty and low living standard of the peasantry, and simultaneously constitutes a factor unfavourably affecting the development of the home market and that of the relations of production in general.

Money-rent in Kurdistan is not yet sufficiently developed, except in certain areas particularly where technical plants are being cultivated (sugar beet and tobacco). The general tendency is for the rent in cash to develop while overcoming various obstacles, and for the elements of labour rent to be dropped. For this reason, and also for the sake of easier comprehension, we shall first treat rent in kind and money-rent subsequently, after which we shall proceed to labour rent regardless of historical succession.⁵

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 776.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ In Turkish Kurdistan where, as compared with the remaining parts of the country, capitalist relations of production are the most advanced, money rent and capitalist ground-rent are already widespread, and for this reason labour rent exists here to a limited extent only. The forms of ground-rent in Iraqi Kurdistan correspond approximately to those in

1. RENT IN KIND, THE CROP-SHARING SYSTEM

In Iranian Kurdistan rent in kind is usually practiced according to the crop-sharing system or crop-sharing lease. It should be noted that the crop-sharing system is of a feudal and not capitalist nature, which means that the entire system is based on a direct division of the yield between the landowner and the peasant, the former virtually assuming the role of a proprietor, the latter that of a labourer tilling the land with his own implements; sometimes the draught beasts belong to the landowner, in other cases to the peasant. "On the one hand the farmer here lacks sufficient capital required for complete capitalist management. On the other hand, the share here appropriated by the landlord does not bear the pure form of rent."⁶ The above can be explained by the fact that in this case we are not concerned merely with the land as the chief instrument of production provided by the landowner, but also with another group of instruments owned by the peasant. "On the one hand, the sharecropper, whether he employs his own or another's labour, is to lay claim to a portion of the product not, in his capacity as labourer, but as possessor of part of the instruments of labour as his own capitalist. On the other hand, the landlord claims his share not exclusively on the basis of his land ownership, but also as lender of capital."⁷ That means as a money-lender. Yet, for the crop-sharing system, a peasant possessing equipment "however poor" is essential but not sufficient; another stimulus functions forcing the peasant to toil on the lord's land - poverty" ... "... it requires also that the peasant be weighed down by want and place himself in bondage."⁸

The landowner or his agent leases the land: 1. according to the number of "juts" and 2. according to the number of members of the

the Iranian part. The chief form of ground-rent in both these parts (Turkish and Iraqi), similarly to the situation in Iranian Kurdistan, remains rent in kind based on the crop-sharing system. (A.)

⁶ K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III, Moscow 1959, p. 783.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ V. I. Lenin, *The Agrarian Question in Russia Towards the Close of the Nineteenth Century*, Moscow, p. 25.

⁹ *Ibid.*

family. In Kurdistan as a rule the area of 3–5 ha of land is given per *jut*, in the Bokan area it is 5–7 ha of irrigated and 8–10 ha of non-irrigated land.¹⁰ In the southern parts of Iranian Kurdistan the amount of land distributed per one *jut* is used for raising 9–15 q of wheat¹¹ and may therefore cover 2.5–10 ha. In the northern and southern parts of Iranian Kurdistan, non-irrigated “*daym*” land is not being leased, which corroborates not merely the abundance of this land but also the fact that non-irrigated land is mostly situated on the hills and on the mountain slopes, and its cultivation is extremely difficult. As the land is at the same time very stony and does not give a good yield, the lessor takes but little interest in it. Every lessee who has obtained land in this way has eternal right to cultivate it. This right is heritable and is sometimes preserved in one and the same family for several generations.¹² The lessee can be deprived of the right in two cases: 1. If he proves unable to till the land, i. e. loses the possibility of disposing of draught beasts, in which case the land is taken away from him and leased to someone else. 2. If another person is willing to till the land under conditions more favourable for the landlord. This applies mostly in the case of better quality land; a leaser possessing stronger draught beasts and having a family with a larger number of grown-up persons (particularly men) is capable to till the land more intensively, which also suits the landowner. This finally results in the more fertile soil being leased to the wealthier peasants. Land adjacent to the village is usually manured with the droppings of flocks and thus offers better yield; it is usually cultivated by the landowner or his agent through the work of agricultural labourers. Recently some landowners in the Kirmanshah and Miandoab areas tend to cultivate the land by means of tractors driven by agricultural labourers, and

¹⁰ A. Galawezh, *Agrarian Relations...*, p. 93.

¹¹ A. Lambton, *Landlord...*, p. 368.

¹² After the lessee's death in case he has no son, his daughter is not entitled to inherit the right to the cultivation of the leased land. In those tribes, however, where the clan relations are still powerful, the land is preserved in the family, and it is the daughter's husband who takes over the right to the cultivation. (A.)

therefore take all land from all the leasers, who are made to move to different villages or to the cities.

It is a usual practice in Iranian Kurdistan that to a certain plot on lease a particular building in the village is attached. In case a person loses the right to till the soil, he is simultaneously deprived of the right to inhabit the building attached and is obliged to vacate it for the new leaser.

The landowner makes an (oral) agreement with the peasant concerning cultivation. The agreements, recognized by the Iranian Civil Code as legitimate, are chiefly concerned with the following two points: first, the objects offered by each party for the cultivation, secondly, each party's share of the yield. Both in Iranian Kurdistan, and in Iran generally, as well as in the whole Middle East, a number of factors function in the crop-sharing system. Evidently, the economic factors play a major part, as do factors connected with the particular circumstances in the respective area, such as national and religious traditions, etc. Only a detailed analysis of all these factors can elucidate the fundamental problem of the agrarian relations in Kurdistan- the problem of the rent in kind as the main form of exploitation of millions of landless peasants.

We shall proceed from the analysis of the "five fundamental elements" (land, water, live and dead stock, seed, labour). From the very beginning it should be stressed that we do not mean to attach absolute importance to the above "five elements" of the crop-sharing system, as it is the practice of most of foreign and Iranian authors, nevertheless we hold the opinion that it would be a great mistake to underestimate or ignore their significance, as, most certainly, the principles of the crop-sharing system in Iranian Kurdistan are based on their functioning. By this we mean that yield is being divided into five equal portions and each party receives a number of portions corresponding to the number of elements it provided.

It is quite understandable that land is regarded as one of the five fundamental elements, and from what has been stated above concerning irrigation, the importance of water for irrigated land as an equal element is evident too. Labour as the chief contribution on the part of the leaseholder is included as one of the equal elements.

Draught animals being one of the elements seems to be quite obvious, especially when taking into consideration the striking poverty of the peasant lessee, for whom the draught animals mean their chief property. It should be added that dead stock belongs to the element comprising draught animals, and although most primitive and crude when approached from the point of view of present-day technology, it is of great importance to the poor lessee, for whom it constitutes essential means of tilling the land.

The fact that seed, too, is regarded as one of the five elements requires a more detailed explanation; as we shall see, not always is it considered absolutely equivalent, particularly, of course, in the case of industrial plants. Nevertheless, the significance of seed in Iranian Kurdistan should be pointed out; the yield from a certain plot is reckoned not per area but according to the amount of seed, the average yield being 5–7 times the amount sown. Thus the yield from one hectare is 840 kg of wheat, consequently 2,520 kg from 3 hectares, 360–504 kg of which represent the seed sown, i. e. $\frac{1}{7}$ – $\frac{1}{5}$ of the entire yield. As a rule, wheat is sown in the autumn. We shall consider a lessee receiving $\frac{2}{3}$ of the yield, i. e. 1,680 kg; if he were to preserve one fifth or one seventh of the yield in order to provide the seed for next year, he would have to give up 20–30 % of his share. It is therefore quite impossible for a lessee, to provide the seed, if in any case bread is secured for 6 months only, and he starves for the remaining half of the year, running into debts. Not to mention a certain kind of wheat wide spread through Iranian Kurdistan which is sown in the spring "*bahara*", that is to say, exactly in the season when the lessee has no reserves, not even for his daily bread. We shall perceive that the landowner considers providing and provides the seed only for the more fertile soil and does not provide it in the case of worse soil.

This corroborates the significance of seed which often constitutes one of the equivalent five elements, and in some cases acquires even greater importance than that. We shall now pay closer attention to the manner of dividing the crop between the landowner and the peasant in various regions of Iranian Kurdistan. There exist a whole number of fundamental principles, according to which the agreements

are fixed, all of them concerning the division of two main products: wheat and barley. A separate section of this treatise will be devoted to the rate of rent levied on other products and on technical plants.

"Niwakara": ("Equal Division")

The landlord leases irrigated land and provides the seed, all cultivation is undertaken by the lessee. According to the principle of the five shares, three shares are taken by the landlord (in return for the land, water and seed and two shares are allotted to the peasant for the work and the provision of draught animals). For example in the village Sarukani (of the Lajan district) the landowner takes 20 % of the yield, the rest being divided equally between him and the lessee. In a village only 10 km distant called Paswe, the landlord provides only half of the seed, yet also takes a half of the yield after having deducted 20 %, which means that the rate is higher than that in the village mentioned before. The difference is due to the fact that the soil of the latter village is more fertile and most certainly it is also connected with the land being owned by one of the most powerful feudal groups of the area - the chief of the Mamash tribe.

In the Sinna region the landowner receives half of the yield in the area extending for several kilometres in the immediate neighbourhood of the city. In villages called Kukeh and Qasimlu in the Urmia region the landlord provides half of the seed, the yield being divided into two equal shares. In case the landlord provides all the seed he would take two thirds of the yield. "*Niwakara*" is practiced mostly in areas with irrigated and more fertile land.

"Seyekbar": (The Lessee Receives 1/3 of the Yield)

The landlord provides land, water, seed and jut, the lessee contributes labour. Then the yield is divided into three portions, two of which are taken by the landlord, the third by the lessee. Such is the

case, for instance, in the village Chiana in the Sulduz district. The lessee is, in fact, an agricultural labourer without any property of his own who toils on the landlord's land, usually together with his numerous family. The *seyekbar* principle is spread throughout almost all areas, but practiced to a limited degree only and is less frequent in areas with a larger number of peasants owning draught animals. The frequency of its occurrence largely depends on the fact whether the landlord is interested in applying it; it occurs very seldom on the estates of large landed proprietors. Yet, it must be noted that this form of rent in kind always exists side by side with other forms, even in one and the same village.

"Sekut": (The Lessee Receives Two Thirds of the Yield)

The landlord provides land and water and receives one third of the yield, e. g. in Zindasht in the Salmas district.¹³ In the Mahabad area the landlord sometimes receives a mere 30 % of the yield instead of $\frac{1}{3}$; such is the case on the land belonging to the Qarapapakh tribe in the Sulduz district. The fact that in some areas the landlord receives less than elsewhere, is due to the tribal relations which still retain their power, and there exists a particularly strong feeling of solidarity amongst the Qarapapakhs, as they are the only Shii tribe speaking Azerbaijanian surrounded by Kurdish Sunni tribes. The leaser in southern Kurdistan in the Kirmanshah area receives $\frac{1}{3}$ of the yield and performs all the work.¹⁴

This manner of crop-sharing is quite common throughout Iranian Kurdistan especially in the northern districts. According to the principle of the five elements the landlord should receive $\frac{2}{5}$, i. e. $\frac{6}{15}$ of the yield (as he contributes only land and water) and not $\frac{1}{3}$, or $\frac{5}{15}$. The

¹³ W. Douglas, *Strange Lands...*, p. 81.

¹⁴ On the daym lands the landlord receives $\frac{1}{3}$ and the peasant $\frac{2}{3}$ and on irrigated land the landlord receives $\frac{2}{3}$ in return for land and water, the peasant $\frac{1}{3}$ for seed, draught animals etc. M. Danoshvar, *Didaniha va Shenidanihaye Iran*, Vol. II, Teheran 1950, p. 231.

fact that he receives by $\frac{1}{15}$ less is due mostly to lack of labour power; cattle-breeding being the chief occupation of most of the population in northern Kurdistan, only a small number of people engage in agriculture. Lack of manpower is also felt in the south in the Kirmanshah area.

"Dawudu": (Two Shares out of Ten)

The landlord provides land and water and receives 20 %. This is the practice in the entire Sinna region and to a large extent also in the northern districts, e. g. in the above mentioned village Sarukani (Lajan district), but the landlord takes one fifth even in years when there has been shortage of water. This likewise applies to non-irrigated crops in all parts of Kurdistan. In Dashtabel (Urmia region) the landlord takes one fifth, in this area, however, plant production plays only a secondary role, cattle-breeding being of far greater importance.

Sometimes the landlord takes less than one fifth, e. g. in Zhavirud near Sinna where he takes only $\frac{2}{15}$, which means by $\frac{1}{15}$ less because of unduly stony and thus infertile soil.¹⁵

The "dawudu" system is developed mostly in areas with predominant animal production, lacking good soil. In most of those areas the yield does not exceed 5—6 times the amount of seed.

Rice

Rice is usually divided half and half, the landowner providing land, water and seed. In Nalos (Shno district) the landlord takes 20 %, after which the yield is divided halfways. In the case of rice the sharing preserves more consistently the principle of five elements due to a greater need of both water and labour. For this reason it is rare

¹⁵ A. Lambton, *Landlord...*, p. 310.

that the leaser takes $\frac{2}{3}$ as in the Qasre Shirin area, in which case, however, he is responsible for all the expenses of cultivation, including seed.

Technical Plants

a) Sugar beet

In Iranian Kurdistan beet is grown around Urmia in the north, Miandoab in the centre, and around Shahabad in the southern part of the country, in which areas its cultivation is of primary importance. The yield is divided into 2 halves, the landowner providing land and water. Seed plays a minor role here and is in most cases provided by the sugar works. Yet, as a rule, in areas with strong feudal relations the lessee cultivating sugar beet obtains but poor profit from the yield: The landowner makes a contract with the sugar works for the cultivation. The agreement cannot be concluded by the lessee, as, according to the Iranian Civil Code, the landowner is the only person in the village entitled to do so. The landowner obtains an allowance from the factory which he keeps for himself; the factory then pays 780 rs (about 10 dollars) and 6 kg of sugar for 1 ton of beet, of which the lessee receives a very small share dependent on the decision of the landlord.

As it is a source of higher rent, the landowners in some villages force the peasants to cultivate sugar beet, sometimes even to the detriment of other crops. For instance in the Khalifalian village (Sulduz district) in summer, when the peasants are fully occupied with other urgent tasks, the landlord forces them and their wives and children to weed the beet.

Landowners possessing tractors (Miandoab area) plough the land tilled by the leasers growing sugar beet and receive a certain sum in return. The sugar works receive 780 rs, i. e. the price of one ton of beet, for ploughing one hectare of land with a tractor.

b) Tobacco

The agreements between the landlord and the lessee on the division of tobacco, which is grown in all areas of Iranian Kurdistan, are based on two principles: 1. The yield is divided into halves, the landowner providing land and water, seed is of little importance. The leaser is in charge of the work and the jut. This system is practiced for example in the village Paswe (Lajan district). The processing of tobacco after harvesting requires much work, namely complete desiccation, sorting and packing. Being a state monopoly in Iran, tobacco can neither be sold nor bought freely. Similarly to the case of sugar beet, it is the landowner who makes the contract with the respective government authorities and receives an allowance and money for the tobacco sold, the peasant being at his mercy. This implies that the peasant has but little interest in growing tobacco, which to him means endless and strenuous toil and hardly any income.¹⁶ For this reason in some areas the landowners force the peasants to grow tobacco, e. g. in the already mentioned village Paswe the lessee, in case he refuses to grow it, is liable to a compensation corresponding to the price of the yield. In this way the yield of tobacco is divided for example in the Shno area where some of the best sorts of Iranian tobacco are grown.

In the case of tobacco rent in kind is often supplemented by *corvéé* (labour rent): The landlord forces the leaser (growing e. g. wheat) to plough the plots for the tobacco plants in the form of *corvéé*, for which the latter receives no reward. All the remaining work is performed by agricultural labourers, who receive half of the proceeds. This is the practice in Nalos (Shno area) and in Chiana (Sulduz).

2. In the Urmia district, where at present most of the tobacco is being grown, the yield is divided, according to the *sekut* system, into three shares, one of them being taken by the landlord providing land and water, the second by the peasant who had ploughed the land with his jut, the third by the agricultural labourer who had performed the rest of the cultivation.

In any case, rent on tobacco is higher than that on grain crops

¹⁶ It is the tribal leader who receives the money for the tobacco and he usually forwards nothing to the peasant. *Sovremennyi Iran*.

and the peasants growing tobacco as well as those growing sugar beet perceive the actual degree of the inhuman exploitation. One special feature of the rent levied on tobacco should be pointed out, namely that it assumes the form of rent in kind as part of the crop-sharing system, yet neither the landlord nor the lessee obtain the yield in this form, as the only buyer is the state paying in money; thus the landlord in fact receives money-rent. This system marks the transition stage between rent in kind and money-rent and demonstrates the influence of the cultivation of technical plants on the agrarian relations and on the differentiation of the peasantry. In any case, already nowadays, as we shall observe, it is virtual money-rent that is paid in Kurdistan both on sugar beet and on tobacco.

c) Cotton

The rate of division of cotton, grown mostly in southern Kurdistan, is two thirds for the lessee to one third taken by the landlord, unless the rent assumes the monetary form.

Fruit orchards and trees

Fruit trees are usually owned by the landowners - this is the case in Harsin and Kangavar in the neighbourhood of Kirmanshah.¹⁷ Even if they belong to the peasant, he must pay rent for the land, usually in the form of 20 % of the proceeds. This is the practice in Mahabad. In other cases the landlord leases his gardens to gardeners. In Hasanabad (Sinna region) the gardeners receive $\frac{1}{3}$ and the landowners $\frac{2}{3}$ of the proceeds.¹⁸ In the Pushti Kuh area of Kangavar trees other than fruit-trees are divided on the basis of two shares to the peasant and one to the landowner.¹⁹

In certain areas the peasants have no right to the trees even if they had planted them. For this reason there are only a few artificially planted forests in the Kurdish countryside. As to the extensive natural

¹⁷, ¹⁸ and ¹⁹ A. Lambton, *Landlord...*, p. 324.

forests, anyone can use them freely both for fuel and their fruit as well.²⁰

In other areas the peasant possesses a certain right to the trees and orchards he plants, which, however, cannot be sold to anyone except the landowner; should the peasant decide to move from the village, he either has to give up his right or sell it to the landlord for a ridiculously low amount. This implies that through this right the peasant is virtually tied to his village and his free movement is, in fact, made impossible.

In the Urmia region a peasant planting non-fruit-trees (mostly poplars) is entitled to half of the proceeds, and it is this area where we find most of the artificially planted forests. In case of crops like melons, marrows, cucumbers, vegetable, etc. the produce is divided into two halves in northern Kurdistan, but in the southern parts (e. g. in the year 1949) on the basis two-thirds to the landowner and one-third to the "bustanchi" - the gardener who looked after the garden.²¹

It has already been indicated that the crop-sharing system is the main form of rent in Iranian Kurdistan, and the significance of the five elements is obvious from what has been explained above concerning its different forms, yet there evidently exist other factors affecting the division of the product.

First in the number of these factors is fertility of the soil: The more fertile the soil is, i. e. the higher the rate of differential rent, the bigger is the share appropriated by the landowner. In areas with poor soil, where not even the peasant's exhausting effort can result in a rich crop, the landowner is obliged to content himself with a smaller share.

Another factor is agricultural manpower. The landowner's share increases together with the growing number of lessees in relation to the area of land under cultivation, and vice versa. Furthermore, the landowner's portion decreases in areas with a majority of the population engaged in cattlebreeding.

We have also perceived the important part played by the quality of the irrigation system. The landowner can count with water as one

²⁰ In the Marivan area 14 kinds of fruits are harvested from oak-trees. A. R a z m a r a, *Military geography of Kurdistan*, Teheran 1940, p. 35.

²¹ A. L a m b t o n, *Landlord...*, p. 324.

of the five elements, in case the water supply is guaranteed also in the dry years, otherwise it cannot be reckoned as such and the landowner's share is lowered by the respective portion. In the case of fertile land, a good irrigation system and abundance of manpower, the landowner tries to provide also seed so as to be entitled to half of the yield (if he provides half of the amount necessary) or to $\frac{2}{5}$ (if he provides all the seed). The landowner's speculation is founded on experience and is correct. Let us consider the case when a landowner has two plots of land - A and B, the former producing four times the amount of seed, the latter ten times the amount, being more fertile.

Table No. 13
A plots

	Seed	Yield	Landlord's share	Leaser's share	Rent
Seed Provided by the Landlord (in kg)	150	600	$\frac{3}{5}$ 360	$\frac{2}{5}$ 240	210
by the Peasant (in kg)	150	600	$\frac{1}{3}$ 200	$\frac{2}{3}$ 400	200

This indicates that there is no substantial difference for the landowner (a mere 10 kg) in case he provides seed for inferior plots. If he, furthermore, considers the agricultural calamities which might threaten the yield, it is clear why he prefers to abstain from providing seed for these plots. Besides, the landlord has 150 kg of wheat at his disposal in the spring season when the peasants starve which enables him to credit the lessee with the seed in return for 200 kg or more on the condition that he receives it after the harvest. Therefore, if the landlord does not provide seed, he receives 200 kg of rent plus 50 kg of interest, instead of 210 kg of rent in case he provided it.

The situation differs materially in the case of the more fertile B plots.

The following table elucidates the reason why the landowner tends to provide the seed for crops grown on fertile land, the difference in his

share amounting to 250 kg, i. e. 50 % more than when he does not provide it.

Table No. 14

	Seed	Yield	Landlord's Share	Leaser's Share	Rent
Seed Provided by the Landlord	150	1.500	3/5 900	2/5 600	750
Seed Provided by the Leaser	150	1.500	1/3 500	2/3 1,000	500

As stated above, the distance of the area from the city and from the market in general affects the division of the yield between the landlord and the peasant. In addition, the landlord's portion is lower if the plots are remote and increases with the diminishing distance from the city. This means, in fact, that within the crop-sharing system there exist elements of differential rent, appropriated, together with the absolute ground-rent, by the landlord.

As to technical plants, namely tobacco and sugar beet, the landlord is virtually free to increase his share through various tricks, and as explained above, the peasants growing these plants are subject to most intensive exploitation. Sometimes, the number of portions taken by the lessee from grain crops depends on the share received from the produce of technical plants, e. g. the landlord agrees to taken one-third of the irrigated crops on the condition that the lessee will grow tobacco on the basis of two shares.

Furthermore, we should not underestimate the role of local tradition, the tribal relations etc. in the division of produce on the crop-sharing basis; in most cases the tradition favours the large landed proprietor, but there are instances (particularly where certain principles of equality still survive) when the traditions function to the benefit of the lessees. In some areas where land is owned by peasants, like the Banch area near the Iraqi frontier, 10 % is paid by tradition to the "*Khan*". Similar customs have been preserved only in the most remote districts. In other areas the peasant, in spite of being the owner

of the land, is forced to pay the owner of the village, a certain amount, which, however, does not assume a form of a portion from the produce. This custom might be regarded as a survival of the tribal relations.

From the first day the peasant begins to reap the crops the landlord's agent supervises the harvest.²² When the harvesting is finished, the yield is publicly divided in the presence of the lessee and the agent. In some areas, (e. g. Sulduz or Mahabad) a special overseer "sarkar" is appointed to supervise the division of the crops.

Depending on the agreement on the rate of the rent, the yield is divided into two or three equivalent portions, which are then allotted to each party usually by lot, although sometimes it is the right of the landlord or his agent to choose which heap he will have. It is also quite frequent that on the day of the crop-sharing the lessee is expected to provide entertainment for both the landlord's agent and a large number of people present.

2. MONEY-RENT

We have already pointed out that in Iranian Kurdistan money-rent is not yet sufficiently developed but is advancing at a growing speed, gradually replacing the other form of feudal rent, namely labour rent and rent in kind.

Money-rent is not based on the capitalist mode of production with the three classes - the large landed proprietors, capitalists and wage labourers - functioning in agriculture, but is "... ground-rent which arises from a mere change in form of rent in kind, just as the latter is but a modification of labour rent",²³ a rent paid by the peasant

²² The manner of supervision is extremely simple and peculiar. The agent prepares a big wooden stamp "shaquel" (20 cm wide and 30 cm long) with a special form of the landlord's seal engraved. He repeats the "stamping" of the heap of crop in regular intervals and any damage of the landlord's seal indicates that the lessee has been stealing, in which case he must replace an amount estimated by the agent. (A.)

²³ K. M a r x, *Capital*, Vol. III, Moscow 1959, p. 777.

in the money form after he has sold the new products. Money-rent is typical for the period of the decay of feudalism and establishment of capitalist relations. As regards the money-rent practiced in Iranian Kurdistan, the following specific features have to be mentioned: Firstly, money-rent functions side by side with rent in kind and labour rent and, in most cases, constitutes a supplementary factor. Secondly, we do not come across this form of ground-rent in the case of the main agricultural products, i. e. grain crops; here the crop-sharing system, as a form of rent in kind, remains the chief manner of paying rent. The money form occurs mostly in the case of technical plants, in market gardening and frequently also in cattle - breeding.

The ground-rent as levied on the two main technical plants, namely tobacco and sugar-beet, where the yield is being divided according to the crop-sharing system, has already been discussed, yet, both the landowner and the lessee receive their share in cash. This, of course, is no more rent in kind, yet it is not the true form of money-rent either, as the legal relation between the landowner and the peasant underwent no change. "With money-rent prevailing the traditional and customary relationship between landlord and subjects who possess and cultivate a part of the land, is necessarily turned into a pure money relationship fixed contractually in accordance with the rules of positive law. The possessor engaged in cultivation thus becomes virtually a mere tenant."²⁴ It is therefore a transitory stage from rent in kind to money-rent. Money-rent is levied on cotton, being 1,000 rs per a unit of plough-land (approximately 1,000 m²).

Money-rent is quite frequent in market gardening and fruit-growing, e. g. (in Nalos) the landlord receives 100.000 rs. of rent yearly on grapes. In the neighbourhood of Miandoab the fruit-trees belong to the peasants, who paid 1 r. per 100 sq.metres to the landowner in 1945.²⁵ A similar situation exists in Urmia, where market gardening is very widely spread.

Rent in cash is also levied on residential buildings in the villages. The houses are built by the peasants themselves, the landowner providing merely beams for the ceilings. Nevertheless, the whole

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 778-779.

²⁵ A. Lambton, *Landlord...*, p. 324.

house is property of the landlord, and for this reason it is understandable that the peasants have but little interest in its proper upkeep, which substantially contributes to the extremely low standard of housing in the Kurdish villages. In the Mahabad area 50 to 300 rs. is levied per house, in some districts the jut-holder pays nothing, while the agricultural labourers pay 20 to 120 rs. a year. In the Mangur district near Mahabad the jut-holder pays nothing, but all the others, namely persons engaged in cattle-breeding, who dwell in the village only during the winter season, have to pay 30 to 70 rs. yearly. The rent on buildings might appear quite low, we must, however, consider the fact that firstly, it has cost the landlord nothing but the price of the beams he had provided during the construction of the building, secondly, the house usually comprises a single room, and finally, the peasant living in a village is obliged to perform various jobs in the form of *corvée*-labour. For an agricultural labourer, whose living standard is particularly low, it is very difficult to provide even 50 rs.

Rent paid to the landowner on the village shops is very high, amounting to e. g. 15,000 rs. in Paswe, 10,000 rs. in Qalatan and 20,000 rs. in Khalifalian per annum. The landowners themselves still own several hundreds of shops in the towns of Bokan and Sulduz. Some years ago, for instance Bokan had a population of 3,000 people and 300 shops. All the shops and residential buildings were property of the feudal lords of the Elkhani family. A similar situation exists in Sulduz which has at present more than 5,000 inhabitants and several hundred shops, the landowner permitting no one to weigh wholesale goods; all goods for sale have to be weighed on a certain public square, for which the landlord receives 230,000 rs every year.

The landowners likewise levy a high rent upon tea-houses built on caravan routes: For two such tea-houses the landlord of Debukr in the Mahabad area receives over 7,000 rs per annum.

One of the most frequent modes of paying money-rent is "*sarana*" (poll tax). In the above-mentioned village in Debukr, for example, it amounts to 500—1,000 rs per jut-owner and in the case the agricultural labourers 30—100 rs. per person yearly. In other cases "*sarjuti*" (tax on the *jut*) is being levied; here rent in cash constitutes a mere supplementary part of the ground-rent. In the Kangavar district near Pushti-

kuh the *sarjuti* amounted to 3 kg of fat, 3 hens and 200 rs. in 1945. In Hasanabad near Sinna 4 hens, 1.5 kg of fat and 100 rs. were levied.

Rent on pastures often assumes the money form; sometimes it is a fixed sum, in other cases it is paid per head of livestock. The rent is usually levied at 5—20 rs. per head yearly and in most cases supplements the rent in kind. This sum (*shakhana*) is sometimes levied according to the needs of the feudal lords and the landowners.²⁶ For example, if the feudal lord travels to the capital or abroad, rent is collected according to the number of livestock or the property of the peasants. E. g. in the Saqqiz area a pasture due is levied amounting to 150—200 rs. per household.

As stated above, money-rent is characteristic of the period of decay of feudalism and rise of the capitalist relationships. As far as Iranian Kurdistan is concerned, this process brings about an increasing significance of agricultural money-rent. On the one hand, the progress of market relations promotes the role of money-rent and is at the same time reciprocally furthered by the development of money-rent clearing the path for capitalist ground-rent.

3. LABOUR RENT AND PERSONAL SERVITUDES OF THE PEASANT

Elements of labour rent can be found in all districts of Kurdistan, the most common form being the "*begar*" - corvée-labour. The peasants are liable to perform various kinds of work in agriculture and building.

The amount of the *begar* varies from district to district, somewhere amounting to mere 7 days yearly, sometimes as much as two months, the landlord being entitled to require the peasant's services any time of the year. The number and the rate of the *begar* increases in proportion to the strength of the feudal relations. Consequently, where exchange relations are more advanced (especially in the vicinity

²⁶ In the Pushtikuh and Pishkuh of Luristan "... goats and sheep are counted as two horns (*shakhi*), cows and oxen as four, asses three and horses four." A. L a m b t o n, *ibid.*, p. 290.

of towns) the *begar* has either been completely abolished or reduced to a minimum.

In Hasanabad by Sinna the levy is made per *jut*, and amounts to seven days' free labour of a peasant and four days' free labour of an ass per annum. In addition the peasants have to work for two days in the landlord's garden.²⁷ In areas where cattle-breeding is developed, the peasants have to collect and prepare all the fodder for the landlord's animals. This is the case e. g. in the village Sarukani of the Lajan district. In this village a peasant willing to grow tobacco, which is of great concern to the landlord, is levied the lowest *begar*. In case the landowner provides the seed, the peasant is exempted from the *begar* altogether. In the Paswe village the landowner grows and harvests tobacco on several tens of hectares of the best soil, all with *begar* labour, while in other areas, e. g. Urmia, the peasant receives $\frac{1}{3}$ of the yield for ploughing and growing tobacco. In Paswe all peasants possessing draught animals are obliged to plough the soil free, the remaining work being performed by agricultural labourers, who take a share from the yield. Furthermore, the *jut*-holder is liable to 40 day's free labour in summer.

In the village Nalos (Shno area) every *jut*-owner is obliged to plough 3–5 ha of land in addition to his own as *begar*, which are then entrusted to a propertyless peasant for cultivation.²⁸ The landlord owns also a large vineyard where all the work is carried out by the peasants in the form of *begar* labour.

In most villages of Iranian Kurdistan the landowner can exact *begar* labour from the peasant at any time he wishes... In the Saqqiz area also each *jut* has to provide several free days' labour in man and asses. In addition to this, agricultural labour has to be performed for the landowner whenever required. Thus, if the landowner wants his land ploughed, or the harvest reaped, or any other agricultural work performed, it is done by *corvée*. Food is provided for those taking part but no other payment is made."²⁹

²⁷ A. Lambton, *ibid.*, p. 331.

²⁸ Very often the peasants are made to till free that part of the land which the landowner allots to the mulla. (A.)

²⁹ A. Lambton, *Landlord...*, p. 331.

In certain areas, like Mahabad and Sulduz, the "*bandavani*" form of *begar* is quite common, for example in the village Khalifalian (Sulduz) every *jut*-owner has to provide one man - *bandavan* - for the period of four months (March-June). The peasant has to pay 880 kg of grain to the *bandavan*, the latter performing various kinds of work for the landowner, e. g. he cleans the canals, builds houses in the village, does the repairs on the landlord's buildings etc. The number of *bandavans* in the village Qunqala amounts to 60—80 persons. It is only the peasants cultivating the soil on the *seyekbar* system (the landlord takes two thirds of the yield), that are not obliged to supply the *bandavans*. In these areas, besides the *bandavani*, there exist also other forms of corvée.

Among the semi-nomadic tribes, or rather in areas with prevailing animal production, *begar* service is either completely non-existent or consists in the performing of minor tasks. This is the case in the Dash-tabel district where *begar* does not exist at all. In the Mangur district (Mahabad) those engaged in cattle-breeding are not obliged to perform any free work.

Very often the peasants are forced to perform free work as *begar* on various construction projects both for the landlord and for the state. Thousands of peasants toiled on the construction of state roads in Kurdistan. Recently, when the number of car owners from the landowner class has been increasing, the peasants have been made to build special roads for automobiles, e. g. in Paswe (Lajan) they had to build an 18 km long road, and in Nalos (Shno) a 15 km long section of road for the private cars of the landowner.

The large landed proprietors living in the cities have their own land and their relatives' houses built exclusively by *begar* labour. When summarizing the different forms of corvée, we receive the following incomplete list:

1. Building of houses, roads etc. for the state and the landlord.
2. Cleaning of canals and performing of different tasks connected with irrigation.
3. Transporting the landlord's share of the yield wherever required.

4. Ploughing of the landlord's plots which the peasant himself does not till.

5. Collection and preparation of fodder, straw, and hay, to supply the landlord's flocks in winter.

6. Threshing and preparation of the yield from approximately 1 ha of land.

7. Every *jut*-owner has to provide one *bandavan* who works for the landlord, for the period of 3—4 months.

8. Feeding and tending several animals belonging to the landlord during the winter season.

9. Providing one ass for transport whenever required by the landlord.

10. Providing a horse (in case possessed) whenever required by the landlord.

11. Preparation and transport of fuel for the landlord's needs during the winter (wood, sometimes several kilometres distant from the village, and briquets made of the animal's droppings).

The above list reveals that *corvée* is still practised in Iranian Kurdistan to a great extent and constitutes the most significant survival of the feudal relations, and simultaneously has a hampering effect on the progress of rural Kurdistan. Surplus time as it exists in the system of rent in kind is reduced to the minimum; the peasant in Iranian Kurdistan cannot find time for surplus-labour due to the numerous obligations connected with the system of *begar*.

The conditions described result in extremely low agricultural production, strong dependence of peasants on the landlord, stagnation and relative stability of the agrarian relations; this again causes a retardment of the differentiation process within the peasant class, and furthermore despite cruel exploitation the mere existence of the *begar* system impedes the development of the class struggle in the village.

Similarly to serfs, the peasants are liable to additional dues paid either in kind or in cash to the landlord.

1. 10 rs. or a certain amount of butter per sheep or goat - "*marana*".

2. 5—10 hens per annum - "*frujana*".

3. An amount of eggs varying according to season - "*helkana*".

4. 200—500 briquets made of cattle's droppings for fuel - "*tapalana*".

5. 2—16 kg of butter - "*ronana*". In cattle breeding areas cheese, wool etc. are supplied as well.

6. "*Gurisana*" - a fee for string, amounting to approximately 50 rs.

7. When the landlord or his agent have guests (which is comparatively frequent in Kurdistan) the peasants have to pay the "*nivanana*" for the guests in cash and kind. They have to provide accommodation for part of the guests and stables for their horses; board, however, is provided by the landlord's house.

8. On the occasion of every festival (especially during the two religious feasts *Ramadan* and *Qurban*) the peasant pays the "*djezhnana*" to the landlord.

9. When a member of the landlord's family dies, the peasants pay the "*sarkhoshana*".

10. In return for a permission for the marriage of the peasant's son or daughter, brother or sister, the farmer is obliged to bring the landlord a valuable present - "*surana*". In cattle-breeding areas it usually consists of a ram, fat, in other cases even a horse, in recent years the present is also given in cash. For instance, in the Akhtachi district (Miandoab area) the *surana* amounts to 5,000 rs. The sum is levied differently from region to region, but mostly according to the property of the peasant.

11. For breach of order or regulations, for harm done to another peasant, the peasant is liable to a fine paid to the landlord. The system of fines is common in all districts of Iranian Kurdistan.

12. Sometimes the peasant's household is ravaged as a penalty for some minor resistance or disobedience shown towards the landlord.

13. After the death of a peasant who has no heirs, his property is appropriated by the landlord, in some cases the latter takes a portion from the property even if there are legal heirs.

14. In case the peasant has not performed *begar* labour he must pay off the "*begarana*" instead. Yet it often happens that he pays it although he had performed the work.

In addition to the dues towards the landlord, the peasants have

additional obligations to other members of the village community,

First of all we should mention the dues paid to the religious dignitaries:

1. The *mulla* receives 160–240 kg of wheat from every *jut*-owner, and 50–80 kg from the peasants not owning a *jut*. In case the *mulla* engages in agriculture, he is allotted a piece of land for which he pays no rent and which is tilled by the peasants with their own implements.

On the *Ramadan* festival the *mulla* also receives the “*zakat*” “*sarfitra*” per head amounting to 3 kg of wheat from the *jut*-owners and usually 10 rs. in cash from the other peasants. Every household has to pay him 15–60 kg.

In case e. g. a ram is killed at the occasion of the *Qurban* festival, the skin is given to the *mulla*.

2. The supporters of the shaikhs and sects (the dervishes and *murids*) have to bring their shaikh an annual present varying according to their property.

3. In Iranian Kurdistan there is a mosque practically in every village, and the peasants contribute to its upkeep in many ways. First of all they pay to the “*mjavir*” (in charge of the mosque), the *jut*-owner 16–30 kg of wheat per annum according to his property and the local customs. During the festivals they provide food for the feasts taking place in the mosque, in which the men take part.³⁰

The upkeep of a mosque includes also the training of the students of theology called “*faqeh*”. In most mosques there are about 5–10 *faques* brought up by the *mulla*, who have to be provided for by the peasants.

The peasants are still liable to further heavy obligations. Every year they must deliver:

1. 80–320 kg of wheat to the “*dehban*”, the official representative of the authorities, who is usually in the service of the landlord,

³⁰ During the holidays and on Fridays the *mjavir* goes round the houses and receives lunch. As every member of the household contributes a share of his lunch into the *mjavir's* bowl, his lunch results in a mixture of all kinds of food. A Kurdish proverb speaks about the *mjavir's* food as a symbol of medley in general. (A.)

and thus it is the latter who, in fact, receives all the payments and remunerates the "dehban" as one of his servants.

2. 50—160 kg of wheat to the "kōkha", or the local magistrate, who is virtually an instrument by which the landlord exercises his power, and is, in fact, nominated by him. In Iranian Kurdistan the *kōkha's* duties differ from district to district.

3. 16—80 kg of wheat to the "gzir" or "gokhil" in charge of the preservation of tradition and regulations, who organizes the cleaning of canals and other collective work. In Iranian Kurdistan he mostly becomes the landlord's supervisor over the peasants.

4. 20 kg of wheat per plough-land to the *sarkar* in charge of the control and division of the crop. In some districts the *sarkar* does not exist, his duties being performed by the local magistrate. In this case the magistrate receives no special remuneration. Yet, where the office of the *sarkar* exists, whether carried out by the magistrate or anyone else, the 20 kg per plough-land are taken by the landowner.

5. 6 kg of wheat per animal to the "gavan" tending the horned cattle and 8 kg to the "shuvan" per goat or sheep.

These are the dues paid by the peasants in Iranian Kurdistan which follow from their various duties, from the local customs and regulations. Most of them are levied throughout the whole country, some only in certain districts. Their amount and extent increases with strongly preserved feudal relations, such as the Lajan area, and are recognized to a limited extent in areas with impaired feudal relations, or where elements of capitalist agrarian relations have already penetrated. Nevertheless, generally spoken these duties are a significant feature of the agrarian relations in Iranian Kurdistan.

In rural Kurdistan other factors still exist connected with the feudal order as prevailing in agrarian relations. A Kurdish saying goes: "If the lord has one village, the serf has a hundred", which implies that the peasant can move freely from one village to another. In this connection there is the expression "khoshnshin" (a nice settler) meaning that the peasant is able to choose a "nice" place to settle and live in. Yet, both this expression³¹ and the above proverb should be regarded

³¹ A. Shamilov considers this expression to have a different meaning (derived from the word jin - life) - "not to live nicely". (A. Z. Shamilov,

as a product of the peasants' wishes rather than that of objective reality.

As to the peasants' free migration, the situation is far from favourable. What hinders them from leaving their native villages? In areas with strong tribal relations it is, first of all, the respect and obligation felt by the peasant towards his tribe and the village, and in addition to that, the peasant rarely dares to quit his native village where his family have lived for a number of generations.

Furthermore, there are economic factors functioning here; the peasant living in one village for several generations has the right to cultivate the soil, to use the water; he possesses a share of the trees fruit orchards and vineyards which he himself has planted, etc. By leaving he would be deprived of these rights, besides, the possibility of gaining them elsewhere is most doubtful.

In many cases the peasant is indebted to the landlord, and being unable to pay the debt off, is virtually forced to remain in the village, which is misused by the landowner for even more cruel forms of exploitation.

Non-economic factors function here as well: The pressure of the landlord³² and the gendarme, the state laws, etc. constitute a further limitation of the peasant's freedom and increase his feudal dependence on the soil.

It is most advantageous for the peasant to move in the spring (in April). By this time he has already used up all the winter supplies of fodder and fuel and, on the other hand, would be able to provide these easily somewhere else. The landlord for his part finds it more suitable, and forces the peasants to move, in the autumn (in November), in which case all the fodder and fuel remains his; the peasants are unable to provide them in the new village, and for this reason have to agree to all the conditions set by the landowner. No wonder that the peasants who have the possibility of moving in spring, prefer to do so

K voprosu feodalizma, p. 39). This explanation, although very improbable, is closer to the actual state of affairs. (A.)

³² As stated above, the landlords take joint measures against the peasants; if a peasant leaves one village, he is not permitted to settle in a village of the same area owned by another person. (A.)

during the night. In order to prevent this, the majority of landlords have special watchmen keeping guard during spring nights.

This limitation of the peasants' migration is, of course, a negative factor impeding the development and progress of the Kurdish village. As a result, not even manpower is free to move.

The feudal relations constitute a hindrance to the advance of trade; in most Kurdish villages no one can engage in trade without the landlord's permission. An strange merchant, selling e. g. nothing but fruit, cannot enter a village, especially where the landlord himself owns orchards.

In other places, like Paswe in Lajan, the peasants cannot even sell eggs or hens as the landlord consumes them himself. In case there is a shop in the village it is leased by the landowner at a very high rent. As to the lessee, this is advantageous, as no one else in the village but him is then entitled to engage in trade. All these regulations limit the development of exchange in general and particularly the progress of exchange relations, hampering the penetration of new capitalist relations into the rural areas of Kurdistan.

Very often a Kurdish girl cannot marry without the landlord's permission. Particularly in the case she is to marry a man from another village or a different tribe, the landlord has the right to refuse, or may require a sum of money so high that the family is unable to provide it, and thus the marriage does not take place.

4. RENT IN CATTLE-BREEDING

We have already mentioned the fact that cattle-breeding is of great importance in Iranian Kurdistan, constituting the source for 40 % of the national income. In areas with prevailing animal production we come across several interesting phenomena in the agrarian relations. The chief kinds of livestock bred are goats and sheep; pigs are reared only exceptionally by Christians, Assyrians, Armenians, etc.

The large flocks of sheep and goats which can be seen throughout Iranian Kurdistan belong mostly to the large landed proprietors,

feudal lords and tribal chiefs, which is to a large degree connected with the mode of pasture-ownership. It is not rare for one large owner to possess anything from 10,000 to 20,000 heads of livestock. As to Iranian Kurdistan, calculations indicate that of the approximate total of 10 mil. animals, 6 million are owned by a section of people constituting 0.6 % of the rural population, each of whom possesses over 1,000 heads of cattle. On the other hand, a great majority of families have to manage with a mere 5—10 animals.

"In the Saqqiz area ... in spite of relatively favourable climatic conditions the peasants do not usually own more than a few animals apiece".³³ This, of course, is the case in other areas, too.

The sorts of animals owned by the peasants differ from those owned by the landowners: A poor peasant unable to provide means for a proper livelihood for himself cannot rear the better sorts of cattle. Even within a single village it is possible to distinguish the landlord's animals from those owned by an ordinary peasant at first sight (this is particularly conspicuous in the case of horned cattle). The above corroborates of the following statement by Lenin: "It goes without saying that the half-ruined peasant, with his poverty-stricken farm, enmeshed on all sides in the toils of bondage, is not in a position to acquire and maintain cattle at all good in quantity. If the owner (owner indeed!) starves, the cattle must starve; it cannot be otherwise."³⁴

The flocks belonging to the semi-nomadic and sedentary tribes and other groups are tended by shepherds "*shuvans*" receiving a wage. It is proper to mention that due to the high mountains and frequent occurrence of wild beasts, the work of a shepherd is regarded as one of the most difficult and responsible posts in Kurdistan.

Each shepherd is in charge of 200—500 sheep and goats, for which he receives 10—14 animals yearly.³⁵ In the Sulduz area each shepherd receives 3,000—5,000 rs. (in cash), a ram of two years, food, clothing, and wool from two sheep.

It happens quite often that the landowner refuses to provide

³³ A. Lambton, *Landlord...*, p. 358.

³⁴ V. I. Lenin, *The Agrarian Questions...*, p. 72.

³⁵ A. Z. Shamilov, *K voprosu feodalizma...*, p. 45.

lodging for shepherds with large flocks in his village because of lack of pastures. In other cases the peasants have to pay heavy dues, and it is for this reason that they do not own more than a few animals, and that cattle-breeding, which is, similiary to all agriculture in Iranian Kurdistan, founded on extensive cultivation, is on so low a standard.³⁶

It might be said that both, pastures and large flocks of sheep and goats, are, in fact, property of the large landed proprietors. It is a very case that the pastures belong to the state "*khaliseh*" for which the government levies high dues from the cattle-breeders.

Among the semi-nomadic tribes owning large flocks there exists a certain community association of the owners of cattle called "*oba*" or "*hoba*". This phenomenon being an object of speculation to some orientalist, we think it necessary to devote some paragraphs to the explanation of its principles.³⁷

Towards the end of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth, in the period when the tribes, the tribal relations, and the nomadic mode of life as such, were going through a stage of disintegration, the *oba* began to spread and became an important form of association in cattle-breeding. It is based on the practice that during the spring a number of flock-holders from one or several villages join and move together to the pastures in the mountains, where they spend the summer; in the autumn they all return to the villages and separate, thus dissolving the *oba*. During its existence all the issues of the *oba* are settled by an elder "*saroba*" or "*sarkhel*". Co-operation concerns only the pasture, all the other activities like milking, processing of butter, shearing of the sheep, etc. are performed by the members separately.

Membership in the *oba* is voluntary and any owner of cattle is entitled to take part. An *oba* cannot be identified with a tribe or a clan, firstly, because kinship and tribal relations are not a necessary condition for membership in the *oba*. Secondly, as we have observed, the *oba* is a transient formation, and thus the entire form of association

³⁶ "Broadly speaking, it would seem that the levying of pasture dues is a deterrent to the keeping of flocks by the peasants." A. Lambton, *Landlord...*, p. 358.

³⁷ See B. Nikitine, *Les Kurdes...*, pp. 149, 151.

is transient lasting for about 6—8 months (from the beginning of spring till late autumn).

The founding of *obas* is a result of the fact that an ordinary peasant owning several, in the best case, a few dozen of animals, cannot afford to hire pastures by himself, as those are leased for hundreds and sometimes even thousands of sheep and goats. This makes it necessary for the peasant together with his flock to join the association as a "*jol*" and together with other *jols* found an *oba*. There exists, of course, a further reason; a peasant with a small number of animals cannot venture the journey into the mountains alone, therefore he joins an *oba* which usually comprises 15 to 20 tents.

The *saroba* (chief) regards all the members of the *oba* as equals and collects rent from each of them according to the number of animals they possess. He is either the chief of a tribe (in case the *oba* in its majority is formed by members of one tribe) or the person owning the largest flock, i. e. the wealthiest of all the members of the *oba*. This means that besides being a function, the *saroba* is also a certain privileged post: All the work required for the upkeep of the *saroba's* flocks is carried out by the regular members in the form of corvée-labour, who also deliver dues and presents for him and his guests in proportion to the size of their flocks. Members of the *oba* have to sell cattle, wool, clarified butter etc. through the *saroba's* mediation only, which is a further source of high income to the latter. The *saroba* makes an agreement with a certain merchant and sells all products of the *oba* to him exclusively. These transactions amount to hundreds of thousands, sometimes even to millions, and the merchant promises to pay to the *saroba* a high sum in return.³⁸ Thus the latter gains rich profits from his own flocks and from those belonging to the other *oba* members too, and sometimes even becomes a millionaire.³⁹

The above indicates that the *oba* is not an association of equal members, and in spite of the outward communal form, contains obvious

³⁸ E. g. in Dashtabel inhabited by the Harki tribe the *saroba* receives 8—10 tons of rice from the merchants as a reward for the "mediation". (A.)

³⁹ The chief of the Harki tribe who is the *saroba* of enormous flocks migrating along the Iran - Iraqi borderline is the wealthiest man in the whole area. It is said that "it takes several mules to carry his golden pounds". (A.)

class disparity and differentiation in property. There are altogether three groups forming the *oba*: the *saroba* and his relatives, the owners of flocks, and the shepherds. Thus the survivals of the nomadic tribe appear in a modified form in the *oba*.

It might be said that despite a number of negative aspects, such as the existence of a certain form of exploitation of the common members the *oba* as a specific form of co-operation in animal production, is capable of being converted into a true co-operative that could play an important part not only in the progress of cattle-breeding alone, but in the general development of large-scale animal production. This, of course, requires the political power to be transferred to democratic forces, and the forming of a corresponding economic sector that would prevail in the economy of the country.

5. CAPITALIST GROUND-RENT

This form of rent is only now beginning to develop in Iranian Kurdistan, and in case it already exists, it usually assumes a highly specific character, namely that the large landed proprietor and the capitalist constitute a single person. The capitalist form of ground-rent occurs mostly in the case of industrial plants. The landed proprietor buys tractors and other agricultural machinery and gradually drives the peasants out of the village or converts them into agricultural labourers working for a wage. From then on he permits no *jul*-owner to enter the village. This is the situation, for example, in the areas of Miandoab and Kirmanshah. The system of large-scale plantation farming recently appearing in some other parts of Iran does not exist in Iranian Kurdistan.

In Iranian Kurdistan landed proprietor and the capitalist constitute one person, mainly as a result of the insufficiently advanced capitalist relations and also of the fact that capitalists and merchants willing to invest their capital into agriculture are very exceptional cases. Yet even these would encounter innumerable difficulties arising from the feudal conditions in the villages. In addition to the above

reasons, the non-Kurdish capitalists consider Kurdistan a marginal area, remote from the centre, and dangerous because of frequent disturbances and the inefficiency of the central executive bodies.

It occasionally happens that the landlord runs the estate in one village in the capitalist manner using tractors and wage labourers, and in the neighbouring village, having a smaller extent of arable land, receives rent in kind and requires all the servitudes connected with the feudal system. Sometimes he applies the two systems within one and the same village, with wage labourers tilling the best soil, and collects feudal rent from the remaining part of land. In both cases he uses agricultural machinery as a means of pressure on the peasants possessing *juts*; the latter is obliged to till the land on the conditions laid down by the landlord, otherwise his social existence is in danger: He would either have to leave the village or become an agricultural labourer. The peasants begin to feel hatred towards tractors and other implements, just like the workers used to hate machinery at the beginnings of capitalism. Nevertheless, there is one more aspect to this tendency: By becoming a wage labourer, the former peasant, who had been cultivating the soil on the crop-sharing principles and simultaneously, as will be shown further on, had to perform various tasks in the form of *corvéé*-labour, had now freed himself once and for all from these yokes. The wage he now receives (together with his family) is higher than the value of the kind he had received under the crop-sharing system. This phenomenon might be explained by the growth of labour productivity resulting from the application of machinery, and by the fact that the landowner appropriates not only ground-rent but also the profit which otherwise is appropriated by the capitalist.

We must, however, keep in mind the high degree of exploitation of the agricultural labourers. They work 7–8 months (from March till October), their working day lasting from sunrise till sunset. In the spring and in summer it is usually from 4–5 a. m. until 7–8 p. m., i. e. a 14–16 hour workday. Woman and child labour is used very frequently to replace the work of wage labourers, their remuneration being extremely low; as to the children, Lenin's statement that they "often toil for mere board and clothing"⁴⁶ is fully valid here.

* V. I. L e n i n, *Works*, Vol. III, Prague 1952, p. 227 (Czech ed.).

Wage labour is very common in the vineyards of the Urmia and Miandoab regions, where wage labourers, in fact, perform all the work, and receive a comparatively higher payment amounting to 50—60 rs. per day. Where special qualification is required (e. g. in the preparation of grape juice) the wage per day might reach as much as 80—100 rs. It is, of course, seasonal work taking place in spring when the grubbing of vineyards is due and during the autumn harvest. In the mentioned areas, which range among the richest, there is a lack of manpower and the majority of the wage labourers come from different districts. When the seasonal work is finished, they return home with a small sum of money which for them means a high income. This is even more obvious in the case of the pickers of Araby gum "katira"⁴¹ The wage labourers come from the most remote areas most of them from Kerman, about 2 thousand miles distant from Kurdistan. As a rule they are hired by trading companies, receive a wage and a share or a bonus from the produce. Evidently, were they not able to earn more than in their native districts, the labourers would not go for 2,000 km in search of work.

Such migration after work, which is gradually becoming more frequent in the areas mentioned, is a progressive tendency in agriculture "... 1 - because they migrate to districts promising higher wages, districts where their position as employees is more advantageous... 2 - the migration after work does away with the enslaving forms of hiring and working off."⁴²

⁴¹ Araby gum, exported almost exclusively from Iran in large quantities is picked from "Góni" (Gawan) bushes growing mostly in the central districts of Iranian Kurdistan (in Sinna and Saqqiz). The produce is used in the textile and chemical industry. (A.)

⁴² V. I. L e n i n, *Works*, Vol. III, Prague 1952, p. 242 (Czech ed.).

THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND LIVING STANDARD OF THE RURAL POPULATION

1. THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THE VILLAGE IN KURDISTAN

The previous analysis enables us to make a rough outline of the social structure of the Kurdish rural population. The most evident classification is that made according to the ownership of means of production, i. e. first of all the extent of land and number of cattle, particularly draught animals, dead stock and the number of wage labourers.

Having applied the above criterion (in areas with prevailing vegetable production), we receive the following groups:

- a) Large landed proprietors;
- b) middle landowners;
- c) *wurdeh-maliks* (rich peasants);
- d) middle peasants;
- e) landless peasants;
- f) agricultural labourers;
- g) other sections of the population.

a) **Large landed proprietors:** own 64 % of all arable land, each of them possessing at least 300 hectares, which is, as a rule, the best soil in the area. They constitute a mere 0.3 % of the rural population, and together with their families, amount to approximately 10,000 people. It is a small section most concerned in the preservation of the existing agrarian relations and hampering the progress of the entire Kurdish society. The large landed proprietors are in most cases absentees and their property exceeds that of a single village.¹

b) **Middle landowners:** own 14 % of all arable land and constitute less than 0.6 % of the population, i. e. about 20,000

¹ See section 1. Landlord ownership, Chapter VI.

people. They live in the village, run the farms, but do not participate in agricultural labour directly. As a rule, one landowner possesses one whole village or part of a large one usually 30—50 ha of arable land.

c) *Wurdeh-maliks*:² own about 6 % of arable land and constitute 1,5 % of the rural population. Each of them owns about 5—20 ha of land leased to other peasants on the cropsharing basis, or cultivated by hired agricultural labourers.

d) *Middle peasants*: own a parcel of land, which they till together with their families, and possess live and dead stock. They do not work for the landlord and never possess surplus land so as to be able to lease it. Hardly ever do they employ agricultural labourers. The middle peasant is in most cases able to provide for his family. This section is not numerous in Iranian Kurdistan, constituting 3 % of the rural population, i. e. 90,000 people possessing altogether 2 % of all the arable land.

e) *Landless peasants*: form the most numerous and most important part of the peasantry, amounting to 2,160,000 people and constituting approximately 72 % of the rural population; two main groups can be distinguished: those belonging to the first (about 42 %)³ own draught animals, agricultural dead stock and, 5—10 heads of cattle in addition; each of these peasants tills 1—3 ha of land. The second group represents about 30 %⁴ of the population, each of the peasants cultivating a plot of about 1 hectare of rented land. In case they possess no *jul*, they plough the land either by themselves with the help of animals and implements belonging to the owner of the land, or the ploughing is performed by peasants of the former group as *corvée-labour*. The yield is then distributed on a crop-sharing basis.

f) *Agricultural labourers*: own neither land nor

² Instead of the expression "*wurdeh-malik*" (small landowner) the word "*kulak*" is used. The application of this expression in this case is not correct, as the small landowners in Kurdistan cannot be regarded as village bourgeoisie, or kulaks. (A.)

³ O. L. Vilchevskii, „Mukrinskie Kurdy”, *Predneaziatskii etnog. sbornik*, Moscow 1958, p. 192. The author gives the figure of 45 % for the area of Mukri Kurdistan (central Iranian Kurdistan).

⁴ *Ibid.*

stock, only 1-3 smaller animals the products of which are used for the everyday needs of the family. They amount to 300,000 constituting about 10 %⁵ of the rural population. In return for their manpower the agricultural labourers receive very low remuneration (mostly in kind) and form the poorest section of the Kurdish village population.

g) Other sections of the population possessing no land are village merchants (settled and itinerant), craftsmen, part of the clerical dignitaries, teachers, etc. Altogether they constitute 2.5 % of the population in the country, about 75,000 people.

Table No. 15
Social structure of rural areas according to the extent of land possessed*

Section	Number of Members**	Percentage of the Population	Percentage of Landed Property to the Total Area of Cultivated Land	Area of Landed Property per Household	Total Area of Landed Property
Large Landed Proprietors	10,000	0.3 %	64 %	over 300 ha	768,000
Middle Landowners	20,000	0.6 %	14 %	30-50 ha	168,000
<i>Wurdzh-maliks</i>	45,000	1.5 %	6 %	5-20 ha	72,000
Middle Peasants	90,000	3 %	2 %	1-3 ha	24,000
Landless Peasants	2,160,000	72 %	—	—	—
Agricultural Labourers	300,000	10 %	—	—	—

* The data have been reckoned according to various sources. (A.)

** The average of 5 members per household in Kurdistan is taken as a basis.

The above table is a clear illustration of the differentiation existing within the Kurdish rural population. Although, of course, the data presented are far from being absolutely accurate, they indicate the

⁵ Ibid.

basic proportions in the structure of the population. The main feature is to be perceived in the circumstance that 82 % of the toiling inhabitants of the Kurdish villages own no land at all, while 78 % of all arable land is property of a group of people representing 1 % of the population. The above statement might be regarded as the main conclusion following from the above table, which cannot be upset by any potential inaccuracy of the data given.

The exclusive or main occupation of 10 % of the rural population is cattle-breeding (mostly sheep and goats); in areas where it forms the chief part of agricultural production, we can distinguish the following three groups:

1. Owners of large flocks and pastures;
2. middle flock-owners;
3. shepherds.

Of the total number of 10,000,000 heads of cattle, 2,000,000 are horned cattle and 8,000,000 are sheep and goats. Table No. 16 demonstrates the differentiation of the population engaged in cattle-breeding according to the number of cattle' owned (not including horned cattle).⁶

Table No. 16

Section	Number of Members	Percentage of the population	Percentage of Cattle Owned	Number of Animals	Number of Animals per Household
Owners of Large Flocks and Pastures	20,000	0,6 %	60 %	6,000,000	over 1,000
Middle Flockowners	120,000	4 %	18 %	1,800,000	approximately 75
Shepherds	150,000	5 %	2 %	200,000	5-10

⁶ As to pastures in Iranian Kurdistan there exist no reliable data. The pastures are mostly owned by the owners of large flocks and by the large landed proprietors. Our calculations are, therefore, only approximate. The government has recently taken large-scale measures with the purpose of nationalizing the pastures. (A.)

The table indicates clearly that 60 % of the flocks of small cattle are owned by a section forming less than 1 % of the rural population and mere 6 % of the cattle breeders. On the other hand, the shepherds, the number of which exceeds 50 % of the cattle breeders, own only 2 % of all the cattle. While the average flock owned by a member of the former group comprises 300 animals, it is only slightly more than one animal per member of the last section.

The situation in cattle-breeding virtually corresponds to that in plant production. On the one hand, large flocks are possessed by a handful of persons, and on the other hand, a large number of shepherds have to put up with a few sheep. Nevertheless, the cattle breeders include also a large section of owners of middle-sized flocks with the average of 75 animals per household. The existence of this comparatively numerous section of flock-owners is founded on two facts; firstly, as mentioned above, the tribal relations are most preserved particularly among the semi-nomadic flock-owners. There still are cases where the pastures belong to the tribe as a whole. At the same time, due to exceptionally favourable conditions, the rearing of sheep in the mountains of Kurdistan is unusually easy and cheap. The *oba* associations of cattle breeders contribute to this state of affairs.

2. THE POSITION OF THE PEASANTRY

According to our estimates⁷ the large landed proprietors appropriate about 20 % of the total national income. The yearly income of this group amounts to 5,600 dollars per head. In so far as the owners of large flocks are concerned, who appropriate about 24 % of the national income, the individual income amounts to 3,300 \$ per annum. The middle landowners appropriate about 5 % of the national dividend,

⁷ For the calculation of the total national income the production method has been applied. In order to estimate the material costs, estimates made for all Iran are taken as target figures. The share of the individual sections of the population in the national income is calculated basically after the production method.

i. e. over 500 \$ per head yearly. The average income of the wealthy peasant, reaches approximately 120 \$, that of the middle peasant is 60 \$ per annum. The yearly income of a middle flockowner slightly exceeds 160 \$.

Our primary interest is naturally the situation of the landless peasantry and the agricultural labourers, who, considered as a whole, constitute 82 % of the rural population.

These two sections live in extreme poverty; in addition to the cruel exploitation, these toiling rural masses are being exploited indirectly through the system of indirect tax. Of the three main products grown in the country, namely wheat, tobacco and sugar-beet, the latter two are a state monopoly. Let us consider tobacco for instance: The governmental bodies buy tobacco according to its quality graded into four grades:

Highest-grade tobacco is paid 48 rs per kilogram, the price paid for the lowest (fourth) grade being 5—16 rs. per kg. The average price paid by the government for one kilogram of tobacco is 20 rs. (The state inspectors generally qualify the tobacco as of average or lower grade and only very rarely as of first grade). Yet, the very same tobacco is being exported by the state for the price of 200—450 rs. per kilogram. In the city of Urmia the authorities buy the tobacco for 27 rs. a kilogram and sell it for 450 rs.⁸

The situation in the manufacturing of cigarettes is about the same: One kilogram of tobacco can be used for the production of 800 cigarettes. The maximum of another 100 % to cover the production costs added, the costs of these 800 cigarettes would amount to 40 rs. Yet, 20 pieces of the cheapest brand of cigarettes "Oshnu" (made from the tobacco from the town Shno) cost 10 rs., i. e. 800 cigarettes for 400 rs. For every kilogram of tobacco the state receives 360 rials, of which 80 rs. might be reckoned as profit to the state. The described system, however, brings the state a further clear profit of 280 rs. on every kilogram of tobacco, gained at the expense of the working people by means of indirect tax included in the price of cigarettes.

The average yearly produce of tobacco in Iran amounts to

⁸ *Sovremennyi Iran*, p. 164.

14,000 tons.⁹ Of this number 25 %, i. e. 3,500 tons are produced in Iranian Kurdistan. The additional income of the state received from the tobacco produced on the territory of Iranian Kurdistan alone amounts to 980,000,000 rs, which can be demonstrated by a statement declaring the income of the state received from tobacco industry and from the sale of tobacco in 1958 to have been 2,250,000,000 rs.¹⁰

The government follows a similar practice when buying up sugar-beet. The sugar-houses pay 780 rs. and 6 kg of sugar for every ton of sugar-beet, i. e. 900 rs. The average sugar content of the beet in Iran is 15 %, thus every ton of beet makes 150 kg of sugar, sold by the state for the price of 3,000 rs. As the maximum costs for the processing of one ton are 600 rs., the net income of the state is 15,00 rs per 1 ton of sugar-beet.

In 1958 Iran produced 730,000 tons of sugar-beet,¹¹ which indicates that the profit exceeded 1,000,000,000 rs. The share of Kurdistan (producing 20 % of Iranian sugar) in this figure is 200,000,000 rs.¹²

The above striking examples are quite sufficient as an illustration of the methods through which the ruling classes of Iran indirectly exploit the Kurdish peasants.

a) Usury

Throughout all Iranian Kurdistan, both the landowners and the city merchants use various widespread systems of usury for merciless robbing of the peasants. The most common form is the "*salam*", the principle of which consists in the practice according to which the

⁹ United Nations, *Economic Developments in the Middle East, 1958-1959*, New York 1960, p. 55.

¹⁰ *Bulletin Bank Melli Iran, Teheran 1959*.

¹¹ United Nations, *Economic Developments in the Middle East 1958-1959*, New York 1960, p. 54.

¹² The clear profit of the state (anonymous sugar plant companies) in 1959 exceeded 300 mil. rs. *Bulletin Bank Melli Iran 1959*.

peasants, whose income is not sufficient for the whole year long, sell the yield of the coming year to the town merchants; the latter then pays the peasant in goods. In this way the peasant is tied to the merchant and forced to buy everything in his shop. The merchant, of course, buys the future yield for an extremely low price and, at the same time, when selling the goods, particularly industrial products, robs the peasant without any mercy whatsoever.

The "*salam*" system of usury is especially common in the northern parts of Iranian Kurdistan, of which Mahabad is most typical. In Mahabad, having a population of over 20,000, there are more than 2,000 shops,¹³ one shop per ten people. If we consider every family to have approximately five members, then 10,000 people, i. e. 50 % of the city's population are merchants and their families. This is a most unusual phenomenon conditioned by the fact that Mahabad is the centre of an extensive area with a population of about 300,000 people. At the same time Mahabad is in close commercial contact with Iraq (in this case not ordinary legal but contraband trade).

The other factor conditioning the existence of this peculiar phenomenon is usury. The whole class of Kurdish commercial bourgeoisie practice usury in the "*salam*" form, which not only impoverishes the peasantry, but also has a disastrous effect upon the development of the means of production, as the merchants tend to concentrate all their financial means on the *salam*, which for them is a source of highest possible profit, and for this reason they are not in the least interested in founding industrial enterprises, which are but few in the whole of Mahabad.

There exists another common form of usury, by which the landowner sells wheat on credit to the peasant in winter or in the spring and takes the money after the yield has been harvested. As according to the rules of Islam interest is not permissible, the whole transaction assumes a form of sale, which, for the landowner, is most profitable. In spring he gives the peasant 300 kg of wheat, the price of which at this season amounts to about 4 rs. per kilogram; the peasant owes him 1,200 rs. The price of wheat after the harvest drops to 3 rs.

¹³ See entry "Mahabad", *Geographical Dictionary of Iran*, Vol. 4, Teheran 1949—1953 (in Persian).

a kilogram, which means that the peasant, in order to pay off the debt of 12,00 rs. has to give the landowner 400 kg of wheat, i. e. 100 kg more.

b) Living Standard of the Peasantry

It is generally acknowledged that the income of peasants in Iranian Kurdistan cannot provide even for the minimum livelihood. "The Kurdish peasant lives in extreme poverty", declares Hamadani.¹⁴ "In Kurdistan, the peasant owns nothing", states profesor Bahrami.¹⁵

According to the official periodical *Ettelaat*, the yearly deficit of the landless peasant owning one *jut* amounts to 1,695 rs.¹⁶ The *Ettelaat*, however, estimates the minimum needs of a family of four to be about 11,640 rs. per annum (i. e. about 40 dollars per head),¹⁷ but the average Kurdish family has five members and thus has an income of 30 dollars per head.

The yearly income of the peasantry, who, according to our estimations, constitute 72 % of the rural population, amounts to 26 dollars per head. As to the agricultural labourers, the figure is even

¹⁴ A. S. Hamadani, *Geography of Kurdistan*, p. 73 (in Persian).

¹⁵ T. Bahrami, *An Agricultural Geography of Iran*, p. 517 (in Persian).

William Douglas, Justice of the Supreme Court of the U. S. A. presents the following picture typical of south Kurdistan: "Abdul: Owned no land, worked no land, owned six cows and 15 sheep, supported a family of 10. Emani: Owned no land; worked no land; owned four calves and twenty sheep; supported a family of two. Hossein: Owned no land; rented wheat land from a merchant in Khorramabad and got his share 20 per cent of the crop which last year was three hundred pounds; owned four cows and thirty sheep; supported a family of five. Taghi: Owned no land; worked no land; owned two cows and twenty sheep; supported a family of four." W. Douglas, *Strange Lands*, p. 103.

¹⁶ *Ettelaat*, July 2, 9 and 12, 1953.

¹⁷ K. Zarnegar, *The Future of Our Villages and Towns*, Teheran 1958, p. 17 (in Persian) declares that the yearly income of the peasant does not exceed 8,000 rs.

lower - 15 dollars per head, the yearly income of a Kurdish shepherd's family being approximately the same.

For the sum of 26 dollars (1,950 rs.) the peasant could obtain:

3 m of cheap cotton material for winter	300 rs.,
3 m of light (summer) material (or one man's shirt)	50 rs.,
1 pair of rubber boots	100 rs.,
150 kg of flour	750 rs.,
1 kg of tea ¹⁸	150 rs.,
12 kg of sugar	300 rs.,
6 kg of cheese	300 rs.,
altogether	1,950 rs.

The above table illustrates how incomplete and inadequate, regarding the minimum needs, the budget is. According to it, the peasant must virtually live on dry bread, which, however, does correspond to the actual state of affairs. He must do without light during the evenings and the nights, as he cannot buy any paraffin. Providing means for the education of children, for medicines or medical service is therefore absolutely out of the question. What then can be the living standard of the agricultural labourer or shepherd who instead of 26 dollars has but 15 dollars yearly.¹⁹

The housing situation of the peasants presents the most drastic picture of the poverty and sufferings borne by the Kurdish people. As a rule the house of a rural family consists of one single room where the whole family live. H. Binder who visited Kurdistan in the past century wrote: "I measured two of these rooms. In the first (3.5 m long, 3 m wide and 2 m high) lived a man, two women and two asses. In the second one (5 m long, 3 m wide and 2 m high) lived a man with his wife, his daughter and son-in-law, two children, a pair of oxen, two asses and four sheep."²⁰ Unfortunately, the situation has undergone no material change since those times.

¹⁸ Tea is the main beverage in Kurdistan. Usually $\frac{1}{2}$ of the household budget goes for tea and sugar. (A.)

¹⁹ O. L. Vilchevskii, "Mukrinskie Kurdy...", p. 192; the income of an agricultural labourer amounts to 80 pud (pud = 16 kg) of wheat, i. e. about 53 dollars.

²⁰ H. Binder, *Au Kurdistan...*, p. 351.

The analysis of the situation of the peasantry indicates best the disparities among the rural population of Kurdistan, 1 % of whom appropriate 44 % of the total national dividend, while the income of 87 % is not sufficient to provide for the most primitive needs of everyday life. The average income of a member of a large landowner's family (5,600 dollars) is more than 300 times that of the agricultural labourer or shepherd (15 dollars). Such is the state of affairs in present-day Iranian Kurdistan.

3. AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND AGRARIAN POLICY

In Iranian Kurdistan agriculture is based on extensive cultivation, nevertheless, the land suitable for agricultural production and even arable land is far from being completely utilized: Of the 1,200,000 ha of arable land only three quarters are under cultivation every year. The soil on which wheat has been grown one year must either lie fallow during the next year, or can be used for vegetable crops, etc. As fertilizers are not used at all and the agricultural methods being extremely primitive, the cultivation of wheat for two years in succession on the same soil would result in very poor or no yield at all. Under this extensive system of cultivation the yield per hectare is unusually low.

The Table No. 17 clearly shows the low level of labour productivity in agriculture in Kurdistan, not only when compared to the advanced capitalist countries but even to a country like Turkey lying in the immediate neighbourhood. As has already been demonstrated, the main cause of this situation, lies obviously in the present agrarian relations in the country, which hamper the general progress of productive forces in agriculture.

The mode of cultivation is too primitive and has, in fact, not altered for several centuries. The land is tilled by means of the traditional *jut* plough with which a furrow no more than 10—12 cm deep can be cut.²¹

²¹ O. L. Vilchevskii, "Mukrinskie Kurdy...", p. 188.

Table No. 17*
Yield per hectar of agricultural products q/ha

	Wheat	Barley	Sugar-beet	Tobacco**
Belgium	36.7	34.1	419	—
France	22.8	20.2	287	19.5
Canada	14.1	13.7	256	16.4
USA	13.4	14.8	367	16.4
Turkey***	11.5	13	160	7
Iranian Kurdistan†	7	5	113	4,3

* According to "Czechoslovakia's Position in World Economy". Prague, p. 69 (in Czech).

** According to "Economic Developments in the Middle East", 1958—1959, New York. For Iranian Kurdistan the statistical data applying for all Iran are taken as a basis. (A.)

*** Indices of the *Economic Development Abroad* for 1958. Prague 1958, p. 543 (in Czech).

† According to Teheran Economist of Nov. 17, and Dec. 1, 1962.

The threshing of the crop is a very lengthy process; in Kurdistan there exist two methods, namely "janjar" and "gera". *Janjar* is a small adapted wooden carriage which has sharp cogs fixed to the wheels. It is drawn by draught cattle with a man sitting on the top of the carriage in order to weight it down, who, at the same time, drives it in a circle around a post. The ears lying underneath get threshed by the continuous rolling of the cogs. Under ordinary conditions the threshing of the yield from one hectar (800—1,000 kg) lasts for a whole week.

The *gera* is a small number (5—10) of cattle (horned) tied to a post and made to walk around in circles, treading on the ears of the crop until they are threshed. This method is even more primitive and tedious than the *janjar*, the time necessary for threshing being considerably longer too. A Kurdish proverb runs: "Before completing the *gera* with an ox your blood will be turned to water".

Still more primitive methods are applied when winnowing, the summer breeze being the only help to the peasant, who tosses the grain

into the air. The breeze blows the chaff away while the grain remains in the same place. Sometimes there is no breeze at all or the wind is too strong. During such a time the peasants sit and wait for a favourable breeze, and as a result the harvest lasts, in fact, for 2 to 3 months. Evidently, these primitive methods of harvesting cause enormous losses of grain which lead to even lower yield per hectare.

Because of exceptionally favourable conditions Iranian Kurdistan holds a prominent place in cattle-breeding. It should be pointed out that it is mainly sheep-breeding; rearing of black cattle is practised only in the valleys where, however, plant production constitutes the chief branch of agriculture. Rearing of pigs is very rare for reasons of religious nature.

Table No. 18
Number of sheep per 100 ha of agricultural land*

	1955—1956
Netherlands	18.8
U. S. A.	7
Argentine	30.6
Turkey	49.1
Iranian Kurdistan	160**

* Indices of the *Economic Development Abroad*, Prague 1958.

** The calculations are based on the total area of land suitable for cultivation. The number of sheep per 100 ha of agricultural land is most probably even higher.

In Iranian Kurdistan, cattle-breeding is carried out with primitive methods and based on the semi-nomadic mode of life led by the flock-owners. It is a very frequent phenomenon that thousands of sheep die and entire flocks become victims of epidemics.

As a whole, the development of livestock production is uneven, slow and undergoes large vicissitudes. In 1959 Iran produced 12,000 tons of wool, while the production of 1960 reached a mere 10,000 t.²²

²² *The Keyhan Journal*, 9. 2. 1961.

The produce is processed uneconomically, with primitive methods and with no regard to hygiene. This is why the final products have such a small share in the export of Iranian Kurdistan, being, in fact, limited to fat only. Otherwise, a larger part of the export comprises mainly cattle, wool, skins and gut.

Furthermore, the low standard of agriculture results from complete lack of specialized cadres - agronomists, veterinaries, etc. As yet no radical measures have been taken by the Iranian government in order to improve the situation. In spite of the favourable opportunities for an advance of agriculture and particularly of animal production, the authorities completely ignore the education of specialists, even lower-grade basic education, required for improving the medieval character of present-day agricultural production. The need for specialists is particularly pressing during the periods of epidemics breaking out among the domestic cattle or elementary disasters resulting in the destruction of the whole year's crop.

The backward, hampering agrarian relations, the extremely low standard of agricultural implements, and lack of specialists, constitute the chief causes of the low level of agricultural production²³ which, for its part, is the cause of the incredible poverty of millions of peasants.

The long-lasting struggle of the Kurdish people for freedom and independence and the penetration of the great ideas of the modern age into the Kurdish villages, as well as into all Iran, incited the Kurdish peasants to a decisive battle. After World War II the peasants not only took part in all the struggles against imperialism and for the national rights of the Kurdish people but also formed independent peasant movements which aimed at furthering the economic interests of the peasantry.²⁴

²³ Iranian bourgeois economist attributes the cause of the backwardness of agricultural production to the inefficiency of the Kurdish peasants who, according to him, lack the "talent" essential for agricultural enterprise and, in order to educate them, proposes that non-Kurdish peasants be transferred into the villages of Rezayeh "Urmia and Mahabad". T. B a h r a m i, *An Economic Geography of Iran*, p. 165.

²⁴ Daneshvar, an Iranian traveller, wrote in 1950 about a certain rich landowner from the neighbourhood of Kirmanshah that he "avoided entering certain villages, as the oppression on the part of the feudals

In the winter 1952 a large peasant uprising broke out in the Bokeran area and spread at such speed that the government had to take immediate measures in order to protect the landowners. Other movements arose in the southern part of Iranian Kurdistan. The pro-government papers wrote in terror: "The Kurdish peasants raise an alarm for the distribution of land."²⁵ "Awake!" they appeal to the land proprietors, "the bloody horizon of the revolution can be seen at a distance!" "Kurdistan has turned Communist!"²⁶ cried another paper.

The ruling circles of Iran are at present facing the extremely urgent demand for the settlement of the agrarian problem. What was the solution offered by the national bourgeoisie which was in power during 1951—1952?

On October 6, 1952 the Parliament passed an act forwarded by Mossaddek's government, which became known as the "20 % Act". According to the new law 20 % of the landowner's share was to be divided in two, one half to be given to the peasant and the latter used for the needs of the village. Simultaneously the government began to sell crown and government estates to the farmers. There was however no mention of distributing or limiting the extent of land owned by the large landed proprietors.

Nevertheless, the 20 % Act itself was not carried out either. The author of this treatise was himself witness to the fact that in the Mahabad area not a single landowner permitted the law to be carried out. It was after petroleum had been nationalized that a certain big landowner told the official who came to ask for the 20 %: "I give my share from

made the peasants enter the Tudeh party (the Iranian working class party - A.)" Elsewhere he quotes one of his dialogues with the peasants: "What made you enter the party?" They answered that "since the reign of Reza Shah a landlord called Hayati has seized everything we possessed; our land, our gardens, and he requires our services everyday... then one day we heard the rumour about a party defending the poor and the subdued. Therefore we entered the party so that we might be defended by it and thanks to the party, Hayati has not appeared for a long time now." M. Daneshvar, *Didaniha ve shenidanihayeh Iran*, Teheran 1950, pp. 214, 241 (in Persian).

²⁵ *Tufane Gharb* of May 1952.

²⁶ *Sanandaj* of May 1952.

the oil to the British and am an Iranian, too. But I shall give no wheat. So tell Mossaddek to leave me in peace."

Following the coup d'Etat of 1953, when the reactionary clique headed by the King seized power, vigorous propaganda was set up as to an agrarian reform, raising of the production level in agriculture, etc. The King himself started to sell his land and made an appeal to the landed proprietors to do the same. The result was very inadequate and the land sold out by the King was soon being re-sold by the peasants and in most cases became property of the large landed proprietors.

At the beginning of 1960 a governmental bill was passed limiting the extent of landed property. The law pursues as its chief goal "an increase in the production and promotion of social justice" (quoted from the preface). The extent of land owned by one person was fixed to 800 ha of unirrigated and 400 ha of irrigated land (Article II). Land worked with the application of machinery can remain in the landowner's possession unlimited. All the land belonging to a single village and irrigated by water owned by the landowner remains property of the landowner. Until one year after the bill had been passed the landowner has the right to transmit to his heirs twice the amount fixed (i. e. 1,600 ha of unirrigated and 800 ha of irrigated land). The landowner is also entitled to select the land he intends to keep. For the rest of the land he is supposed to obtain a price in proceeds.

It is obvious that the law cannot lead to a removal of the existing feudal relations, as the landowners may retain as much as 400 ha of irrigated land.

The ruling classes of Iran, including the feudal lords, who had the main say, had to pass the act under the pressure of the general public. The main purpose of this provision was, on the one hand, to moderate the vigilance of the peasantry and weaken the revolutionary spirit of the masses, and to further the forming of a numerous rural bourgeoisie, kulaks, that would constitute a reactionary social basis directed against the peasantry and against future tendencies towards democratic reforms, on the other. The selling of crown and government estates pursues similar goals.

The large landed proprietors and the feudal lords, however, did not accept this law either, and thus it has remained a mere scrap of

paper unable to produce any effect upon the agrarian situation.²⁷

In spring 1961 when Ali Amini "the man of revolutionary reforms" became Premier, the Minister of Agriculture said in an interview with a correspondent of *Le Monde*: "I shall not repeat the mistake of the Shah; he distributed part of the land among the peasants possessing neither seed nor tractors, who had to sell it again to the feudal lords. We intend to abolish large landed properties to the benefit of the peasants."

"Your Excellency seems to be forgetting that the Premier, Mr. Amini, himself is a big landowner."

"And so what? It is me who is responsible for the agrarian reform and I can promise that in a month's time it will be carried out."²⁸

Exactly two months later at a meeting of big landowners the Premier amended the words of the Minister by declaring: "I am one of you ... It would be a misunderstanding to think that we intend to take your land and confiscate it. There exists no such intention. We are considering mere reforms to be introduced with the help of the landowners themselves."²⁹

²⁷ At the beginning of 1962 it was replaced by a new one which was amended in February 1963. The essence and aims of the law, however, underwent no change and neither of them concerns the Crown estates which embrace over 2 million hectares of highest-quality soil. (A.)

²⁸ *Le Monde*, 27. 5. 1961.

²⁹ The Tudeh party consequently strove for a radical agrarian reform to take place in the whole of Iran. It has always taken the side of the peasants in their struggle against the large landed proprietors, struggled for the unity of the working class with the peasantry and for the materialization of the slogan "Land to those who work it". The Democratic Party of Kurdistan in its draft program of 1956 demands the following: State-owned land, as well as the land of the feudal lords and large landed proprietors, and that owned by the enemies of the Kurdish people, be distributed free of charge among the poor and landless peasants. For a just division of the crops between the landowner and the peasant new laws have to be introduced, with regard to the conditions in each region. The government must help the peasants by providing agricultural implements; it should grant long-term credits at low interest, carry out extensive public works, such as construction of dams, opening of Artesian wells, construction of irrigation system, and mechanization of agriculture. The debts of the peasants to feudal

The ruling classes of present-day Iran prove to be incapable of altering materially the existing agrarian relations, which becomes evident from the way the agrarian reforms are being carried out. The distribution of land according to the new law concerned about one third (approximately 15,000 out of 50,000 villages) of the land owned by the large landed proprietors. Nevertheless, by the middle of March 1963 land had been distributed in no more than 2,000 villages. As to Iranian Kurdistan, the agrarian reform has hardly penetrated there at all, and the number of villages where land has been shared out amounts to no more than a handful.

The entire agrarian policy of the Iranian government leads to further impoverishment of the peasantry. Sometimes it is an immediate cause of decrease of agricultural production; e. g. in 1960 the government concluded an agreement with the U. S. A. regarding the purchase of 300,000 tons of wheat. Until then Iran belonged to the wheat exporting countries. In 1956 the then Minister of the Interior and later Prime Minister Alam justified the purchase of 2,000 tons of fat from the U. S. stating: "The government not only gave consent to the import of fat but exempted it from customs' dues in order to enable the importers to supply the home market with this product at a favourable price. ... 1 kg of Kirmanshah fat is being sold on the Teheran bazaars for the price of 135—145 rs. or even 150 rs; If the imported fat is sold for 100—110 rs., just wait and see the results." Such methods are applied by the government selling the surplus products from overseas, to the virtual detriment of local products. Wheat and fat constitute the chief articles for exportation from Iranian Kurdistan to the other regions of Iran. It is most clear how unconcerned with the interests of the Kurdish people the Iranian ruling classes are.³⁰

The large landed proprietors, while appropriating 20 % of the total national dividend, according to the law of 1958, pay tax cor-

lords and large landed proprietors, enemies of the people, and money-lenders, must be cancelled. Corvée-labour must be abolished throughout Iranian Kurdistan.

³⁰ Other instances of the anti-popular policy of the Iranian government could be quoted, e. g. in 1960 8.2 million rials worth of cheese was imported from the Netherlands and Denmark. *The Ettelaat*, 26. 7. 1961.

responding to a hundredth part of the price of land owned.³¹ It is not by chance that in the years 1959 and 1960 this tax constituted only 0.3 % of the state income,³² which is respectively 5 % and 9 % of all direct taxes.

As shown on Table No. 19, the backward agrarian relations and the policy of the government result in an extremely slow advance of agricultural production.

Table No. 19*
Indices of agricultural production in Iran (1952/1953—1956/1957 = 100)**

	1952/53	1953/54	1954/55	1955/56	1956/57
Total production	90	98	99	104	109
Foodstuffs	91	98	98	104	109
Cereals	91	99	95	98	116
Per capita: Foodstuffs	96	100	98	101	104
Cereals	96	102	96	96	111
	1957/58	1958/59	1959/60	1960/61	1961/62
Total production	122	122	125	117	125
Foodstuffs	123	122	124	113	121
Cereals	120	115	128	110	123
Per capita: Foodstuffs	115	112	113	100	105
Cereals	112	106	116	98	107

* *Annuaire statistique 1961*, U. N. O. New York 1962, p. 90.

** *Economic Survey of Asia and the Far East*, 1962, U. N. O. New York 1963, p. 192.

The average yearly growth of agricultural production during the 9 years mentioned amounted to 3.7 % per annum. If we take into account the comparatively rapid growth of the population, the total increase in the volume of agricultural products during the same period was 7 % in the case of foodstuffs, i. e. 0.8 % per annum, and 5 % in the

³¹ *Bulletin Bank Melli Iran*, Teheran, July 1958, p. 34.

³² *Ibid.*, 1959—1960.

case of cereals, i. e. 0.6 % per annum. This indicates that the volume of agricultural product per capita remains practically on the same level. It is particularly noteworthy that the growth of agricultural productions shows a declining tendency. While the average increase in the first four years exceeded 4 %, during the following years the production fell into actual stagnation showing an imperceptible increase of 0.5 % per annum.

INDUSTRY, COMMERCE AND FINANCE

1. INDUSTRY

According to approximate data the total capital of the 518 factories and workshops of Iranian Kurdistan amounts to 1,746,846,000 rs. (i. e. 23 million dollars) constituting 3,8 % of the total investments of Iran.¹ When adding the workers in the petroleum industry in Kirman-shah to those employed in the above mentioned factories and workshops, we receive the total of 7,500 persons employed in industrial enterprises, i. e. 0.2 % of the population of Iranian Kurdistan. In order to complete the survey it should be added that the industrial plants in Iranian Kurdistan dispose of a mere 2 % of the motor capacity and 1.9 % of the electric power capacity of the whole of Iran.²

Together with the craftsmen manufacturing carpets in the workshops, brickmakers, transport employees and other workers in mechanized and manufactory enterprises, the approximate number of workers amounts to 40—42,000 people, i. e. 1.2 % of the population.

The few data given above might be sufficient to give a clear idea of the situation of industry in Iranian Kurdistan. In fact, the only modern industrial branch is the oil industry, comprising both mining and refineries, which since 1951 are in the hands of the A. I. O. C. After the nationalization, the state-owned Iranian national oil company took charge of the oil industry, but the rate of growth of the production and of the processing of oil is very slow. Until the nationalization the low speed of oil mining was caused by lack of interest on the part of the A. I. O. C., extracting oil also in the south, to increase the production of oil in Kurdistan, as the latter is used only for home consumption and not intended for export.

¹ According to *Statistics of the Country's Industrial and Mining Activities in the Year 1338 (1959)*, Teheran 1960.

² *Sovremennyi Iran...*, p. 140.

Following the nationalization, the International Consortium, which replaced the A. I. O. C., has of course been hampering any increase in the output of the state-owned oil in Iranian Kurdistan. The home consumption of oil in Iran is more than 3 million tons per annum, of which the state sector produced a mere 10 % (1960), the rest being purchased from the Consortium.

One more factor functioned in this branch until 1959: The deposits of Kirmanshah oil extend as far as Iraqi Kurdistan, where oil is mined in the area of Khanekin with a greater concentration of refineries. Until the nationalization in 1959 Khanekin oil was in the hands of imperialist monopolies which, of course, were interested in preventing a possible increase in the output of oil from Kirmanshah.

Other industries are developed only very little, being, in fact, limited only to sugar-houses, factories for cleaning cotton, drying fruit, brickworks, etc.

The population of Iranian Kurdistan constitutes 17 % of the entire population of Iran, yet its share in the industrial production is a mere 3 %. If we take into account that Iran as a whole belongs to the economically underdeveloped countries, the backwardness of the economic situation in Iranian Kurdistan is still more evident.³

The Role of the State Sector

We can perceive a most interesting tendency in the development of oil industry: Although the total output of oil shows a high rate of

³ The share of Turkish Kurdistan is 3–5 % of the total industrial production of Turkey, although its population constitutes 19 % of that of the whole country; thus Turkish Kurdistan, too, is the most backward part of Turkey.

The situation in Iraqi Kurdistan is substantially different. It forms the most advanced part of Iraq due, first of all, to a developed oil-mining industry and thanks to favourable geographical conditions, as well as to a greater population density. The share of Iraqi Kurdistan in the total industrial output (including oil) is over 50 % of the production of the whole country. (A.)

increase, that belonging to the state (in Iranian Kurdistan) is either virtually stagnating or the rate of increase is hardly worth mentioning.

Table No. 20
Oil-mining in Iran (in thousands of tons)

Year	Total*	In the State Sector (Iranian Kurdistan)**
1955	17070	240
1956	26481	226
1957	35129	220
1958	40243	248
1959	45023	255
1960	52064***	300
1961	58800***	—
1962	63900***	420***

* *Economic Developments in the Middle East 1958 - 1959*, New York 1960, p. 72.

** *Middle East Economic Digest*, February 1960 and February 1961, London.

*** *Petroleum Press Service*, February 1963, London.

The above table proves that whereas the total output has increased more than 3.5 times from 1955 till 1962, the increase in the state sector has not exceeded 75 %. In 1962 the output of the state sector amounted to 420,000 tons which represents 8 % of the home consumption of Iran and less than 1 % of the output registered by the Consortium.

The rate of increase of the output of oil-processing industry is far below that of oil-mining. In 1950 before the nationalization, the Abadan refinery plant, one of the largest in the world, had processed over 24 million tons of oil, i. e. 76 % of the total production of that year. After the nationalization had taken place, the international petroleum monopolies began to build refineries in other parts of the world at a great speed, namely in Western Europe. At present a large part of the Iranian output is being exported in the form of crude oil. In 1961 the Abadan refinery processed only 16.8 mil. ton, i. e. 28 % of the average yearly production.

The antagonism between the state sector and the imperialist monopolies is reflected also elsewhere: It is no secret that the Iranian government, under the pressure of the United States, began to sell plants in the state sector to private contractors.⁴

Evidently the monopolists are not in favour of a state sector in the economically underdeveloped countries, whether the latter are headed by a government pursuing a national policy, or a government, which, being an ally of the imperialist countries, can be directly influenced by them. The antagonism results from the role objectively played by the state sector in the underdeveloped countries as the chief economic stronghold of the anti-imperialist forces of the country.

For this reason a fierce struggle continues against the state sector; an artful argument declaring the state to be an "inefficient businessman" is being spread. We have already noted that the state has started selling its plants to individual contractors. In report No. 12 of the Planning Organization of March 1960 it is recommended that the state sell its enterprises as soon as possible; unprofitability and low level of productiveness are given as the main reasons. Furthermore, the report declares that "the past has proved that private capital is more capable of realizing industrialization of the country than state capital."⁵

Recent development in Iran proves nothing of the sort, as the "industrialization project" has not been realized at all, and the present industries for the most part exist owing to the state sector. As to the unrentability of state plants and their low productiveness, their source has to be sought elsewhere: First of all, the state sector comprises mainly plants established in the 1930-ies, and since then their equipment has not been altered. The low productivity of labour and the unrentability of the plants is also due to the bureaucracy and corruption ruling in the state machinery. The matter is, therefore, not that of the state being an inefficient businessman, but of the discrepancy between the aims pursued by the state policy and the system

⁴ The sale of state enterprises to individuals is being shammed as "nationalization", under the pretext that it is the people, the nation, who is buying them. (A.)

⁵ *Report of the Planning Organization, No. 12, Teheran 1960, p. 93 (in Persian).*

of the state machinery. As a proof — the state also runs enterprises so profitable as tobacco plants with up-to-date equipment; in 1958 the profit made by these amounted to 30 million net income.

The above quoted report states the total capital invested by the private sector into the industries to have been 30—40 million dollars in 1958 and 1959, i. e. $\frac{1}{60}$ — $\frac{1}{80}$ of the national income of 1958. How can anyone under these circumstances speak of industrialization carried out by private capital? The experience of a number of countries confirms that, as a rule, it is no one but the state sector that plays a derisive role in the industrialization of the economically underdeveloped countries including those with lack of private capital (like Iran). Any theory directed against the existence of the state sector in the economically underdeveloped countries, underestimating its significance and discrediting it directly benefits imperialist monopolies.

The majority of the now existing industries in Iranian Kurdistan are part of the state sector and, in fact, we can hardly speak about any local industrial bourgeoisie here at all. The Kurdish national bourgeoisie, as it will be mentioned further, is basically a bourgeoisie of a commercial character, and as has already been pointed out, a moneylending bourgeoisie, engaged to a great extent in indirect exploitation of the peasantry. At the same time the Kurdish bourgeoisie is dependent on the Iranian big bourgeoisie functioning as its branch for Iranian Kurdistan.

The usurious nature of this class is more intense in the north and gradually weakens as we proceed to the southern districts, where the bourgeoisie engage in large-scale trading, and in the Kirmanshah area we can even come across small industrial capitalists. Kirmanshah is the only city in Iranian Kurdistan with a chamber of commerce.

2. TRADE AND FINANCE

The entire complexity of social relations finds its clearest reflection in trade and in the financial system of the country. The strong feudal and partly even patriarchal relations constitute a considerable

impediment to the development of the home market. The insufficiently developed division of labour among different branches of national economy likewise has a harmful effect. The natural economy together with the insufficiently advanced market relations, particularly in certain areas, constitute further hampering factors. The limited amount of roads and absolute lack of a railway system result in a lack of mutual trade contacts among the different parts of Iranian Kurdistan, the individual districts tending more to establish these contacts with the neighbouring non-Kurdish areas and with the Capital.⁶

The attachment of Iranian Kurdistan to the world market, oil-mining and the employing of a large number of people in the mining and distribution of oil, together with a rapid growth of foreign trade and consolidation of the central authorities, are the factors favourably affecting the progress of the home market.

a) Foreign Trade

Foreign trade is primarily directed to the big capitalist countries, which use it as a means of enforcing their economic policy upon Iran, thus increasing the unfavourable division of labour where Iran plays the part of a mere agrarian and raw-material appendage.

Table No. 21
Foreign trade of Iran,* (in millions of dollars)

Year	Export Excluding Oil	Export of Oil	Total Export	Share of Oil in the Total Export (%)	Import	Balance
1957	111	258	369	69 %	320	+ 49
1958	105	304	409	74 %	446	- 37
1959	102	659	761	86 %	555	+206
1960	105	794	899	88 %	577	+322

* *Ettelaat*, 1. 8. 1961. *Economic Developments in the Middle East 1958—1959*, New York 1960, p. 102 and 109.

* The total length of motoring roads is 1,600 km, which makes 1 km of roads per 75 km². (A.)

The above table demonstrates the dependence of the country on the export of oil, the mining and marketing of which is fully in the hands of the international monopolies grouped in the Consortium, and the increasing tendency of this dependence. In 1960 oil constituted already over 88 % of the total export of the country, while in 1951 to 1953 when the petroleum industry had been nationalized and its export discontinued, there was a favourable balance of trade. In 1952 the balance was 10 million dollars and by 1953 it even exceeded 40 million \$.⁷ At the same time the structure of foreign trade was more favourable for Iran than it is at present; the state exercised control over the trading, and Iran imported goods and equipments necessary for the growth of the country's economy.

It should be pointed out that in the recent years the volume of imported goods exempted from customs dues, not included in the above table, has greatly increased. The total value of these goods imported by governmental bodies, by the Consortium and by the Iranian army in 1958 amounted to 172 million dollars,⁸ and in 1960 surpassed the figure of 100 and in 1961 the figure of 130 million \$.⁹

It follows from the above that in the course of a mere three years (from 1957—1960) the volume of petroleum export increased three times, while that of other goods decreased by 6 %. On the other hand, export grew at a great speed indeed - by 77 % during 1957—1960.

Oil is being exported into the countries of western Europe (50 %), furthermore to the Far East (16 %), to Australia (6 %), Africa (17 %) and to north America (6 %).¹⁰ The countries included in Table No. 22 belong to the largest importers from Iran.

The German Federal Republic holds the foremost place both as to the total volume of trade and as to the import (21 %); as far as export is concerned, it holds only the second place. The U. S. S. R. is the fourth in the total volume of trade, but holds the fifth place in imports (5 %), and what is most significant, the first place in exportat-

⁷ *Foreign Trade Statistics of Iran in the Year 1958*, Teheran, p. 26.

⁸ In Iran the year lasts from March 21st and ends on March 20th.

⁹ *Teheran Economist*, 5. 1. 1963.

¹⁰ *Report on the Consortium Activities in 1959*, p. 16, Teheran 1960 (in Persian).

Table No. 22

Export (excluding oil) and import of Iran in 1958 (in millions of rials)*

Country	Export	Import
German Federal Republic	1,223	7,314
U. S. A.	1,080	5,663
Great Britain	852	4,907
U. S. S. R.	1,749	1,864
Japan	147	3,453
France	633	1,085
Italy	273	1,031
Thaiwan	1,8	1,260
India	191	962
Czechoslovakia	252	615

* FTST, p. 4, 6, 8.

ion from Iran (22 %). Japan holds the fifth place in the total volume of trade, being the fourth in imports (10 %) and the thirteenth in export (1.8 %). It is of interest that Thaiwan is the sixth biggest importer to Iran (3.7 %), but is the 35th in exports (0.2 %). Czechoslovakia is the tenth biggest trade partner of Iran, holding the 14th place in imports (1.8 %), but the 8th place in exports from Iran (3 %).

In the year 1958 66.6 % of the import to Iran was covered by the U. S. A. and the countries of western Europe and a mere 9.5 % by the U. S. S. R. and the member-states of the Mutual Economic Aid Council.¹¹

The above table proves clearly that the imperialist countries carry on trade with Iran on a one-sided basis; in 1958 imports to Iran exceeded exports six times in the case of the German Federal Republic, five times in the case of the U. S. A. and Great Britain, and as much as 20 times in the case of Japan. This unhealthy state of Iran's foreign trade is not altering, as can be proved by the foreign trade balance of 1961 when the volume of imports to Iran was seven times larger than

¹¹ *Economic Developments...*, p. 95.

the volume of exports in the case of the German Federal Republic, twelve times larger in the case of the U. S. A., nine times in the case of Great Britain and 44 times in the case of Japan.¹² For this reason the trade with the U. S. S. R. is of such outstanding significance to Iran, as the partnership is based on parity; the U. S. S. R. buys Iran's traditional export goods, the marketing of which otherwise causes considerable difficulties; furthermore, the trade carried on with the Soviet Union requires no foreign exchange, which Iran has always lacked and which is a necessary condition for purchase in the advanced capitalist countries. In return for the traditional export goods the Iranian merchants have the possibility of purchasing various industrial products and equipment at a rich assortment. Finally, the immediate neighbourhood with the Soviet Union enables the Iranian merchants to achieve a quicker return of capital as compared to trading with the U. S. A. and other capitalist countries. These favourable aspects of trade with the U. S. S. R. were fully revealed during the existence of the Mahabad Republic, when the Soviet Union became the chief factor promoting economic prosperity in the northern part of Iranian Kurdistan.

As shown above, the deficit in the foreign trade balance is being compensated by the export of oil, yet in this connection an important circumstance has to be pointed out: First of all, the production, export, and sale of petroleum is managed by the imperialist Consortium, which implies that oil is not a commodity which Iran could dispose of, i. e. trade with, freely. All the conditions under which international trade with Iranian oil is carried out are fixed by the imperialist Consortium. Secondly, according to the agreement in force, Iran receives only 50 % of the revenue derived from the sale of oil. For these reasons we are justified to exclude oil from the number of goods exported from Iran and to abstain from reckoning it as one of Iran's export articles and a full-value item on the foreign trade balance.

It is noteworthy that the structure of the imperialist countries' export to Iran is for the latter highly disadvantageous, the majority comprising consumption goods. This does not apply to the trade with

¹² *Teheran Economist*, 5. 1. 1963.

the socialist countries; the governmental journal *Ettelaat* admits that according to the recent agreement 80 % of Czechoslovakia's export to Iran is formed by machinery and productive instruments.¹³ Machines and machinery parts constituted in the years 1956–1958 roughly 15 % of the total amount of import¹⁴ to Iran the remaining part comprising final products, especially luxury goods and certain raw materials. In the year 1960 Iran bought 16 million dollars worth of automobiles, "mostly passenger cars". It is of interest that Iran has recently been importing even such goods which before were being exported, such as wheat, cheese, oranges, apples and even carpets.¹⁵ This is a result of the open-door business policy recommended to the economically underdeveloped countries by the bourgeois economists.

The open-door policy produces a harmful effect upon the country's economy. The production costs of the goods produced at home are higher than those of the imported goods, against which no customs barriers have been set up. The prices of imported goods drop while the goods produced and consumed within the country are gradually becoming more expensive.

Table No. 23
Index of Prices of Imported and Home Goods* (1955-100)

1955	1956	1957	1958	
100	93	83	82	Imported Goods Goods Produced and Consumed in the Country
100	107	112	118	

* *Report of the Planning Organization No. 12, 1960, p. 162.*

When a country like Iran, with a productivity of labour several times lower than in the developed capitalist countries, pursues an

¹³ *Ettelaat*, 26. 2. 1961.

¹⁴ *Economic Developments...*, p. 109.

¹⁵ In 1960 Iran imported bananas, oranges, apples and alcoholic drinks worth 2 million dollars; *Ettelaat*, 26. 7. 1961.

open-door policy, it can lead to nothing but stagnation of trade with domestic products and to ruin of the local industry.

b) Finance

This unfavourable situation is clearly reflected in the balance of payments and in the financial standing of the country.

The balance of payments has been deficient for a number of years, notwithstanding the fact that it is partly being balanced by the exportation of oil and by the foreign currency thus acquired by the state. The deficit amounted to 10 mil. dollars in 1955, and by 1958 reached the figure of 97 mil. dollars.¹⁶ The gross national debt to the National Bank increased more than twice from March 1953 till August 1959 - from 165 mil. dollars to 364 mil. dollars.¹⁷ Regardless of the incomes acquired from the sale of oil amounting to approximately 300 mil. dollars, the indebtedness of Iran to the imperialist countries and their banks greatly increased; in 1961 it exceeded 700 mil. dollars. Iran began obtaining these loans in 1953 and had to make the payment already by 1959. These short-term loans rendered at 6-7 per cent interest with various political and military conditions attached did not and could not lead to the goals proclaimed.

A lasting inflation is but a natural consequence of the economic position; the amount of money in circulation has grown at a great speed (see Table No. 24).

In the period from 1953 until 1962 the amount of money in circulation more than doubled, which caused the depreciation of the national currency, a decrease of the gold and currency holdings, a rise in prices and an exceptionally rapid upward swing of living costs in the country.

In some of the economically less developed countries inflationary measures can have a positive effect upon the economy. For this reason such provisions are, to a certain extent, admissible, on the condition that the means acquired through it be optimally utilized: Firstly, the

¹⁶ *Economic Developments...*, p. 90.

¹⁷ *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnyie otnoshenia*, No. 11, 1961.

Table No. 24
Growth of the Amount of Rials
in Circulation (in millions rs.)*

Year	Annual Average
1953	20,067
1954	21,632
1955	23,078
1956	26,447
1957	31,387
1958	38,917
1959	37,942
1960**	44,500
1961**	41,300
1962**	44,300

* *Bulletin Bank Melli Iran*, Teheran August, September 1960.

** *Monthly Bulletin of Statistics, U. N.*, July 1963, New York (the situation in March).

means should be invested exclusively in production. Secondly, the measure must either be taken by the state sector alone or under its direct supervision. Thirdly, when carrying out inflationary measures it is essential to preserve a certain balance between the growth of production and the amount of money in circulation. The inflation must never reach a state which would cause a depreciation of the currency and a consequent distrust of the society in its stability, which could lead to highly inauspicious consequences. Obviously, inflation leads to a depreciation of the national currency as compared to the foreign currencies and impairs its international standing. At the same time it causes an unfavourable effect upon foreign trade and an exhaustion of the currency holdings. It is therefore a necessary prerequisite that foreign trade be a state monopoly and at the same time that it

be carried on so as to protect the national products and the country's industrialization.

The present-day situation in Iran shows utterly different tendencies: First of all, the majority of the money acquired through the inflationary measures is being invested in non-productive spheres (military purposes, speculative ventures with land, purchase of luxury goods, etc.). Thus while explaining the inflationary measure by a concern for an increase in production, the state, in fact, uses them primarily for unproductive purposes.

In the year 1957 the state gained 7 milliard rials through a new emission of money on the basis of an altered exchange rate of the rial (from 34.6 rs. = 1 \$ to 75 rs. = 1 \$). Half of this sum, 3.5 milliard rials, was invested into the development of agriculture. The money was put into circulation and was to be invested into agriculture only gra-

dually till the Spring of 1962; the Agricultural Bank rendered the loans primarily to the large landed proprietors and their agents, who, as we have seen before, do not belong to those most interested in raising agricultural production. The result of such provisions is evident: Inflation is spreading, and production is showing signs of stagnation. As to Iranian Kurdistan, this part of the country received a mere 0.8 % of the sum and therefore suffers equally from the consequences of the inflation, but receives nominally 20 times fewer loans than would correspond to the number of its population.

The spread of inflation caused an unprecedented growth of the interest rate. The free annual rate of interest in Kirmanshah is 24—38 %¹⁸ (similar to almost all areas of Iran).

Where to seek an explanation? At first sight it might seem that if the inflation tends to spread and the amount of money in circulation is higher - the interest rate should be low.

Although the free interest rate amounts to 24—36 %, that in the banks is three to four times lower, i. e. 6—7 %. This can be explained by the balancing of the state budget by loans from the National Bank; as stated above, they amounted to as much as 364 mil. \$ already by the year 1959. The state spends most of the newly issued money for military purposes and administrative and current expenses. As a result, the inflation keeps spreading but the banks do not have the capital at their disposal for investment purposes.

Further it is the speculative ventures, particularly those with land in and around the cities, that exert a negative influence on the application of additional money. Hardly anyone is willing to accumulate capital in order to make investments in production if ventures with land can secure 50 to 100 % of annual interest rate. He buys land at the beginning of the year for 5 \$ per square meter, and can sell it by the end the same year already for 8—10 \$ or even more. No wonder then that it is rent which tends to undergo the most rapid increase of all the indices of expenditures. From 1953 until 1961 the cost of living increased altogether by 76 %, rent alone by 120 %.

The high rate of interest retards accumulation and investments

¹⁸ *Bulletin Bank Melli Iran, Teheran* 261, No. 27, 228.

of capital into production and directs the standing means into non-productive spheres.

A serious cause of the present crisis of the Iranian economy is Iran's participation in the aggressive CENTO pact. Iran keeps an army numbering 200,000 men, out of which 30,000 are officers and 60,000 non-commissioned officers.¹⁹ For the upkeep of the country's armed forces Iran spends over 40 % of the total national income. From the beginning of 1953 till the beginning of 1961 the military expenditure exceeded the sum of 866 mil. dollars.²⁰ The figure is higher than that standing for the total investments of Iran into industry, agriculture, transport and communication, social and administrative projects, as realized and planned for the period 1958—1963.

As regards foreign trade, this policy finds its reflection in the "open door" practice. From as early as 1953 Iran has virtually been an open market for all capitalist countries from the U. S. A. to Taiwan. This practice is founded on the well-known theory of "comparable costs" declaring that the freer the trade, the more and the better applicable is the principle of "comparable costs". The theory maintains that international trade spontaneously leads to the optimum structure of international division of labour, and that each country is able to market best those goods which it produces under standing circumstance for the minimum costs. Yet Iran not only remains a raw-material appendage of the imperialist countries, but can no more sell the former traditional export goods either. As far as the international division of labour is concerned, from this point of view Iran's situation has even worsened, which indicates that the application of the theory of "comparable costs" on the relationship between developed capitalist countries and the economically underdeveloped ones can lead to nothing but impairment of the international standing of the latter.

When mentioning the theory of "comparable costs" it would be useful to pay attention to one more problem: The monopolies advocating the theory apply it only one-sidedly; what would happen were the countries of the Middle East permitted to sell their oil freely on the

¹⁹ *Bakhtare Emruz*, 21. 12. 1961.

²⁰ *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnoshenia* (MEMO), No. 11, Moscow 1961.

basis of the theory? It is the monopolies that sell it for a price corresponding to that of the oil from the Mexican Gulf - 23 dollars per ton, although the production costs of Middle East oil are much lower. How would the West European market be effected if this oil was sold for the price of 10—15 dollars per ton? Is it not Middle East oil that is produced for the minimum production costs? Can it be by mere chance that exactly the product produced in the countries of the Middle East for minimum costs cannot be sold freely on the world market? That it is exactly this product that is in the hands of international monopolies selling it for a monopoly price?

OIL AND ITS PLACE IN THE NATIONAL ECONOMY

1. OIL IN THE WORLD

Oil plays an exceptionally significant role in the economy of Kurdistan just as it does in the economy of all the main oil producers in the Middle East. The problems arising from its existence and exploitation apply to the entire area in general and will definitely determine its future economic and political development to a large degree. For this reason their complex treatment from the viewpoint of the whole Middle East appears to be necessary, the economic aspect of the Middle-East oil, and particularly its influence upon the future development of this area, remaining at the same time in the centre of our analysis.

Oil is reaching the height of its importance in the world economy, gradually replacing coal as fuel and even more strikingly as a raw material for chemical industry; a whole new branch of chemistry has emerged known as petrochemistry, having tremendous importance for the whole economy. Oil has become one of the most sought-for raw materials, because its extraction, transport, storage and processing are simpler and less costly than those of coal. In electric power production one ton of oil contains the same amount of calories as three tons of coal, and moreover, leaves no ashes. Furthermore, oil is becoming a significant factor for the production of nitrogen fertilizers for agriculture. In twenty years the share of oil has increased from 10 % to 60 %, whereas that of coal decreased from 90 % to 40 %.

The significance of petroleum as a strategic raw material is beyond discussion. In spite of the fact that war is assuming a different character due to the discovery and progress of rocket technology and the application of new kinds of fuel, oil still remains an important fuel for a present-day war, its strategic role being greatly stressed in the military projects of the imperialists and their aggressive pact N. A. T. O. and the like.

It is quite natural, therefore, that the production of oil has increased from 20 mil. tons in the year 1900 to 1,200 mil. tons, i. e. sixty times the amount, in the year 1962.

At present there are four main areas of oil extraction - the U. S. A., the Caribbean area (Venezuela), the Middle East, and the U. S. S. R. In the year 1961 the production of oil in the Middle East exceeded one quarter of the total production in the world, the rate of growth of production being the highest in the capitalist world. In the Middle East the production increased between 1950 and 1961 by 218 %, in Venezuela by 94 %, in the U. S. A. by a mere 30 % during the same period.¹ The countries of the Middle East possess three fifths of the hitherto ascertained oil supplies of the world. This means that in a very short time the Middle East will get ahead of the U. S. A., and thus become the foremost producer of oil in the world.

The above quoted data are sufficient evidence of the significance of Middle East petroleum for the economy of the capitalist countries, particularly for Western Europe as its chief consumer, and they indicate the extremely important role it is going to play in the economy of the entire capitalist world, including the U. S. A., in the future.

2. OIL IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE PETROLEUM MONOPOLIES

Despite the immense importance of oil for the economy and the development of the Middle East countries,² it is not the nations concerned that take decisions about it. National capital in petroleum constitutes less than one per cent of the total capital, the entire petroleum industry being, in fact, controlled by imperialist petroleum monopolies, among which the American monopolies have attained

¹ *Petroleum Press Service (PPS)*, September 1962, p. 324.

² In this treatise we are referring to the following countries: Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, the Neutral zone and Bahrain. We are not considering Egypt, Turkey and Israel, as altogether they produce just over 1 % of the total oil production of the Middle East. (A.)

a hegemonic standing as a result of a fierce struggle. Although their share in the extraction of oil in 1937 was only 1.31 %, by the year 1957 it had increased to 59.6 %, whereas the share of the British monopolies decreased from 76.8 % to 30.6 % respectively.

The international petroleum cartel (further I. C.) associating eight big monopolies³ controls the extraction, processing, transport, and marketing of Middle-East oil, on the basis of concessions obtained in this part of the world. In the recent years also Italian, Japanese and Canadian petroleum companies have penetrated into the Middle East; the concessions made by these companies have not, as yet, shown any remarkable consequences, nevertheless, it is clear already now that especially the Italian and Japanese companies, being outside the I. C., will become a source of considerable difficulties to the latter.

At present a hard struggle is taking place between the individual monopolies for a dominant position in the exploitation of oil in the Middle East. Where is the source of such extraordinary interest in the Middle-East oil?

Oil is produced in the Middle East at a minimum cost. In the Mexican Gulf the cost of oil is 2 dollars per barrel - in the Middle East 10—35 cents, which is five to twenty times less, this difference being due to the location and natural setting of the oil deposits in the latter; it is sufficient if we state that with one oil well in Iran, Saudi Arabia or Kuwait 500 times more oil is produced as compared to the U. S. A. A single well in Kuwait produces approximately 710 tons per day, 820 tons in Saudi Arabia, 950 tons in Iraq, 1,115 tons in Iran, whereas mere 1.65 tons in the U. S. A. There exist no dry holes; on the other hand, these constitute some 40 % of all oil wells made in the U. S. A., which increases the costs by a further one million dollars every year. Moreover, the oil industry in the Middle East has the most up-to-date

³ Members of the international petroleum cartel are as follows: five American monopolies, namely Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, Standard Oil Company of California, Socony Vacuum Oil Company, Gulf Oil Corporation, The Texas Company; furthermore the British-Dutch company Royal Dutch Shell, the British Petroleum Company, formerly Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, and the Compagnie Française des Pétroles. (A.)

equipment. Most part of the mining and processing of oil is automatized and the automation process is still continuing. For this reason the number of workers in oil industry gradually decreases in spite of the rapid growth of production. The spread of automation, meaning a substantial growth of labour productivity, is most profitable to the monopolies, which feel no concern whatsoever about its social consequences, especially the growth of the masses of unemployed. On the contrary, a low number of workers is most welcome to them, as they prefer a few workers with a "good income" to a large number with a meagre wage. Such procedure is advantageous from the political aspect too, as it enables the forming of a section of the so-called workers' aristocracy from permanent employees under the conditions of the Middle East, which is to impair the role of the workers in the petroleum industry in the working-class movement, in the country as such, and particularly in the struggle against the foreign petroleum monopolies.⁴

The generally low wages of the oil industry workers in the Middle East, being on the average eight times lower than in the U. S. A., is also a favourable circumstance of great importance to the monopolies.⁵

Thanks to exceptionally high productivity of labour combined with hard exploitation the Middle-East oil has become the cheapest in the entire capitalist world.

The Middle-East oilfields are the closest to the European market, which is the main importer, and the problem of transport is furthermore facilitated by the fact that most of the oil mined in the Middle East is extracted either directly on the coast, mainly along the Persian

⁴ The monthly income of a skilled worker in the oil industry amounts to 70–80 dollars, which, in the Middle East, is comparatively higher than in other industries, where the skilled worker's wage is 40–50 \$ a month. (A.)

⁵ There are considerable differences in the standard of wages in the individual countries of the Middle East: The wages are higher in countries with a higher living standard, where the workers are more advanced in their class consciousness and tradition of struggle against the oil monopolies, such as Iran and Iraq, than, for instance, in Saudi Arabia. (A.)

Gulf, or is easily conveyed to the Mediterranean Sea by pipe-lines. Shipping of oil has proved to be the cheapest means of transport; the average costs of sea transport were seventy times lower after World War Two than by road, twenty times lower than railway and four times lower than pipe-line transportation.

The lack of petroleum in the Far East is generally known, and the Far East alone imports 10 % of the oil produced in the Middle East, which, considering the oil-mining areas of the capitalist world, are again the nearest.

The advantages of the concession agreements concluded with the Middle-East countries on the extraction of oil are so attractive that the petroleum monopolies make every effort in order to be able to mine oil in this part of the world. For example the American monopolies earn a yearly profit of 20 % in the U. S. A., 35 % in Venezuela and 100 % in the Middle East on the same amount of investment.

As will be shown later, the division of profit on the principle of 50 : 50 which forms the basis of the agreements made between the petroleum companies and the governments of the Middle East, is feigned and misleading. The profit made by the monopolies is, in fact, much higher. The official net income alone, as presented in the publication of the U. N. O. was 1,500 mil. dollars in the year 1961.

The prospects of future development of the oil industry in the Middle East are the best in the capitalist world. Over 70 % of the hitherto ascertained supplies of petroleum are located in this area, and new domes are being discovered every year, whereas the extensive exploration projects in other parts of the capitalist world are carried out with poor results.

In the period between 1950 and 1962 the share of Middle-East oil in world production increased from 16.9 % to 25 %. The following index of oil production in the three main oil producing regions of the capitalist world during the last five years is highly illustrative of the recent development.

The Table No. 25 indicates that during the five years the production of oil in the U. S. A. has remained basically the same, in Venezuela it increased by 17 % and in the Middle East by 71 %. The supplies of oil ascertained in the U. S. A. in 1958 amount-

Table No. 25
Production of Oil in Millions of Tons

	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962
U. S. A.	353	330	347	345	353.5	361.6
Venezuela	145.3	138.6	146.5	151	151	170.8
Middle East	175	210	226	265	278.5	305

ed to twelve times the average per annum output, in Venezuela 15 times, and in the Middle East in the year 1961 it amounted to 90 average yearly outputs.

3. THE 50 : 50 PRINCIPLE AND ITS APPLICATION

Hand in hand with the growing importance of petroleum in the economy of the countries of the Middle East, the endeavours on the part of these countries, aimed at increasing their share of the profits, are constantly gaining weight. Most of the countries suffer from immense economic difficulties, and the deficit in their budgets, together with lack of capital required for the realization of the development plans, add to their efforts. The advancing anti-imperialist movement taking place in the countries in question, especially the feeling of resistance towards the petroleum monopolies, added to the above mentioned economic factors, force the respective governments to demand from the monopolies a more fair division of profits gained from the oil industry. The governments of these countries are well aware of the present-day international situation being favourable for their demands and the entire socialist world being on their side, together with the nations of the noncommitted countries and the democrats of the advanced capitalist countries. It is for this reason that they have taken a firmer attitude towards the monopolies, some of them even certain concrete steps.

As yet these efforts have been aimed at increasing the incomes

from oil of the countries in the Middle East in the frame of the existing agreements between them and the petroleum monopolies, which as we know, are officially established on the principle of 50 : 50.

It should first be pointed out that the quoted principle had been attained as a result of a strenuous and long struggle. Before that, the share received by the countries in question was lower still. To give an example - beginning with the year 1908, when the extraction of oil in Iran started, until 1950, when the nationalization of the Iranian petroleum industry took place, the former Anglo-Iranian Oil Company extracted in Iran altogether 326 million tons of petroleum, for which a mere 105 million pounds sterling were paid to Iran, the A. I. O. C. having gained 790 million pounds. On every ton of oil the company made a profit of over £ 2, while the income of Iran was 6 shillings, i. e. seven times less.

After the Second World War the countries of the Middle East began a concentrated fight against the monopolies, which in 1950 culminated in the nationalization of the Iranian petroleum industry, the then biggest producer of oil in this part of the world. Later, in 1954, Iranian oil did once again fall under the sway of the petroleum monopolies (this time the A. I. O. C. was replaced by the International Consortium); nevertheless, this event made the people of these countries realize for the first time, of what enormous wealth they were being robbed by the monopolies.

The increasing protests of the public against the monopolies compelled the latter to make certain concessions, by which former contracts were revised and consequently the so-called agreements on the division of profit on the 50 : 50 basis came into being.

For this purpose the profit is calculated according to the so-called post-price.⁶ Before 1948 the price of oil had been reckoned according to the production costs in the U. S. A. At that time, the U. S. A. were by far the biggest producer and consumer of oil in the world; since then, however, they turned from an oil-exporting country into an importer of oil, and the petroleum monopolies began to reckon the production costs of the Venezuela oil as basis for fixing the price.

⁶ The price of oil posted by the petroleum monopolies by the Persian Gulf. (A.)

At present the situation in the production costs per unit of crude oil are as follows:

Table No. 26
Production Costs per Barrel (in dollars):*

Iran	0.10
Iraq	0.25
Saudi Arabia	0.35
Kuwait	0.10
Persian Gulf (average)	0.21
Caribbean Sea	0.85
Gulf of Mexico**	2.0

* *Ekonomika kapitalisticheskikh stran posle vtoroi mirovoi voyny*, Moscow 1959, p. 101.

** *MEMO* 1959/1, p. 123.

On the average the production costs in the Middle East are one tenth of those in the Mexican Gulf and one fourth of those in the Caribbean Sea. The prices of crude oil in the individual oil producing areas are as follows.

Table No. 27
Price of Crude Oil per Barrel in 1962 (in dollars)*

Persian Gulf (average)	1.72
Iran	1.73**
Iraq	2.07**
Saudi Arabia	1.80**
Kuwait	1.59***
Caribbean Sea	2.52***
Gulf of Mexico (average)	3.15—3.25 ⁺

* Compiled according to *Petroleum Press Service*, 1962.

** density 34—34,9°

*** density 31—31,9°

+ density 35—35,9°

The table shows that the disparity in prices is smaller than that in the production costs. This can be explained by the fact that the

production costs, as given in Table No. 26, correspond more or less to the actual costs of production, whereas the prices, as stated in Table No. 27, with the exception of the Mexican Gulf, represent the so-called post-price. It is these prices, on the basis of which the countries of the Middle East receive 50 % of profit, after the production costs have been deducted. Both the production costs and the above mentioned post-prices are fixed by the monopolies. It is noteworthy that e. g. the Iraq Petroleum Company states the same production costs, 13 shillings per ton, whether the oil be mined at Kirkuk, Basrah or Mosul, although the conditions of production in the areas mentioned differ to a great extent. In addition, the given costs have remained practically unaltered during the whole post-war period.

The worst conditions of production are in the U. S. A.; the international value of petroleum is therefore fixed according to them. The role of the international petroleum cartel fixing a high monopoly price of oil for the entire capitalist world, should not be ignored either. The above implies that the international price of oil is, in fact, permanently fixed according to the price of oil extracted in the U. S. A. and not according to Venezuela oil, as the spokesmen of the I. C. are trying to prove.

The price of Middle-East petroleum should be 3.15—3.25 dollars per barrel, which is almost twice the present post-price. This would mean a material increase in the income of the countries concerned and seemingly the profits of the petroleum monopolies should be higher too. The actual state of affairs, however, is not that simple.

Here the I. C. appears in all its might. In 1960 the cartel controlled 61 % of the production of oil in the capitalist world and 94 % of the oil-production of the Middle East. This means that the I. C. is by far the most powerful ruler over the production and distribution of petroleum in the capitalist countries. Such dominant position enables the cartel to carry out large-scale price manipulations. In the Persian Gulf the oil is only being transferred, no trading takes place here. The actual dealing takes place in Western Europe, where oil is being sold for the international price. These manipulations are a source of tremendous profits to the I. C., to the detriment of the countries in the Middle East of course, as the difference between the post-price of oil

in the Persian Gulf and the international price amounts to one dollar per barrel, i. e. 7.2 dollars per ton, at least.⁷ As far as the Middle East is concerned, in 1962 the difference surpassed 2 milliards dollars. As for Kurdistan, the difference exceeded 250 million dollars, out of which one half, due to the country, was stolen by the monopolies through their price machinations. To illustrate the significance of the sum - 125 mil. dollars represent 12.5 % of the total national income of all parts of Kurdistan. The comparison of price of crude oil reveals that even if Venezuela oil is reckoned as basis, the post-price in the Persian Gulf is lower by at least 0.5 dollars per barrel.

In the course of the last five years the countries of the Middle East received the following sums from the petroleum companies:

Table No. 28

Incomes from Petroleum of the Countries in the Middle East during 1957-1961 (in millions of dollars)*

	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961
Iran	213	272	262	285	290
Iraq	137	224	243	267	265
Saudi Arabia	303	302	294**	332**	340**
Kuwait	308	354	409**	409**	454**
Entire Middle [†] East	1016	1224	1274	1360	1440***

* Table according to PPS, 1962/9, p. 324; the estimated figures by the author.

** the neutral zone not included.

*** an estimated figure.

† Bahrain and Qatar included.

The table indicates an absolute increase in the incomes, but we must take into account the income per ton, which in the respective years was the following:

⁷ For the sake of simplification and with regard to the higher density rate of American oil the minimum figure of 1 dollar has been reckoned; i. e. the difference in price between American and Iranian oil: 3.15 - 2.07 = 1.08. (A.)

Table No. 29
Incomes of the Countries in the Middle East per Ton of Crude Oil (in dollars)

	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961
Middle East (average)	5,8	5,8	5,6	5,1	5,1

It follows that in the course of five years the income per ton of oil decreased in the Middle East by 70 cents, i. e. by 12 %. Thus in 1961 alone the countries of this area suffered a loss corresponding to approximately 195 million dollars.

It is worthwhile to pay closer attention to some of the figures given in the above table. The production of oil in Iran, controlled by the Consortium increased in 1961 by 8 mil. tons as compared to the year 1960; the income of the country was, however, only 5 mil. dollars higher, which means that in return for each additional ton of oil produced in 1961 Iran received but 60 cents. In Iraq, the production grew by one mil. tons, while the incomes decreased by two million dollars. In the year 1960 a further reduction in the post-price was announced, by which the countries of the Middle East lose 3—4 % of their incomes. These countries, joined in September 1960 by Venezuela, founded in Baghdad the so-called Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (O. P. E. C.).⁸ The memberstates stated that oil constitutes the fundamental part of the income and their investment in economic plans; the budget equilibrium is directly dependent on the production of oil, which "as a capital, which is not inexhaustible, has to be replaced by other capital in proportion to the rate of its consumption."

All that has been said concerning crude oil, applies with even greater force to petroleum products. How enormous the profits made by the petroleum monopolies are can be illustrated by the fact that they sell a ton of oil to the West-European consumer for the average price of 240 dollars, which is a price 160 times higher than the average

⁸ Member-states of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries are Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Venezuela. The organization was later joined by Qatar, Libya and Indonesia. (A.)

production costs in the Middle East. (As stated, the costs of one barrel amounted to 21 cents, which is approximately 1.5 dollars per ton.)

The advocates of the I. C. explain this disparity by the heavy taxes assessed by the importing countries, without, however, mentioning the actual figures. Nevertheless, it is clear that the costs of transport, processing and marketing, together with the import tax levied by the importing countries, however heavy, cannot raise the costs 160 times.

The representative of Saudi Arabia in the U. N. O. worked out that the petroleum monopolies gain 20 cents on the transport of one barrel of oil from the Middle East, one dollar on the processing and 2 dollars for marketing, i. e. altogether 3.2 dollars.

Summing up the above, we arrive at the following conclusion: The production costs of crude oil in the Middle East are 1.5 dollars per ton. The oil monopolies declare the investigation projects connected with oil to be extremely high - let us presume them to constitute one third of the production costs, which would thus amount to two dollars. A ton of crude oil from the Middle East is sold on the world market for 23.3 dollars (= one barrel for 3.15), and here is the source of the immense profits made by the monopolies on the Middle-East oil.

Table No. 30
Net Income Made by the Petroleum Monopolies on Middle-East Oil (in dollars per ton)

Average Exploration and Production Costs	Average Incomes of the Middle-East Countries	Total Investments	Selling Price	Profit
2	5.1	7.1	23.3	16.2

The production of oil in all Middle East in 1962 exceeded 300 mil. tons, the incomes received by the Middle-East countries amounted to 1,530 mil. dollars. The profits made by the monopolies, however, reached the sum of 4,860 mil. dollars. Moreover, 20 % of the petroleum (60 mil tons) are processed in the Middle East. Taking the calculations of the Saudi Arabia' representative as basis for our calculations, i. e.

3.20 per barrel (23 dollars per ton) in Saudi Arabia and about 20 dollars in the other Middle East countries,⁹ it would mean an additional profit of 1,200 mil. dollars.

The profits of the petroleum monopolies from oil produced in the Middle East run into the phantastic figure of 6,060 mil. dollars, i. e. 15 % more than the entire national revenue of all the Middle-East oil exporting countries. It is not by mere chance that the profits made by the biggest petroleum monopolies in the last decade reached the astronomical figure - 54 milliard dollars.¹⁰

The above figures clearly indicate that the so-called 50 : 50 principle is a concealed imposture. According to the above calculations, the ration is not 50 : 50 but 79.8 : 20.2 in favour of the monopolies, which further indicates that within the frame of the present agreements it is possible to raise the incomes of the O. P. E. C. members in the Middle East twice or even 2.5 times. Were the incomes on Kurdish oil alone raised to twice the present amount, it would have meant another 180 mil. dollars e. g. in 1962.

The petroleum monopolies often speak about great capital assets required for the extraction of oil, yet those invested in the Middle East are the lowest in the whole capitalist world.

Table No. 31
Average Investments for 10 Years (1949-1958) per Ton in Oil Extracted (in dollars)*

U. S. A.	Canada	Venezuela	Middle East	Far East	Other Countries
12.3	25.7	4.2	1.18	6.45	10.0

* A. I. B o z h e d o m o v, *Neftianaya renta v stranakh kapitalizma*, Moscow 1962, p. 276.

The countries of the Middle East have already for a number of years been searching for more advantageous contracts on extraction

⁹ In Iran and Iraq the production costs for the processing of petroleum are somewhat higher than in Saudi Arabia. (A.)

¹⁰ *World Petroleum Industry*, New York 1961, p. 27.

of oil outside the I. C. In 1957 Iran concluded an agreement with the Italian state company E. N. I., with the American Standard Oil Company of Indiana and the Canadian company Seshire Petroleum Limited. These companies are no more in possession of concession rights, but hold 50 % of the shares of a composite company. The remaining 50 % are in the possession of the Iranian national petroleum company. Here the 50 : 50 principle is applied, too; as Iran holds 50 % of the shares, its income forms 75 % of the total profit. Other important contracts have been made between Kuwait and the Japanese company Arabia Sekiyu, and between Saudi Arabia and Arabia Sekiyu. The national capital of these countries does not participate, but Saudi Arabia is going to receive 56 % and Kuwait 57 % of the profit made on all the operations, including the extraction and the marketing of petroleum products. Evidently these contracts are not in full concord with the interests of the nations of the Middle East either, and have been concluded without their participation and consent and against their wishes. Nevertheless the advantages of these agreements, as compared to concession contracts concluded with the I. C. should not be overlooked. The above mentioned agreements are furthermore advantageous in that the countries concerned will be able to exercise control over all the transactions made by the respective companies. The significance of the agreements is as yet of qualitative and legal nature only, but they constitute the first step towards impairing the privileged standing of the I. C. No doubt, the future will reveal the practical advantages of these contracts in comparison to those concluded with the I. C.

4. NATIONALIZATION OF THE PETROLEUM INDUSTRY AND THE PROBLEMS INVOLVED

Following a series of lengthy fruitless negotiations with the I. C. monopolies, the countries associated in the O. P. E. C. finally arrived at the conclusion that it is necessary to adopt firmer provisions. Their governments have not, as yet, considered the nationalization of petro-

leum industry at all; nevertheless this measure as a last solution cannot be eliminated altogether - the more, because it has already a certain tradition in the Middle East. In addition, the international political situation is favourable for materializing a nationalization project. The era when the appearance of the British navy in the Persian Gulf decided everything, has been over for a long time. Yet, from the economic aspect, the situation is far from being that simple.

In the year 1962 the Middle East exported over 270 mil. tons of oil. In the case of nationalization and a potential subsequent boycott of Middle-East oil on the part of the imperialist powers, this is not a product that could be imported by the socialist countries. The Soviet Union is a big exporter of oil, and the same applies to Roumania. Needless to say, the remaining countries of the Council for Mutual Economic Aid (importing oil from the Soviet Union) would be unable to consume a substantial part of Middle East petroleum, which thus constitutes the only important product with little prospects of sale in the socialist countries in the near future.

On the other hand, the capitalist part of the world and especially the West-European countries are largely dependent on oil from the Middle East. The importance of oil in their economy has grown to such an extent that it is impossible to replace it in its role as fuel, the less so as raw material. These countries, and those outside the I. C. in particular, are at present importing Soviet oil. The question arises as to why they could not buy nationalized oil from the Middle East? The countries of Western Europe and also certain countries in the Far East (e. g. Japan, Australia) are in great need of oil. The dependence is thus mutual: The consumption of Middle East oil on the West-European market and the economy of the West-European countries on the production of oil in the Middle East.

When the nationalization of the Iranian petroleum industry took place in 1950, the requirements made by Western Europe, which, by the way, were several times lower than at present, were fully complied with by the U. S. A. and by some other countries of the Middle East. The I. C. monopolies expanded the oil production in these countries on behalf of Iran. The West-European market and that of the whole capitalist world was well supplied by oil from other

Middle East countries and partly also from the U. S. A. As a result, the production of oil in Iran decreased to such a level as to supply the home market, whereas in the other countries of the Middle East production grew at great speed.

At present the U. S. A. are no more able to export oil, on the contrary they import a large amount; the production of oil in Venezuela would not be sufficient to supply Latin America, the import needs of the U. S. A., and the consumption in Western Europe in addition.

From the above follows a further conclusion, namely that success in nationalization of oil is conditioned by solidarity on the part of the O. P. E. C. countries and their joint action directed against the I. C. The member-states of the O. P. E. C. were well aware of this from the very beginning and have declared in point No. 4 of their first resolution issued at the organization's constituent meeting: "... that no member-state will accept such advantages offered by the petroleum companies, that would menace the member-states in materializing joint resolutions."¹¹

On the other hand, for the petroleum exporting countries in the Middle East there still exists at present the possibility to manage without oil for some time. It is obvious that these countries can rely on active economic support from the countries of the socialist camp.

The request to nationalize the petroleum industry is therefore a realizable one, by which we do not imply that the petroleum monopolies and even the members of the I. C. would not be permitted to participate in the extraction, processing, transport and marketing of Middle East oil. This, however, could take place only on the basis of new fair principles. First of all, the petroleum companies would have to respect the sovereignty of the countries concerned. At present they constitute a political factor of first-rate importance; they organize conspiracies, and coup d'états. No anti-popular action takes place without the monopolies having the main say. They interfere in all matters of the entire area. By no mere chance do the people of the Middle East describe their role as that of "a state within a state". The demand of the patriotic forces expressed in the slogan "No oil rather

¹¹ *Eurostat*, 12. 12. 1960.

than the presence of oil monopolies" is but a reflection of justified anger.

The significance of the O. P. E. C. consists in the very fact that the organization created a united front of the petroleum exporting countries, which, if unity and solidarity of the member-states are secured, reckoning on nationalization as an emergency but not undesirable measure, will force the monopolies to make concessions to their demands.

Successful nationalization is conditioned by the support of the masses, first of all of the working class, which is most concerned with the nationalization of the petroleum industry. Recent experience in the Middle East countries shows clearly that no attempt of the reactionary ruling sections, nor that of the national bourgeoisie, to fight the oil monopolies and their own people at the same time can meet with success. The struggle against the monopolies cannot achieve victory without the support of the people.

Nationalization will in any case encounter temporary difficulties in the mining, processing, transport of oil, and with the organization of its marketing. The Middle East has only few native experts, a large part of the refineries, means of transport, and store-houses, belong to the I. C. or are directly under its influence. The sale of petroleum will be obstructed by the I. C. branches controlling the most important markets. A consistent and uncompromising attitude towards the I. C. monopolies will result in a gradual removal of these obstacles, and it might be possible to utilize services of the monopolies standing outside the I. C. Let us only recollect the services rendered by Japanese and Italian companies with the transport of Iranian nationalized petroleum. The statements of the oil monopolies as to the nations of the Middle East being unable to run so big an industry are ridiculous. The same was said concerning the people of Egypt and the Suez Canal, and yet, for eight years already Egyptian experts have been successfully controlling all the operations connected with the traffic on the Canal. In addition, the West-European countries outside the I. C., especially the German Federal Republic and Italy, knowing that the I. C. branches are selling them oil for a high monopoly price, make no efforts to conceal that direct purchase of petroleum from the Middle East would

be most welcome to them. And it is these states that are the main importers of Soviet oil in Western Europe. An official statement has been made as to the companies of G. F. R. being keen on a direct purchase of petroleum from the Iranian petroleum company.

5. PETROLEUM AND ITS RELATION TO ECONOMIC PROGRESS

From all that has been said above we can draw the following conclusions: On the one hand, the Middle-East petroleum exporting countries have a yearly national income of approximately 150 dollars per head, which is eight times less than the advanced capitalist countries in Western Europe and one twentieth of the per-capita national income of the U. S. A. The people of these countries live in poverty, suffering and illiteracy. On the other hand, the nations of these countries are being robbed year by year of several milliard dollars. Were the profits made on petroleum divided justly, if only according to the present 50 : 50 principle, many of the most urgent economic and social problems of these countries could be solved.

The incomes from oil could become a source of accumulation. In the economically underdeveloped countries lack of capital constitutes the chief obstacle to quick economic development. In the course of the next few decades oil can bring the Middle-East countries incomes amounting to many milliards of dollars.

Estimates concerning the future prospects of petroleum indicate that in the course of the next ten years oil will become the main source of energy and the role of natural gas will increase. In 1970 oil together with natural gas are supposed to constitute two thirds of the sources of power; the increase in their production will be of a higher rate than the growth of power itself. The increase of all electric power will amount to $\frac{1}{2}$, whereas that of petroleum and natural gas will reach the total of 66 %, the greatest share of the increase coming from the countries of the Middle East, which will become the main petroleum producing and exporting area of the capitalist world.

Table No. 32

Approximate Growth of the Share of Middle East Oil in the Total Production of the Capitalist World in the Years 1960-1970 (in mil. tons)*

	1960	1970	Growth in 10 Years	Average Growth per Annum
The Whole Capitalist World	885	1,375	55 %	4.5 %
The Middle East	265	825	310 %	12 %
The Share of the Middle East per cent	30 %	60 %	—	—

* The table has been compiled according to *World Petroleum Industry*, New York 1961. The Middle East estimate is based on the increase of petroleum production during 1950-1960 and the prospects of future development as compared with the remaining oil production areas in the capitalist world. (A.)

The existence of enormous supplies of oil would enable its exploitation for building up a fuel and electric power basis; consequently, electrification and the production of cheap electric power would become a question at issue.

It is already amazing that the Middle East producing 30 % of oil, which means over 12 % of power sources of the capitalist world, has an exceptionally low electric power basis and the consumption of electric power in these countries is a mere tenth of the consumption of the advanced capitalist countries.

The present situation must undergo a substantial change in the coming ten years, which must result in the countries of the Middle East being able to build their electric power bases on petroleum, to commence electrification and introduce electric power into industries and agriculture. In so far as Kurdistan is concerned, there are large sources of hydro-power. The building up of electric power stations utilizing oil, combined with the construction of hydroelectric power plants, could considerably speed up the electrification process in Kurdistan.

Oil could serve as a raw material for the creation of an extensive chemical industry, where the Middle East could specialize in petro-

chemistry - a branch with great prospect for the future. It should be added that the petroleum exporting countries in this area possess extensive supplies of natural gas: In the year 1961 6,707 milliard cubic metres of natural gas were ascertained.¹² In 1960 alone 21,000 mil. cubic metres of natural gas extracted together with oil remained unused.¹³ Such resources would enable the chemical industry to develop to such an extent that it could mean the beginning of the countries' industrialization and become the basis of their heavy industry; it could also serve as raw material for the production of a sufficient amount of consumer goods and contribute to a radical change in the present state of agriculture.

As mentioned above, a great majority of oil was exported in its crude form. The further development of the petroleum-processing industry must alter the situation to the benefit of the oil exporting countries in the sense that the petroleum export will comprise a majority of oil products. Large-scale investments obtained from the incomes from oil and the development of manufacturing and chemical industries will effectively help to solve the question of expanding the home market and mobilizing all other home sources for further economic progress. The export of petroleum will solve the problems of balance of trade. It is generally known that the economically less developed countries lack the sufficient quantity of goods for export, in return for which they could import the products they urgently need. For the first few years this question could be solved by the export of oil and petroleum products. After some time the countries of the Middle East could export chemical products and products of chemical industry.

The balance of payments could be solved by means of exporting petroleum. In return for the currencies obtained the countries of the Middle East could purchase machinery and equipment needed for industrialization.

The future advance in the petroleum industry will greatly promote the significance of the state sector of the Middle East countries. The incomes from oil, which the state is going to receive, will convert the state sector into the biggest entrepreneur in the country, which

¹² *PPS*, November 1962, p. 406.

¹³ *Ibid.*

will have a favourable effect as a decisive factor in industrialization.

There exist already now certain attempts on the part of the states to mine oil by means of national capital. No doubt, national capital in the petroleum industry, as the main form of the state sector, will become an economic stronghold of the anti-imperialist forces in their struggle against the foreign petroleum monopolies and in their endeavours to build up an independent national petroleum industry. The present development indicates that it will be the petroleum industry which in the countries of the Middle East will form the foundations of industrialization. Strengthening of the state sector against foreign imperialist capital, on the one hand, and against private capital within the country, on the other, objectively means a great step forward towards the creation of favourable conditions for optimum progress of the countries' economies.

These are some of the results which might in the future be achieved by the countries of the Middle East, including Kurdistan. It means that petroleum will play a decisive role in the complex solution of the most important problems in economic progress. The oil supplies, of course, are not inexhaustible, and their utilization must therefore be planned and economical. As to the I. C., it exploits the oil regardless of economy and literally wastes the gas. The countries in the Middle East would have to settle the problem of extracting the oil in concord with the needs of their economies and with a complete utilization of the underground natural gas. Under such management the supplies would last for several decades at least.

Until 1980 petroleum and gas will definitely have the biggest share as a source of energy and will be a highly sought-for raw material for the chemical industry. By them it would be desirable to solve the main problems of economic progress in order that oil be really replaced by "other capital" at the rate it is being consumed.

PART III

THE KURDISH QUESTION

CHAPTER XI

THE KURDISH QUESTION IN OUR DAYS

1. SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE KURDISH QUESTION

Before approaching the main problem concerning the solution of the Kurdish question we have to mention some of its specificities which follow from the facts discussed in the preceding parts of this treatise.

The national-liberation movement of the Kurdish people is at present directed not only against imperialism as an arch enemy, but against the ruling classes of Iran, Turkey and Iraq, too. The dominant nations of these countries - Persians, Turks and Arabs - are, however, themselves still in the stage of anti-imperialist struggle. In other words - the Kurdish people are striving for their national independence amidst the national-liberation movement of the people of the other countries. This phenomenon sometimes gives rise to confusion; not always is it easy for the Kurdish people as an oppressed nation to distinguish their chief enemy - imperialism, as they wage their struggle directly against the governments of the respective countries. The impression that the struggle is not clearly directed against imperialism is due to the fact that the countries inhabited by Kurds enjoy formal independence and the influence exercised by the imperialist power does not assume the classic colonial form, remaining concealed behind the state authorities of the feudal-comprador bourgeoisie, which, though seemingly native, is, in fact, a stronghold for the interests of the imperialists.

Beginning with the termination of World War I the leading

imperialist states have aimed at misusing the situation for their own benefit by sowing nationalistic discord, assuming the role of advocates of the Kurds' interests and thus bringing confusion into the entire national-liberation movement. It is sufficient to recollect the British policy in Iraq and Turkey right after the First World War, the British and the French policy in Iraq and Syria between the two World Wars and the U. S. policy in Iran and Iraq since the second World War. It should be admitted that the disruptive policy pursued by the imperialists bore fruit in some cases and not infrequently was it the main cause of a defeat of the Kurdish people's struggle. The historical experience gained in the many years' striving and the presentday experience of other nations have given the Kurds many a lesson in this point. Only few nations had shed so much blood and suffered so greatly before recognizing their true arch enemy - imperialism. The Kurds are settled in an area extending along the border regions of several (mainly three) states, in each of which they form a minority. Their power is thus artificially divided. On the other hand, as shown above, the interests of the respective governments are of such nature that, in the last resort, the states always take joint action against the Kurdish national-liberation movement. Every attempt at liberating a part of Kurdistan is checked not by the ruling classes of the respective country alone but with the support of the other states where the Kurds populate part of the territory. Any change in the *status quo* that takes place in one of the countries is of great concern to the other states, in fact, to the entire Middle East. Furthermore, as Kurds live in Iraq and Syria, two Arab countries, it is also a concern of the whole Arab world.

All this contributes to a most unusual state of affairs: A nation divided in its endeavours at freedom and independence, the forces of which are moreover split by the borderlines of several states, encounters at the decisive moments the united forces of the ruling classes of these states and sometimes even other states, too.

Kurdistan abounds in rich deposits of oil which are being exploited by imperialist petroleum monopolies, and any change in the *status quo* in this area meets with a strong resistance of these companies which, in the Middle East in particular, are the sole factor directing

the policy of their governments (the U. S. A., Great Britain, France) in that area.

As indicated in Chapter III, the fate of the Kurds since World War I has been closely linked with petroleum, which for the capitalist countries continues to be a raw material of ever growing importance. The significance of Kurdistan as a rich source of oil for the capitalist world is, therefore, far from declining; on the contrary, it has been showing a steady tendency to increase. The imperialist companies gain several hundred million dollars per annum from Kurdish oil, their presence in Kurdistan revealing their virtual role of immediate exploiters of the Kurdish working people and of their natural resources.

Being a crossroad of three continents and an important area from the political and strategic aspect, the Middle East holds a specific place in the plans of the imperialists. The whole area, and Kurdistan in particular, borders on the U. S. S. R., and important military bases attached to the aggressive imperialist blocks are being built on its territory. Furthermore, Kurdistan constitutes a direct linking line between the Soviet Union and the whole Arab East. The experience of the post-war years indicates that any achievement in one of the countries of the Middle East is apt to produce a chain reaction spreading over the whole area. There is no significant country in the area which would not be a scene of serious and occasionally very radical and even revolutionary developments. Profound changes of the political situation in the immediate neighbourhood of the Soviet Union might result in sealing the doom of imperialist rule in the Middle East. For this reason the imperialists have fiercely resisted and are going to resist all radical changes, and particularly changes which have anything to do with the liberation of the Kurdish people. These specific features connected with the present-day objective standing of the Kurdish problem cannot, of course, be separated from the concrete international situation, under which it will be solved, either.

As regards the settlement of the Kurdish question, similarly to other acute problems of the present, there functions another factor of high significance, namely, that from the historical point of view, in addition to being an era of the downfall of the entire colonial system

of imperialism and of newly gained independence for the oppressed nations, this is a period, the nature of which is marked with the transition from capitalism to socialism; furthermore, "the principal contents, the principal direction and the principal specificities of the historical development of human society in the present epoch are determined by the world socialist system, by the forces struggling against imperialism and for a socialistic reconstruction of society."¹

It is only in the light of the above mentioned facts that we can consider the settlement of the Kurdish problem; any attempt at an abstract solution would be incorrect from the theoretical point of view and harmful in its practical consequences. "An indispensable condition of the Marxist theory in analysing any social question", writes Lenin, "is to lodge the question into a certain historical framework and then, if it concerns a single country (e. g. the national program of the given country) to consider the concrete specificities which in the same historical period differentiate the country from other countries."²

2. THE PRESENT POSITION OF THE KURDS

In the first part of this treatise we have thoroughly discussed the attitude of the respective governments - of Turkey, Iran and Iraq, to the Kurdish question. In the following section we intend to summarize the situation from the point of view of the recent events.

As to Turkey, all the post-war years, which have materially changed the complexion of the world, have brought nothing new as compared to the pre-war period. "In the eastern districts of Turkey, in Kurdistan, reprisals against the Kurdish population have been and remain to be particularly barbarous. In nine districts of the eastern part of the country a military state of emergency has been maintained

¹ *Declaration of the Communist and Workers' Parties Conference*, November 1960 (translated from Czech edition).

² V. I. Lenin, *On the right of Nations to Self-Determination*, Works, Vol. 20, p. 407 (Czech. ed.).

for a number of years."³ The military coup-d'état of May 1960 brought no change in this respect either. Gürsel, the present President of the Republic, repeated the old song, declaring that "in the world there exists no nation with an individuality of its own under the name Kurdish. The Kurds are not merely our fellow-citizens, but also our racial brothers."⁴

The events that have taken place since September 1961, particularly the revolution which spread over entire Iraqi Kurdistan, found ready response throughout Turkish Kurdistan. The people of this part of the country, especially the Kurdish intelligentsia, began to take active part in the happenings. Kurdish periodicals were issued and many Kurdish peasants joined the Kurds struggling in Iraq.

In August 1963 the Turkish government started extensive persecution against the Kurdish patriots. Hundreds of people were arrested, and during the lawsuit brought against them the prosecutor pronounced death penalty upon 25 persons for an attempt at forming an independent Kurdish state.

Shaikh Said and his comrades were executed for the same offence in 1925, 40 years ago. Since then the world has undergone a fundamental change, but in Turkey, the government of which claims to be the advocate of nations struggling for their freedom and independence and uses all means to further the rights of the Turkish minority in Cyprus, the lives of the best sons of the Kurdish people are in danger for the very reason that they are fighting for the rights and freedom of their own nation.

The Iranian government has modified its attitude to the Kurdish question to a certain degree, which, however, altered nothing about the position of the Kurds there. The roots of the tendency can be sought prior to the July 1958 revolution in Iraq, when Cairo radio started to broadcast in Kurdish in order to stimulate the Iraqi Kurds against the Nuri-Said regime. The Iranian government was so alarmed that a decision was made to undertake a propaganda journey through Kurdistan after which 7 million dollars

³ S. C ũ s t ũ n g e l, *Questions of Peace and Socialism*, No. 8, 1960.

⁴ The Turkish Journal *KIM* of 27. 4. 1961. Quoted by "Kurdish Facts" of 7. 6. 1961, Amsterdam.

were assessed as a contribution to the country's development.

The official propaganda intensified its activities: Seven transmitters began to broadcast in Kurdish; a weekly periodical in Kurdish was issued in Teheran under the supervision of the authorities. The *Bamshad* journal wrote: "Evidently, the Egyptians enjoyed swallowing the part of Syria settled by Kurds ... Had we protested at the time when Cairo wanted to swallow up Syria, nowadays the Egyptians would not dare to speak about Kurdistan."⁵ Another periodical is more outspoken: "Should a movement called the Kurdish Movement be created, it is the natural privilege of Iran to initiate it. The Kurds, no matter what part of the world they live in, are Iranians with Iranian blood flowing through their veins ..." "Naturally it is the right of Iran to become the vanguard and summon under its sacred flag the Kurds scattered over other countries."⁶

The then Foreign Minister Hekmat declared in the National Assembly: "The Kurdish question, sometimes put forward by hostile and suspicious persons, has no grounds in Iran."⁷

What are the principles of the Iranian government's policy to the Kurdish question? We might say that it actually reflects the views expressed by the former Prime Minister of Iran M. Foroughi in the year 1927 when he was Iranian Ambassador to Turkey. In a secret letter he wrote: "As far as an independent Kurdistan is concerned, this menace should, in my opinion be regarded as obvious ... we must firstly have in mind our Kurdistan, and if really possible, gain also the Turks, not in order to ruin the Kurds, which is nothing but an illusion, but for the purpose of tying them to Iran, giving them an Iranian education, which for us is much easier a task than for the Turks, as the Kurds are Iranians, both as regards their language and their race. ... Should the idea of independent Kurdistan gain force, we shall have no difficulties with the Kurds living in Iran. It is possible that the Iranian element in them will prevail and not only shall we lose nothing, but might even gain."⁸

⁵ *Bamshad*, 26. 6. 1958, Teheran.

⁶ *Mehre-Iran* journal, 1. 7. 1958, Teheran.

⁷ *Keyhan*, 30. 6. 1958, Teheran.

⁸ *Yaghma*, No. 8, October 1958, Teheran.

It proves that Forughî was a far more foresighted politician than the present rulers of Iran; soon after the First World War he anticipated the future development of the Kurdish problem. The ruling circles of Iran, on the other hand, are being forced to deal with the Kurdish question as a result of the pressure of the present situation. Nevertheless, a policy which might have meant some success after World War I is not likely to bring any outstanding results nowadays. At the same time, the present-day rulers of Iran are concerned with an additional problem; they feel frightened by the fact that it is the left-wing forces that are gradually acquiring preponderance in the leadership of the Kurdish national liberation movement. For this reason they attempt to shatter the unity of the movement and drive all revolutionary-minded people out of the leadership.

The policy of the rulers of Iran towards the Kurdish question might be summarized as that of crushing any movement of the Kurdish people, and in case that proves impracticable, penetrating into it in order to exert their influence or even take over the lead; in the worst case they aim at damaging the movement and driving out of its leadership the true defenders of the Kurdish people's interests.

The Iraqi revolution of July 1958 offered new prospects to the Kurds. In appreciation of their participation in the struggle against the Nuri-Said regime the Constitution of the Republic of Iraq declared "Iraq is the common country of Arabs and Kurds". During the first year of the revolution the Kurdish people achieved significant results in securing national and political demands. Hopes arose promising that necessary prerequisites will be created for a rational solution of the Kurdish question within the framework of the Iraqi republic - a solution which might have constituted a model for the other countries with a Kurdish population.

After the first year of the new regime Kasim introduced his anti-democratic policy, and together with the intensification of reprisals against the democratic forces and the suppression of democratic liberties, strengthened the oppression by terror of the achievements and the rights of the Kurdish people. This finally led to an armed conflict between the Iraqi government and the Kurdish armed groups

in September 1961 which continued until the fall of the Kasim government.

The military operations carried out by the Kasim government, bombing of the peaceful Kurdish population, devastation of villages and unprecedented political, military and even economic pressure, brought no success whatsoever. The unity of the Kurdish people became firmer still and an overwhelming majority of the Kurds in Iraqi Kurdistan united under the leadership of Mustafa Barzani. Kasim's policy in Kurdistan was brought to a deadlock and thus formed one of the chief causes of the fall of his dictatorial regime.

In order to gain the support of the Kurdish armed movement, or to neutralize it at least, for the first period after the putsch, the Baasists already before the putsch, which took place on February 8, 1963, promised the Kurds extensive autonomy. They even continued to speak about the autonomy for the first days following their advent to power. Yet, the more they strengthened their position, the more they tended to postpone the fulfilment of their promises. The final outcome was nothing but a promise to the Kurds of a "decentralized government" with no real meaning, which was to substitute the right for autonomy. The representatives of the Kurdish national-liberation movement could not give their consent to this proposal and demanded the government secure an immediate and unambiguous recognition of an autonomy for the Kurds in the framework of the Iraqi republic.

One after the other the manoeuvres of the Baasist leaders failed; it came to light that they did not recognize the sole existence of the Kurdish nation. Beginning with the first half of June 1963, the Arif government started to concentrate troops in Kurdistan. On June 7th, three days before the declaration was made, the governmental troops attacked the military stations of the Kurdish armed forces. On the 9th of the same month the five members of the Kurdish delegation negotiating in Baghdad with the Iraqi government were imprisoned ... Thus the Baasists unveiled themselves as people with no respect for norms and moral obligations.

After seizing power in the putsch of February 8, they concealed under the pretext of suppressing a "communist conspiracy" all their atrocities, terror, persecution, torturing, mass executions of the

democratic leaders and communists. How can they ever justify themselves in the eyes of the whole world, having perfidiously broken off negotiations and at variance with all regulations and contrary to the United Nations Charter started to massacre the Kurdish population? They were killing women and children, burning down villages and crops - all this, as pointed out by the Lebanon journal *Al-Akhbar*, in the name of "freedom" and "socialism". They cannot be regarded but as people who had adopted the fascist methods from the West and combined them with feudal barbarism. The Baasist leaders have been aptly characterized by the Italian *Unità* that describes them as a group of opportunistic intelligentsia incapable of seizing power by themselves, and therefore ready to serve anyone in order to attain this goal.

Mass terror against the Iraqi patriots and war of extermination waged against the Kurdish population deprived the Baasist government in Iraq of all social support. This government relied on the "national guard" formed by déclassé elements, a fanatically and chauvinistically directed section of the youth, students and petty bourgeoisie. Their attempts to create an atmosphere of Arab chauvinism and hatred against the Kurdish people and to declare a war of Arabs against the Kurds failed. The war against the Kurdish people turned into a symbol of struggle of all the nations and strata of the Iraqi people against Baasist rule. Not only the communists and democrats of all Iraq, not only the Kurdish national-liberation movement as a whole, but also sections of the national bourgeoisie, liberal leaders and even the "unionists", advocates of a firm link between Iraq and the U. A. R., who took part in the coup d'état on February 8th, joined the opposition to the Baasist rule in Iraq. In fact, conditions have been created for the reinstalment of the unity of all the Iraqi people which must sooner or later arise in its mighty force. On 18th November 1963 the Baas and its rule of terror and bloodshed was overthrown.

The standing of the Kurdish national-liberation movement in Iraq has never been so firm as nowadays. The armed struggle of the Kurdish people enjoys the support of every honourable citizen in Iraq, which is proved by the fact that many Arab patriots, officers and soldiers, crossed over to the fighting Kurds. The material and moral

support rendered by the Arab section of Iraq guarantees both the friendship of the two nations and the victory of their joint struggle.

The Kurdish people receive substantial help from the socialist countries, particularly from their mighty neighbour, the Soviet Union, which took the side of the justified cause of the Kurdish people with all its international authority. Turkey, Iran and Syria have been warned not to interfere with the internal affairs of Iraq; the declaration of July 7, 1963 addressed to these governments by the Soviet government states: "The tragedy of the Kurds in Iraq has already become an international issue. All this stirs up the righteous indignation of the broadest public in the world." The Soviet Union, loyal to its inherent traditions, and as a true friend of the Kurdish people, asserts in a declaration addressed to the Iraqi government: "Doubtless, the Iraqi government has knowledge of the fact that the Soviet people, similarly to the nations of the world, most strongly condemn the blood-shedding reprisals made by the Iraqi authorities against the peaceful Kurdish people which constitutes almost a quarter of all the population of the country."

The members of the aggressive CENTO pact, during the session of its permanent council in Smyrna in July 1963, worked out a plan on the intervention of Turkey and Iran against the Kurds which was given the name of "Operation Tiger". According to the plan the Turkish troops were to advance towards Mosul, the Iranian troops in the direction of Sulaimanya. The Soviet warning reached the rulers of Turkey, Iran and Syria just in time. In its note the Soviet government declares: "An intervention of other states into the events taking place on the territory of the Iraqi state is not merely a concern of Iraq. The participation of other countries in a conflict and the provision of military training grounds in the vicinity of the Soviet frontier to outside powers linked with aggressive military and political blocks endangers the safety of a number of states including the Soviet Union." Thus the Kurdish question, for so long a time regarded as of local importance only, has become a problem of international significance.

During the session of the U. N. Economic and Social Council that took place in July 1963 in Geneva the Soviet government raised the issue of the extermination of Kurds in Iraq. It was exactly the

imperialist powers that took the side of the Baasists, and it became evident to whom the latter, who had been blazoning abroad the slogan "unity, liberty, socialism" were affiliated. The isolation of the Baasist government reached such a degree that the biggest Arab state, the U. A. R., made it clear that its government disagreed with the war of extermination waged by the Baasists against the Kurds and preferred a peaceful settlement of the Kurdish problem.

In need you get to know both your friends and your enemies - says a Kurdish proverb: Great Britain supplied the Baasist regime with armaments and the U. S. A. through their Ambassador to the Lebanon, Armin Meyer, openly displayed their support of the Baas party in both Iraq and Syria. It is not by chance that *Le Monde* complained in its editorial of 11. 7. 1963 called "Le probleme Kurde internationalisé": "... how can the West possibly leave the defence of international morale and of the rights comprised in the United Nations Charter to the Communist bloc?" It should be mentioned that this attitude of the West is nothing new, neither in the present world in general, nor in the history of Kurdish people.

The demands of the Kurdish people in Iraq are justified and realistic; they require the recognition of the right to an autonomy of Kurds in the framework of the Iraqi republic, the formation of autonomous executive and legislative bodies, and at the same time, the right to Kurdish representation in the central government. The Kurds demand that a just portion of the profit gained from petroleum production be contributed to the economic development of Iraqi Kurdistan. Cultural autonomy is also demanded, namely school education in Kurdish, establishment of scientific and cultural institutions in Kurdistan, etc. None of these claims is at variance with the ambitions of Arabs in Iraq, and their realization would only add to the traditional friendly relationship between the Arab and the Kurdish population of Iraq founded on democracy and equality of rights. The representatives of the Kurdish national-liberation movement have given an affirmative answer to the idea of Iraq's participation in the federation of Arab countries on the condition that the Kurds shall enjoy an autonomy within the federation.

Regardless of the different circumstances existing in Iran,

Turkey and Iraq, the attitudes of the respective governments have very much in common, primarily that none of them recognizes the existence of a separate Kurdish nation de facto.

It is not only the ruling circles of the above mentioned countries that ignore the existence of the Kurds as a nation - even some sensible people in the surrounding countries have doubts as to the Kurds forming a single and separate nation. For this reason we consider it essential to mention this problem briefly.

3. KURDISH NATIONAL CONSOLIDATION

Is it at all possible to speak about the Kurds as a nation? Would it not be more appropriate to speak about them as the Kurdish nationality or national minority? - Let us pay closer attention to these questions.

Not always in the past was the conception of a nation defined correctly, but modern science offers a precise definition of its contents: It is a community which originated in the course of history and has proved its stability that we regard as a nation. The community becomes a nation only at a certain stage of its development. The origin of modern nations is, in fact, connected with the rise of capitalism, and they become consolidated together with its progress. The prerequisites for further development of these nations lie, of course, already deep in the preceding social formations, in the eras of slavery and feudalism. Nevertheless, the transition of a community into a nation depends on further conditions, the most significant of which are a common language, territory, economic life and psychic disposition which becomes expressed in the form of its national culture.

We have stated that the Kurds do form a historical community and were known by this name as early as the 7th century. And what are the main features of a nation in the case of the Kurds?

Kurdish is the language common to all Kurds and the existence of certain differences between various dialects changes nothing about this fact; dialectal differences have been preserved even in far more

advanced countries. The fact that as yet there exists no unified literary language is of greater importance, yet this state of affairs is not due to the Kurdish language being insufficiently developed nor to its being a mere dialect of Persian, as is sometimes said. No recognized orientalist has ever doubted the existence and adequate level of development of the Kurdish language. The first grammar of the Kurdish language was published in Rome already in 1787.⁹ The situation is caused chiefly by the non-existence of a uniform Kurdish writing. As shown above, Kurdish is written in the Arabic, Latin and Cyrillic characters, which for its part is evidently due to the splitting of the Kurdish nation among different countries, and to the prohibition of school education and literature in Kurdish in most of these areas. Minimum provisions and minimum time - from the historical point of view - would be needed to create a uniform writing and thus a single literary Kurdish language. It follows that the common language as one of the features inherent to a nation is provided.

Nobody doubts the territorial unity of Kurds. From time immemorial Kurdistan has been known as the motherland of Kurds, who have been living together in its mountains and valleys already for milleniums, and the splitting of Kurdistan by political borderlines between different states has changed nothing about it.

The unity of economic life is the most disputed factor of all. Evidently we cannot seek such unity in the economic life of the Kurds as we find in the case of the French or the Italians. From this aspect there is a distinction even between the Kurds and the Turks, as the latter are on a somewhat higher level. This can be explained by a lower degree of capitalist development in Kurdistan, the next important cause consisting in the state of affairs when the economy of Kurdistan is split and the individual parts of the country are virtually isolated from one another. Kurdistan has been divided even within one and the same state, which has exerted a hampering influence on the formation of a common economic life. For instance in Iran, Kurdistan had been divided into three regions: the northern (officially called "the

⁹ M. Garzoni, *Grammatica e Vocabolario della lingua Kurda*, Rome 1787.

region of Western Azerbaijan"), the central (officially "the Kurdistan region") and the southern part (officially "the Kirmanshah region"). There does not exist even a good road to connect the whole of Iranian Kurdistan. In winter there is in addition no connection between Sinna and Saqqiz, which means that the southern part of Iranian Kurdistan is completely cut off from the northern part.

In spite of all that has been said, the advancement of capitalist relations, differentiation in the rural areas, the growth of towns, expansion of trade and transport do lead to an economic consolidation of the Kurdish nation.

It follows that although we cannot, as yet, assert that the unity of economic life in Kurdistan is complete, it is not possible to ignore that in the case of the Kurds this feature does exist. It has been mentioned that despite the artificial borders they retain large-scale economic contacts with each other (e. g. the Kurds in Iraq and Iran). Besides, the unity of economic life is more or less relative in the case of the nations surrounding the Kurds - the Persians, Turks, Arabs, Azerbaijanians (in Iran) etc., somewhere assuming a firmer, somewhere a looser form. Economic unity was also incomplete in the case of the Caucasian nations, and was far from complete among the Central Asian nations of Russia. This, however, constituted no obstacle to these nations now being regarded as separate socialist nations.

The common psychic disposition of Kurds is recognized generally. All orientalists and specialists dealing with the problems of Kurdology are agreed that the Kurds differ from all the surrounding nations, that they have preserved their own culture and have not become assimilated by any other racial or ethnical group. The long-lasting struggle of the Kurdish people to preserve their national existence has become a lasting element in the consolidation of the psychic disposition and the national culture of Kurds.

It should be added that following the Second World War, and particularly during the existence of the democratic rule in Mahabad, the national consciousness of the Kurds strengthened greatly.

The process of national revival proceeded and deepened still further after the July 1958 revolution in Iraq. At present not in Iraq alone, but partly also in Iran, Kurdish periodicals are issued- Kurdish

transmitters constructed, and although they carry out pro-governmental policy, they, in fact, contribute to the development of the Kurdish language, and partly also its culture, namely literature and music.

It is important to add that the national consolidation of nations in the economically underdeveloped countries is necessarily linked with the struggle against imperialism; the Kurdish people, too, are becoming consolidated during their fight against imperialism and against national oppression from the part of the central governments of Turkey, Iran and Iraq.

Religion belongs to the factors that have retarded the process of forming the Kurdish nation. Islam as a common faith of all the Moslems became the veil concealing national oppression during the era of the Baghdad Caliphate and later when the Turkish sultan became the caliph.

Let us recall as an example that during World War I, the Kurds, who had then a great opportunity to struggle for their national rights and self-determination, were influenced by the ideas of the *jihad* (religious war of Muslims against unbelievers) to such a degree that they even forgot about the national oppression they suffered from the Turks.

Religion, of course, is not and cannot be regarded as a feature inherent to a nation, but we might be able to estimate its effect upon national consolidation from the following example: Although the Kirmanshah region is, from the economic and social aspects, far more advanced than Mahabad, the national revival in the latter is much stronger as a result of the fact that the Kurds living there are Sunnis while those of the Kirmanshah region together with the Persians belong to the Shii sect. Thus national oppression in the Mahabad region is stressed by the difference of religion, which brings about even stronger resistance on the part of the Kurds and thus furthers their national consciousness.

Obviously the division of Kurdistan between several countries functions as a hampering element in the process of national consolidation of the Kurds, and it is important not to underestimate the effect of this factor which still remains in force.

The next in the number of negative factors are the preserved tribal and feudal relations, which, however, are gradually being deprived of their importance due to the progress of the home market and the penetration of the capitalist relations into rural Kurdistan.

We arrive at the conclusion that a complete national consolidation of the Kurds under present circumstances is not attainable. This does not imply that we can ignore the existence of the Kurdish nation which as a historical category is undergoing a development and becoming consolidated.

Fundamentally none of the features inherent to a nation is missing in the case of the Kurds, although some of them (e. g. unity of economic life) are not as yet fully developed. We can, therefore, speak about a Kurdish nation just as we can speak about nations in the other countries of the Middle East, nations which are at present undergoing the consolidation process.

The Communist Party of Iraq has the great merit of having been the first to formulate its opinion on the consolidation of the Kurdish nation, an opinion which became a theoretical basis for the party's activities in the following period.

"The Kurdish nation possesses all the qualities essential for a nation: It is a stable community of historical origin; although split by imperialism, it possesses a common territory, a common language and all prerequisites for the formation of a common economic life, and it possesses the common traditions of psychic disposition expressing itself through the national culture and through the common endeavour of the Kurds for liberty and national unity."¹⁰

The transition from a clan or tribe to a nationality meant, at the same time, a transition from the primitive-communal and slave systems towards feudalism. The transition from nationality to nation means the transition from feudalism to capitalism; this is the transition which the Kurds are undergoing, or rather which they are now completing.

¹⁰ Quoted from the declaration of the Second Conference of the Communist Party of Iraq, July 1956 (in Arabic).

4. CHARACTER OF THE NATIONAL-LIBERATION STRUGGLE OF THE KURDISH PEOPLE

At present the struggle of the Kurdish people assumes, first of all, an anti-imperialist character, imperialism constituting the enemy number one. Political independence and liberation remain incomplete and insecure unless the political influence of imperialism is destroyed, unless imperialist pacts and military bases are abolished. On the other hand, it is also the dominant nations of Turkey, Iran and Iraq that are engaged in a struggle against imperialism. That is to say - anti-imperialist struggle is common to all nations striving for liberty, and in this endeavour the Kurdish nation stands side by side with the nations of all the countries in the Middle East. While imperialism is present and rules the countries inhabited by Kurds, there is no liberty for the Kurds nor for the other nations who are not free either. The primary and fundamental task of all the enslaved nations of the Middle East is to do away with imperialism. In this way the national-liberation movement of the Kurdish people becomes part of an international struggle, being thus organically linked with the hundreds of millions of people striving for democracy and progress, against reaction and imperialism throughout the world.

The Kurdish national-liberation movement is furthermore directed against the ruling circles of Iran, Turkey and Iraq who, as advocates of the interests of the feudal-comprador clique, represent the chief stronghold of imperialism. The struggle against this clique is being waged by the nations of the respective countries; e. g. the nations of Iran are fighting against the reactionary regime of the Shah and thus stand in the common front with the Kurds living in Iran. In addition to that - in this striving, which is virtually taking place within the political frontiers of the Iranian state, the Persians and Azerbaijanians, at this stage, have *more possibilities to support the Kurdish people in Iran and therefore form a closer link* with them than the Kurds living in Turkey or in Iraq. Every change in the political situation in Iran finds a *direct* reflection in Iranian Kurdistan, while a change in Iraq or that concerning the Iraqi Kurds affects the standing of the Iranian

Kurds only *indirectly*. The same applies to any other changes in the economic, cultural, or administration policy.

The recent happenings in Iraq have corroborated the above statement: All the Iraqi people were literally on the side of the Kurdish patriots; it was not merely moral support which impaired the prestige of the Baasist government, but direct participation of thousands of Arabs in the Kurdish national-liberation struggle, which constituted the immediate aid rendered by the Arab part of Iraq to the Kurdish people's endeavours and which, as yet, cannot be offered on a larger scale by the Kurds of Iran or Turkey. Lenin's words apply here fully: "As long as different nations live within a single state, they are mutually linked by millions and milliards of threads of economic, legal and social nature."¹¹

In other words - imperialism and reaction as a common enemy objectively unites and unifies against itself the nations of any country. This, on the other hand, does not imply that in our example the Kurds in Iran are completely unable to support or influence the Kurds in Iraq. On the contrary, any change in the standing of the Kurds in one state necessarily affects the remaining countries with a Kurdish population; any upheaval in the Kurdish national-liberation struggle in one country enables the Kurds living there to render more effective support to their brothers in the other countries. This was the case during the rule of the Mahabad Republic, when the Iranian Kurds gave valuable help to the Kurds of the surrounding countries. It was also the case during the first year the Iraqi revolution of July 14, 1958, when the Iraqi Kurds came and offered active support to the Kurdish patriots in Iran. Finally, the same applies nowadays, when the Kurds of Iran and Turkey keep rendering many sided help to the Kurds struggling in Iraq.

Neither does the above statement imply that during the present stage when the general endeavours are concentrated against imperialism, the Kurdish nation would have *absolutely* no right to consider its national rights and to strive at achieving them. It has already been pointed out that the struggle against national oppression cannot be

¹¹ V. I. L E N I N, on "Cultural and National" Autonomy, Works, Vol. 19, p. 502 (Czech ed.).

separated from the anti-imperialist struggle. Were the endeavours of the Kurdish people not directed against imperialism and against its influence, but merely against national oppression, it could never achieve victory due to isolation, as national oppression, similar to national disputes necessarily accompanies the existence of imperialism. The above attitude materialized would enable the imperialist agents to apply the slogan "Divide and rule", and to misuse the national movement of the Kurds against the anti-imperialist struggle waged by the other nations.

At the same time it would be a great error to ignore the strivings after national rights, or even after autonomy, for the Kurdish people in the framework of the anti-imperialist movement. This approach would benefit those powers that aim at depriving the Kurdish people of their revolutionary leadership and isolating them. The Kurds must regard the fight against imperialism at the same time as a fight for the realization of their national rights and for their liberation from national oppression. This illustrates the *mutual intermingling and natural links of the struggle against imperialism with that waged against national oppression which constitute virtually one and the same fight*. Simultaneously we must keep in mind that the fight against imperialism is *primary and decisive*, whereas the endeavour at removing national oppression constitutes only one of its parts.

The settlement of the Kurdish question, being of a national character, depends on democracy. The national question as such is a question of democracy. More than once did Lenin write that the solution of a national problem cannot be realized outside democracy, without a consequential democratic relationship among different nations. "There is only one solution to the national question (in so far as it can be solved at all in the world of capitalism, in the world of profit, bickering and exploitation), and that solution is - consistent democracy."¹²

In Chapter II of this treatise it has been demonstrated how both the evolution of the Kurdish problem and the national policy of the respective states depend on democracy. Whenever democracy was

¹² V. I. Lenin, *Questions of National Policy and Proletarian Internationalism*, Moscow, p. 26.

advancing, the Kurds as an oppressed nation were able to fight and achieve their national rights; on the other hand, every violation of democracy was accompanied by a violation of the national rights the Kurdish people had achieved through their struggle. This was the case at the victory of Kemalism in Turkey, in the years 1945—46 in Iran, and in Iraq after the revolution of July 1958. Neither national rights nor a settlement of national problems can be materialized without democracy, unless democratic liberties are guaranteed.

The experience of the recent years in Iraq has produced convincing proofs of the fact that repression of democratic forces means repression of democracy and repression of the national rights of the Kurds. Literally, every single achievement of the reaction and every retreat of democracy were accompanied by an attack against the Kurdish people and their national rights.

The above does not imply that the two problems are parallel. Lenin's statement, concerning the rights to selfdetermination as one of the requirements of democracy which must naturally be subordinate to the needs of democracy, is generally acknowledged. The fate of Kurdistan offers a conspicuous example of what is a primary and what a subsidiary factor. Nowadays, there exist seven Kurdish transmitters in Iranian Kurdistan, which spread governmental propaganda in Kurdish, and periodicals are being issued in Kurdish, too. Yet, the Kurds suffer under cruel oppression, enjoy no national rights and any attempt at achieving them encounters resolute suppression. Hundreds of Kurdish democrats have been arrested and sentenced to lengthy imprisonment, all because democratic liberties have been violated, because there is no sign of democracy which would guarantee the people their fundamental civil rights. In the years 1951—1952 there existed no Kurdish transmitters, nor periodicals, but there was a certain degree of democracy, and democratic liberties were recognized, although to a limited degree only. The Kurdish people had the possibility of expressing their will, of demanding their national rights, and the circumstances in general were much more favourable for them. In other words, the ruling circles for different reasons can, or are forced to, approve, if partly at least, of certain manifestations of national rights. Nevertheless complete removal of national oppression,

and guarantee of national equality are unthinkable outside democracy, i. e. the settlement of a national problem depends on the existence of democracy. The more profound a democracy, the more realistic are the prospects of solving a national problem. This indicates that the struggle for democracy embraces also the struggle for a settlement of national problems. Yet, it must be pointed out that it is not sufficient to endeavour for democratic liberties and democracy in general, among the democratic requirements the goal of national rights for the Kurds as a democratic claim must be set forth distinctly.

Another feature of the Kurdish national-liberation movement is its anti-feudal character. Part No. II of this work has eloquently illustrated that the feudal landed proprietors constitute the most reactionary and progress-hampering element in all Kurdish society. More than 80 % of Kurdistan's population are peasants, most of them landless, and it is they who form the decisive force in the national-liberation movement. The success of the struggle is directly conditioned by the degree of participation shown by this decisive section of the population. It has already been demonstrated in Chapter No. II that among the chief causes of the repeated defeats of innumerable Kurdish revolts were feudal leadership and lack of a vital interest in promoting the struggle on the part of the peasantry. One of the circumstances which brought about the fall of the Mahabad Republic was the fact that no agrarian reform took place. In order to achieve active participation of the peasants in the national-liberation movement it is essential to set forth the goal of an agrarian reform: confiscation of land from the feudal land-lords and its free distribution among the landless peasants.

Under the present conditions in Kurdistan (especially in the Iranian and Iraqi parts where the feudal and tribal relations are still very strong) it would be unthinkable to set forth the slogan: "Land to those who work it". A large part of the middle landowners and an overwhelming majority of *wurdeh-maleks* took active part and even nowadays participate in the national struggle, and for this reason we must distinguish among the landowners who do not cultivate the land themselves. The policy pursued by the democratic Party of Kurdistan in Iran seems to be correct; the following aim has been set up: confis-

cation of the land belonging to the feudal landed proprietors and all other proprietors who have joined the side of the enemy. In the present stage of the national-democratic revolution this means gaining the support of millions of landless masses, joining forces with the middle peasants and small landowners, gaining or neutralizing the middle landowners and isolating the feudal landowners, who are the chief object of struggle within the Kurdish society.¹³

The nationalists have the habit of speaking of the Kurdish nation and of Kurdism in general and hardly ever distinguish between the classes in the Kurdish society. They stress that point in the national-liberation movement which concerns the achievement of national rights for the Kurds and accuse the communists of neglecting this aspect. Our previous analysis proves clearly that such statements do not correspond to facts. On the other hand, the nationalists are always prepared to "forget" all about the class character of the struggle in Kurdistan. The main content of the class conflict is at present the fight of the peasants against the feudal landed proprietors.

No movement, whether in Kurdistan or in any other of the countries of the Middle East, can attain any radical change or a complete victory unless supported by the masses of peasantry. And no movement can gain this support unless it sets an unambiguous anti-feudal goal, a concrete program of an agrarian reform.

The peasants, although representing the main power in the fight for national liberation, are incapable of taking the leadership, due to their own backwardness and the underdeveloped relations of production on which they depend. It is the national bourgeoisie and the proletariat that are at present striving at the hegemony and the leadership of the movement.

It has been shown that the Kurdish national bourgeoisie is as

¹³ It sometimes happens that for various, particularly national, motives the feudal landowners side with the national movement. Such cases, however, are mere exceptions, each of them requiring different evaluation. As a class the feudal landed proprietors stand against the people and are allies of both the central government and of the imperialists. It is inevitable that other factors too, particularly the tribal relations, are taken into account in the individual areas of the country. (A.)

yet weak and not fully developed, forced to bear the pressure of imperialism, that exerted by the bourgeoisie of the dominant nations and by the Kurdish feudals. These are the reasons which motivated its present participation in the struggle against imperialism. The same applies to Kurdish nationalism as an ideological weapon of the Kurdish bourgeoisie. Kurdish nationalism is assuming an anti-imperialist and democratic character. V. I. Lenin has always distinguished between the nationalism of an oppressed and that of a dominant nation. "The bourgeois nationalism of every oppressed nation has a general democratic content which is directed against oppression, and it is this content that we support unconditionally."¹⁴ This content finds an expression in the endeavour to achieve national independence and national revival."¹⁵ Exactly for these reasons the revolutionary forces of all parts of Kurdistan render their support to this democratic aspect of Kurdish bourgeois nationalism.

While the standpoint of the bourgeoisie is basically in concord with that of the proletariat during the first stage of the struggle waged against imperialism, the two class standpoints gradually become estranged in the process of its advancing. For this reason not always and not under all circumstances does the proletariat support the bourgeois attitude to the national problem. "To throw off all feudal oppression, all national oppression and all the privileges enjoyed by one nation or one language, is the bounden duty of the proletariat as a democratic force, and is certainly in the interests of the proletarian class struggle, which is obscured and retarded by bickering on the national question. But to help bourgeois nationalism beyond these strictly confined and definite historical limits means betraying the proletariat and taking the side of the bourgeoisie."¹⁶

In the course of the struggle for national liberation of the Kurds the two classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, strive to obtain hegemony, and the present situation indicates that the possibilities for gaining it on the part of the revolutionary forces is more favourable here than in any other country of the Middle East. The struggle of the

¹⁴ V. I. Lenin, *Questions of National Policy and...*, p. 81.

¹⁵ "Program of the C. P. S. U.", *Nová mysl*, October 1961, p. 441.

¹⁶ V. I. Lenin, *Questions of National Policy and...*, p. 41.

Kurdish people both in Iran and in Iraq is led by left-wing political parties (as to Turkey, the movement has been pushed far into the background). For example, in Iranian Kurdistan all attempts to form a right-wing nationalist party have met no success. Ever since the Second World War the Kurdish people have felt attached to the revolutionary parties and to the mass organizations under their leadership.

In Iraq, where the Kurdish bourgeoisie is comparatively stronger, the nationalists' position in the national-liberation struggle has always been firmer and remains so even nowadays. Nevertheless, even here the standing of the Iraqi Communist Party is very strong. Another of the political parties active in Iraqi Kurdistan is the Kurdish Democratic Party formed by different sections of the population, which is an advocate of friendship with the socialist countries and particularly with the Soviet Union. Due to the wide popularity of Marxism-Leninism amongst the masses of intelligentsia in Kurdistan, also the KDP professes its teaching.¹⁷ At present, the Kurdish Democratic Party headed by the popular leader Mustafa Barzani plays a decisive role in the armed struggle of the Kurdish people in Iraqi Kurdistan.

The high standing of the communists is primarily due to their being the most consistent fighters against national oppression and for the liberation of the Kurdish people. In all times and whatever the conditions the communists have waged an intransigent struggle against all forms of national oppression.

There exists one objective condition for the position of the proletariat, as compared with that of the bourgeoisie, to be more favourable: True, the proletariat is weak and of no great number, but the bourgeoisie is comparatively weaker still. It has been said in Chapter II that the class of the Kurdish national bourgeoisie comprises practically no industrial bourgeoisie and consists chiefly of the commercial petty-bourgeoisie. On the other hand, the Kurdish industrial proletariat has arisen and has been growing independently of the bourgeoisie due to the fact that the main industries existing in Kurdistan are either in the hands of imperialist companies (oil in Iraqi Kurdistan) or of the state

¹⁷ See draft of the program of KDP (Baghdad 1959) in Arabic.

sector (all branches of modern industry in Iraqi, Iranian and Turkish Kurdistan, including parts of the oil industry). Thus in Kurdistan the proletariat as compared to the bourgeoisie is stronger even in number (in comparison to the proportion of the Turkish proletariat to the bourgeoisie and of the Persian proletariat to the bourgeoisie).

The higher standing of the Kurdish proletariat against that of the Kurdish bourgeoisie is due to the many-sided support rendered to the Kurdish people in its struggle against national oppression by the proletariat of Iran, Iraq and Turkey. At the same time, the Kurdish proletariat is thus given the opportunity of gaining additional experience and relying on the help offered. All this promotes the growth of political consciousness on the part of the Kurdish proletariat.

On the other hand, the bourgeoisie of the dominant nations oppose the idea of national liberty for the Kurds which impairs the position of the Kurdish bourgeoisie as a class. It must be admitted that the bourgeoisie through its efforts to mobilize the entire Kurdish nation regardless of class differences into the fight for national liberation, is gaining substantial support among the masses. It is, however, true that the more active and conscious the masses, the better they differentiate between the class standpoints of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie not only of their own oppressed nation but also those of the respective sections of the dominant nations. As a result, the masses of the oppressed Kurdish nation began to regard the proletariat of Turkey, Iran and Iraq as their most loyal ally.

The same applies to the international level: The proletariat of the whole world, namely the socialist camp as the chief force of the international working class, supports the rights of nations to self-determination, while the big bourgeoisie of the imperialist countries represent the chief enemies of liberty for the Kurds.

The Great October Socialist Revolution and the neighbourhood of the U. S. S. R. exert a strong influence upon the national-liberation movement of the Kurds. The Mahabad spirit, the spirit of friendship with the Soviet Union, has become a prevailing tradition in the struggle of the Kurdish people. The mere fact that in the U. S. S. R. where the teaching of Marxism-Leninism was victorious, a Kurdish population numbering less than one hundred thousand people has attained the

greatest possible achievements, speaks for the benefit of the Kurdish people.

In a society with prevailing feudal relations and a proletariat weak in number, the intelligentsia assumes a significant role. Generally speaking, in the economically underdeveloped countries the intelligentsia plays an important part both in the national-liberation movement, and after the liberation, in determining the direction of further development.

Even among the Kurdish intellectuals we may come across such who feel no concern about the well-being of the people, yet the overwhelming majority have always been and still are firmly on the side of their nation, and simultaneously, particularly since World War II, during the Mahabad Republic and after its defeat, have become more and more attached to Marxism. The Kurdish intelligentsia thus constitutes an effective help to the Kurdish proletariat in its endeavour to obtain hegemony in the national-liberation movement.

There exist all objective conditions necessary for the revolutionary forces in Kurdistan to gain and establish their hegemony in the movement with the help of the democratic forces in the countries inhabited by Kurds. The materializing of this hegemony is, therefore, at present dependent, first of all, on subjective factors. In order to secure their hegemony, the revolutionary forces in Kurdistan have to wage a fight on two fronts; on the one hand, they have to fight against Kurdish nationalism and at the same time against chauvinism on the part of the dominant nations, which at the present stage of the struggle, when the Kurdish people still suffers strong national oppression, represents the gravest danger. It might happen that the communists when fighting bourgeois nationalism amongst their own nation will go as far as to neglect the danger of chauvinism on the part of the dominant nations, which might lead to their isolation from the masses of their own nation and create favourable conditions for an increasing influence of the bourgeoisie and of nationalism within the national-liberation movement. Lenin gives warning to the communists against this danger and reminds them that by such procedure they might "in their fear of playing into the hands of the bourgeois nationalism of the oppressed nations, ... not only play into the hands of the bourgeois

but also of the Black-Hundred nationalism of the oppressor nation."¹⁸

The process of obtaining hegemony over the bourgeoisie and the right-wing forces is highly complicated and accompanied by numerous difficulties; nevertheless, it has recently been proved that the revolutionary forces of Kurdistan, fortified by the experience of the struggle in their own country and that of the international fight waged by the working people, are capable of heading the Kurdish national-liberation movement, and that it is, in fact, they alone who can lead this struggle to its conclusion.

¹⁸ V. I. Lenin, *Questions of National Policy and...*, p. 21.

THE RIGHT OF NATIONS TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND THE KURDISH QUESTION

1. MARXISM AND THE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION OF THE KURDISH NATION

Due to the great historical transformations which have taken place since the Second World War, the liberation of former colonial and oppressed territories has become an urgent issue of the present period. Nowadays there exists no nation which has not attained political independence, or is not its way to liberation. The former great colonial powers are forced to recognize officially the right to self-determination of one nation after another. On the other hand, we might still observe the tendency to postpone the granting of political independence as long as possible, or to keep regarding some of the nations as "immature".

Marxism-Leninism avows the right of self-determination to every nation, and this right for them has a concrete contents. Lenin in his polemic with reformists and deviationists from Marxism showed clearly that "... the self-determination of nations means the political separation of these nations from alien national bodies and the formation of an independent national state."¹ And somewhat later: "self-determination of nations in the programme of the Marxists cannot have any other meaning than political self-determination, political independence, and the formation of a national state."²

Marxism not only defines the exact contents of the right of nations for self-determination, but proclaims this right clearly under any circumstances and whatever difficulties might temporarily occur as a consequence.

Lenin was an uncompromising advocate of the right to self-

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Questions of National Policy and...*, p. 63.

² *Ibid.*, p. 67.

determination and strictly censured anyone who denied the right or regarded it otherwise than a right to separation. "A socialist, who is a member of a dominant nation," writes Lenin, "and does not further the right of oppressed nations to separation during peace nor during a war, is neither a socialist, nor an internationalist, but a chauvinist."³

The Kurds, like any other nation, have the right to self-determination the right to create an independent Kurdish state. The singularity of the Kurdish problem consists in the fact that it is not only separation, but *mainly union*, which is the main issue in their case. The materialization of the right to self-determination is not, for example, in the separation of Iraqi Kurdistan from Iraq, but primarily in its unification with the other parts of Kurdistan in Turkey and in Iran. In this case we are actually concerned with the right of the Kurdish nation to *integrity* within one state.

With regard to what has been said in the previous chapter as to the concrete specificities of Kurdistan, the idea of Kurdish unification might, at first sight, appear illusory from the practical viewpoint. This problem will be treated later. Yet, however distant or illusory the independence and unity of Kurdistan might be, the recognition of the right to form an independent state is just. To recognize the right to self-determination as inherent to every nation without exception, irrespective of its size and the stage of development of the country it inhabits, means to recognize the principles of equality of nations and internationalism. The existence of objective possibilities to create an independent state, the potential advantage or disadvantage of nation A becoming independent or remaining within a single state together with other nations, the question of nation A utilizing or not utilizing this right, or that of the possibility to satisfy the claim already under capitalism or only under socialism - neither of these problems should lead to denying the right of nation A to self-determination, including the right to form an independent state. "In the internationalist education of the workers of the oppressor countries, emphasis must necessarily be laid on their advocating freedom for the oppressed countries to secede and fighting for it. ... This is an absolute demand, even if the

³ V. I. Lenin, *The Revolutionary Proletariat and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination*, Works, Vol. 21, p. 416 (Czech ed.).

chance of secession being possible and "feasible" before the introduction of socialism be only one in a thousand."⁴ For this reason the working class parties active in Kurdistan have raised the slogan of self-determination for the Kurdish nation, in spite of the difficult and complicated situation.

The program of the Turkish Communist Party of the 1930-ies reads: "The government of workers and peasants grants the right to self-determination including the right to separate from the state to the national minorities living in integral communities (The Kurds, Lazians)"⁵

During the Mahabad Republic, in spite of the fierce resistance on the part of Iranian reaction and the proclamations of Iranian chauvinist bourgeoisie, the Tude party made a brave defence of the Kurdish nation's right to self-determination.

The Iraqi Communist Party when dealing with the Kurdish issue on the occasion of its second conference, which took place in July 1956, during the Nuri-Said dictatorship, declared: "The Kurdish people in Iraq is an inseparable part of the Kurdish nation in the whole of Kurdistan now split among the states of Turkey, Iran and Iraq ... An autonomy founded on voluntary, militant, fraternal union constitutes a temporary settlement corresponding to the circumstances and in accordance with the interests of both nations (Arabs and Kurds - A.), namely, of course with the interests of the Kurdish people; it does not, however, mean a final solution which might substitute the right of the Kurdish nation to self-determination. This settlement will, at the same time, be a significant factor in the liberation of the Kurdish people, the realization of its national unity and in the preparation of favourable conditions for the Kurdish nation to be able to dispose of its right to self-determination including also the formation of an independent state for all Kurdistan."⁶

Thus the Marxists, both in their theory and in their activities, recognize the right of the Kurdish nation to self-determination and to

⁴ V. I. L e n i n, *Questions of National Policy and...*, p. 182.

⁵ *Programnye dokumenty kommunisticheskikh partii Vostoka*, Moscow 1934.

⁶ *Statement of the 2nd Conference of the Iraqi Communist Party, July, 1956* (in Arabic).

the creation of an independent state. It should be admitted that the workers' parties in the countries inhabited by Kurds have not always been able to act correctly in the complicated situation connected with the Kurdish problem. This, however, has been and is happening also in the case of other workers' parties in other countries. This complex problem is more complicated due to the fact that it is not sufficient to raise the slogan of the right of the Kurdish people to self-determination. The communists, as a party of the working class, hold their own class standpoint which takes a concrete form under concrete circumstances. Lenin has often pointed out that each national problem requires a concrete solution of its own. Although the proletariat recognizes "equality and equal rights to a national state, it values above all and places foremost the alliance of the proletarians of all nations and assesses every national demand, every national separation, from the angle of the class struggle of the workers."⁷

By no mere chance does Lenin lay so much stress on the union of proletarians of all nations. For the concrete settlement of the Kurdish question it would not be right to approach the matter from the standpoint of Kurdish interests alone, just as it would be incorrect to consider the interests of the nation (or nations) of *one* of the states with a Kurdish population. To esteem the union of proletarians of all nations above everything else, means in our case the union of all the nations concerned in the Kurdish problem, and even more than that, the union of all nations, and it concerns also the interests of socialism and democracy in the Middle East and in the whole world.

2. THE DEMAND FOR THE CREATION OF A SEPARATE KURDISH STATE

The claim for the formation of an independent Kurdish state is sometimes regarded as reactionary and the communists are for this reason supposed to fight against it. The chief argument of this stand-

⁷ V. I. Lenin, *Questions of National Policy and...*, p. 79—80.

point is the danger of the state power being seized by the feudal lords who necessarily oppose democracy and socialism.

Kurdistan would thus become a stronghold of reaction in the Middle East. This whole standpoint is, however, in its very essence baseless and results from lack of understanding of the present-day state of affairs in Kurdistan. The above analysis of the agrarian relations and the Kurdish society has shown that the feudal lords have long ago lost the lead in the national-liberation movement of the Kurds. Feudal relations are dissolving and new social powers, namely the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, are acquiring decisive significance. It follows that a Kurdish state headed by feudal lords belongs to the past, together with the period that followed World War I. We must keep in mind that an independent state can come into being only as a result of a fierce national-liberation struggle in which the national bourgeoisie and the proletariat would play the leading roles.

By the above we do not mean to deny the high economic standing and a certain degree of political authority still enjoyed by the Kurdish feudal lords which is sometimes connected with the influence of tribal and religious relationships functioning to the benefit of the feudal class. It has already been demonstrated that the feudal lords constitute the chief stronghold of the imperialist powers within the Kurdish society and it is therefore important to count with the fact that they might still cause considerable difficulties in the course of the national-liberation process. This was proved during the Mahabad Republic when the feudal lords of Iranian Kurdistan revealed themselves as helpers of the Iranian government, and also during the first year following the Iraqi revolution of 1958 when the feudal lords, backed by the Iranian government and the Iraq Petroleum Company organized a war against the Iraqi Republic which was then taking a democratic course of development.

The sly propaganda spread by the western powers as to their disagreeing with the attitude assumed by the ruling circles of Iran, Turkey and Iraq towards the Kurds is sometimes a source of the impression as if it were they who support the idea of creating an independent Kurdish state. From the theoretical point of view it is impossible that the imperialist powers would be promoters of in-

dependence for the Kurds or for any other nation unless they were forced to it. From the practical point of view it would be illogical if at present the West put forward a request for an independent Kurdish state, against the will of its CENTO allies, Turkey and Iran. Where is there any guarantee that the prospective rulers of independent Kurdistan would be more obedient to the West than the present governments of Turkey or Iran? It has been mentioned above that the CENTO organization is directed against any national-liberation movement and particularly against any attempts on the part of the Kurdish people, which became reflected concretely in the "Operation Tiger" project. *Le Monde*, worried by the attitude assumed by the West to the Kurdish national-liberation movement, points out that "the western governments hesitate to support the Kurdish national movement for fear of alarming their Turkish and Iranian allies."⁸

The imperialist monopolies still possess the concession for mining oil in Iraqi Kurdistan; at Kirkuk alone⁹ they obtain a yearly profit of 400—500 million dollars. Under the present international circumstances, any change in the status quo in the countries of the Middle East would necessarily lead to unpredictable consequences as to the interests of the West concerning petroleum. The Western powers are perfectly aware of this and are, therefore, most of all concerned with preserving "peace and security" in the Middle East, in retaining their economic, political and strategic standing in this area.

Nowadays the imperialists are conscious of the general mood among the Kurdish people and for this reason are not willing to undertake any risk of potential Kurdish independence. They realize that an independent Kurdistan would bring them at least as many problems as they are facing at present due to the national-liberation movement. The present course of development, however, disquiets them too, namely a radicalizing tendency within the Kurdish movement, the penetration of Marxist-Leninist ideas amongst the Kurdish people, which they call "bolshevization". In view of this they sometimes express their solidarity with the Kurds and with their struggle and make attempts to interfere with the Kurdish

* *Le Monde*, July 11, 1963.

national-liberation movement mostly through the influence of the biggest feudal lords.

Imperialist interference with national-liberation movement is by no means a new phenomenon; it is an old method applied frequently both in the past and in the present with the purpose of attenuating and misleading the struggle and, at the decisive moment, attacking it from the back. The above implies that an independent Kurdistan does not suit any of the plans of the imperialist powers.

It might happen that in Iran, Turkey and Iraq the power will be seized by the anti-imperialist national bourgeoisie, or that the countries will undergo radical democratic changes. In that case, will the imperialists not make efforts to encourage the Kurds against these countries and to support their claim for independence? Such a development might very well occur. Yet, if, in such a case, the imperialist circles for the sake of their interests, will *really* be in favour of Kurdistan's separation from those countries, it will signify that the anti-imperialist struggle in these countries has materially advanced, and that the Kurdish people have made considerable achievements in their fight, namely through a unity with the other nations of these countries. Under this situation it becomes obvious that any endeavours on the part of the imperialists to implicate the Kurdish people into their plans must turn out fruitless. This was proved already after 1958 revolution in Iraq, when an overwhelming majority of the Kurdish people, headed by the Iraqi Communist Party and the Kurdish Democratic Party, rendered active support to the Kasim regime. Clear evidence of this support was shown by the decisive action taken by the people against the Mosul uprising of colonel Shawaf in the spring of 1959 and against the Kirkuk conspiracy organized by the I. P. C. in July 1959.

No agreement or compromise can ever be achieved between the Kurdish national-liberation movement and imperialism, which will remain in the future the arch enemy of the liberation of Kurds and of Kurdistan's independence. This means that in the present period the claim for creating an independent Kurdistan is by no means a claim of reactionary and pro-imperialist powers.

It seems that the separation of Kurdistan would bring into

being a smaller, and thus economically weaker, state, which regarded from the viewpoint of future economic development, is by no means admissible. Although at present there exist states that are considerably smaller, we hold the opinion that sovereignty constitutes no obstacle to future economic integration, to the creation of a large economic unit which would comprise a number of states of one area. On the contrary, political independence can be regarded a condition, a necessary stage on the way to economic integration based on rational international division of labour.

The separation and formation of an independent Kurdish state does not, by far, imply disintegration; on the contrary, *after* that all the prerequisites for establishing a union among all the states of the Middle East, say, in the form of a federation, will be provided. Marxism does not in the least agree with the creation of small states nor with splitting of bigger states into smaller ones, but on the other hand, regards the separation of an oppressed nation as a step towards unity, a step towards political and economic concentration, towards concentration on a democratic basis. It would be a mistake to think this a paradox. The recognition of the right for separation removes in theory all the obstacles to unity, since that cannot be based but on complete equality, on consistent democracy. In the course of history, between the oppressing and the oppressed nations a relationship of inequality is created. The objective conditions of it reflect in the economic, political and cultural spheres in the form of greater advancement on the part of the oppression nation. The subjective reflection appears in the way of thinking of the oppressing nation who treat the oppressed nation with disdain and chauvinism. On the other hand, the members of the oppressed nation have a distrust to the former and tend to regard everything from a narrow nationalistic angle. The task of removing the objective circumstances and their subjective conclusions is not a matter of short duration. It is, first of all, necessary to gain the trust of the masses of the oppressed nation and educate the masses of the oppressing one in the spirit of internationalism. Lenin stated clearly: "We do not demand the freedom of self-determination, *i. e.* independence, *i. e.* the right to separate for the oppressed nation, because we would

be longing for economic disintegration or favouring the idea of small states; on the contrary, because we want large states and integration, even merging of nations, but that on a truly democratic, truly internationalist basis which is unthinkable without the right to separation."⁹

The Marxists, although they support the *right to separation*, do not always support the *separation itself*. The recognition of the right to separate "...by no means prevents the Marxists of one or another oppressed nation from *propagandizing* against separation, just as recognition of the right to divorce does not prevent in one or another particular case propaganda against the divorce itself".¹⁰

We have already said that the communists *on principle* favour both the separation of the Kurdish nation and the creation of an independent Kurdish state. There are, however, certain differences between the duties of the communists of the oppressing and the oppressed nations. The education of the masses in the oppressing countries towards internationalism must inevitably be concentrated upon proclaiming and defending the right of the oppressed nations to separation, and vice versa - the communists of the minority nation must centre their propaganda not on separation but on the slogan of voluntary unity of nations. There is no contradiction in this statement; this is the only way which can lead to the linking and unity of small and big nations, one and the same aim being pursued from two different directions. Under the *present* circumstances created by long historical development there does not and cannot exist any other way in which the aims of friendship, equality and internationalism could be achieved.

The above applies fully to the Kurdish question. Can we consider the claim for an independent Kurdistan a momentous issue at the *present stage* of the struggle, when imperialism constitutes the chief hostile force in the Middle East and a yoke which the oppressing nations have not, as yet, thrown off themselves? As it has been stated above, this claim in the particular case of the Kurds

⁹ V. I. Lenin, *The Revolutionary Proletariat and...*, p. 417.

¹⁰ V. I. Lenin, *The Right of Nations to Self-Determination*, Works, Vol. 20, p. 418 (Czech ed.).

can mean nothing but *unification*, thus we cannot regard the separation of one part of Kurdistan only, e. g. of Iranian Kurdistan alone, as the forming of an independent Kurdish state. If, for instance, the Kurds lived *only* in Iran, the situation would be much simpler and the Kurdish question would be that of a nation living within one single state. The situation would also be much simpler if Kurdistan were a colony. The intricacy of the Kurdish problem consists in the very fact that Kurdistan is split among different states all the nations of which carry the burden of political and economic pressure. As long as imperialism remains master of the Middle East, the communists in Kurdistan have to lay main stress on the link with the nations of these countries and propagandize against separation. The demand for Kurdish independence as an immediate slogan might impair the joint struggle of nations within a single country and is at present virtually unsatisfiable. Is it at all possible to satisfy the demand of nations for self-determination consequently under the presence of imperialism? The removal of imperialism itself is a many-sided process of long duration; the struggle has to be aimed against the economic interests of imperialism, in the case of Kurdistan, against the petroleum monopolies, furthermore against the aggressive CENTO pact and the military bases. All this leads the Kurdish people into a joint struggle with the other nations.

It follows, that at the present stage the slogan of Kurdish independence is theoretically erroneous, practically injurious, its materialization being impossible. Let us venture the hypothesis that the influence of imperialism in the Middle East (in the course of time) is going to weaken and that the national bourgeoisie will seize power in the countries with a Kurdish population. To a certain extent this already happened in Iraq in the year 1958. It would be quite understandable from the Marxist point of view if the Iraqi (Arab) national bourgeoisie opposed the national claims of the Kurdish people. This in fact happened; just as Kemalism after World War I, the Iraqi national bourgeoisie took stern repressions against the Kurdish population.

If we consider that the Iraqi bourgeoisie which on the one hand is less advanced and more oppressed, weaker and thus on the

other hand more radical, assumes this attitude to the national demands of the Kurds, then the national bourgeoisie of Turkey and Iran, comparatively more advanced, less oppressed and stronger, therefore possessing a stronger tendency towards conservatism and chauvinism, will hardly have a better relation to the Kurdish national movement. Consequently, as long as it is the national bourgeoisie which rules the country, as long as the capitalist system prevails, there can be no hope for materializing the right of the Kurds to self-determination. On the other hand, it would be a mistake to conclude that all efforts to materialize national rights or to satisfy partial requests need be fruitless before the victory of socialism. National claims, similarly to all claims for democracy, have got to be attained through struggle, and while the power is in the hands of the reaction or the national bourgeoisie, the materialization of each claim, however partial, requires much effort and striving; nevertheless, it can be achieved even under these conditions. The experience of the recent years in Iran and Iraq offers proofs of this, yet, it also proves that virtual satisfaction of the Kurdish people's claim for the right to self-determination cannot be reached unless the exploiting classes are deprived of their dominant role.

3. THE WAY TOWARDS LIBERTY FOR THE KURDISH PEOPLE

In case the Kurds, and for that part not only the Kurdish democrats, but an overwhelming majority of the Kurdish people, wish to attain freedom and independence, they have the only choice, namely that of joining the anti-imperialist democratic movement of the whole Middle East. No one else but the democratic forces in the neighbouring countries headed by the communists are the most consistent allies of the Kurdish national-liberation struggle. In other words, the Kurdish national problem cannot be completely settled as long as the feudal clique, or even the national bourgeoisie retain the power, which implies that there cannot exist a final solution of the political and national aspect of the Kurdish question within the capitalist order. The settlement of the Kurdish question is conditioned by the progress of democracy and socialism in the Middle East. The

historical statement of the Manifesto applies with ever growing strength: "In proportion as the exploitation of one individual by another is put an end to, the exploitation of one nation by another will also be put an end to."¹¹

Certain nationalist circles, dissatisfied with this conclusion, might raise the following question: And what about the unification of Kurds after the working class of the states among which Kurdistan is now divided has come to power in these countries? The answer of the communists is unambiguous: The Kurds will then unite and create an independent state of their own. However, this status will not be achieved immediately but by gradual steps.

The Kurdish people will be achieving further success in their struggle in proportion to the advance of democracy. At the beginning it will most likely be an autonomy in the framework of each of the states which embrace parts of Kurdistan. In the present stage the slogan proclaiming Kurdish autonomy within each of the countries in question appears to be most correct. Yet, even the realization of an autonomy requires great efforts and will have to be preceded by the recognition of the existence of a Kurdish nation and its language (especially in Iran and Turkey). Only then a complete economic, political, cultural and administrative autonomy can be introduced. It might happen that autonomous, or may be federal, republics will be formed in Iranian and Iraqi Kurdistan, within the two respective countries, of course. These will gradually become closer and closer, until finally a unification will be achieved. Later, the remaining part of Kurdistan will join the newly created state. We are all the time centering around the problem of *uniting* the individual parts of Kurdistan, yet this problem concerns not the Kurds alone, but the Arabs too. The process of Kurdish unification cannot be completely separated from the unification process of the Arabs either. The Arabs in Iraq will one day unite with the Arabs of other countries, which process will definitely affect the unification of Kurds, a great part of whom at present live together with the Arabs in Iraq and Syria.

¹¹ K. Marx, F. Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Marx-Engels, Selected Works, Moscow 1955, Vol. I (English ed.).

Would it be possible that one part of Kurdistan alone became independent and thus formed a free Kurdish state? This is rather unlikely, although the possibility of such a development cannot be altogether excluded. Without wishing to speculate on this point, we might answer that the communists shall support the creation of such a state in case this provision will prove beneficial to the anti-imperialist front, to the cause of democracy and socialism in the whole Middle East. The communists themselves shall create such an independent state only after they will have done away, with the help of the working class of the respective country, *in the main* with the exploiting classes in the part of Kurdistan where they shall attain power;¹² also only after they will have arrived at the conclusion that a democratic independent state in one part of Kurdistan will serve as an example a furthering and speeding up the consciousness of the Kurdish nation in other parts of Kurdistan and contributing to the establishment of democracy and socialism in all the Middle East.

It is not a matter of the form in which the right to self-determination will be materialized, as this will depend on a number of factors; nor is it a matter of formal possession by the Kurdish nation of a state of their own, but the actual ability to dispose of the right to self-determination, to decide their own fate freely. The decisive matter is, therefore, the contents. Nowadays we can find many an example of a country being independent only formally: e. g. Jordan is an independent state, enjoying formal sovereignty, having its national anthem, its national currency, flag and a representative in the U. N. On the other hand, the Uzbek S. S. R. is not a sovereign state, has neither its own national currency and is not represented in the U. N. either. It is one of the republics of the U. S. S. R., but it is evident to all that the Uzbeks are a free nation,

¹² The case that the socialist revolution would achieve victory in one of the countries where it would be followed by the construction of socialism while the old regimes remained preserved in the other countries is most improbable. On the contrary, the balance of power in the world, together with the general situation in the Middle East, indicate that the development will take a much more rapid course. (A.)

freely deciding their fate, while the people of Jordan are deprived of all rights of free decision.

For this reason, both now and in the future, the ability to determine their own fate will be the most decisive factor for the Kurdish people. We have shown that a unification of the Kurdish people will take place eventually, by which we do not mean to imply that the Kurds will break away from the neighbouring nations. It is very likely, and at the same time it would be of great benefit to both the Kurdish people and the other nations, to create larger voluntary unions. Regarded from this aspect, the present-day state borderlines will, in the future, gradually lose their significance. A voluntary union of nations founded on free decision, that is the future complexion of international relations. This is also the Leninist settlement of the national problem as it has been, for the first time, successfully materialized in the Soviet Union. The forming of such a voluntary union is, however, a process of long duration requiring much time and effort.

Almost half a century has elapsed since Lenin wrote: "Such a union cannot be achieved at once, it has to be gained with immense patience and circumspection, so that we spoil nothing and give an opportunity for overcoming the feeling of distrust left over by the centuries of landlord and capitalist oppression, private ownership and hostilities resulting from the dividing and re-dividing of this private ownership."¹²

The necessity of a speedy settlement of the economic problems in the countries of the Middle East and the common interests and problems of the nations concerned, the geographical position of the area and the historically formed economic and cultural links among its nations, and last but not least, the significance of oil in the economy of most of these countries, all this, together with further economic and political elements which will come to being in the future requires a voluntary union of the nations in the Middle East established on democracy and internationalism, based on socialist

¹² V. I. Lenin, *Letter to the Ukrainian Workers and Peasants*, Works, Vol. 30, p. 294 (Czech ed.).

relations. From the economic viewpoint it means: not the creation of miniature national economies, but the forming of larger, at least regional, economic units. Socialism alone is capable of finding a consequential solution to the national problem on the basis of equality of nations. It is capable of eliminating the objective causes of the persisting inequalities in the course of a historically short period, namely the economic and cultural backwardness of the formerly oppressed nations. It does, however, take comparatively longer to do away with the hangover in people's approach to the national question, chauvinism and megalomania as it remains in the minds of the people belonging to the big nation, and nationalism and distrust on the part of the members of the small nations. The task of eliminating all the consequences of national inequality demands, therefore, much more time, and much more endeavour at educating the masses in the spirit of internationalism.

These are, in general, the problems of the political and national aspects of the Kurdish question which, through the events of 1963, topped by the enforcement of a bloodshedding war upon the Kurdish people in Iraq, has entered a new stage.

While few years ago in full accord with the wishes of the states in question the Kurdish problem was being regarded as that of local and national import, as an internal matter of these states; nowadays, the Kurdish problem has turned into an international issue. It interests not only the countries for which it is a matter of immediate concern, but also remote countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. It calls the attention of the United Nations and other international organizations, and the public opinion of the whole world has been closely following the happenings in Iraqi Kurdistan. The stage when the Kurdish issue was an isolated question, when the world seemed to have neither time nor the ears to devote to the cries of the Kurdish people, has come to an end.

The war of extermination waged by the Baasists was fruitless and the "mere stroll" taken by the Iraqi army, as referred to by the Defence Minister of the Baasist government at the beginning of the war, lasted so long that it outlived the Baasist regime itself. The world is by now convinced of the firm position held by the Kurdish

national-liberation movement, and the prospects of the Kurds are steadily improving.

The regime that replaced the Baas rule on November 1963 consistently pursued a military settlement of the Kurdish problem. During the exceptionally hard winter of 1963-1964 the Iraq army used all its power in the struggle against the Kurdish revolutionary forces; yet, the results were very poor and the prospects gloomy. The victory of the government forces was just as distant as it had been during the Baas rule. It was proved once again that the Kurdish problem cannot be solved with arms.

On February 10, 1964 both sides concluded a truce. Both the Iraqi and the world public welcomed the armistice with great relief. The Kurdish people on their part hoped that the cessation of action would lead to the creation of favourable conditions for a just and peaceful settlement of the Kurdish question. In the meantime, however, the imperialists, the Iraq Petroleum Company, the member-states of the CENTO and the Iranian government, in particular, spared no efforts in order to weaken the Kurdish national-liberation movement and isolate it from the democratic movements in Iraq.

On the conclusion of the armistice the Iraq government representatives declared that they recognised the rights of the Kurdish people and that these rights will be embodied in the new Constitution. The government of Iraq promised to withdraw the troops to the positions occupied before the conflict of September 1961, to disband the mercenary troops comprising the traitors of the Kurdish people that had been receiving a rich pay, to commence building industrial and construction projects in Kurdistan, to compensate all those who had suffered a loss in the course of the war, to liberate all political prisoners in Iraq.

A year has passed without the fulfillment of any of the promises. The new Constitution that had been declared and which the Iraqi people had not the least possibility to decide about, contains no mention of the rights of the Kurds. It is a step backwards as compared to the Constitution of 1958, which had guaranteed equality to the Kurds and declared Iraq the country of Arabs and Kurds.

The present Constitution states already in Article No.1 that

„Iraq is part of the Arab nation“, thus ignoring the existence of the Kurds as a separate nation. At the same time by declaring the Arab Socialist Union the only political organisation of the country, it practically excluded from political life all the Kurdish people constituting one fourth of Iraq's population. Consequently, it does not recognize even the Kurdish Democratic Party lead by Barzani, the chief organiser of the Kurdish revolution.

Arif and his government have, in fact, reduced the entire Kurdish problem, i.e. the question of securing the right to self-determination of the Kurdish people and the formation of autonomy within Iraq, to the question of „economic improvement of the North“. Nevertheless, no steps have been taken in this respect either.

Arab tribes are still occupying the villages in the vicinity of the oil-fields near Kirkuk which they had occupied during the Baas rule, expelling from there over 40 000 Kurdish peasants. The past year has meant a continuation in the process of Arabization of the regions of Arbil and Kirkuk.

Some other provisions made by the government likewise proved that it is the reactionary elements who do not recognize the very existence of the Kurdish nation which have gained the upper hand in the government and the state administration.

The Kurdish revolutionary forces could not but fight at two fronts. In the first place a patient negotiation with the government was commenced with the purpose of searching a peaceful solution for the Kurdish problem. The negotiations, having continued until the middle of December 1964 gave clear evidence that the hopes held towards the regime of Arif were of no avail. In no form is the government prepared to recognise the Kurdish autonomy which remains the chief demand of the armed struggle.

Furthermore the Kurds continued to build up the achievements of the revolution. On October 9, 1964 the Revolutionary Leadership Council was formed as the supreme body of the revolution with the right to decide all matters of political, military, financial and administrative character until the time when an autonomy within the Republic of Iraq is reached. The council represents all sections of Kurdistan's population: the armed forces, political organisations,

national and religious minorities. The revolutionary forces have actual control over three quarters of the territory of Iraqi Kurdistan.

Mustafa Barzani, leader of the Kurdish Democratic Party and chairman of the Revolutionary Leadership Council stated in his recent declaration published on January 1, 1965: „A whole series of local military conflicts provoked by the government military forces has created an atmosphere similar to that which preceded the Baasist aggression of June 1963.

We are firm in our attitude which we consider to be just. We do not want war and shall never begin it. Nevertheless, we shall go on building the foundations of our autonomy and strengthening our administrative system. Should we be attacked, we shall defend ourselves with the same determination as we did when attacked by Kasim and the Baasists. We have no doubt as to the final result of our struggle for liberty.“

There are several forceful factors functioning at the present stage to the benefit of the Kurds: First of all, the Kurds are struggling for their national rights, for their very existence, and this, in the 1960'ies, is no more a sin. The public opinion in all countries, including those among which Kurdistan is split, realizes that the Kurds demand for national autonomy within the limits of the Iraqi Republic is their natural right and that it is detrimental neither to the Arabic people nor to other nations. The Kurds are struggling on the territory of their own country and have waged a justified war against the aggressor, as it is they who have been attacked. That is why they are in the right, why truth is on their side, that is the substance of their power and invincibility.

The failure of the attempt on the part of the Baasists to provoke a national war, a nation-wide war of Arabs in Iraq (and elsewhere too) against the Kurdish people, greatly impaired their position; the Baasists could not rely on the support of the Arab section of the Iraqi population. On the contrary, the Arab people in Iraq have been rendering moral and material help to the Kurdish revolutionary army with ever growing activity. More and more Arabs kept joining the Kurdish people's struggle.

With the exception of Syria, also ruled by Baasists, the Iraqi

Baasists did not succeed in gaining another Arab country for the cause. The U. A. R. did not show support for the campaign against the Kurdish people, which was of great importance: It weakened the standing of Baasists, on the one hand, throughout the whole Arab world isolating them from the majority of the Arab states, and, on the other hand, among the non-committed countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, where the U. A. R. holds considerable authority.

The unconditional support of the socialist countries, particularly that of the Soviet Union, is of enormous international importance. It is not for the first time the Soviet Union is backing the Kurdish people's fight, yet the Soviet Union of today is incomparably stronger and has a far bigger say in the world affairs than in the years 1945 to 1946, at the time of the Mahabad Republic. The support rendered by the socialist countries and a large section of the public in the Western countries refutes the absurd fabrications as to the Kurdish movement being a reactionary one and serving the feudal lords and imperialists.

The attitude shown by the Soviet Union has one more aspect still: The warnings of the Soviet government have, in fact, excluded the possibility of direct interference by the governments of Iran and Turkey into the war in Iraqi Kurdistan. How many times in the course of the Kurdish history have the reactionary governments stood up together against the Kurdish national movement. The world underwent a material change, and the Kurds have a powerful neighbour and a loyal friend always ready to come to their assistance at the decisive moment. It appears that the "Operation Tiger" project is bound to remain a scrap of paper.

The internal conditions of the struggle in Kurdistan are more favourable than ever. As a result of prolonged fights, defeats, and difficulties, an unprecedented unity of the Kurdish people as a firm guarantee of the final victory has been created. All sections of the population of Iraqi Kurdistan have entered the armed struggle; with the exception of a few hireling feudal lords who were forced to quit the country, all the Kurdish people are fighting to a man. It is of special importance that the prerequisites have been created for the unity of ideas and co-ordination of action among the two chief

political parties, followed by an overwhelming majority of the Kurdish people, namely the Kurdish Democratic Party and the Iraqi Communist Party. The other parts of Kurdistan, too, are proving to be a ready source of assistance. Everything for the front, everything for the fighters of the Kurdish people - became the slogan of the entire Kurdish nation - from the peasants and shepherds in the valleys and in the mountains of Kurdistan to the Kurdish intellectuals in Europe and America.

The situation is favourable for the Kurds from the military point of view; not only the fame of the Kurds as invincible warriors and their minute knowledge of every single rock in the Kurdish mountains - the mountains have always protected them against the enemy and similarly today they constitute an insurmountable obstacle for the enemy's aircrafts and cannons - a new factor has emerged too: The Kurds have gained much experience in the course of the 2 years of armed warfare against the Kasim, Baas and Arif rule. It is no more mere guerilla units attempting to co-ordinate their military actions, but a trained revolutionary army numbering over 20,000 well equipped "*peshmarga*"¹⁴ fighters.

The Kurdish revolutionary army includes at present dozens of officers and hundreds of junior officers of the Iraqi army who lead the Kurdish units. The government troops, being well equipped with up-to-date armament, are of course superior from the technical point of view. The Kurdish fighters are in need of heavy armament, particularly anti-aircraft and anti-tank weapons, which in spite of being a considerably unfavourable factor, is not decisive in this case. Was not the French army in Vietnam and Algeria also technically superior?

Everything indicates that no such power exists that could block the Kurdish national-liberation movement in its new stage.

¹⁴ Member of Kurdistan's revolutionary army - literally: "going to his death". (A.)

PROBLEMS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE AND ECONOMIC PROGRESS

The above tentative conclusions concerning a solution of the Kurdish problem lead to the following conclusion which is of more general validity: A complete and final settlement of the Kurdish question in its political and national aspects is conditioned by a victory of democratic forces and the establishment of a socialist order. This applies even more to the economic aspect of the problem.

Political independence is an inevitable, yet by itself an insufficient condition for further economic progress. As soon as political sovereignty has been gained, there arises a contradiction between the young country's striving after independent development and its persisting economic dependence which is due to the fact that the country's previous economic development was subject not to the country's needs but to the demands of the metropolis. This can be proved throughout the entire modern history of Kurdistan and it explains the backwardness and deformations of its economy. In order to do away with the above contradiction, it is essential to create such a material and economic basis that would enable the country to liberate itself from economic dependence. By this, of course, we do not mean an economic autarchy; at the present-day level of advancement of the production forces and international economic relations, it means that each of the less advanced countries reaches a stage which would make it possible to take up an optimum position in the system of international division of labour, with regard to the country's resources and possibilities.

The essence of this consists in the manner and the means that should be taken to secure a rapid and manysided progress of Kurdistan's production forces so that the country might recover from its

old economic backwardness in the course of a historically short period.

The question is of vital importance to further hundreds of millions of people in a large part of the world. At present, and even more so in the future, the issue of political independence of nations formerly oppressed is going to be regarded from this viewpoint.

Some 90 % of Kurdistan's population live in poverty and ignorance. The Kurdish working people, neither the peasants nor the workers, will content themselves with the right to an education in their mother tongue; they require not merely political independence for their country but also a guarantee of material conditions, the termination of cruel exploitation and the right to a truly human life. The working people of Jordan, although they do not suffer from national oppression, have their own state and enjoy formal sovereignty, live in even greater misery than the working people of Kurdistan.

This indicates that the attainment of political independence does not mean a solution of the urgent economic problems which are of vital concern to the broadest sections of the people. The economic aspect of the whole problem appears fully only after political independence has been gained and thus becomes the decisive criterion for the further progress of the country.

There exists a considerable difference in the level of advancement among various less developed countries. In some of them, e. g. in the majority of the Latin American countries, capitalist relations are far more advanced than in Asia or Africa. There occur certain disparities even among countries within one area, such as e. g. the existing differences in the stage of development between Yemen and Syria, Turkey and Pakistan etc. Nevertheless, the conclusion at which we have arrived as a result of an analysis of the economy of Kurdistan, namely that it is a country with disproportionately developed production forces at a low level of advancement, with strong survivals of pre-capitalistic relations, an extremely low per capita national income and is greatly influenced by imperialist monopolies, applies basically to all of them.¹

¹ In the economic publications published in the West, including those

2. THE INTERRELATION OF AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRIALIZATION

A serious problem facing the economically less advanced countries is that of the future orientation of their national economies: whether to concentrate chiefly on agriculture or on the development of industry. At the same time it is not a question of choosing between agriculture and industry - neither in theory nor in practice. The core of the dispute lies in the following: Should the economically underdeveloped countries retain their present position in the present-day international division of labour, where they hold the place of

issued by the U. N. O., the only indicator for specifying a country as economically less advanced is the rate of national income per capita of the population.

The per capita national income can serve as a reliable indicator of the development of production forces, yet as an only one, it is neither realistic nor sufficient, as in the less advanced countries it does not indicate the oneness of the development of production forces: In many of the economically less advanced countries a single industry (mining) or one agricultural (monocultural) branch constitutes the source of a great part of the national income - e. g. oil in the countries of the Middle East or Venezuela, precious metals in some of the African countries, etc. In this particular branch of industry or agricultural monoculture there is usually a high productivity of labour, whereas that in the other branches is incomparably lower. The per capita national income is therefore unacceptable as an illustration of the actual deformation of the economy in the less advanced countries, and in some cases, it might lead to completely false results. The national income per head in Kuwait was 3,000 dollars per annum - in 1961 (the petroleum incomes amounted to 900 million dollars, the country has a population of 300,000) which is higher than in the U. S. A. In Venezuela the national income is 500 dollars per head, which almost corresponds to the per capita national income in some of the West-European countries. Yet, it has to be pointed out that in Kuwait almost the entire national income and in Venezuela a large part of it come from oil; otherwise we would have to make the ridiculous conclusion, that as regards the level of development of production forces, Kuwait and the U. S. A. on the one hand, or Venezuela and the West-European countries on the other, belong into one group. (A.)

agrarian or raw-material appendages, or should they alter this position, and taking the course of industrialization, become advanced manufacturing countries?

a) The Advantages of Industrialization

By industrialization we understand the transformation of an agrarian country into a manufacturing one in that sense that a larger part of the national income is provided by industry instead of agriculture. The advantages of this way are evident: Firstly, industry constitutes the decisive branch of any national economy and the fundamental branch conditioning the very development of other branches. Without the existence of industry it is impossible to build up a modern communication system, transport, equipment for health-service or culture, and as will be shown later, it is an inevitable condition for the material progress of agriculture itself. Furthermore, labour productivity in industry as compared to that in agriculture is much higher. This is a necessary consequence of the very nature of agriculture where the most recent achievements of science and technology cannot be applied quickly enough. This implies that the rate of increase of industrial production is higher than in agricultural production.² The fact that industry possesses a higher rate of increase might be decisive for the perspective development of the countries in question, the problem of increasing the per capita national income being a serious issue for the economically less advanced countries. It follows that should these countries succeed in directing their national economies so that a larger part of the national income be provided by the branch showing a higher rate of increase, i. e. by industry, they would manage to speed up the increase of their national incomes. The actual situation in the economically less

² This applies generally to capitalist as well as socialist countries. However, this does not imply that agricultural production in certain countries could not for some time exhibit a higher rate of increase than industry. (A.)

advanced countries is characterized by the fact that the rate of increase of the population is approximately the same as the rate of increase in agricultural production (2—3 %). Thus, although the rate of growth of industrial production is higher than that in agriculture and higher than the rate of increase of the population, the share of industry in the total national income being small (5—15 %), the per capita national income is growing very slowly.

The concentration on agriculture has, furthermore, additional disadvantages. While industrial production has still enormous prospects of development, the possibilities of which are practically inexhaustible, the growth of agriculture is limited. The limited extent of agricultural land necessarily restricts the increase of agricultural production.

The problem of market, too, constitutes an exceptionally serious problem for a country which would specialize in agriculture, the market of agricultural products being limited by various factors. The consumption of foodstuffs is limited by the mere fact that a human being can consume a certain amount only. It is true that the world's population, particularly in the underdeveloped countries, is rapidly increasing and that malnutrition is a current phenomenon over most of the world, yet approaching the problem in its prospective and theoretical aspect, we are bound to take it into consideration; for another reason too - namely that it is the advanced capitalist countries, where malnutrition is in fact non-existent, which would become the chief importers of agricultural products from the economically less developed countries.

In addition, the rate at which the consumption of raw materials is increasing has a declining tendency - in other words, with the exception of petroleum and a few other raw materials, the consumption of raw materials in general has a lower rate of increase than industrial production. This is due to the fact that, on the one hand, the consumption of raw materials per unit of production decreases as a result of permanent growth of labour productivity and improved technology, and, on the other hand, the use of synthetics for the production of a large number of products is expanding. All this indicates that from the viewpoint of future development it

is far more advantageous for the economically underdeveloped countries to concentrate on the development of industry. Does this mean that industrialization should be commenced immediately and on the basis of heavy industry - as proclaimed in the past?

Here the situation varies from country to country. In some of the economically less developed countries (numbering a few only) which possess favourable resources and circumstances and comparatively advanced industries (such as Brazil and India) it is possible to industrialize on the basis of heavy industry; it concerns, of course, such branches of heavy industry for which there exist optimum conditions within the country. In other countries, where industry is only at the very beginning, and neither the resources nor the possibilities are suitable for such a course, it will more likely be rather a period of creating the conditions for industrialization. In the third group of countries possessing one advanced branch of industry (such as petroleum in the Middle East) industrialization will be based on the expansion and full exploitation of the industry already existing. Yet, without leaving industrialization as the primary road to economic progress out of account, in the early stage all these countries must pay great attention to agriculture. To put it in a better way, the economically less developed countries will have to face an important task for their economic development, namely to determine the proper proportions between the growth of industry and agriculture. These proportions will vary in accordance with the different economic and other factors as they function in individual countries. During this early stage of development almost all the economically less developed countries will have to solve certain problems alike.

One of the foremost tasks will be ridding agriculture of the system of natural economy. In order to do so, a radical agrarian reform will have to be carried out, which will increase the living standard of the toiling rural population; furthermore, it will be essential to create prerequisites for expanding the home market and for an increase in the consumption of industrial products. The expansion of the home market is a necessary condition for the progress of rising home industries, which for a certain time will be unable to enter world competition.

b) The Agrarian Reform and Increase of Agricultural Production

A radical agrarian reform is conditioned by a number of circumstances. It has been proved by experience from India and the Middle East, as well as from North Africa and Latin America that the national bourgeoisie which seized power in the economically underdeveloped countries was unable to settle the agrarian problem consistently. On the one hand, the national bourgeoisie is interested in removing the survivals of feudal relations obstructing the migration of manpower and hampering the expansion of the home market, on the other hand, in spite of wanting to restrict the feudal class, the national bourgeoisie is not prepared to do away with it altogether. Although the national bourgeoisie came to power due to the support of the peasantry, they are not willing to take a decisive step against feudal landed property for fear that the millions of landless peasants might interfere with their rule. On the contrary, where the rural population take revolutionary action, the national bourgeoisie join forces with the feudal lords against the peasants. In many of the economically underdeveloped countries, as in Kurdistan, the fact that large sections of the national bourgeoisie are at the same time owners of big landed estates plays a significant role. Furthermore, the national bourgeoisie generally opposes complete expropriation of feudal property, as it is its inherent class feature to oppose abolition of "sacred" private property as such, because it would endanger the property of the national bourgeoisie too.

The aim followed by the national bourgeoisie when accomplishing an agrarian reform is to disintegrate the agriculture to a higher degree still. The large landed estates of the former feudal lords are divided among the small peasants, the management remains on the basis of small-scale production, and the peasants have neither agricultural machinery, nor the possibility of carrying out extensive irrigation projects. As illustrated on the example of Iran, the peasants were even forced to sell the land they had shortly before bought from the Shah for lack of agricultural implements. All indicates that basically labour productivity does not grow, and as to the small farms, it virtually remains the same. The living standard, therefore,

stagnates or grows slowly; the home market shows signs of but slow expansion.

In case it is the working class or people with a revolutionary way of thinking who gain power the agrarian problem is solved in principle. Being closely linked with the peasantry, they give the land to those who work it. The feudal class and feudal relations are removed once and for all together with the centuries-old cruel exploitation in the country as such. Land, as the main means of production, is made group property of the toiling peasants instead of private property, by which the conditions for socialist largescale production and a substantial increase of labour productivity in agriculture are created.

In this respect, Cuban experience is of great value: In Cuba co-operatives were founded immediately after the agrarian reform, both for the agricultural labourers on the former sugar-cane producing latifundia and for the poor peasants too. Collectivization in agriculture thus started before industrialization was accomplished, and such a course can be taken likewise in Kurdistan and the Middle East countries in general, although there do not exist such big plantations and capitalism in the rural areas has not reached the stage of development as was the case in Cuba.

However, the measures described require certain conditions: First of all, the power must be in the hands of democratic forces in order to constitute a support for the agricultural co-operatives. Secondly, with the help of the socialist countries it is easy to furnish the co-operatives with machinery and transform them gradually into co-operatives of a socialist type with large-scale production. There exist further favourable conditions for immediate collectivization, namely the positive factor of the irrigation projects; the extent of work connected with their construction will lead the peasants to co-operation.³ With the help of the government this could constitute the primary form of agricultural co-operatives. We should keep in mind that here the slogan promoting *distribution* of land among the peasants has not been accepted by the masses of peasantry, that

³ Already nowadays such work and sometimes even work on the fields is performed in groups, which is called "haravaz". (A.)

it would not be inevitable first to give land to the landless peasants and establish co-operatives only later. The feeling of private ownership of land is not so deeply rooted among the peasantry. Certain traditions and survivals of the tribal and communal relations, tribal ownership of land and the cattle-breeding associations (*oba*) etc. can play a positive role in the process of collectivization.

At present, mechanization of agricultural production as a means of its substantial increase involves a number of difficulties. Not only is the industry unable to provide sufficient machinery, fertilizers etc. for the first period, but there is serious lack of qualified agricultural cadres for mechanizing and controlling agriculture.

One more problem arises as an urgent issue in the development of the economically less advanced countries, namely unemployment. As has been shown in Part II of this treatise, there exists latent unemployment in agriculture. To introduce one tractor into a Kurdish village means at present to deprive about half of the people of their work. And already peasants coming to the cities encounter difficulties in their search for employment; there is a strong army of jobless people in most of the cities of the economically less developed countries.

During the first period attention will be concentrated on agriculture, which implies that industrialization will not advance quickly enough so as to absorb all the manpower released from agriculture. Nevertheless it is not admissible to maintain the present low level of agricultural production. In this case there is no other way but, for the beginning, to increase it not so much through mechanization but through intensification, increasing the share of labour ameliorating the soil. Permanent growth of production achieved by this method will then require at least the same amount of manpower if not more - for agricultural labour, furthermore, it will provide the workers with experience, thus in part educating agricultural cadres and paving the way for further mechanization.

It will be necessary in the first period to direct agricultural production towards removing the monocultural system. This will, first of all, secure a part of the basic foodstuffs for the population, which would not have to be imported; secondly, the country will have the possibility of exporting a larger assortment of agricultural products

and thus improve its standing on the world market. The removal of monoculture means removal of internal economic deformity and of the objective circumstances resulting from the dependence on the advanced capitalist countries. This should mean no limitation on the traditional products, nor removal of the specialization attained before, but the spread of further products, for which there exist optimum conditions in the country. At the same time, in the first stage and even more during the following stage of development when a certain level of industrialization has not yet been attained, it is impossible to presume the smooth progress of agriculture. We might suppose that the economically less developed countries will continue to receive all machinery and agricultural implements from abroad; intensification of agriculture, however, requires a great amount of fertilizers and other chemical products which will have to be manufactured in the country itself.

We have already pointed out the importance of water and irrigation in the countries of the Middle East. Irrigation is of great importance in a number of other economically less developed countries as well. It is clear that an extensive irrigation system can be created, dams built and agriculture provided with sufficient water only with an enormous amount of cement and other building material. This indicates that progress in agriculture must be accompanied by a developing chemical and building industry.

c) Some Problems of Industrialization

The following principles could be applied during the first stage of development of industry. First of all, as there is a lack of capital, it is necessary to concentrate on those profitable industries which require comparatively lower investments and accelerate the return of capital invested. For Kurdistan it could be, for example, the construction of cement works, creation of a tobacco industry, etc. Furthermore, it is advisable to build such industries that for the time being secure the export of industrial goods to the world market in return for which the

country could obtain goods, especially machinery and equipment, needed for industrialization. These industries may vary in kind from one country to another and are determined by the capacity to sell their products on the world market in spite of international competition. For this reason it has to be such an industry for the development of which there exist optimum conditions in the country in question. In Kurdistan it might be the textile or dairy industry, etc.

Only in the following period will it be possible to turn the attention toward such industrial branches that could form the basis for creating other industries, i. e. toward founding the industries producing machinery and other equipment. For the beginning it need not be an industry capable of producing complete plant equipment, factories, and power stations; it might produce light machinery, precision instruments, machine parts and the like. There exists no such law according to which all countries, both big and small, rich and poor, would have to commence industrialization by the building of heavy industry, metallurgy and heavy engineering. This is neither possible nor profitable. It is only essential that each country specializes on those industrial branches producing machinery, equipment and machine parts, for which it has the most favourable conditions and resources. (It is very likely that in the course of future development, a country with unfavourable conditions for the building of a certain industry will be completely freed of the necessity to do so, on the basis of an economic alliance of countries belonging to a certain area, and the division of labour among them.) For Kurdistan and most likely the other Middle East countries as well, it could be, for instance, petro-chemistry and chemical industries in general.

The economically less developed countries are bound to encounter a further difficulty in the course of their industrialization: What machinery and equipment should be used to furnish the new industries? Should it be machines which are product of the most recent technological discoveries, up-to-date and automatized machines, or such that are less productive and of average performance? On this point there exists a difference of opinions. Nevertheless, the opinion recommending the industrialization of less advanced countries on the basis of average and less productive machinery is unacceptable, as it would

hardly alter the position of these countries as compared to the advanced capitalist countries. On the other hand, when applying automatic machines we shall again be faced with the problem of unemployment; the masses of peasants coming to the cities in search of employment will not be able to find work in automatized enterprises. The following solution can be offered: In the early stage, it is not inadmissible to furnish e. g. textile and tobacco industry of the first and second types with less productive machinery.⁴ On the other hand, that industry which is to become the basis of other industries must necessarily be furnished with most up-to-date equipment. First of all, because introduction of new machines in economically less developed countries requires comparatively more time than in the advanced capitalist countries, and thus by the time they start to produce, the machines do not belong to the most modern ones any more, and at the same time, as the purchase of these machines means great capital expenditure, it is not possible for the economically underdeveloped countries to replace them in a short time. Furthermore, were the machines themselves of lower productivity, they could not produce highly productive equipment for other branches. The problem of manpower might then be solved by reducing the working day. In such modern establishments it would be sufficient if the workers had only a six-hour working day,⁵ in which case it would be advisable to increase the number of shifts worked. This would increase the number of workers employed and speed up the amortization of machinery. There would, of course, arise difficulties as to providing the enterprises with a large number of skilled workers, yet this kind of obstacles can be gradually overcome.

⁴ This might, of course, cause difficulties to the country on the world market, where the products have to enter competition with those of the advanced industrial countries, but we must consider the lower wages of the workers of the economically less advanced countries functioning to the benefit of those countries as compared to those with highly developed industry. (A.)

⁵ At the same time, the wages of workers employed in such enterprises with a high productivity of labour could still remain on the level of wages in other enterprises with an eight-hour working day. (A.)

3. RAISING THE LIVING STANDARD OF THE POPULATION

Both in the first period and in the following stages of economic development comes forward the question of increasing the living standard of the working population. In Chapter VIII it has been shown how unbelievably low the standard of living of the Kurdish peasantry is. It is essential that economic development should bring about a substantial material improvement of the people's lives. The fact that there exists lack of sources of accumulation should not lead to a division of the national income at the expense of the consumption fund. Here lies one of the most difficult problems connected with the development of the economically less advanced countries, which must find such an optimum division of the national income that would permanently secure both relative and absolute growth of the accumulation fund and at the same time an absolute, however slight, increase of the consumption fund. It is necessary to count with a rapid growth of population. Steady growth of the living standard of the population in the economically less advanced countries is of double consequence: It is the working population which plays the decisive part in the country's development and should thus receive an adequate share of the values produced. Such division of the national income will make them even more concerned with further progress of their country. What miracles have been accomplished by the liberated masses building socialism in the U. S. S. R. and other socialist countries! What miracles are at present being performed by the people of Cuba, enthusiastically building a new life for themselves! There is a qualitative difference between liberated people, freed of exploitation working for their country and for themselves consciously and with initiative and those, who are exploited and forced to work by the necessity of making their living. At the same time, the people, their consciousness and initiative at work, their experience and endeavour to appropriate the greatest values of culture and science - all that has enormous importance for the development of productive forces and finds a clear reflection in the rate of growth of production. Secondly, raising of the living standard conditions the expansion of the home market, which, for its

part, promotes the development of home industries; that again can lead to an increase of the accumulation fund.

In so far as securing sources of accumulation is concerned, there exist two standpoints: The first declares foreign aid to be the chief source of accumulation, whereas the other one regards the internal source as being decisive. Foreign aid can play a decisive role in the economic development of a certain country. Generally speaking, the outside conditions as such, and the existence of the socialist countries in particular, constitute an important factor in the progress of the economically less developed countries; favourable outside conditions and the existence of the socialist system are a necessary condition for a quick development of these countries. Nevertheless, as to the overwhelming majority of the economically less developed countries, the chief sources of accumulation are at present internal. This statement applies especially to the countries of the Middle East and Kurdistan, where it is petroleum which is of first-rate significance in this respect. It does not mean, however, that for most of the economically underdeveloped countries the external sources will not play a significant role during future development.

For the progress of the economically less advanced countries the problems concerning the planning of the national economy obviously assume exceptional importance. The experience gained from the planned economy of the socialist countries, their planned and proportionate development has become so attractive, that at present the advantage of planning has been accepted in all the economically less advanced countries, including those ruled by most reactionary circles. Those of the economically less developed countries which have taken the course of capitalist development cannot reach the necessary level of planning, for two main reasons: First of all because the prevailing relations of production are those of exploitation (feudal and capitalist), and because there exist a number of sectors side by side, namely the foreign monopolist sector, state and capitalist sectors, small-scale production, not to mention natural economy.

For this reason, we are at present concerned rather with the regulation of the economy, and for real planning the necessary conditions will still have to be created. We can only say in general that in

the conditions of non-socialist relations of production, existing in the economically underdeveloped countries, the state, its economic policy, and the state sector, as its economic stronghold, will play the main role. The greater the share and the role of the state sector in the national economy, the better are the prospects for planning. Under socialism, planning becomes a necessity. Nevertheless, expropriation of means of production and the establishment of socialistic relations of production alone do not constitute all the conditions required for a planned national economy, which requires the forces of production to have reached a certain level. This is another important reason for the present low standard of planning in the underdeveloped countries.

4. CAPITALISM OR SOCIALISM?

Among the countries which have adopted the capitalist way of development we can distinguish two main groups: One comprising the so-called non-committed countries, which pursue a policy of neutrality, and the other, consisting of countries which belong to various aggressive imperialist pacts. The above is, of course, a political criterion, yet it is of considerable significance for the economy of the countries concerned. Nevertheless, we shall perceive that from the point of view of future development this significance is not at all decisive, because the basic course of development, namely capitalism, remains identical in the majority of the countries of both groups. In Part No. II of this treatise it has been shown on the example of Iran, what the economy of a country looks like when its policy is subject to the interests of imperialists. The same applies to other members of the CENTO, Turkey and Pakistan: compared to them, Iran has even some advantages, such as large incomes from the petroleum industry, a lower population density (as compared to Pakistan), which in the present feudal-capitalist relations of production has become an irremediable malady of economic development.

India affords a good example of the non-committed countries: We cannot deny that India has attained certain achievements in the

development of her economy. Let us, however, pay some attention to the chief problems of economic development as they have been solved in that country: the increase of the level of productive forces, for which the settlement of the agrarian question is of major importance, industrialization, raising the national income per head, and removal of the influence of imperialist monopolies.

The national bourgeoisie of India holding state power for some fifteen years has not been able to settle the agrarian problem. The land reform has not been carried out radically enough and altered neither the agrarian relations nor the social and cultural aspects of life in the rural areas. The outcome of the reform was that by 1962 82 % of all peasant households owned 27 % of farm land, whereas 2.43 % possessed 28 % of land. The rate of increase of agricultural production is not satisfactory either, and the increase in the production of cereals is not sufficient even to satisfy the basic needs of the country; in the years 1957—1959 alone India had to import over 10 mil. tons, mostly from the U. S. A. In spite of this the consumption of cereals per head remains below the pre-war level.

The general structure of India's economy underwent no transformation at all: A mere 16 % of the national income was produced by industry, which implies that India continues to be a backward agricultural country. The rate of increase of industrial production offers no prospects of industrialization in the near future either: During the years 1951—1962 the index of industrial production doubled,⁶ the average rate of growth thus being a mere 6.6 %. Consequently, the growth of the volume of the national income does not indicate any radical changes to have taken place. During the period mentioned it increased by 47 %, and due to the rapid growth of population the per head national income was raised by no more than 18 %, the average yearly increase amounting thus to 1.5 % per capita.⁷ The imperialist monopolies continue to occupy a strong position in India's economy. From 1948 until 1958 the volume of private foreign capital increased from 560 mil. dollars to 1,200 mil. dollars respectively. A major part of the production of tea, which constitutes India's chief export article,

⁶ *Monthly Abstract of Statistics*, May 1963.

⁷ *Ekonomicheskoe polozhenie kapitalisticheskikh stran*, Moscow 1963, p. 71.

remains under the control of British capital. Foreign capitalists hold large shares in the mining of highest-quality coal, petroleum refineries, manganese mines, in the chemical, jute and tobacco industries.

Such is the basic outline of the present-day economy of India, where the bourgeoisie, leading the country in the capitalist way, has been in power for more than 15 years. A similar situation can be found in a number of other economically less advanced countries.

In recent years (1958—1963) the average yearly growth of production in the economically less developed countries is 7.6 %⁸ in industry and 3 % in agriculture, which means a 5 % increase of the net national income per annum.⁹ Supposing this increase to be uninterrupted and abstracted from economic crises and features of economic depression, we would obtain the following picture of the future of the economy in countries on the same level as Kurdistan. The per capita national income in the whole of Kurdistan amounts to approximately 100 dollars. The growth of population being more than 2 % yearly, the increase of per capita national income cannot surpass 3 % per annum. This, however, implies, that it will take some 80 years (i. e. in the year 2040!) before the national income reaches 1,064 dollars per head, which represents the present-day level of the advanced West European countries.

There is but one obvious conclusion: In case Kurdistan, and the other Middle Eastern countries adopt a capitalist development, they can have no hope of catching up or even approaching the advanced capitalist countries in the production of national income per head within a measurable space of time.

In case the per capita national income in the West European countries increased only by 2.1 % every year, which corresponds to the actual state of affairs, then in 80 years' time it would amount to 5,000 dollars, i. e. five times more than that in the Middle Eastern countries

⁸ The slightly higher figure as compared to India alone is due to the rapid growth in the production of certain raw materials, particularly of petroleum. (A.)

⁹ According to the IIIrd economic plan (1961—1965) India's national income is to increase altogether by 30 %, i. e. by 4.5 % per annum. (A.)

at the same time, thus, even after 80 years these countries would have to be marked as less advanced. This is the best possible development which under optimum circumstances can take place in the economically less developed countries, were they to adopt capitalism. And then we have disregarded the uneven way of capitalist development, connected with exploitation of man by man, filled with suffering for the working people.

The situation will differ substantially, would the present economically less advanced countries decide on socialist development. This is evidenced by the rapid economic progress made by the Transcaucasian and Central Asian republics of the U. S. S. R. For instance in 1960 in Soviet Armenia, the production of electric power per head amounted to 1,478 kWh, which is more than in Italy, Japan, Denmark and other capitalist countries, 15 times more than in Turkey, 32 times more than in Iran. In the course of 6 years (1956—1961) the total volume of production in the Tajik S. S. R. doubled, which means that the average rate of increase was 15 % yearly. The recent development of countries not long ago belonging to the economically less advanced parts of the world, such as e. g. the Peoples Democratic Republic of Korea, testifies to the above statement.

The economic development in democratic Korea illustrates most clearly the advantages of socialism: The volume of the gross industrial product between 1957 and 1960 exhibited a yearly increase of 36.6 %, i. e. increased altogether 3.5 times.¹⁰ In the year 1960 the relation between industry and agriculture was 71 : 29. Highly illustrative is the fact that the share of engineering increased to 21.3 % of the total industrial production and that the coefficient of the supply of home-produced machinery exceeded 90 %. In the course of the seven-year plan (1961—1967) the total volume of industrial production is to exhibit an average increase of 18 % per annum, the production of production means is to increase altogether 3.2 times. The national income will grow 2.7 times, i. e. approximately by 15.3 % yearly, which is a rate three times higher than that in the economically less advanced countries which took the course of capitalist development.

¹⁰ *Questions of Peace and Socialism*, January 1962, p. 62.

By no more chance did the People's Democratic Republic of Korea surpass a capitalist country so far advanced as Japan in a number of important products produced per head, as for instance in the production of electric power.¹¹ Thus, should Kurdistan adopt the socialist way of development and show a similar rate of growth of national income as democratic Korea, i. e. 15.3 % per annum the rate of increase of population amounting to 2 % per annum, in twenty years' time the per capita national income would reach 1,160 dollars and thus overtake the present-day level of the advanced capitalist countries. In addition, the presence of immense sources of petroleum in Kurdistan and in the other Middle Eastern countries could considerably speed the progress.

Such are the prospects of socialism - transformation of a backward country into an industrialized one not in the course of centuries but during the lifetime of a single generation. It is due to this vigorous growth of their national economy that the socialist countries have arrived at the conclusion that "they can gradually overcome the historically originated difference in the level of economic development and build up a material basis for a more or less simultaneous transition to communism of all nations belonging to the socialist system."¹² While capitalism widens the gulf between economically less advanced countries and the developed capitalist countries, socialism raises the former economically less developed countries that are part of the socialist system to the level of the most advanced socialist countries

¹¹ It has very often been objected that such rapid progress is possible in the economically less developed countries only, and as soon as these attain a certain level, the rate of increase will decline considerably. Yet, the examples of the U. S. S. R., the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the German Democratic Republic have disproved such "arguments" long ago. The programme of the C. P. S. U. constitutes fresh and convincing proof of the incorrectness of any such theory. During the next twenty years the volume of industrial production will grow at least six times, which is by some 9.4 % every year. Agricultural production is to increase 3.5 times, i. e. by 6.5 % per annum and the volume of national income is to grow altogether five times, i. e. an average yearly increase of 8.9 %. (A.)

¹² *Declaration of the Council of the Communist and Workers' Parties Representatives, Moscow, November 1961.*

approaching communism, in the historically shortest time possible.

Is it at all thinkable that countries with insufficiently spread capitalist relations, take the road toward socialist development directly, omitting the capitalist stage?

Engels himself predicted such a course of development, although he regarded the victory of socialism in the advanced capitalist countries as a necessary condition. Engels wrote that when the backward countries see "how to make the forces of production, which will have become social property, serve the whole society, these backward countries can adopt this shortened way of development," which will be possible for "all countries on the precapitalistic stage."¹³ Lenin developed the theory of the direct transition from feudalism to socialism: "The Communist International must set up and substantiate theoretically the thesis declaring that with the support of the proletariat of the advanced countries the underdeveloped countries can pass on to the soviet order, and later, via certain stages of development, to communism, leaving out the capitalist stage."¹⁴

If the working class, as the most revolutionary class of human society, is in power in one advanced socialist country, it is possible to create socialist relations of production in another country, where revolutionary forces have come to power. A socialist state is created, although the economic basis is in fact two formations behind. The necessity of omitting the capitalist stage of development follows from the fact that both those who have acquired power in the economically less developed countries and the working class of the advanced socialist country wish to build directly more progressive, i. e. socialist relations of production. The possibility of such omission consists in the very existence of an industrialized advanced socialist country, the support of which immediately conditions the creation of a socialist basis. The decisive condition is, of course, that political power, i. e. the state, be held by communists or people of marxist views wishing to build socialism. It is virtually a matter of creating a union between the

¹³ *Correspondence of K. Marx and F. Engels with Russian Political Personalities*, 1951, p. 291 (Russian ed.).

¹⁴ V. I. L e n i n, *Works*, Vol. 31, p. 240 (Czech ed.).

working class of the advanced socialist state and the masses of the respective economically less developed country.

The People's Republic of Mongolia affords a notable example of such direct transition from feudalism to socialism: Until the year 1921 there existed neither industry, nor proletariat nor bourgeoisie, and the Mongolian society belonged to the most backward in the world. Thanks to the help rendered by the U. S. S. R. it has been transformed into an agrarian manufacturing state. The volume of industrial production has increased four times in the course of ten years (1950 to 1960); the annual rate of increase was thus approximately 15 %. The share of the industries producing means of production has increased from 25.3 % in 1952 to 50.9 % in the year 1960. Much has evidently still got to be done in order to develop the means of production in the People's Republic of Mongolia even further, yet Mongolia will have the historical merit of having undertaken the long way from a feudal society to a complete victory of socialist relations of production in all the fields of economy in the course of mere 40 years, thus offering valuable experience to all economically less advanced countries.

Nowadays, when the socialist system has become so powerful, the help it will render to the economically less developed countries that will adopt socialism can be more effective still and will grow in proportion to the increasing number of socialist countries. This implies that in the future the economies of the countries which will take the path of socialist development will make even more rapid progress than at present.

CONCLUSIONS

In the above analysis of the agrarian relations together with their historical development the author has tried to demonstrate the complexity of different social relations, out of which the present-day Kurdish society has been created. It has been shown that all kinds of internal and external circumstances have been the cause of the extremely slow advancement of productive forces in rural Kurdistan and in the Kurdish society as such.

There was, therefore, a whole number of factors, such as invasions of foreign tribes, wars lasting practically till the end of the 19th century, low population density, inefficiency of the central government etc., which, each at a certain time, materially influenced the development in this area; the discovery of new routes to India (via South Africa; the Suez Canal) impaired its international role too. Nevertheless, the main and decisive factors which have caused the slow progress, sometimes even stagnation, are the existing relations of production, the characteristic feature of which is natural economy. Rent in kind as the main form of exploitation has been practiced for several centuries. Natural economy assuming the form of rent in kind led to more or less self-supporting peasant farms. Exchange and the home market spread but very slowly and gradually. The agrarian relations, as the chief contents of the relations of production in the society, hampered the development of productive forces.

The Kurdish society remained in this stagnant state until the 19th century, when Kurdistan became part of the world market. At that time feudalism and feudal relations became the prevailing and decisive contents of the society. In addition there also functioned tribes and tribal relations.

Kurdistan's attachment to the world market brought about a number of significant changes, namely consolidation of landlord (feudal) landownership and differentiation in the village, complete

abolition of communal ownership, disintegration of tribal relations; growth of social division of labour, separation of crafts from agriculture, progress in home and foreign trade, creation of the Kurdish national bourgeoisie. Yet, as we have shown, despite all these and other substantial changes that had taken place, feudal relations remained basically preserved.

Although feudal relations were prevailing at that time, there existed survivals of patriarchal and tribal relations too. At the same time capitalist relations began to develop. Tribal relations became extinct, feudal relations gradually disintegrated, and capitalist relations spread. The described process was very complicated and its advancement was hampered by several factors. The feudals, constituting the chief stronghold of the ruling circles in Kurdistan, made use of their political power in order to hinder social progress and preserve the established relations of production.

Beginning with the turn of the 19th and 20th cent. the entire social life of the country became strongly influenced by an outside factor - imperialism. At this moment there appeared a paradoxical phenomenon: Imperialism, representing the supreme form of capitalist relations, aimed at subduing a country, appropriating its wealth and employing it as a sphere for exportation of capital, which was objectively connected with the exportation of capitalistic relations of production. On the other hand, it was no one else but the feudal class that became the ally and stronghold of imperialism within the country. It means that imperialism joined forces with the very power which was concerned in preserving the existing outlived relations, and supported the latter against those forces which aim at ending national oppression, breaking down feudal relations and creating new, more progressive ones. All this objectively furthers the struggle against imperialism and against national oppression.

The level of productive forces is in full concord with the forms of ground-rent, as analyzed in the treatise. Besides rent in kind, as the prevailing form of ground-rent, there exists labour rent and money-rent. In some areas we come across ground-rent which has already assumed the capitalist form. Rent in kind appears in the form of the crop-sharing system which reflects the transition from feudal to

capitalist relations. The transition itself, however, is a lengthy and slow process.

The peasant, seemingly free, is attached to the soil with all kinds of ties which deprive him of the possibility of free movement. As a result, the migration of manpower both in the rural areas, as well as from villages into the cities is very limited. Feudal relations impair trade and free exchange, thus hindering the development of the home market. Usury too, practiced by the feudals, landlords, clergy, and city merchants, functions as a negative factor in this respect. Yet, it is the crop-sharing system alone which is the main cause of the stagnation of productive forces in rural Kurdistan.

Labour productivity is very low, chiefly owing to the backward relations of production. The means of production are primitive in the extreme and require a great amount of peasant labour to be performed. The low level of labour productivity becomes obvious from the fact that the entire agricultural production is based on extensive cultivation. We have pointed out the latent unemployment in rural Kurdistan. People suffer from starvation, yet a considerable part of the population of the working age has but occasional opportunities to work. This part of the population is not sufficiently free, so as to be able to go into the cities. Yet even though the migration of the people is comparatively free in some areas, those entering the towns mostly search for work in vain.

Feudal relations and survivals of tribal relations prevail as a rule even in cattle-breeding. In this branch of agriculture the *oba* association is of particular interest; in the future the *oba* and the traditions connected with its existence may facilitate the forming of co-operatives which could play a positive role in the transformation of cattle-breeding and of rural Kurdistan in general.

It follows from the preceding parts of this treatise that those regarding Kurdistan and the Kurdish community as a group of nomadic tribes are grossly mistaken. Completely nomadic tribes do not exist in Kurdistan at all and the number of semi-nomadic ones is rapidly diminishing. Various factors, especially the attachment of Kurdistan to the world market, and subsequent rise of capitalist relations, have altered the tribe a great deal. Nowadays, although

tribal relations still survive, the tribes do not exist in their original form any more and are now in the process of complete disintegration.

The Kurdish community is, therefore, not even such a tribal association as is the case in some African countries which have recently been declared independent.

The above analysis of the peasantry's situation has demonstrated that the living standard of the Kurdish peasants is one of the lowest in the world. This fact can be evidenced by the per capita national income amounting to 100 dollars per annum. As shown in detail, the income of most peasants does not even reach 30 dollars yearly.

The prospects of industrial progress are not particularly favourable either. This, consequently, affects the development of the country's proletariat and especially that of the local national bourgeoisie. Generally speaking, progress in industry is being hampered mainly by the following two factors: the existence of feudal relations inside and the pressure exercised by the imperialist monopolies from outside. These two factors, besides having an objectively hampering effect upon the development of the national industry, function as a subjective element against the attempts to establish local industry and against the country's progress.

All these factors find their reflection in the slow expansion of the home market, which remains narrow even today due to the existing relations of production as well as the monopolies, namely by means of foreign trade which in their hands functions as an effective instrument. The market is flooded with goods of foreign make; the local industry cannot stand up to the competition because of low labour productivity and, receiving no help from the state, is gradually being ruined.

Home goods do not sell, which leads to market stagnation. It is only those trading with foreign goods from the imperialist countries, i. e. the comprador bourgeoisie, who profit from the market. Through foreign trade all the currency gained from the sale of petroleum goes into the safes of the monopolies. Thus foreign trade promotes even more the present state of international division of labour in the capitalist part of the world which assigns to the

economically less advanced countries the role of agrarian and raw-material appendages.

To summarize - Kurdistan appears as an economically less advanced region in the framework of the underdeveloped countries, has one-sidedly developed productive forces on a low level with strong surviving feudal relations, a low per capita national income and is strongly influenced by imperialist monopolies.

The downfall of the imperialist colonial system constitutes one of the chief features of our era. Formerly subjected nations are gaining independence one after another. In Asia, where this process had started earlier than on the other continents, colonialism has almost completely been done away with. In the Middle East, however, there are areas where people suffer under the yoke of colonialism. But the only big nation in this area which remains subdued having neither national rights nor political independence are the Kurds. Kurdistan is not a colony in the full meaning of the word, nevertheless, its political status is practically the same. In addition to that, the country is split among a number of states.

The national-liberation struggle of the Kurdish people aims at a settlement of the Kurdish question. At the same time, within the movement two main trends represented by the two main sections of the Kurdish national-liberation movement, the proletariat and the national bourgeoisie, have already begun to emerge.

Considering the historical and local conditions, the revolutionary forces of Kurdistan possess all the qualities essential for gaining and retaining hegemony in the struggle, if supported by the working classes of the neighbouring countries, which would guarantee the future socialist development of Kurdistan.

Securing of national rights and especially the right to self-determination constitutes a decisive stage in the history of the Kurdish nation. The settlement of this aspect of the problem cannot, however, be achieved unless the influence of imperialism in the Middle East is put an end to. For this reason the struggle for Kurdish independence is *part* of the general struggle of all the Middle East nations against imperialism. At the same time the settlement of the Kurdish problem depends on the victory of democracy and

of democratic forces. The Kurdish problem cannot be solved, nor the right to self-determination of the Kurdish nation secured, without democracy. That is why the endeavours to solve the Kurdish question are *part* of the general fight for democracy waged by the democratic forces of all countries, headed by the working class.

The working class of the dominant nations, as the most consequential fighter against imperialism and for democracy, is the best ally of the Kurds in their struggle for national rights and independence. Nevertheless, as long as the reactionary feudal-comprador clique, or even the national bourgeoisie of the dominant nation, remain in power in the countries oppressing the Kurdish nation, a complete guarantee of the right to self-determination is out of question. This means that the final solution of the Kurdish problem in its political and national aspects cannot be achieved under capitalism.

The settlement of the Kurdish problem must build on the specific conditions of the life of the Kurdish nation and the situation of the country. Both the level of the country's economic development and the whole complex of problems connected with the cultural, religious and traditional aspects of life in Kurdistan must be taken into consideration. An attempt at a stereotyped settlement of the problem might only prove detrimental to the final goal.

The Marxist approach to the national question presupposes at the same time an absolute respect of the principles of proletarian internationalism. The Kurds, like every other nation, have the right to self-determination including the right to form an independent state, which in this particular case assumes the form of a right to unite the country. Through the acknowledgement of this right on the principles of proletarian internationalism a voluntary union of the Kurdish nation with other, formerly oppressing, nations of the Middle East may be created.

In Kurdistan there still survive feudal relations, but the capitalist stage of development is not inevitable for the country's transition to socialism. With the help of the advanced socialist countries, which at present means the help of a powerful socialist system, the capitalist stage can be left out. The transition to socialism may yet assume different forms.

Capitalism is unable to offer a solution for the problems which the economically less advanced countries must necessarily face, such as the agrarian question, industrialization, mobilization of national resources, etc. The capitalist way of development offers but very gloomy prospects of Kurdistan being able to overcome its centuries-old economic backwardness in the near future.

Socialism opens the path to the final settlement of the Kurdish problem, which belongs to the most complicated issues of our days. Socialism is capable of solving the national, political and economic aspects of the Kurdish problem as one complex, similarly, as it offers a complex solution for all the problems of economic progress. Socialist development not only guarantees rapid economic progress, but in addition to that, does away with exploitation of man by man and secures a more just division of the national income among members of the community, based on human labour as the chief criterion. Socialist planned economy guarantees consistent and proportionate development of all economic branches, eliminating crises of over-production and unemployment. Socialism will enable Kurdistan to change from a backward agrarian country into a advanced industrial one within the lifetime of one generation. As a country possessing enormous wealth, especially rich deposits of petroleum, a variety of natural conditions, a country of industrious people, bordering on the U. S. S. R., offering most valuable and many-sided support to countries building socialism, Kurdistan may in the course of a historically short period become the flourishing garden of the Middle East.

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Items occurring in the text very frequently, such as Iran, Iraq, the Kurds,
 Kurdistan, Syria, Turkey, etc., are not included in this Index.

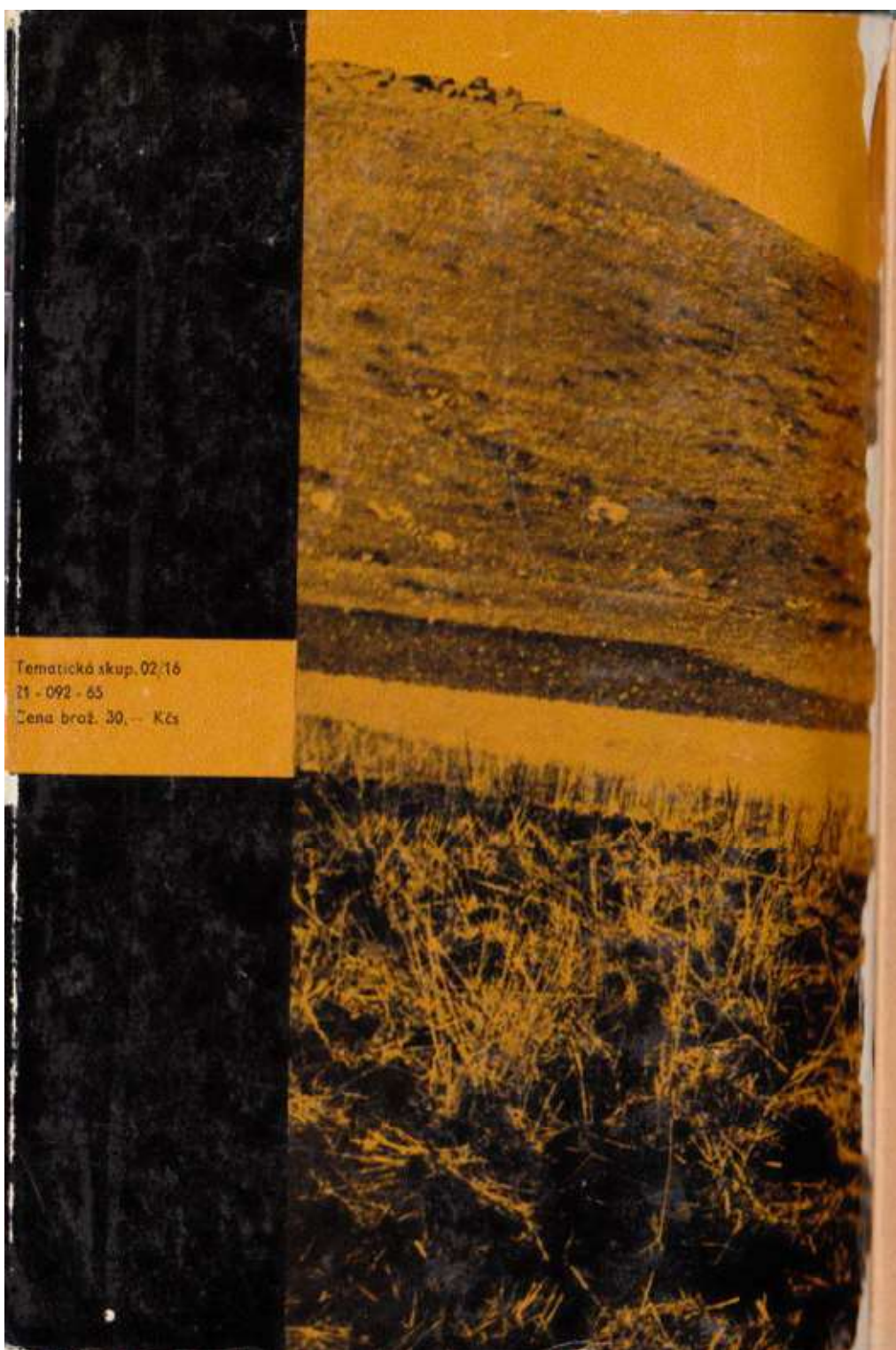
materialization of the Kurdish people's right to self-determination. This part contains also conclusions applying to the economic progress of the economically less developed countries in general and of Kurdistan in particular.

The work as a whole is an attempt at a scientific explanation of the Kurdish question. It is basically an economic and political monography with major stress laid on the economic problems, the analysis of which provides grounds for the author's conclusions. The conclusions, in spite of their topical political import, are rather of theoretical nature and remain on a general scientific level which is the leading feature of the whole book.



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