THE KURDISH NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT SINCE 1975: SUCCESS OR FAILURE

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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August 1996

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
POLITICS

Doctor of Philosophy

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This thesis is a study of the Kurdish National Liberation Movement (KNLM) between 1975 and 1995. Being the largest nation in the contemporary world still without their national state, the Kurds have been relentless in preserving their national identity through active and passive resistance. This study begins with an anthro-cultural analysis of the Kurds and Kurdistan. It then tries through historical and legal analysis to establish whether the Kurds constitute a nation which qualifies for the universal right of self-determination or not. The next task of the thesis is to provide a detailed theoretical and conceptual analysis of Kurdish nationalism.

The third task is to focus on the armed struggle since 1975 in southern Kurdistan and also to cover the northern armed uprising which has been raging since 1984. The investigation then moves on to measure the achievements of the KLM. This is done by focusing on two of the three dimensions, internal, regional and international, which are considered influential and significant in that matter. Thus, both the internal and regional dimensions are analysed and their impact discussed.

In order to understand the complex nature of the Kurdish society, politics, geopolitics, and the armed struggle, a multi-dimensional approach is used to highlight not only the internal variations but also the regional interaction and its impact on Kurdish policy-making. The thesis surveys the literature on nationalism, ideology, leadership, and political parties in order to illuminate questions of concern. Hence, this analytical approach is both quantitative and qualitative. It attempts, on the one hand, to evaluate the course of the KLM since 1975, and tries to highlight the factors influencing its conduct. It seeks to provide an answer to whether the KLM has been a success or a failure and to explain why.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe a debt of gratitude to a number of people who have given encouragement and support during the preparation of this study. First, I thank my supervisor, Professor Peter Calvert, Head of the Politics Department at Southampton University, whose guidance, advice, patience and kindness, has been of great value. Secondly, my thanks must go to my two younger brothers, Majid and Azad and my family for their material and moral support without which this research would not have been possible. My thanks also go to Mr Darwish Haji Agha for being always there to answer my inquires. Thanks must also go to Majid Ali Khan, Sardar Ismail and Bahjat Mohammed-Taher Zinavayi for their contributions.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to both Dr M'hand Berkouk for his brotherly concern, help and advice, and Dr Arvind Sivaramakrishnan for his encouragement and help. Among my postgraduate colleagues, special mention must go to John Glenn not only for the constructive discussions we had but also for his kind help with technical matters. I would also like to thank Richard McGrady for reading parts of this study. Last but not least special thanks must go to Melanie Rogers for her support and help.

TO MY FATHER

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INTRODUCTION

The Kurdish National Liberation Movement (KLM) is the longest-running nationalist movement in the twentieth century seeking independence and national sovereignty. The Kurds are the largest nation in the contemporary world that is still without its own state. For the best part of her modern history, Kurdistan has been the battle zone for endless armed uprisings. Since the first half of the nineteenth century the Kurds have been in revolt against the Ottomans, Persians, Turks and Arabs. As a result, their modern history can only be described as tragic. In 1915 the Ottoman Turks embarked on the first of a number of campaigns to depopulate Kurdistan by deporting over one and a half million Kurds from eastern Anatolia to the West. In 1990 the Iraqis had almost succeeded in depopulating southern Kurdistan. Despite Kurdish revolts raging in this part or that of Kurdistan, the story of the KLM has hitherto been one of failure. This thesis is an attempt to outline why the KLM has hitherto failed to attract world attention and acquire an international personality. I intend to argue below that significant differences obtain between the way the Kurdish nation has been treated and the ways other nations in the region have been treated since the end of the First World War. Secondly, I shall attempt to demonstrate that the differences between the strategies respectively adopted by the northern and southern Kurds have been highly significant in determining their respective fortunes since 1975.

With the end of the First World War the political map of the Middle East was poised to experience a fundamental change. The end of the war marked the end of five centuries of Ottoman domination and the beginning of European rule. By the end of the Second World War, the region had experienced a radical transformation. New states were set up by the colonial powers, mainly the British and French. A glance at the boundaries of the new states reflects the arbitrary division of the Ottoman territories to suit the interests of the European powers. The Kurds were, however, the main losers under the new political arrangements. As a result, Kurdistan was divided between four states with borders cutting across Kurdish families and tribes. Why did the Kurds fail to set up their national state when states were being created almost at random? Did they constitute a nation? Did they not qualify for the right of

self-determination under the UN Charter and international law? These questions appear to have been neglected by those who imposed the post-war arrangements upon the region.

Moreover, the post-1945 socio-political changes in the region marked a departure from centuries of thinking in terms of one nation (the Muslim Umma) bound together by a common bond, Islam, to a new, radical, and alien thinking based on the European secular ideals of ethnicity, nationalism and nation-state. The previously settled communities of the region were directed to think in terms of their own peculiarities. Hence each nationalism presented itself as sui generis. The westernised élites of these states were keen to advocate their respective local nationalisms in their attempts to create political nations. Nationalism, therefore, became the mouthpiece of the political systems each exalting its own people, mores and customs. As the process of building nations usually involves evoking national sentiments, it means finding a target group. The Kurds became the required target group. As a result, the Kurds too turned to national symbols to counter aggressive nationalisms flowing from all different centres.

Failing, however, to fulfil their national aspirations by setting up a Kurdish state, the Kurds have been engaged in armed uprisings in different parts of Kurdistan. Southern Kurdistan, the main focus of this investigation, has experienced the longest armed struggle, which began in 1961 and has lasted until the present day. The southern Kurds enjoyed de facto control over their region from 1970 to 1974. In 1975 the Iraqi and Iranian governments signed the Algiers Agreement, which in practice meant the end of the Kurds' de facto control. Having been deprived of their only logistical base, Iran, the Kurdish nationalists went into exile. For the next fifteen years the Iraqi Kurds failed to regain their pre-1975 strength. Yet their cooperation with Iranian forces in the Iraq-Iran war meant severe punishment from the Iraqi government. They became the first people to be gassed by their 'own' government since the Holocaust. This punishment meant the end of the Kurdish rebellion in Iraqi Kurdistan. The Kurds, until March 1991, were simply passive observers.

Meanwhile, in northern Kurdistan, the Kurds in Turkey launched an armed struggle in 1984 under the radical Kurdish Workers Party, PKK. Since then the PKK has become a major force in Kurdish politics throughout Kurdistan. The PKK

has managed to impose itself on Turkish politics and it is gradually publicizing the Kurdish plight. What has made the PKK's campaign effective? This question will be examined below.

The first aim of this thesis is to present a descriptive account of the Kurdish question. It begins with an attempt to address the question as to whether the Kurds constitute a nation. Since 1923 the very existence of the Kurds in northern Kurdistan has been denied by successive Turkish governments and the Turkish state-sponsored ideology, Kemalism. In Syria Kurds are denied citizenship and are considered second-class citizens. Only in Iraq are they acknowledged as a distinct ethnic minority. Yet sympathy for Iraq from the rest of the Arab world has meant the denial of the Kurdish right to self-determination. Many Arabs tend to acknowledge the legitimacy of the Kurdish struggle in Turkey or Iran when mentioned, but dismiss the same right to the Kurds in Iraq. The same goes for the Kurds in Syria. Hence Chapter One attempts, through a brief theoretical analysis of the respective concepts of nation, states and national self-determination, to establish that the Kurds do constitute a nation and whether they qualify for that status under international law and the UN Charter.

The next stage of this study, Chapter Two, consists of an analysis of Kurdish nationalism. It begins with a brief outline of the concept of nationalism. Beginning with Turkish nationalism under Atatürk, nationalism became the main source of legitimation at the disposal of the new political élites. Under these conditions Kurdish nationalism grew as a counter-reaction to Turkish, Arab, and Persian nationalism. The analysis looks at the sources from which nationalism derives its potency and momentum. It outlines the elements such as education, the middle and merchant classes, and the intelligentsia as well as mass media and sport which are significant for the development of nationalism. It tries to establish the impact of these factors on the development of Kurdish nationalism from the beginning of the twentieth century to the present.

The following stage looks at the armed struggle since 1975. Here, it is necessary to draw a comparison between the southern and northern armed struggles. This stage covers an important era of modern Kurdish history. Following the end of their armed conflict with the Iraqi government in 1975,

the southern Kurds continued to return to Iraq in small guerrilla units from their bases inside Iran and Syria. Though these acts were insignificant in the eyes of the Iraqi government, which had extended its authority over most parts of southern Kurdistan, the Kurds were, nevertheless, desperate to maintain a degree of defiance. Their hopes were completely dashed at the end of the Iran-Iraq war in 1988. The Iraqi Anfal campaign, which was launched immediately after the cease-fire with Iran, succeeded not only in crushing the last remnants of active Kurdish resistance but also in bringing southern Kurdistan into submission.

During every political upheaval, the Kurds seem to have learnt to be ready to take advantage. Saddam's invasion of Kuwait, and the subsequent build-up of forces by the American-led coalition to eject the Iraqi army from Kuwait, gave the Kurds fresh hopes for an unplanned comeback. Since May 1991 they have come to enjoy total control over the UN-protected Safe Havens. Their return, however, was not a result of their armed struggle, but a by-product of the Kuwait crisis. An assessment is also made of both the northern and southern armed struggles to show which has been stagnant and which has made political and military progress.

The following two chapters, Four and Five respectively, will attempt to examine two of the three dimensions which are thought to have hindered the Kurdish Liberation Movement (KLM). Chapter Four consists of an analysis of the internal factors which have hampered the KLM since 1975. It is argued that for a nationalist movement to lead an effective armed struggle, a number of vital components must be available. Selecting the southern movement as a focal point, it will be argued that their armed struggle has lacked three of the most important factors which contribute to an effective campaign. It is argued that since 1975 the KLM has lacked leadership, a leading political party, and a coherent ideology. In the absence of these elements, tribalism has continued to play a part in swaying loyalties. Both the northern and southern movements are compared in the light of the availability of the three crucial components mentioned above.

The KLM is unique in that it is not only hampered by its internal crisis, but also in that its geopolitical position is regarded as a determinant factor in its stagnation. The Kurds, a landlocked nation, are located in four states

with whom they are in dispute. Therefore, their success is always measured by the willingness of one of those four states to provide support. Having no access to a neutral neighbour, the Kurds are forced to enter into alliances with one state or another in the region on unequal terms. The last phase of this study, Chapter Five, therefore, looks at the regional dimension and its impact on the freedom and mobility of the Kurdish rebels.

With the creation of the state of Israel in 1947 and until the first half of the 1990s, the Arab-Israeli dispute headed the political agenda of the Middle East. Other issues, including the Kurdish question, remained marginal. Despite their efforts to press their demands, the Kurds were ignored by the world at large. Even groups in similar political positions, such as the PLO, failed to acknowledge publicly the Kurdish plight and the Kurdish right to statehood. Therefore, the Kurdish challenge to the status quo in the region attracted neither sympathy nor support. The Kurds remained outsiders, denied access to governmental offices almost worldwide or an international platform from which to highlight their plight. Throughout its working life, the United Nations has failed to offer a platform to the Kurds. Even when the International Conference on Chemical Weapons was convened in Paris in 1989 to discuss chemical weapons following Saddam's chemical attacks on Kurds in 1988, the conference denied the Kurdish delegates even entry as observers, let alone a platform.

In the light of this marginalisation, the Kurdish armed struggle seemed in vain. For three decades and until the end of the 1980s, any challenge to the status quo was not supported. This was a result of the Cold War where spheres of influences were recognized in international politics. However, with the onset of the 1990s, fundamental changes were occurring around the Kurds and further afield. First, the Cold War ended. With the end of the Cold War came the wave of social and political changes throughout Eastern Europe setting up democratic systems, the echo of which is loudly reverberating around the Middle East. Secondly, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, which subsequently lead to the Second Gulf War, changed the balance of power in the region. Since the end of that war the Kurds have been visible and have won sympathy worldwide. More importantly, the Arabs and the Israelis seem to have decided to end their dispute, having dominated the politics of the region for about half a century. From the Kurdish point of view, this is the opportunity

to move up the regional agenda.

The aim of this study is to judge, through a theoretical analysis and empirical data, the degree of success of the KLM in southern and northern Kurdistan in its pursuit of national aspirations. This study also attempts to address the options open to the Kurds. Since the setting up of the Safe Havens in southern Kurdistan to protect the Kurds from the Iraqi government, Kurdish politicians have stressed their desire for a federal arrangement with the central government in Baghdad. Can a federal system be viable in the absence of an overall democratic framework? Equally, can an independent Kurdish state be viable if it is set up in only one part of the divided Kurdistan? In the light of the historical discord between the regional states, Kurdish options are analysed in terms of regional security.

This thesis will employ a multi-dimensional theoretical and conceptual approach to the Kurdish question. First, it will provide a historical and cultural analysis of the Kurdish issue. It also utilizes, as analytical instruments, nationalism, leadership, political parties, and ideology in order to assess their impact on the KLM in particular and Kurdish society in general. In addition, it looks at the geopolitical dimension which has hitherto proven decisive in the history of the KLM.

The task of preparing this study was by no means easy. For a start, the sources of information available to the researcher are limited. A number of original interviews, however, were conducted at the Kurdish parliament in Arbil during field research in southern Kurdistan in September and October 1994. Arrangements were made to meet both Massoud Barazani and Jalal Talabani at their headquarters in Sallah al-Din and Arbil respectively but for reasons outside the author's control, the meetings did not occur. While in Arbil several Kurdish politicians including the first ever Kurdish prime minister of the safe haven, Dr Fouad Maşwm, were interviewed or given written questions. Dr Maşwm kindly answered the written questions given to him personally at the Kurdish Parliament. A'arf Rushdy, a PUK politburo member, too, was helpful in answering many questions in a recorded interview in his office in the city of Dohuk.

The KDP's officials were, however, reluctant to respond. Copies of written

questions were left with several KDP members of parliament, including the influential Fransw Hariri, but failed to respond. Only the Deputy Secretary of the parliament, Najad Aziz Agha, responded but answered only two out of thirty-one questions posed. Also a recorded interview was conducted, through a third party on my behalf, with the Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party of Kurdistan, Sami Abdul Rahman, in February 1992. However, Sami failed to respond to my written questions in 1994 after having rejoined the KDP. Furthermore, it was noticed that on certain issues, there was often reluctance on the part of some Kurdish politicians and nationalists to divulge information of any substantive kind.

In addition to Kurdish, Arabic and English literature and press reports as well as the Kurdish political parties publications, accounts of many Kurds, including ordinary people, villagers, Peshmerga fighters, intellectuals as well as refugees in the UK and those passing through, have been selected. Finally, the author's personal sources including relatives and special references were invaluable. The subject treated, however, is in itself original because of its exhaustiveness and its up-to-date information.

CHAPTER I

NATION & NATIONAL SELF-DETERMINATION

At the turn of the twentieth century, it was common to believe that nations were immemorial. Anthony Smith cites the familiar view that nations were thought of as natural and perennial; people had a nationality much as they had speech or sight (Smith, 1989: 343). Developing from a concept devised to distinguish categories of students at the mediaeval European universities, 'nation' has become a term relating to a larger human population labelled under one name and usually living on a given territory. In attempting to define a nation, one is faced with a plethora of approaches. Thus the difficulty in finding a single scientific definition lies in the fact that whatever criteria are used to establish whether the people in question constitute a nation, there will always be an exception to the rule. Therefore, and because of the diversity of the criteria and conditions under which modern nations have emerged, the debate continues between scholars as to what makes a nation, and how we should distinguish between political and cultural nations (see for example, Anthony Smith, 1986: 130ff, and Couloumbis & Wolfe, 1978: 37).

Moreover, the post war anti-colonial preoccupation with the idea of states and nations in Africa and Asia has led to the association of nation and state. The term nation is often used vaguely, to mean any sovereign state with political autonomy and settled territory (Scruton, 1982: 312). Thus, although a nation may and can exist without its own state, the two concepts have been intimately linked in political and cultural contexts, hence causing confusion between nation and country (on states see Glassner & Blij, 1980: 43-4). Clapham says that during the colonial era the 'state was imported along with people who ran it'. In the post-colonial period, the new states, however, argues Clapham, could not eradicate the divisions set up during the colonial era between the indigenous society and the external political; therefore, it was 'rarely something to which loyalty was owed in itself' (Clapham, 1985: 42).

THE KURDS AND THE IDEA OF A NATION

There is an intense debate between those claiming that the Kurds are a nation entitled to self-determination and those who argue that they are merely lost tribes of Turkic stock, an Arab nation or the Iranian race, who live in the remote mountains in mediaeval conditions, or bandits who have no grasp of modern political institutions and organizations (the climate of popular opinions held by Turks, Arabs and Persians respectively). Furthermore, world public opinion has, until recently, been unaware of the Kurdish plight.

Are the Kurds a nation? Do they constitute a nation? If they do, then, do they not qualify for the right of national self-determination under international law and the UN Charter? Or do they have no claim to such a right and they lack the criteria which makes a nation? The Kurds look upon themselves as ancient people constituting a nation equal to any other nation. Other views on the Kurds include a denial of their ethnic name in Turkey where they have been officially known as mountain Turks. The Iranians see the Kurds as another branch of the Iranian race cohabiting the land with no right to a separate state. The same right is denied in Iraq but with official recognition of the Kurds as a separate ethnic group. In Syria the attitudes oscillate from recognition to denial but the Kurds remain 'second class' citizens, while in Lebanon citizenship is denied to over 200,000 Kurds, who therefore have no cultural or legal rights. In the rest of the Arab world, the general public have failed to distinguish between the Iraqi and Syrian Arabs and the Kurds as a separate ethnic groups. They have always regarded them as Arabs. Only after the 1991 exodus did some ordinary Arabs come to realise that the Kurds are not Arabs. Also many Arabs from the Arab world (including Arabs in the southern parts of Iraq) have had difficulties in differentiating between Kurds and Turks as both sound similar. In the western world, opinion ranges from images of nineteenth century savagery and banditry to recognition of the Kurds as ethnic minorities or separate people. This analysis is intended to outline criteria such as territory, population, language, and will, which are considered central to the idea of nationality.

In respect of nationhood, one of the basic factors that the Kurds demonstrate to mark their nationality is their name (Smith, 1986: 32). As every other group in human geography, the Kurds are known as Kurdi or Kurd, and their

homeland in known as Kurdistan. Territory is another element that the Kurds display in characterising their nationality. A nation is characteristically associated with a particular territory to which it lays claim as the traditional and natural habitat and national homeland. If such a homeland does not exist, then, it has to be found as was the case with the Zionist thinkers of the late nineteenth century. Palestine, later Israel, played a significant and a unique role in the formation of the Israeli (Jewish) nation. It was that particular territory - the Promised Land - that continued to play the symbolic role for identification in religious ceremonies for the adherents of Judaism. Territory to them was not only home but as, Emerson observed, it was seen as 'a re-entry of the Jewish people into their national heritage' (Emerson, 1960: 106). Anthony Smith goes even further in emphasising the importance of territory by suggesting that an ethnie 'need not be in physical possession of its territory, what matters is that it has a symbolic geographical centre, as a sacred habitat, a homeland' (Smith, 1986: 28). Therefore, every nation needs its own home. Barker writes that 'The true nation has a home and it is by their possession of such a home and its shelter, that all true nations have developed traditions and character' (Barker, 1927: 15).

As a territory, Kurdistan was evidently recognised as the land of the Kurds even by the newcomers to the region. Among the many letters to his beloved Rita in Britain, the assistant to British Political Officer in Sulaimaniya, Thomas Richards, refers to the territories as the 'occupied territories of Mesopotamia and Kurdistan.' (he goes on, pointing out that he has been learning the Kurdish language) (The Independent 16/4/1991, p.16).

However, it is extremely difficult to establish the borderline of Kurdistan which traverses the frontiers of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria and parts of Transcaucasia, partly because the Kurdish territories do expand and contract (Ramazani, 1966: 34) depending on the political climate at any given period and in any given locality. The Autonomous Region of southern Kurdistan (Iraqi Kurdistan) for example, contracted when it was granted 'local autonomy' in 1970, on account of the exclusion of many Kurdish territories and tribes from the 'Autonomous Region' and their annexation to the provinces of Mosul and Kirkuk, though both provinces are claimed by Kurds as Kurdish. In addition, the continuous policies of deportation, resettlement and Arabization in Iraq, and those in Syria, Turkey and Iran aiming at changing the demography of

Kurdistan, have contributed to such fluctuating trends.

Thus, the task of estimating the total size of Kurdistan and drawing the frontiers is almost impossible. Some Kurdish sources, usually the nationalists, argue the size of Kurdistan to be similar to that of France (over 500,000 sq.km) (Hyman, 1988: 1. Also see Ghassemlou, 1965). Other sources put the figure around 390,000 sq.km (Encyclopedia of Islam V :440). Once again Kurdish nationalists claim that the territories occupied by the Kurds (including Luristan Province in southern parts of Kurdistan) run along the Iran/Iraq borders southwards to the Gulf where the Kurds have access to the sea, the Persian Gulf. The same claim is made regarding the width where the territory in question reaches the Mediterranean in the north-west (See maps A & B). Some independent sources (O'Ballance, 1973: 32) agree with more objective Kurds on the length of Kurdistan at around 1000 km, while the width extends northwards up to around 750 km (For an independent view see maps C, D and E).

Stretching from central Turkey in the north west to Lake Urmieh in the east and from the slopes of Mount Ararat in the north to near the Persian Gulf in the south, Kurdistan is a rugged and mountainous land with a high plateau and valleys of which some are quite wide. It is rich in water resources with many rivers flowing through it. The Tigris and Euphrates rivers flowing from the Kurdish heartland, although not navigable, have a potential for hydro-electricity (see Chapter Five). Other sizable rivers are, respectively, the Greater and Lesser Zab in Iraqi Kurdistan. There are also several lakes in various parts of Kurdistan such as Lake Van in Turkish Kurdistan and Lake Urmieh in Iranian Kurdistan.

The composition of land, too, can be taken as a mark of nationality (Hertz, 1944: 146). The Iraqi Kurds have, for example, often argued that they are different from the Arabs of Iraq by pointing to the geophysical differences where the land changes dramatically from a flat, semi-barren plain on the Arab side to rugged semi-forested mountains in Kurdistan. The Kurds further argue by pointing to the natural frontiers. As natural frontiers have marked the division between different nations as for example, the Pyrenees between France and Spain have done, so too in this case do the mountain ranges of Hammrin in southern Kurdistan, Zagaros in the east and Ararat in the north . All have been taken by the Kurds as their natural national frontiers. In Iraq the

Arabic word jabal (mountain) naturally has come to be associated with the Kurdish region, a reference to the Kurds.

Then, if the most significant outward factor in the formation of nationalities was a common territory (Pounds, 1963: 9-10), the Kurdish territorial claim can be presented as viable on the grounds that the region specified above has been their homeland down through the ages. In contrast to Africa for example (see for example, Herbst, 1989: 680), there is no difficulty in drawing Kurdish national boundaries to correspond with ethnic identification. And they have been recognized as such by the international community in the Treaty of Sèvres 1920. The territory has also been recognized by local administrators as in the case of Iraq where there is officially an autonomous region of Kurdistan, and in Iran where there is a province called Kurdistan (part of Iranian Kurdistan). Furthermore, the territory in question is overwhelmingly inhabited by Kurds. Despite deportation and resettlement throughout Kurdistan, the core of the national homeland remains Kurdish. There has been no mass or significant migration or influx of other groups into the heart of Kurdistan. Thus, if the basis of every nation 'is its population, recognizable by certain common characters, the most important of which is a sense of belonging to some distinct portion of land' (Weilenmann in Deutsch & Foltz, 1963: 33), then the Kurds fulfil that criterion.

If we look at some theoretical views on the nation (for example, Alexander, 1963: 114, Stalin, 1936: 6, Baker, 1927: 17), then, territory can be identified as a vital component upon which people build up their claims to be a nation. It is on this 'territorial thesis' (Buchanan, 1992: 353), then that the Kurds will have no trouble in presenting this important character as firm evidence to substantiate their argument.

Moreover, it is argued that in order to make a nation, an ethnie should be 'more than a face-to-face group, the individual member of which can meet together in one place and transact business in common' (RIIA Report, 1939: 251). The size of population, however, has not been an actual definitive barrier for an ethnie's aspiration towards nationhood. Although there is no agreement by which the size of nation is determined, in Nations & States, Watson argues that a nation exists if 'a significant number of people in a community consider themselves to form a nation' (Watson, cited in Alter, 1989:

5). Nevertheless, there has been no stipulation on what is a significant number, or how many people there should be in order to make a nation. However, we find in the political maps small countries in terms of both population and size of territory (the tiny Island of Nauru with about 5,263 acres of territory and 3,100 inhabitants, became an independent state in 1968), while others occupy large territories or even a continent (Australia) with big populations such as China, Brazil, India or the United States of America. Despite these variations in the modern nation, size is important. The term nation applies to a wider community than kinship occupying a 'single locality' (Akzin, 1964: 31).

To this end the size of the Kurdish population, divided or on aggregate, represents a reasonable size to make a nation. If we take the total size of the Kurds it is estimated to be between 20 and 30 millions, (Bulloch and Morris, 1992: 4, 51-2, Laizer, 1991: 1) the size of many medium nations. Even if the Kurdish population was considered individually in each of the four parts each area still have enough population to make up a nation. The smallest part of the population, Syrian Kurdistan, around two millions, is still big enough to equal countries like, for example, Kuwait.

A further element by which the Kurds distinguish themselves from others is language. Kurdish, the language spoken by the inhabitants of Kurdistan, is a separate and independent language (Ramazani, 1966: 33; Edmonds, 1957: 7). It is spoken in two main dialects <u>Kirmmanji</u> and <u>Sorani</u> (for further details on various dialects see <u>Voice of Kurdistan</u> No.3, January 1991).

The <u>Kirmmanji</u> dialect is spoken in north and north-western parts of Kurdistan including the Kurds in the former Soviet Union, most of Turkish Kurdistan, Syria and the western territories of Iraqi Kurdistan in the province of Bahdinan comprising the districts of Dohuk, Mosul and part of Arbil. It is also spoken in some parts around the province of Urmieh in eastern-Iranian, Kurdistan (Ghassemlou, 1965: 26). The <u>Sorani</u> dialect, also known as Kurdi, Mukri, Sulaimani or the southern dialect (references are made to these names as separate local dialects rather than different labels for one dialect (Great Britain Naval Intelligence Division - GBNID, 1944: 325), on the other hand, is spoken by Kurds inhabiting the south and south-eastern parts of Kurdistan, consisting of the districts of Sulaimaniya, Kirkuk and the remaining parts of

Arbil in Iraqi Kurdistan, and Mahabad, Kermanshah, Kurdistan, Saggez and Sanandadj provinces in Iranian Kurdistan. Other noticeable, though minor, dialects are Zaza (Dimbili or Dimili), spoken only by a group in the far western parts of Turkish Kurdistan, in Dersim, Elazig, Bingol and Siverek. Zaza has some relationship with the Gorani, which for its part is used by certain groups both in Iraqi and Iranian Kurdistan (Edmonds, 1957: 10). Gorani is spoken mainly in Hawreman area in Dalehu and surroundings, west of Kermanshah. The Gorani dialect is sometimes referred to as Hawremani (for further details on language see for example 'The Kurdish Language And Some Of Its Characteristics', Voice of Kurdistan, No. 3, January 1991).

The Kurdish language has managed to retain a large degree of originality despite centuries of domination by other cultures and attempts at cultural assimilation by means of banning the language, especially in Turkey after the First World War (Ghassemlou, 1965: 26) and in Syria after its independence in 1946. Of course, it cannot be denied that some Arabic words and phrases are repeated in Kurdish mainly because the daily practice of Islam is conducted in Arabic. This is common not only in Kurdish but also in all lands under Islamic influence.

A nation is seen by most scholars and writers as a community of people sharing one language or the dialects of a common language (Scruton, 1982: 312). Language 'binds a group of people together, gives it a unified and manageable entity, and distinguishes it from other national communities' (Duchacek, 1975: 48). As the prime instrument of communication, speaking the same language leads to the creation of a common bond, and a shared feeling of belonging. Language, observes Hertz, 'is not only a means for communicating with others. It also constitutes the most powerful implement for developing personality, both individual and collective' (Hertz, 1944: 78).

Kurdish, then, emerges as a significant element in the demarcation of Kurdish national identity and personality, and if Hertz's assumption that a nation 'is simply a people with separate language' (Hertz, 1944: 95), then Kurds will strongly classify themselves and be classified as a separate people possessing that important element of nationhood. The strength of the Kurdish presentation of language lays on the independence and separateness of their language from both Turkish and Arabic. Moreover, since language can be classified as either

an exclusive possession of the group, as Italian or Polish (RIIA Report, 1939: 254), for example, or one which is shared with others as are English or French, Kurdish can be pointed out as more of an exclusive possession of the Kurds. It is spoken only by the inhabitants of Kurdistan and is not shared with a non-Kurdish population.

Scholars disagree as to whether language can be the decisive factor in distinguishing nationalities. In 1919, when the peace treaties were being framed, it was generally acknowledged that people who share the same language did not require further proof of their nationality in order to form a nation (Hertz, 1944: 96). There was a general tendency, observes Cobban, to believe that language was a sufficient test of nationality. Cobban points to Toynbee's argument that the rise of the sentiment of 'nationality in Central and Eastern Europe had associated itself not with the new frontiers or the new geographical association but rather on mother tongues' (Cobban, 1945: 24). And for Herder, for a man 'to speak a foreign language was to live an artificial life, to be estranged from the spontaneous instinctive sources of his personality' (Kedourie, 1960: 64).

Nevertheless, Herder's conception of the importance of language as a pillar of nationhood has been contested by some, who point out that language by itself does not provide the social cement for all groups. References are usually made to the Swiss, who have come to make a successful nation despite the fact that they speak four different languages. Scotland too has been pointed out as a place where language has ceased to play the role. of identification and personality. Instead, institutions, legal and educational systems have emerged forming the social bulwark for a continuing Scots sense of ethnic identification (Smith, 1986: 26-7). However, even when the 'economic' conditions and the 'alternatives', in the above examples, were to be found, language may still play a leading role in determining nationality. The tension between the French and English speaking Canadians, the question of Wales and the conflict in Cyprus between the Turkish and Greek speaking Cypriots are good examples (as in Kurdistan) of severe tension in some pluralist societies. Conversely, in order to forge the new Israeli nation, the founders of Israel, for example, made Hebrew the official language. Again in Pakistan, attempts were made to establish Urdu as the national language. But because of the negative impact of this step in Eastern Pakistan (Bangladesh),

the 1954 constitution opened the door for other local languages to be recognised. The adopted constitutions of 1956 recognised that the official languages should be Urdu and Bengali (Emerson, 1960: 139).

In summing up, then, if 'no nation is possible without common language' (Stalin, 1936: 12), the Kurds present Kurdish as a national character determining the boundaries of Kurdish ethnicity, identity and a living proof of their national personality. Despite the difficulties that Kurdish has and still encounters such as the absence of a unified script, nevertheless, the language has as Kreyenbroek points out, 'lost none of its positive symbolic value, it is felt to prove that the Kurds are an independent people, with a literature and therefore an identity, of their own' (Kreyenbroek, Closed Seminar, April 1991, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London).

The linguistic colonialism of the dominant cultures has failed to erode Kurdish as a language and supplant it with the core languages be they Turkish, Arabic or Persian. The Kurds have clung to their language despite pressures from the central administrations and have not abandoned their native tongue. It might be argued that the Kurdish language in Turkey is no more than a relic in the mouths of old people. The lifting of the ban on Kurdish in Turkey in 1991 (The Observer 27/1/1991), however indicates the persistence of the language which the state's ideology could not overcome in seventy years of suppression. As a result, then, if we take Scruton's definition of a nation as consisting of 'people sharing common language (or dialects of a common language), inhabiting a fixed territory ...' (Scruton, 1983: 312), then the Kurds can safely claim to be a nation and not a mere offshoot of Arab or Turkish stock.

Last but not least, ethnic communities, nations, are nothing if not 'historical communities built upon shared memories'. And it is this sense of common history which moulds and unites 'successive generations each with its set of experience which are added to the common stock' (Smith, 1986: 25). In that respect the Kurds have a long span of time and a common historical experience that can and does generate potent common myths, legend and sympathies. The Kurds claim to be one of the ancient tribes in the region, with a recorded history dating back to the third millennium BC (Naamani, 1966:

281). Early empires as well as modern ones regularly sought to conquer them whether politically by winning the loyalty of the tribes or by actual military conquest, on account of Kurdistan's strategic importance as a buffer zone and the usefulness of its inhabitants for warfare (Curzon, 1966: 552).

However, throughout history the tribes dwelling in Kurdistan have often ignored the authority of the outside powers. Referring to the tribes who harassed the ten thousand Greek soldiers around the present town of Zakho in Iraqi Kurdistan along the international border with Turkey, Xenophon (400 BC) in his Anabasis describes them as '...living in the mountains, are brave and will submit neither to the rule of King Xerxes, nor to Armenian rule' (Ghassemlou, 1965: 34. Also see Bulloch and Morris, 1992: 55). Furthermore, throughout the dominance of empires like the Parthian, Macedonian, Assyrian, Roman, Persian and Ottoman, the Kurdish tribes retained a large degree of their political, economic and cultural identity. Though influenced by, they were not absorbed into them and '..they have proved a thorn in the side of every ruling power' (Curzon, 1966: 550). Kurdish scholars regard the defeat of the Assyrian empire and the fall of their capital Nineveh in 612 BC to the Medes as the beginning of distant Kurdish history (Ghassemlou, 1965: 35).

During the tenth and eleventh centuries the Kurds managed to establish successful dynasties in various parts of Kurdistan (Humphreys, 1977: 29). Although they were virtually independent, these principalities maintained a nominal allegiance to the Abbasid Caliphs (allegiance to the supreme Caliph, the overall leader of the Muslim Umma, is usually expected from the Muslim nation as the Caliph is the source of legitimacy). By the eleventh century, the Kurds came to play an important role in the politics of the Middle East. Competition between the two Islamic orthodoxies, Shiite and Sunni, in Cairo and Baghdad respectively, encouraged the Europeans to invade the Muslim east in the name of religion and under the pretext of liberating the Holy Land (Irwin, 1986: 11). It was here that the Kurds came first to overthrow the Fatimid dynasty in Egypt in 1171 and then set up the Ayyubid dynasty in 1174 (Bulloch and Morris, 1992: 64-8; Irwin, 1986: 11-12). It cannot be denied, however, that many Kurdish individuals have contributed to the Islamic civilization (Encyclopedia of Islam, V, 481). The outstanding Kurd in Islamic history is probably the Sultan Salahdin Ayyubi (1138-93), a hero among the Kurds and a legend in the Muslim world. Although his authority extended to

cover most of the present region of the Middle East after driving the European crusaders out of the region, neither he nor his successors accentuated any nationalistic Kurdish connections. Although the Kurds were instrumental in preserving the integrity of the Muslim east, modern Arab nationalists tend to 'obscure the fact that in medieval times Kurdish and Turkish elites were the prime movers in the region' (The Independent 2/3/1991).

The Kurds have, despite their difficulties in writing their history freely, managed to revitalize that important historical sense through an oral tradition, passing down legends through generations. Thus, history, as a factor in the formation of Kurdish nationality, has emerged as a source of common sympathy and solidarity. Therefore, the Kurds can fulfil Ernest Renan's requirement of nation which was stressed in his lecture; Qu'est-ce qu'une nation? in 1882 when he stressed that a nation is based on a sense of common history, especially a memory of common suffering in which the Kurdish case is, indeed, very rich.

Finally, as wars have played a significant role in the process of forming nations (Hertz, 1944: 217), the never-ending wars which have been raging in Kurdistan have contributed enormously to the formation of a Kurdish personality. Kurdish history is largely based on wars with the Persians, Turks and Arabs. Great battles, great heroes, victories, betrayal and defeats, all form a considerable portion of the Kurdish mentality. The numerous rebellions in the twentieth century, for example, with the usual bloody ending where they have been ruthlessly put down has left a deep sense of common suffering in face of the common foe or foes (Turks, Persians and Arabs). These sufferings have naturally influenced the Kurdish consciousness, and have created the common bond and the common sense of being persecuted.

However, theorists have suggested that what really makes a nation is the will of the people to live together (Renan reprinted in Zimmern, 1939: 203; Hartmann, 1957: 28; Greene, 1964: 379). For Renan and his supporters the existence of a nation ultimately depends on the will of the individuals who occupy a piece of land and consider themselves a nation. It is, of course, necessary to take into consideration the question whether the peoples look upon themselves as a nation or not. To this end Hertz defines nationality as 'community formed by the will to be a nation' (Hertz, 1944: 12).

An ethnie is not just a category of people sharing a common name, culture, territorial association or history. It is, indeed, a community with a definite sense of peculiar identity and solidarity. Anthony Smith observes the cases of the Slovaks and the Ukrainians in the eighteenth century, pointing out that they were classified as an ethnic category for possessing the objective characters thereof; but they had little or no sense of community and solidarity (Smith, 1981: 30). Therefore, to qualify as an ethnic community, as opposed to a mere ethnic category, a people must have a strong 'sense of belonging and solidarity which in time of stress and danger can override class, factional or regional division within the community'. In addition to this sense of identification and communal solidarity, for an ethnie which aspires to nationhood, Smith continues, it must first 'become politicized and stake claims in the competition for power and influence in the state arena' (Smith, 1981: 30). Do the Kurds then possess this sense of national identification and have they politicized their claims for national self-determination?

Setting aside the tribal and political differences and the actual partition of the nation into four segments, pride in being a Kurd is an overwhelming sentiment reflected in the continuity of Kurdish nationalism. Moreover, as to the politicization stage which is a necessary step towards nationhood, the Kurds have long politicized their claim for nationhood and statehood. They have been competing in the state arena for equality, power and personality. Since the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire, they have been politically and militarily active in order to achieve statehood. They did compete with other groups in the Empire. Since then they have taken every opportunity to stake their claim for independence as was the case, for example, with the Mahabad Republic in Iranian Kurdistan in 1946, or at least for local autonomy as they have done in Iraqi Kurdistan. Furthermore, they have the required politicized elite and the cadres to carry out the process of building and running a state of their own. Cases of the Kurdish élite participating in the highest level of politics in Turkey, Iraq, Syria and Iran are clear evidence of the availability of such an élite to undertake, given the opportunity, the running of a Kurdish state.

Despite the lack of a single legal concept of the nation (on different concepts see Hertz, 1944: 6) which is usually expressed in legal documents

such as passports, the Kurds have developed the social concept of nation, which is expressed in national consciousness, which has in return been manifested in the Kurdish struggle for national personality. It is their awareness of distinctiveness that has made a nation an idea as well as a fact in the minds and perceptions of the Kurds. The pressure of nationalism, economic conditions as well as their reaction to the hostile nationalisms flowing in from all directions, have all put immense pressure on the Kurdish ethnie to move towards nationhood. The will to be a Kurd, to be a member of the Kurdish nation, and the belief in common values, social norms and traditions have always been prevalent in the making of national consciousness individually and collectively. It has been through this action of 'consciousness collective' (Hechter, 1975: 4) that the Kurds as individuals have become socialized.

Achieving national independence and statehood is indeed a priority topping the nationalist agenda even in the absent of sufficient communication resources. The respective struggle of the Eritreans and the Kurds are recent examples (Eritrea achieved statehood in 1991). For them only nationhood and statehood would provide the conditions suitable for enhancing further national sentiment. The unavailability of effective and sufficient communication (Deutsch, 1953: 70-1) in Kurdistan, for example, are attributed to the reluctance of the central authorities who have, as the Kurds argue, deliberately avoided introducing modernization and effective communications. Being on the periphery, the Kurdish regions have always come at the end of the list for any investment.

In conclusion, then, the interpretation of the idea of a nation, as a major social phenomenon, can, as Joo argues, differ substantially depending on the discipline (history, anthropology, political science, sociology, and so on, or on the geographic and cultural background of the author). As a result of the arguments and counter arguments in the conceptual debate, national identity can be attached either to the state (legal-political interpretation) or to certain ethnic elements (ethno-cultural interpretation) (Joo, 1991: 101). In other words, the concept of nation can be interpreted in two ways, either according to national development or the political tendency to efface the boundaries of nation and state, as in the Swiss case (Boehm, 1933: 231-2). Here the individual's adherence is to the state, or in contrast, the nation

can be viewed in a cultural context, where it is founded upon the spirit of community which results from sharing certain objective characteristics and does not have to be mediated by national government or other political forms (Alter, 1989: 14).

The Kurds, then, can demonstrate, with no difficulties, their claim to the right of cultural nationhood. The internal and regional political and economic conditions under which they have evolved have shaped a nation of politically aware and conscious people. If we then apply Barker's formula (Barker, 1927: 15) to the Kurdish case we can find that in an identifiable territory, Kurdistan, the organization is to be found in the political parties as well as the tribes, the language is Kurdish, the belief is the spirit of Kurdishness. These have over time led to the shaping of the Kurdish nation. They have been displaying Smith's 'syndrome of character' by which they have persistently made demands for the recognition of their identity by others (Smith, 1989: 231-2).

NATIONAL SELF-DETERMINATION

Parallel to the idea of the nation, is the idea of the state. A state is a 'place' and a 'concept represented by certain symbols and demanding....the loyalty of people' (Glassner & Blij, 1980: 43). Hence, the state has come to be regarded as the sanctuary of the nation. It is only within the boundaries of its own state that a nation feels satisfied (on state see; McLennan, Held and Hall, 1984); thus, fusion between the two has been the main objective of nationalists. However, as a political expression of the nation, the state is the political identity of the cultural unit; the nation-state unit, therefore becomes a nation with a state wrapped around it (Glassner & Blij, 1980: 47). This view can be traced to the French Revolution, which assumed that the cause of peace would be well served if each nation were able to choose its own political destiny (Couloumbis & Wolfe, 1978: 38). Yet it is difficult to find such concurrence on a large scale as nation-states are few in number. The political state rarely encompasses all the territory of the national culture. The overlapping of political and ethnic boundaries has therefore made most states heterogenous rather than homogeneous. This has subsequently led to endless demands often expressed in violent armed struggles by unsatisfied

stateless groups.

The creation of states in the first half of the twentieth century was not according to specifications and standards. It was rather a random product of the Europeans in Africa and Asia. In the Middle East, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Kuwait and Iraq were created between the two world wars, largely to suit the imperial interest. To reward Prince Abdullah, the son of Sharif Hussein, the Kingdom of Transjordan was created; it is said that Churchill drew the map during a Sunday afternoon tea party (Darussalam, No. 89, 15/12/1995), even though the Kingdom had neither a sizable settled population nor natural resources. It had to depend on the United Kingdom for its economic survival (Taheri, 1988: 73). Even Jordan's military organisation was headed by an Englishman, Glubb Pasha.

As a people the Kurds have, because of a variety of historically evolved relations of a cultural, linguistic, territorial and political nature, become increasingly conscious of their ethnic coherence. Therefore, they have, as almost every other people have or have done, demanded the right to national self-determination, via the creation of a Kurdish state. However, one of the basic difficulties the Kurds have faced so far and probably will continue to face in the foreseeable future is that the prospect of this realization has become dependent upon regional political development and the interest and influence of other states in the region. The fate of Kurdistan has, consequently, become enmeshed in the regional balance of power configuration.

The emergence of contemporary independent states has brought to the fore the plight of many groups who have been divided among different states by arbitrarily drawn international boundaries. The politics of the nation-state and the programmes of nation-building have, however, failed in many countries to unify the heterogenous populations. Assimilation and integration ideologies have also failed to integrate different nationalities into one citizen body in any state. This problem of mixed population has usually led groups to voice their desire for national recognition and ultimately national self-determination. They have, whenever possible, displayed the desire to break away from the state structure in which they believe they have been wrongly or unjustifiably confined against their own wishes. Hence, the highly political principle of self-determination broadly means 'The arrangement by a group of

individuals of their own life together in their own way, and preserving the character of the group' (Fawcett, 1968: 36). As a political rather than a legal phenomenon, national self-determination is persistently stated as a right by national minorities and has usually served as 'a rationalization for rebellion and secession when demands for separate government have not been met' (Plano & Olton, 1982: 36).

The systematic disadvantage of the Kurds in the states they inhabit, has given Kurdish nationalism a significant political and cultural motivation to struggle for a Kurdish state. The establishment of such a state has become imperative for the Kurds since the conditions under which they have been living do not seem to be improving. The inclusion of the Kurds in Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria has consequently presented Kurds with serious problems. Although the political systems of these states vary, they, nevertheless, share attitudes towards Kurdish aspirations. Turkey's army-dominated 'democracy', Iran's theocracy, and Syria and Iraq's authoritarian regimes, have either denied or restricted Kurdish rights. These states embarked on building nation-states based on their respective national majorities, and excluding the Kurds or undermining Kurdish identity through assimilation and integration. Thus, as the Turks and Arabs, for example, were sponsoring their own nationalisms within the framework of their states, the Kurds, not possessing a state as a vessel for such promotion failed to promote their nationalism equally. The absence of a Kurdish state has meant, first, the lack of commitment for economic development in Kurdistan. It is probably true to describe Kurdish society as 'living in several centuries simultaneously. The peasant's biblical ass shuffles alongside the feudal lord's latest model Mercedes' (Kendal in Chaliand, 1980: 52). The Kurdish economy is mainly based on agriculture with a peasant population as high as 80 percent whose income is chiefly derived from farming and livestock.

Moreover, the markets for Kurdish agricultural produce lie mainly outside Kurdistan. This dependency has always caused the Kurdish farmer a great deal of trouble. Following the end of the war of 1975 and until the end of the 1980s, the Kurdish farmer in Iraq was allocated a small quota for his products. Unlike his Arab counterpart, the Kurdish farmer was restricted to the local market which was already saturated, and was not permitted to seek the national markets by taking his product to, say, Baghdad or Basra.

Frustrated farmers often left their tomatoes and grapes unpicked since they had to wait for boxes distributed by government union branches. This process usually meant a lengthy period of time waiting for the distribution of the empty boxes. Denying the national market to the Kurdish farmer was partly to protect the Arab farmer who would have a near monopoly, and partly to 'punish' the Kurds, as was often claimed by Ba'ath officials in the Kurdish region. This trend led many farmers to abandon farming and move to the shanty towns searching for employment instead (personal).

Industrial development in Kurdistan has been very slow and limited. Apart from the few factories set up in the last two or three decades, the existing industries are village-orientated and manual. The main industry, particularly in Iran and Iraq, is the state-controlled processing of tobacco. Elsewhere, carpet and rug weaving, whether done at home or in small factories, is the main activity, again with a market almost totally outside Kurdistan. Local crafts such as shoe-making and textiles are still family-based. Although Kurdistan plays an important part in contributing to the economies of the respective countries, central governments have hitherto paid very little attention to introducing modern norms of industrialisation and modernisation to the region and there has been very limited investment (Sim, 1980: 2). The impact of the lack of investment has been evident throughout Kurdistan. George Harris, for example, identifies Turkish Kurdistan as the least developed part of Turkey (Harris, 1985: 13). He points to the small industrial base in Turkish Kurdistan, which is by no means sufficient enough to absorb the excess labour force. The result has been a large-scale migration of the local labour force to other parts of Turkey and abroad. Communications are still poor. Only in Iraqi Kurdistan has a relatively modern network of roads been built in recent years, mainly to facilitate the mobilisation of troops in that inhospitable region.

Secondly, the absence of a Kurdish state has meant the inability of the Kurds to promote their nationalism through education, literature and art. Kurdish cultural activities are either prohibited, impeded, or directed by the respective central governments. Thirdly, the absence of a Kurdish state has meant denying the Kurdish nation international recognition and personality. Therefore, the Kurds have been denied access to international and regional fora (for further details see under Conclusion). Realising the significance

of statehood, the Kurds have continued through armed uprisings to endeavour to establish their own state.

The principle of National Self-Determination (NSD) found its way into Kurdish national aspirations as early as the beginning of the twentieth century. When the doctrine was by 1917 turning from a mere phrase into what Woodrow Wilson called an 'imperative principle of action' (cited in Cobban, 1945: 13), some Kurds envisaged the possibility of a Kurdish state, and the principle was so popular among them and seemed attainable at the time that many people chose the name Wilson as the first name for their offspring (Taheri, 1988: 89).

After the First World War the Kurds were able specifically to seek the establishment of a Kurdish state, by basing their appeal on Wilson's Fourteen Points of January 1918. The Kurds cited Point XII of Wilson's list:

> The Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development (quoted in Hoover, 1958: 22).

President Wilson's programme for 'other nationalities' specifically mentioned 'three countries which should attain statehood under League of Nations mandate and which should not be broken up, namely (in this order) Armenia, Kurdistan and Arabia (H.D.Hall, 1948: 37 as observed by Vanly in Chaliand, 1980: 159).

The Kurds were active after the Mudros Armistice of 30 October 1918. Their committees of liberation which were formed before and during the war, assembled in Kahta near Malatia, to oppose and resist the Kemalist movement even if it required force to do so. This gathering by Kurdish nationalists was dissuaded by Colonel Bell of the British Intelligence Service who promised them that their aspirations would be considered and would not be overlooked at the Peace Treaties (Bois, 1966: 143). The Kurdish campaign bore fruit in the Treaty of Sèvres of 1920. Articles 62 and 64 of the treaty provided for a commission composed by the Allied members to draft a scheme of local autonomy for the Kurdish areas. The Sultan's government promised to allow self-government to the Kurds if within a year the majority of the Kurds wanted

such rule and if the League of Nations considered them fit for it (Kinnane, 1966: 28). However, and as a result of the Turkish War of Independence which followed, the Allied Powers drew up a new peace treaty, the Treaty of Lausanne, signed with Turkey in 1923, which failed to mention the Kurds, their past, present or future.

The Kurds were presented with yet another opportunity to press their demands. The question of Mosul gave them the chance to put their predicament before the League of Nations. A dispute over the vilayet of Mosul - southern or Iraqi Kurdistan - erupted between Turkey and Britain (see map F). The British forces were stationed about 50 miles south of Mosul at the time of the Armistice of 30 October 1918. They entered Mosul on 3 November 1918. The vilayet of Mosul had acquired an extra importance as a result of the discovery of oil. Under Article 3(2) of the Treaty of Lausanne, Mosul was temporarily allocated to Turkey. The future of the vilayet, however, was to be the subject of negotiations between Britain and Turkey and, if no agreement was reached within a month, the case was to be referred to the League's Council. Although negotiations took place, they did not yield any results and on 6 August 1924 the British Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, appealed to the League of Nations to make a decision. A commission of enquiry was dispatched to examine the matter on the spot. In October the crisis worsened, and on 9 October Britain issued an ultimatum to the Turks to withdraw their forces within 48 hours. On 30 October, at a League Council meeting in Geneva, a line of temporary demarcation was fixed. The Commission of Inquiry, made up of Belgian, Hungarian and Swedish observers, tested local opinion. It found that the predominantly Kurdish population of the vilayet of Mosul had little enthusiasm for either claimant, and the population were adamant in wanting an independent state of their own. The Commission, however, concluded that Iraq should be awarded a 25 year mandate over Mosul (Northedge, 1986: 106). The commission's report suggested that:

> If a conclusion is to be drawn from the racial argument alone, it would lead to sanctioning the creation of a Kurdish independent state, the Kurds forming five ninths of the population. If such a solution should be envisaged, it would be appropriate to add to this figure the Yézidis, Kurds of the Zoroastrian faith, and the Turks [Turkumans], who would easily be assimilated to the Kurdish element. On the basis of

such an evaluation the Kurds would constitute seven ninths of the total population (As quoted from Bois, 1966: 144).

Nevertheless, the Council of the League of Nations in its 37th session on 16 December 1925, decided that the vilayet of Mosul should go to Iraq, while guaranteeing Kurdish rights (Bois, 1966: 144). Realising its strong position in the Council, Britain sought to make the Council's decision binding. The issue was referred, for advisory opinion, to the World Court in The Hague, whose consequent recommendations were in Britain's favour. The Kurds were to receive guarantees from the Mandatory Power but of course this was a long way short of fulfilling Kurdish aspirations. On 11 March 1926, the Council declared the definitive settlement of the frontiers. As a result southern Kurdistan, against the wishes of its population, was formally annexed to the newly created Kingdom of Iraq. The Kurds had pinned their hopes on Britain, and had, as observes Hamilton, requested to be placed under the British mandate rather than under Turkey as 'they sought eventual independence and had not bargained on being left under Arab officials'. But Hamilton points out to the British position by admitting:

> We were then, however, beginning to give our support entirely to the Arab interests in the Iraq government, and the Sheikh's followers [referring to Sheikh Mahmud or the Kurds] had good reason for believing that our statesmen could not make up their minds what to do with the Kurdish districts. There seemed to be no assurance whatever that Britain, as Mandatory power, wished to retain her influence in Kurdistan (Hamilton, 1958: 136).

Despite the promises made to the Kurds by the victorious powers, Kurdish aspirations did not materialize. The European powers did not seem interested in guaranteeing the right of self-determination to the Kurds. The emergence of a strong nationalist Turkish republic, the growing British interest in Iraq and Iran, especially in the oil fields, and perhaps to some extent the support and participation of some Kurds in the Turkish liberation movement which acquired a religious character against the invading Greeks, 'the infidels', all eroded their earlier sympathies and the promises made to the Kurds, who thus lost their first opportunity to create a Kurdish state.

However, Sheikh Mahmud set up an independent government in Sulaimaniya. Hamilton observes 'The Sheikh actually formed a Kurdish government and even printed his own postage stamps. And ministerial portfolios included Minister of Education, Minister of Custom and Excise, etc' (Hamilton, 1958: 136). The British were regarded as the only obstacle to the achievement of Kurdish sovereignty. British indecision was interpreted by the Kurds as temporary. Hamilton points out that the Kurds believed that the British 'soon ...will go and then we shall have no need to fear the Arabs'. Despite the efforts of the Mandatory British political officer in Sulaimainya, Captain Clarke, the Sheikh 'had no intention of being persuaded [by Clarke] to accept the administrative instructions of an Arab government..'. Nevertheless, the Sheikh was warned and advised that he 'must remain under the government [of Baghdad]...and give up his plans for self-determination' (Hamilton, 1958: 135, 136).

This course of events show the unwillingness of the Allies to apply the idea of national rights outside Europe. It was the conflict between American liberalism and European imperial realism that led to the slow or limited application of the principle. It is said that because of her growing interest in the region, Britain put pressure on France to detain Sheikh Mahmud Al-Berzenji's envoys in Syria to stop them from attending the Peace conference in France (Sako, 1987: 118). Britain and France were busy with the spoils of victory. The world was there to be taken and not given away. Baylson observes that Wilson's Fourteen Points conflicted with the Anglo-French Sykes-Picot Agreement which had already divided the Middle East between the two. At the Peace Conference Wilson proposed to send an inter-Allied commission to the near east to assess the wishes and aspirations of the population on the future of the region. The Europeans, Britain, France and Italy, initially agreed, but then refused to send commissioners (Baylson, 1987: 90).

The idea of applying the right of national self-determination outside Europe attracted no interest among the European powers. Many people who sought the right outside Europe, such as the Kurds, were seen as unfit and incapable of self-government. General Smuts of South Africa argued that the German colonies are populated by 'barbarians who can not only possibly govern themselves, but to whom it would be impractical to apply any idea of political independence in the European sense' (Smuts, 1918, quoted from Boumahdi, 1988: 35). Hence, the nineteenth century nomadic and semi-nomadic nature of the Kurds has always

been pointed out with the suggestion that they are not fit to rule themselves. Bullard notes that there have been demands for an independent Kurdistan, or at least autonomy. But '..it is doubtful whether the majority of the Kurdish villagers and nomads have any clear conception of such organization' (Bullard, 1958: 491). Images of the barbaric nature of Kurdish society appears too often in the accounts of many Europeans who had been or worked in the region. In To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise, the British officer E.B. Soane describes the Kurds as:

> shedders of blood, raisers of strife, seekers after turmoil and uproar, robbers and brigands; a people all malignant and evil-doers of depraved habits, ignorant of all mercy, devoid of all humanity, scorning the garment of wisdom (Soane as quoted in Khashan & Harik, 1992: 150).

These images had indeed contributed to the lack of interest or sympathy for the Kurds among those granting the right of self-determination to others. However, the objection to granting the Kurds the right on the ground that they are not prepared to rule themselves can be objectively contested by pointing to cases where the right was granted to groups not necessarily more advanced or prepared than the Kurds. Thus, the western liberal ideals of Wilson and Lloyd George, for example, were not acted upon. The reason was that the imperial powers of Europe had ensured (in the drafting of Article 22 of the text of the Mandate of the League of Nations) control over the people who they thought were not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, the tutelage of whom should be entrusted to advanced nations.

Moreover, it is often argued that Kurds do not qualify for and are not entitled to the right of NSD because they were never politically independent, and there was never a state called Kurdistan. Such a precondition, however, has not been a factor for the emergence of many states (Emerson, 1960: 116). Again if the Kurds have had no prior political independence of their own, they, like many other people such as Pakistan and most Arab and most African states, were part of multi-national empires. The various ethnies in the Middle East, for example, were part of successive empires from as early as the eighth century onwards. None of today's Middle Eastern states can objectively and satisfactorily make claims to having been a prior national ethnic state,

or a prior nation-state based on territorial conditions or ethnic elements. Until the twentieth century identification and loyalty was with the larger Muslim umma (nation). During that period, the factor binding people was Islam.

With the birth of the UN as an international body replacing the League of Nations, the right of self-determination was embodied in the UN charter for the first time as a universal right enjoying an international consensus. Although Articles 1, Para (2); 55; 73, and Article 76 of the UN Charter affirm the right of self-determination, the language of the Charter is ambiguous and unclear so far as people like the Kurds are concerned. It was largely drawn up with colonies and trust territories in mind. Thus, despite the importance of the right, little significance was attached to the loose language in which self-determination was mentioned in the Charter.

Although the UN adopted several resolutions concerning the right of self-determination such as Resolution 421 (v) 1950, 545 (VI) 1952, 637 (AV II) 1952, 2649 (XXV), 1514(XV) 1960, 2787 (XXVI) 1971, and Resolution 3314 (XXIX), the language of the right expressed so far, though universal, remained specific to colonial and foreign domination. Schwarzenberger suggests that in fact the UN Charter did not provide any rights to peoples already under the territorial control of member states, other than a consensual basis in trust territories and former League Mandates (Schwarzenberger, 1976: 15). Thus the Kurds found little help in the Resolutions since they were not recognized as being subject to foreign or colonial domination.

However, if the earlier UN declarations and resolutions concerning human rights and the principle of self-determination were inherently ambiguous, the International Covenants on Human Rights which came into force on 30 January and 23 March 1976, leave no ambiguity. It appears, thence, that the Kurds would qualify for and be entitled to the right of self-determination and the establishment of their own state.

However, the doctrine of self-determination which became both a catalyst and justification for independence movements throughout the world and was instrumental in the decolonization period after the Second World War was difficult to apply. The difficulties with the application of the right remains that of;

1) the difficulty over finding a satisfactory definition or criteria for what constitutes a nation.

2) the impracticality in altering the frontiers and setting up of new states, to avoid creating new minorities.

3) the will to apply (Cobban, 1945: 23).

Even the interpretation of the relevant international law remains concerned only with the non-self-governing territory which is either under formal colonial rule or, is 'being subjected to explicit and legal racism or similar forms of political discrimination or by being under military occupation' (Wiberg in Lewis, 1983: 49). Under international law, the decolonization process meant that 'the inherited colonial boundaries would be the legitimate boundaries of the newly independent states' (Thomas in Booth, 1991: 270). Therefore, one of the main reasons the Kurds have neither achieved self-determination nor established any legal claims under the interpretation of the international law has been because they were not directly under colonial (European) rule. After all, the unique character of the Afro-Asian movements, observes Walker Connor, was obtaining independence not in terms of ethnic distinctions but along the essentially 'happenstance borders that delimited either the sovereignty or the administrative zones of the formal colonial powers' (Connor, 1967: 173). Thus, the colonial era, which became the pretext for the application of the right to the colonies, was perhaps the vital element that was missing for the Kurds to claim the right under international law. In other words, Kurdistan was not a colony or under direct Mandate through which it could demand independence as conceived for in the UN Charter. Although the British mandate over Iraq extended to cover the vilayet of Mosul (Iraqi Kurdistan), nevertheless, the mandatory centre was Baghdad and the people were the Iraqis not the Kurds. The Kurdish region remained on the periphery. Although the new states of Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria were viewed by the Kurds as neo-colonial, in the eyes of international law the Kurds' plight remained a domestic affair of these states. Thus, missing out European colonial rule, the Kurds missed out the claim to NSD, lacking the pretext which became crucial in the international arena and international law.

Furthermore, even though Kurdistan has been under permanent military

occupation (in the form of the troops of the central governments stationed there) this has not, under international law, been seen as military occupation. Even the application of martial law throughout Kurdistan (in Turkey it has been in force throughout the 1980s and 1990s and in Iraq it has been permanent) has caused the international community almost no concern, unlike the concern expressed when Israel, for example, has resorted to martial law in the occupied territories. Thus, despite the presence of 'foreign armies', Turkish, Arabs and Iranians, as the Kurds perceive them, on Kurdish soil, they are not regarded yet by international law as foreign armies. Hence, although the right to self-determination is clearly endorsed in the UN Charter, the issue remains tangled when it comes to the identification of the eligible people. The principle of NSD is therefore inherently vague since it leaves such questions unsolved.

Since there are no accepted legal definitions for people, the term 'people' has, in a major treatise on NSD, been described as follows:

1) The term 'people' denotes a social entity possessing a clear identity and its own characteristics.

2) It implies a relationship with a territory, even if the people in question has been wrongfully expelled from it and artificially replaced by another population (Wiberg in Lewis, 1983: 46-7)..

Because of the difficulty in establishing which peoples are entitled to and qualify for the right, and the unavailability of an authorised organ within the international community to confirm it (Sureda, 1973: 28), the majority of UN member states have taken care to reserve the right only for certain peoples, thus narrowing the concept of self-determination. As a result people such as the Kurds, Basques and Tibetans have been denied the right to self-determination.

If the principle of NSD means that each nationality has the right as a self-distinguishing cultural group to self-rule, then the right becomes or appears to be a moral imperative; then the Kurds, from this moral point of view, have the right to determine their own fate, shape of government, organizations, and ultimately state. The opposition to this moralistic approach seems to be less

easy to reconcile with principles such as 'the rights of states to preserve themselves'. Rivlin points to opinions put forward by people like Hans Keisen, for example, that the UN is merely concerned about the maintenance and preservation of independence. He denies that self-determination has any special meaning 'other than the rights of states to sovereignty' (Rivlin, 1955: 202). With this approach, then, the Kurds have not been so successful since states recognized by international bodies such as the UN and by other states are the only legitimate members of the world community.

One of the most obvious ambiguities of the concept of self-determination lies in the fact that, as it is the case with most Third World countries, states dislike the idea of applying the same principle internally (Duchacek, 1975: 88). Thus 'the United Nations has strenuously resisted interpreting that right to include a broad right to secede' (Buchanan, 1992: 349). Hence the Kurdish proverb 'the Kurds have no friend but only the mountains' has been true in sofar no one is willing to debate and sponsor their plight. Although they have demonstrated the minimum requirements for a nation, because of the above circumstances they have been reduced to a recognized minority as in Iraq, or their nationality has been denied as in Turkey. This has forced the Kurds persistently to assert their separateness and distinctiveness, often with violence.

Therefore, one of the most acute problems facing many sovereign states today, particularly in the developing world where political states and not nations were forged first, is that which results from the mixture of heterogeneous populations within their boundaries. The hasty and arbitrary demarcation of the political borders during the period of decolonization, by the colonial masters and mandatory powers made it impossible for these political boundaries to coincide with those of racial, ethnic or national territorial divisions. Often, then, there will be segments of the populations which will detach themselves from each other. This detachment, usually based on cultural and ethnic grounds, often finds violent expression leading to regular political and social upheavals, rebellions and civil wars. These conditions have brought to the fore the plight of many minorities, the Kurds included, who have been resisting the policies of integration.

The Kurds, having missed the opportunity to establish their own national

state, have been reduced to the status of a national minority with rights either denied or only reluctantly recognised. As strong national governments devoted their efforts towards building new nations under the banners of their respective core nationalisms, the Kurds came to be regarded by the world as a minority and their strife as an internal affairs of the respective states involved. The Kurds have become minorities in their own motherland, and subject to domination by the core ethnies. As a national minority, they have established their recognition only in Iraq where the first republican Constitution stated that the Arabs and the Kurds are partners - associates - in the Republic of Iraq.

The Kurds are, indeed, a numerical minority in their present political environment since they are less than half the population (Dworkin & Dworkin, 1981: 15-9, Schermerhorn, 1970: 14). However, due to the peculiar nature of the Kurdish issue, the political division of Kurdistan has not meant substituting a nation's perception for a mere ethnic minority. Kurdish self-perception remains one of an indigenous unit distinct from the rest, claiming its own homeland and not a land which historically does not belong to them. On the conditions of the Kurdish minority, Charles MacDonald makes an interesting observation:

> the various parts of the Kurdish identity combine to form a basis for a Kurdish ethnic group consciousness, but this group consciousness is fragmented and does not yet approach a coherent Kurdish national consciousness that seeks a "Greater Kurdistan". It is true that the Kurds have a population. They are concentrated in a given territory, they have a Kurdish language, and to a degree they are mostly Islamic. However, the historical legacy arising from the arbitrary division of Kurdistan into "the five parts" following World War I, and the impact of the separate development under modern territorial states based on the European state system, have effectively divided the national energies of the Kurds and directed them to seek narrow goals based on the Kurdish experience in each national setting, within each host state (MacDonald in Esman & Rabinovich, 1988: 239).

Indeed, the complexities of Kurdish politics have forced the Kurds to operate

within their 'host states' as a unit. But this has not reduced their perceptions and aspirations to one confined to their political setting at present. Pursuing their political goals (against the odds and at considerable cost to themselves) in each country separately has led rather to their realization of the political settings around them, which have been the determining factor limiting their strife. Nevertheless, this has not meant the Kurds' voluntary acceptance of their position. It is this complex political setting that has hitherto localised Kurdish political objectives.

CONCLUSION

The Kurds, as a nation, have not enjoyed their own state and national government. Despite possessing the components of a nation for the Kurds in general, the idea of building a nation has not hitherto crystallized as their main priority. They can demonstrate the requirements of nationhood but this ideal has not yet appeared to be their immediate concern. Instead, they have sought the establishment of any form of a Kurdish entity whether in the form of the an autonomous region as in Iraq and Iran, or the creation of a Kurdish independent state, as has been manifested in the PKK's ideology. However, the conditions of the various parts of Kurdistan make it evident that they have been persistently demonstrating an objective capacity and subjective willingness not to be assimilated into the 'host societies'. They have always demonstrated their unreadiness for any adaptation into the 'host states'. If national states were crucial in creating feelings of national distinctiveness and consciousness, then neo-colonial conditions and alien rule have, as I have attempted to show above, contributed immensely to the politicisation of Kurdish consciousness and enhanced their identity as much as a Kurdish national political authority would have done. External pressure has resulted in the crystallization of their identity.

CHAPTER II

NATIONALISM

PRELUDE

The story of nationalism begins 'as a sleeping beauty and ends as Frankenstein's monster' (Minogue, 1969: 7). This statement accurately exposes the power of nationalism both as a political ideology and a national sentiment. The rhetoric of nationalism is ephemeral, instrumental and manipulative; it has often been successful in manipulating and rallying the masses in its direction by making passionate appeals to love and fear. Nationalist rhetoric plays an important role in influencing the minds and emotions of people. Ben Israel points to the importance of nationalist rhetoric by suggesting that:

> through its unique language it often succeeds in striking the appropriate chords. Such concepts as the shame of assimilation, the glory of national sacrifice, the continuity of heroic lives and the everlasting value of 'authentic' cultural treasures are the stock-in-trade of nationalist vocabulary. (Ben Israel, 1992: 391).

Feelings of national pride, love of country, food, flag, music, myth and legends, come easily to most peoples, and are often sufficient to trigger passions harmless on the surface. But these feelings are too often transformed into ideologies for which men and women are willing to fight and kill. Contrary to the spirit of the old great religions with universal and unifying messages to all mankind, nationalism, on the other hand, has expressed a distinguishing message by re-enshrining the earlier cults and rites of each nation and nationality. Nationalism:

> inculcates neither charity nor justice, it is proud, not humble; and it singly fails to universalise human aims.... Nationalism's

kingdom is frankly of this world, and its attainment involves tribal selfishness and vainglory, a particularly ignorant and tyrannical intolerance, and war. That nationalism brings not peace but the sword (Hayes, 1926: 125).

Nationalism is manifested in various forms. It has no universal garb, it appears in all different characters, and is greatly shaped by its environment. It appears disguised in religious dogmas, political maxims, economic affairs, social behaviour, in culture, mores and in sport. And each nationalism tends to appear or pretend to be the paragon of excellence. Nationalism has no great analyst. There is no Karl Marx, no Adam Smith, no Sigmund Freud (Keane, Channel 4: 1991). It has no script or known codes to follow. It is not a theory because it varies from one place to another each with its peculiar local characteristics, hence, it is 'difficult to accept that there is any underlying theory involved' (Drucker, 1974: 98). Nationalism remains mysterious in that it can be articulated by people according to the needs of the time and can be twisted to fit the objectives of its articulators. The 'grammar of nationalism' and its presentation are peculiar in that they create the fear of others as dangerous, and at the same time presents them as nothing to fear or as objects of contempt.

Although nationalism is an integrative process in bringing certain people together, it is also a highly separative one, since it requires a target group for its full fruition (Carr, 1978: 90). In the case of Arab nationalism, for example, the Jews and the state of Israel have always been the target group for sustaining Arab nationalism over the last half century. And perhaps Israel was the only common denominator, as a 'common enemy' for Arab nationalism. The picture is reversed in Israel as the Arabs in general and the Palestinians in particular have been the target group for Jewish national solidarity.

Moreover, one of the dangerous outcomes of nationalism has been the belief in blood and its purity, in other words 'biological nationalism' (Kennedy, 1968: 9). The assumption of superiority has had profound consequences in modern times. The most obvious example of this 'blood' nationalism has been the case of the Nazis' claim to being from 'superior' Aryan stock. It was on such grounds that the Nazis justified the persecution and attempted extermination of Jews who were regarded as inferior. On similar grounds Atatürk inspired

Turkish nationalism, and more recently, Saddam justified Arab nationalism in Iraq and the Arab world by invoking and claiming a superior status. Thus, a superior/inferior relationship involves and denotes domination and exclusion; this also occurred in South Africa under apartheid, where it was claimed by South Africa's Prime Minister Strijdom that 'the white man will only succeed in remaining in South Africa if there is discrimination. In other words, only if we retain all power in our hands' (Sithole, 1959: 34). The definition of white man's 'supremacy' in Africa and in the same vein the Hebrew claim to being the 'Chosen People' (Sithole, 1959: 28), are but examples of the discriminatory nature of nationalism. This tendency which involves the exclusion of others from power, has not been peaceful. It usually generates a counter-nationalism by the 'inferior' since the existing conditions implies humiliation of the dominated by the dominator, and the greater the discrimination is by the superior, the greater the stimulus is for the inferior to rebel. Nationalism, hence, can and does a tendency to develop to an extreme resulting in the emergence of racist or ethnocentric ideologies.

Furthermore, nationalism carries with it the idea of self-determination. It stresses that each nation has the right to form its own national state and government within claimed national boundaries. Therefore, it represents an aggressive philosophy in contrast to the defensive principle of patriotism (Haddad in Haddad & Ochsenwald, 1977: 8). If nationalism denotes a demand for self-rule, it has also demonstrated its desire to rule others (Mazrui in Silvert, 1964: 37). The manifestation of this desire has been evident, under the pretext of 'civilized rule' as in the case of the Spanish conquest of Latin America and the British colonization of Asia and Africa, or in the name of nation-building as in the case of most states in the developing world more recently.

Nationalism then can be seen as a product of the natural division of humanity into distinct nations (Kedourie, 1966: 9) each attempting to preserve its identity, culture and peculiarities. Hence nationalism denotes a demand for self-rule and its own political state as well as promising collective security. For these nations the only means for a legitimate authority is that of national government and only such government can legitimately exercise power. The strong resurgence of nationalism in Europe in the late 1980s, and throughout the world, which has dominated the news, is a clear indication of the far reaching implications of the principle. Amongst these resurgent

nationalisms, Kurdish nationalism stands out as one of the longest-lived in this century which has not hitherto achieved its objectives and aspirations.

THE RISE OF NATIONALISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Until the end of World War One, the present Middle East was under either the direct or nominal rule of the Ottoman Empire. However, the nineteenth century marked a period of stagnation which the empire had entered. This was the beginning of a gradual decline of the empire, which culminated in its dissolution in the early 1920s. To trace the date of modern secular and political European styled nationalism in the Middle East, therefore, one must take the period immediately prior to the First World War as the point of departure.

The concept of nationalism was known only among the intellectuals, army officers and the middle class. Among the masses who were, and still are in many parts, distanced from any political participation, nationalism had no appeal. Affiliation to Islam was the common bond for the subjects of the empire. Nationalism as understood today was almost alien to the majority of the population. Although ethnic ties and sentiment had persisted in varying degrees among the ethnic groups in the Middle East, they had 'neither territorial expression nor political manifestation' (Smith, 1986: 142).

The collapse of the Ottoman Empire, however, marked the rise of the ethnic nationalism of the Turks, Arabs and Kurds. As the empire came to an end, every ethnic group was planning the shape of its future political organization separately. For the Turks, the rise of the Inspector General Mustafa Kemal, better known as Atatürk - 'the father of the Turks' - led to the creation of a modern Turkey based exclusively on the idea of organic Turkish purity. The emergence of these ethnic tendencies which later developed into ethnic nationalism was significant in that it marked the divorce between religion and the body politic. As the philosophy of the Young Turks, Turkish nationalism manifested a revolt against 'the Islamic hierarchic conception of Islam' (Kennedy, 1968: 205). As a result, then, the politics of the Young Turks were seen by the majority of the empire's subjects as an attempt at Turkifying the

ailing empire, and for the first time in centuries the Arabs came to view the Turks as conquerors rather than brethren in faith. As the Turks adopted the European ideal of ethnic nationalism and sought to establish the Turkish state on the same lines, the Arabs opted for independence. Arabs then became the target group for Turkish ideologists such as Jalal Nori who wrote in Tarykh al Mustaqbel, (History of the Future) that 'we [Turks] should deport the Syrians from their land and establish Turkish colonies in Yemen and Al-Hijaz [western parts of present day Saudi Arabia where the holy places are], and we should consider Turkish language as a religious language [as Arabic is the language of Islam and the Quran]; these are matters we ought to accomplish quickly'. The reason for this urgency was that the rising Arab generation is being affected by waves of ethnic consciousness (Mohammed Al-Jabiri, (Asharq Al Awsat 16/2/1996). As a result of these attitudes the Arabs opted for independence and the present Middle East was born.

It was at this juncture in the history of the region that centuries of Islamic universalism were supplanted by a European-style national ideal. And it was in the name of this new sentiment that the Muslim umma, nation, was fragmented into many nations. Ethnic and national frontiers in the heartland of the Muslim world replaced those marking dar al-islam, 'the abode of Islam', from dar al-kufr, 'the abode of the infidels'. As a result, Islam lost its organisational role in the management of man and society and, as a doctrine, Islam was pushed into the background. In a speech in Aleppo immediately after the Armistice in 1918, Faisal, son of Sherif Hussein of Mecca, appealed to the people not on traditional Islamic grounds but on ethnic Arab unity. 'His basic theme' was that 'the Arabs had been Arabs before they became Muslims, Christian or Jew' (Thomson, 1972: 6). This new thinking meant the secularization in nationalism of the region.

The Kurds, too, were keen on the establishment of a Kurdish entity. In 1908 Kurdish forums and clubs were founded by the combined efforts of people like Mir Badir Khan, General Sherif Pasha and Senator Abdul Kadir of Shamdinan. They opened a school in Istanbul for Kurdish children and they had at their disposal the journal Kurdistan. In 1910 a group of Kurdish students established a Kurdish movement called the Kurdish hope, Heviya Kurd. They had a monthly publication called the Kurdish Day, Roja Kurd. In 1914, this became the Kurdish Sun, Hatawe Kurd. In 1917, Sa'id Abdullah, the son of Sheikh Abdul

Kadir, while taking refuge in Mecca, formed a society called Independent Kurdistan, Istiqlal Kurdostan. (Bois, 1966: 142). The important observation which must be made here is all Kurdish efforts to found clubs and publications took place outside Kurdistan. The above clubs and periodicals were created for the few Kurds living outside Kurdistan and had little or no impact on Kurdish society as a whole.

Although Kurdish nationalism grew contemporaneously with other nationalisms in the Ottoman Empire (Nejad, 1992: 163), such as Turkish and Arab nationalism for example, it remained incapable of penetrating the complicated structure of Kurdish society. Indeed any investigation into the nature of Kurdish nationalism is hindered by serious obstacles; neither can it be reasonably understood without careful consideration of its complicated background. Tribalism, illiteracy, poor communications, and the restrictive central policies of the respective governments are but a few of the factors which have made Kurdish society unable so far to accommodate a secular and political nationalism. Although a sense of common belonging is a pervasive idea among the Kurds, nevertheless nationalism as a political force has not yet emerged as the unifying ideal and the ultimate force to channel their political loyalty in one main direction in their pursuit of national identity.

KURDISH NATIONALISM

One of the peculiar things about Kurdish sentiment is that while there has been a relatively strong national sense as expressed in many uprisings in the past, it has not, on the other hand, been well equipped to raise national awareness to politically desired levels in the twentieth century. However, with the effective suppression of Kurdish nationalism in Turkey under Atatürk in the late 1930s and in Iran after 1946, Iraq became the centre for active Kurdish politicisation. From the 1950s until the second half of the 1980s, Iraqi Kurdistan remained the main centre for Kurdism. Several reasons can be identified for southern Kurds being the 'pace-setters of Kurdism' (Yapp as quoted in Khashan & Hairk, 1992: 147), despite the fact that Iraqi Kurdistan comes third behind Turkish and Iranian Kurdistan in terms of both size and population. First, Iraqi Kurdistan was the nearest to colonial European

domination, thus providing contact with foreigners and different ideas of political association. Secondly, the oppression of Kurdish nationalism in Iraq was not as severe as it was in Turkey. It was only in the late 1970s and 1980s that Iraqi Arab nationalism became more intolerant and repressive. Thus the fears of the Iraqi Kurds were far less intense than those generated by Turkish nationalism among Turkish Kurds. Iraqi reprisals were usually less severe than those of the Turks. The process of nation building in Turkey preceded that of Iraq. The Turks emerged after the disintegration of the Ottoman empire, with a strong central government. In Iraq the situation was different, it remained under British influence until 1958. After the Revolution of 1958, weak governments followed until the advent of the Ba'athists. It was only after Saddam's control of total power in 1979 that the strongest government in Iraq emerged.

Modern Kurdish ideals arose largely as a reaction to the revolutionary nationalistic ideologies of the new states in the region. But the Kurds lacked certain necessary elements in their nationalism. An attempt is made below to identify some of the elements that have been least and most effective in assisting and promoting Kurdish nationalism.

1) HISTORY & CULTURE

The rise and development of nationalism has usually invoked an element of history. Smith suggests that 'The discovery and uses of a common history constituted one of the fundamental goals of nationalist ideal of individuality'. He continues his observation by arguing that when groups have lacked a common history, nationalists have searched and sought any 'common myths of origin and common memories, often oral ones'. Such attempts are made not only to distinguish the group from foreign rule but also to provide 'the new collective identities they are forging' (Smith, 1976: 16). The sense of history, then, has at one stage or another been a driving force for many nationalisms. To support this, Kennedy cites Japanese nationalism which he says 'drew strength from the continuity of Japanese political history which was aided by the insular position of Japan and the long tradition of emperors whose origin was traced back by legend to the Goddess of the Sun' (Kennedy, 1968: 78-9).

Duchacek writes that

> Glorification of past achievements may help a group overcome a distressing period or regain a lost sense of identity and self-confidence. An overwhelming stream of embellished memories, myths, and legends is produced in every nation by the government, schools, the army, the media, patriotic organizations, historians, philosophers, poets and artists (Duchacek, 1975: 42).

Thus, an aggregate of human beings is transformed into a 'collective person' endowed with feeling, memories, pride, sorrow and hope. In other words, Duchacek concludes, 'with a soul'. A common past and present as well as a commitment to common future make 'men conscious of being part of a unit that with its collective will, is different and separate from the rest of humanity' (Duchacek, 1975: 42).

The re-construction of Iran's pre-Islamic Persian history by the late Shah in 1971 (Shawcross, 1989: 38), was a boost to Iranian nationalism during the period of Iran's rising military power. In Iraq, on the other hand, after assuming the presidency in 1979, Saddam Hussein embarked on a revisionist campaign to rewrite the history of Iraq from a new angle, the Ba'athist/Arabic dimension. History, therefore, was rewritten to suit the new drive in Arab nationalism. For instance, al-Iraq fey al-Tarykh, 'Iraq in History' (1983), and Dwr al-Tarykh fey al-Taw'iah al-Qawmia, 'The Role of History in National Awareness' (1988), are only two out of hundreds of publications where the Arabs are presented as the rightful owners of history. Therefore, it is not unusual for nationalist states to undertake rigorous tasks and projects to appeal to the national conscious by articulating history and re-writing past events. In Nations & States, Seton-Watson cites the Persian historical mythology which survived and played its part in the development of the modern nation. To this end Watson suggests that 'in this the Iranians perhaps resembled the Serbs, whose mediaeval state was destroyed but left a memory in poetry: The Narodne Pesme are the equivalent of the Shahname' (Seton-Watson, 1977: 243-4). The Shahname, the 'Book of the Kings' by Firdausi (932/42-1020/26) is not only a literary masterpiece, but also contains Persia's historical mythology, and so has an important role in the formation of Iran's national consciousness (Seton-Watson, 1977: 245).

It is the 'historical consciousness and awareness', George Mosse says, that have 'formed the basis of all modern nationalism' (Mosse in Kamenka, 1976: 40). History was also the main element of Jewish nationalism manifested in the Zionist movement both in Western Asia and in Europe. This, Avineri observes, involved a strong sense of history as the search for a national identity took a political turn. It involved a strong and explicit emphasis on tribal unity, the Twelve Tribes of Israel (Avineri in Kamenka, 1976: 102). The possession of a common, eventful and documented history has often inspired an intense national consciousness and heroic resistance. Even in the absence of records, a strong sentiment can be generated with the aid of folk tales and poems, as was the case with Ukraine and Slovakian nationalism (Smith, 1976: 17).

Analysing Kurdish nationalism in the light of history, it becomes clear that the historical element has failed to raise a political national consciousness conducive to secular nationalism. Despite Kurdish claims to a continuous history of over five thousand years on their homeland, the role of recorded history, nevertheless, has hitherto been marginal as an articulating element. Documents and records have not been available for verification, mainly because of the scarcity of relative material at the disposal of the nationalists. Although the work of a handful of scholars and orientalists like Bois, Minorsky, Nikitine, Barth, Hamilton, Edmonds, Schmidt, et al., have been generous in their investigations into Kurdistan and the Kurds, nevertheless, their research has not been freely available to the Kurds themselves. Their research has generally been shelved in western libraries. Restrictions and censorship imposed by the respective states has restricted Kurds' access to this material. More importantly, these restrictions have seriously limited Kurdish efforts to carry out any objective research into their own history. Where any research was allowed, as was the case only in Iraqi Kurdistan, the findings had to match the government's own official ideology.

An important observation about Kurdish history is that it has not hitherto been fully nationalised. The documented and preserved mediaeval Kurdish history in the Sharfnameh, written by Sharafedin Khan of Bitlis, written in Persian and published in 1596, for example, is 'an aristocratic history, principally concerned with the fate of the noble families rather than with that of the entire Kurdish nation' (Bulloch and Morris, 1992: 71). Kurdish history was until the recent past a chronicle of Kurdish mirs, aghas and

pashas; the ordinary Kurd remained to some degree insignificant in making and shaping the national history. The heroes were always from the nobility.

Furthermore, while Arab nationalism, for example, developed partly because of the western connection in the form of the American and European missionaries as early as the 1820s, Kurdish nationalism, on the other hand, lacked such contact. The first American mission, established in Beirut in 1823 by the American Presbyterian Mission in Boston, is credited with planting the seeds for an Arab romantic movement, and with efforts to revive Arab culture and history (Avineri in Kamenka, 1976: 102). Religious loyalty in many parts of Kurdistan represented a barrier for such western penetration. Thus, the work of the only few western missionaries who found their way through the rugged Kurdish terrain was largely fruitless. The killing of the American missionary, Cumberland, in 1938 by the nineteen year old Saliem Agha, one of the chieftains of the Doski Tribe, practically ended any hope for such contacts to take place in that part of Kurdistan, the Bahdinan region. Hence, while Turkish sentiment had become the strongest in the region under Atatürk, and Arab sentiment was already taking a distinct shape, the Kurds remained isolated.

Moreover, the absence of established and prosperous urban centres can also be seen as a factor for the slow development of Kurdish nationalism. Unlike the littoral Arab centres, and the main population centres in Turkey which provided fertile ground for the development of national sentiment, Kurdish society remained scattered in tribes with small administrative centres made up mainly of the bureaucrats to whom patriotism, until very recently, was regarded as simply loyalty to the administration and government in which their personal interest was invested. The lack of cities in Kurdistan has been significant as it is generally thought that big cities play an important role in shaping radical ideas because a wide variety of opinion is available most of the time. In Turkish Kurdistan, for instance, there are no cities as such although Diyarbakir would come close to being one (Laizer, 1991: 64). The idea of setting up the PKK was conceived in Ankara. In Iraqi Kurdistan, although population centres like Dohuk are called cities they are no more than medium-sized towns. Only Sulaimaniya can be called a city.

Moreover, the isolation of the Kurds in their remote mountains contributed

further to the slow development of national awareness. Their contact with the outside world was minimal. There was little direct contact on a large scale with cultures other than those surrounding the region. Even then, the trade and commercial activities have always been conducted through foreign merchants or proxies. To the majority of the Kurds of Iraq, for example, travelling even to Baghdad is still a big adventure. Again, only since 1991 the has the Kurdish society in southern Kurdistan come to contact the outside world on a large scale. This has either been through the agencies working in the region, or as a result of the exodus of many young Kurds to Europe and North America. It can be safely said that over the last five years, 1991-6, more Kurds have travelled abroad, mainly to Europe and Canada, than did so in the previous twenty years.

It is also worth noting that the exaggerated and often unfounded predatory images attached to the Kurds have kept outside interest at a minimum (Fisher, 1950: 80). If we look, for instance, at Egypt as early as 1875 the number of European citizens there was about 100,000. They had brought with them Europe's ideas, thoughts, virtues and vices (Haddad, 1963: 63). In Kurdistan, meanwhile, such a presence was virtually non-existent apart from the odd traveller, army topographer, or orientalist. Nor has travelling abroad been easy for the majority of the Kurds. A combination of economic and political factors, such as poverty and government restrictions, have made travelling abroad a luxury. Those who have managed to travel, for example, for educational purposes, and have returned home, are usually appointed to government departments where they become alienated from Kurdish society, especially when appointed outside Kurdish districts. For reasons of their own and their family's safety and security, they often refrain from politics.

The cultural freedom in Iraqi Kurdistan, however, over the last few decades (before the establishment of the safe haven in 1991) has encouraged a cultural revival among the youth and students who have shown eagerness to develop further their own culture. Publications such as; Karwan, 'Caravan', Rangeen, 'Colourful', Bzaff, 'Struggle'... etc, although published under the auspices and the watchful eye of the Iraqi government, have been the vehicle for modest attempts to investigate Kurdish history and revive its culture.

2) LANGUAGE

The inability of the Kurds to develop and use their own language, especially in Turkey, has handicapped their attempts at a cultural revival. The lack of a single unified written script throughout Kurdistan has limited further the emergence of a national literature and more importantly a single classical language for the nation as a whole. The limited number of Kurdish publications are usually written either in Arabic or Persian, and are banned in Turkey. This is either because of government restrictions or lack of resources (only in Iraqi Kurdistan are publications usually in Kurdish). Thus exponents of a cultural renaissance as poets, philosophers, artists, writers and so on, through whom national ideals are usually articulated, have not been influential in the Kurdish case.

The language dilemma, however, is chiefly a product of conditions imposed by the respective governments. For a start, other scripts have been imposed. Kurdish, for example, has been banned in Turkey for about 70 years. Hence Turkish is the official and only language spoken and used for instruction (only in 1991 did Turkey admit even the existence of the Kurdish language). In Syria and Iran, Arabic and Persian have been the only languages of instruction with Kurdish remaining, particularly in Syria, a spoken language only. In Iraq, the situation has been different. The Kurds have achieved reasonable success in winning cultural concessions from the various governments in Baghdad.

Thus, for a Kurd to become a teacher, doctor, nurse, engineer, lawyer or take up any other profession which requires specialist knowledge, he or she has to acquire that knowledge in a foreign language and usually in an alien environment. Although Kurdish is taught at school level in Iraq, the higher stages of education, however, take place in Arabic, and in some cases in English, albeit invariably in an Arabic environment (in Iraqi Kurdistan there was only one university, Sulaimaniya, which in the late 1970s was moved to Arbil). Thus the home language is marginalized both at school, and in scientific terminology, since it is known in advance that Arabic is to be the determinate factor in one's future. This is due to the fact that allocation of university places is nationwide; thus a Kurdish candidate is likely to get a place at Basra or Baghdad universities where Arabic is the only language.

Furthermore, the diversity of the Kurdish language, which has two main dialects, has caused some internal difficulties. Classical or written Arabic, for example, enables educated Arabs, despite their various dialects, to communicate with one another. For the Kurds, the absence of a classical written Kurdish has limited communication between the two main groups. For speakers of both dialects who have had no previous contact with one another, there is often a problem of communication. But it is also important to note that this handicap is usually overcome very soon after contact occurs. From the author's experience, other languages such as English are used when two Kurds, one from each group, meet for the first time. But soon Kurdish replaces the other language.

Language then has hindered and will continue to hinder the development of a national literature, which is in turn important for a national cultural revival. Variations in Kurdish script, as mentioned earlier, have represented a real problem for Kurds from different parts. They find it hard to exchange ideas freely and in one national language, despite tireless efforts by the outstanding scholar, Tawfiq Wahby, who devised an excellent phonetic alphabet using first the Arabic and then the Latin script. The efforts of the Kurdish nationalist Bader Khan and his family in general who introduced the Latin script into Syrian Kurdistan have been of no avail in unifying the Kurdish script. The various scripts imposed on them by the central governments, each attempting to link Kurdish with its own script with the hope of an eventual assimilation, remain an obstacle to the emergence of a unified language.

3) EDUCATION

Levels of illiteracy are high in Kurdish society compared to those in Arab, Turkish and Persian society. Education has continued to be regarded as the second or even third option open to parents, especially in the countryside. On account of the agrarian nature of the society and the need for labour, usually male, for agricultural purposes, it is common to find young boys withdrawn from school at an early age to assist their families in the fields, or even to do manual jobs in the cities as child labourers. Kurdish boys as young as six or seven years of age, have the monopoly over the street shoe-shining trade in most cities and towns. As for females, it was not the fashion

to send girls to attend school because of the religious and conservative tribal traditions. Though this attitude has gradually declined in the last few decades, particularly in Iraqi Kurdistan, female education remains less widespread than male.

The scarcity of printed matter and books has further delayed the development of secular national ideals. While we find printing presses established as early as 1816 and 1822 in Cairo and Constantinople, in Kurdistan such important facilities remained unavailable. Therefore, the early Kurdish publications were printed at the turn of the twentieth century in places as far afield as Cairo. More significantly, as to education policies, there have not been, hitherto, any fundamental changes in order to erode illiteracy and spread education on a large scale. Illiteracy provides better conditions for controlling the population, and makes the task of 'divide and rule' easier. Therefore, there are fewer schools in Kurdistan, for example, than in other non-Kurdish parts. Even for Kurdish students it is still harder to get into colleges and universities than for their counterparts who are Turks, Arabs, or Persians. In Iraq for example, Kurdish applicants are refused admission into sensitive colleges such as those of the Air Force. In the Military College, Kurdish candidates have not been allowed admission since the second half of the 1970s. Even the favour whereby a handful of candidates were enlisted every year in the Military and Police Colleges as a favour to Kurdish chiefs supporting the government was eventually abolished. Even when the number of officers in the Iraqi Army was on the decrease due to the First Gulf War with Iran, the Ba'athist government was reluctant to admit Kurdish cadets.

4) THE KURDISH INTELLIGENTSIA

If nationalism, as Smith stresses, requires by definition 'some westernised and secular intellectuals to elaborate and systemise it', then the conditions of Kurdish nationalism have hitherto lacked the vital condition of that social stratum which is chiefly composed of westernised natives. For nationalism to develop into a fully-fledged movement, it requires the influence of professional classes who, in the words of Smith, provide the

> backbone of most nationalisms, as well as much of the leadership; and,

> in some cases, they constitute the main bearers of the movement, since it provides a practical programme for fulfilling their needs, material and mental, and answers closely to their vision of the world and their place in it. Hence the rise and exclusion of an intelligentsia must be regarded as a necessary.... condition of the development of nationalism (Smith, 1976: 22).

The link between the intelligentsia and Kurdish nationalism, however, is a peculiar one, and is of a complex nature. The intelligentsia and the professional strata, despite their steady growth over the last few decades, have not hitherto managed to show their discontent with the tribal and religious authorities. They are still suspended midway between their own background of traditional and tribal loyalties, and secular and scientific thought.

The development of the intelligentsia in Kurdistan under Ottoman rule was seen as a privilege for the sons of the Kurdish mirs, princes, chieftains, aghas, and the feudal élite. Those who were able to go to the urban centres, or better still to Istanbul, preferred to remain there and sustain their new life style influenced by European culture. To the majority of them, Kurdism was merely a debate in their private courtyard. Thus, they were alienated from the society they had left behind. On this diaspora, Amir Taheri writes in The Cauldron, that:

> The Ottoman authorities, always wary of Kurdish intentions, prevented educated Kurds from returning to their native villages. As a result, the Kurdish educated elite was almost always in exile, in Cairo, Alexandria, Beirut and Paris (Taheri, 1988: 90).

Their role was further limited by the lack of communication. To travel from Sulaimaniya to the Porte, for example, was not easy. Therefore, those who went there would stay usually for a long time instead of coming and going frequently. Even the nationalists who were passionately searching for the creation of a Kurdish entity were doing so far from Kurdistan, in Istanbul, Cairo, or cities in Europe (Bois, 1966: 142-3). Another limitation can be attributed to the fact that in the empire the doors were open for almost anyone to climb the hierarchy regardless of their ethnic background. Thus

personal motives helped to curtail Kurdish activities.

However, Mohammed Malek draws the attention to the nature of Kurdish nationalism by noting that over the last five decades at least two different strands of nationalist sentiments, with different visions and approaches, have developed. The first, he suggests, is one orientated to the tribal system, while the second is to be found among the urban intelligentsia (Malek, 1989: 81). The former sentiment has hitherto represented the most powerful element in Kurdish society with the almost mediaeval authority of some local chieftains and sheikhs, to whom the politics of the tribe are of paramount importance. The latter sentiment, with a widespread popularity among the urban intelligentsia, has usually a strong Marxist-socialist tendency. Both strands, Malek says, have been joined together, the former providing the military element while the second facilitating educational, cultural and international solidarity (Malek, 1989: 81).

Cooperation between followers of the two paths, however, did not function smoothly. From the mid-1960s, the two have been engaged in a conflict, sometimes hidden and sometimes open, between conservatism and a tribal vision and the interests manipulated by the chieftains with their personal and local authority at stake, and the intelligentsia who on the other hand attempt to break down the monopoly of the chieftains. The tribal role has persistently disillusioned most Kurdish intellectuals whose role has always been pushed into the background. After the departure of the tribal Kurdish leader, Mustafa al-Barazani in 1979, Kurdish intellectuals started to organize themselves in more liberal and democratic organizations such as the People's Party of Sami (Shinjari) Abdul Rahman, and the PUK, under Jalal Talabani, with the hope of shaking up the monopoly of the long established KDP. Nevertheless, such attempts by the Kurdish intelligentsia to influence the current of Kurdish nationalism are still hindered by considerable resistance from the 'old guard' (see also under Political Parties, Chapter Four). Cooperation between the intelligentsia and the peasants has not yet reached the desired level necessary for the liberation struggle.

To sum up then, the intelligentsia, which was marginal in the recent past, has come to be more active since the late 1970s. The last decade has witnessed a steady growth and participation of the intelligentsia in the management of

Kurdish nationalism. The PKK in Turkey, the PUK in Iraq and the KDPI in Iran are largely based on the idea of positive and active participation of the intellectuals. Yet they are, with the exception of the PKK, unable to break away from traditionalism and tribalism.

5) KURDISH MIDDLE CLASS

Among the factors which have contributed to the slow development of the Kurdish national ideal has been the absence of an active middle-class which is considered a vital component for cultural and political nationalism. This absence of this component has been significant in the history of Kurdish nationalism. The emergence of middle-classes in most of the Middle East and the Third World in general was due to the merits of colonialism. It was under European colonialism that an urban middle-class was devised to carry out the administrative functions of the state. Therefore, social and economic changes interacted with the growing fabric of nationalism, and caused, as Kennedy observes, the emergence of a distinct middle-class 'through government services and trade' (Kennedy, 1968: 90).

It was the part the middle-class played in Indian nationalism and its cooperation with the intelligentsia and the westernised Indians, for example, which led to the creation of the Indian National Congress Party, which in turn became the vehicle of Indian nationalism. In other countries such as Egypt, Iraq and Lebanon in the Middle East, under European domination, there emerged distinct social classes, based largely on the British and French social and economic patterns. These classes evolved later into distinct middle classes articulating their nationalism. Batatu observes the role of the middle and mercantile classes as instrumental in the development of modern Arab and Iraqi nationalism (Batatu, 1978: 298).

As for the Kurds, direct colonial rule was limited to the southern Kurdish provinces. Even then, it was still peripheral and marginal to British calculations. It only mattered where oil was discovered. Once annexed to Iraq, southern Kurdistan remained to a large extent set in its old social and economic life. There was no colonial European stamp on Kurdish society that might have facilitated social change. There was no Anglicized Kurdish elite

similar to the Anglophile and Francophile Arabs in the region. Kurdish traditional social organisation remained based on the overwhelming peasant majority and the powerful tribal chiefs.

Furthermore, Kurdistan has attracted little attention from policy makers in each of the respective governments in respect of economic and industrial development. From an economic standpoint, Kurdistan could safely be described as a depressed region. Economic development not only plays an important role in the transformation stage from a domestic economies of 'rural manners' and the 'urban guilds into national economy', but it also tends, argue Deutsch, 'to pull people out of the unchanging relationships of the village and to push them more and more into contact with modern life' (Deutsch, 1966: 21). In the Kurdish case, it is clear that because of the absence of significant economic development, the Kurdish picture remains one of a village-orientated and isolated economy. Kurdish society is yet to evolve away from a basic agrarian society, to give up farming and move towards an industrialized goal. But industrialization or even a modest urban economy is not possible since Kurds have no control over either resources or decision-making. This condition has limited that effective social mobilization which in turn is important for the articulation of national ideals. Kurdistan did and still does lack the centralized markets which attract interest and talents. Thus, if we take the classical definition of imperialism which is associated with capital and markets - 'the theory of capitalist imperialism' (see for example Anthony Smith, 1983: 19 ff), it can be easily noticed that no imperialism in Kurdistan meant no capital; no capital meant no investment, no investment meant no industry, which in turn meant no local markets and consequently no division of labour. This in turn meant no middle-class who would usually be the managers of industry. Thus the 'insignificant' small Kurdish middle-class that has grown over the last few decades has been unable to participate in financing and supporting the development of Kurdish nationalism.

6) KURDISH POLITICAL LOYALTY

A further principal factor that has contributed to the slow development of political and cultural nationalism in Kurdistan has been the confusion of the Kurds over their political loyalty and to whom it should be owed. This

political loyalty, which forms the basis of Hinsley's definition of nationalism (Hinsley, 1973: 19), remains the Kurds' main dilemma. Tribal and family ties continue to govern their socio-political life especially in the Bahdinan region of southern Kurdistan. Loyalty to the tribe would usually have priority over other structures. But beyond the horizons of the tribe, political loyalty has not yet clearly evolved from the tribal stage to the national stage. Political loyalty has not yet reached the popular stage; neither has it been sufficiently nationalized to clear uncertainty and confusion and make the majority feel that the nation should command their political loyalty.

Moreover, because of this fragmentation in loyalty, Kurdish national grievances have also been localized. For nationalism, as a political movement seeking the attainment and the defence of national integrity, to develop and rise objectively, the nationalist grievances, argues Minogue, 'must be collective and collectivity must be the nation' (Minogue, 1969: 25). One of the problems facing Kurdish nationalism is that grievances are not expressed collectively and on a national stage. In Iraqi Kurdistan, collective grievances once expressed are more apparent among the Sorani than the Bahdinan. Traditionally, the Sorani Kurds have been more collective and nationalistic, partly because of their better standard of living and education.

Further, since tribalism is manifested in the person of the chief, the collectivity, too, has depended on the chief's own visions and interests. Therefore, grievances expressed by one tribe do not necessarily lead to wider participation by the neighbouring tribes. Hence, one of the peculiarities of Kurdish nationalism is that while there is a strong sense of collectivity on the tribal level, national solidarity has only recently been developing. Finally, one of the striking trends the author noticed during a visit to the safe haven in southern Kurdistan in 1994 was the political thinking of the political parties about loyalty. Discussion with many members of both KDP and PUK showed clearly that both parties were interested in loyalty in connection with party politics rather than nation. Neither party had yet taken the opportunity to enhance national loyalty (see also under ideology, Chapter Four below).

7) MASS MEDIA

As a vehicle for ideas and thoughts, the mass media have so far had a minor role in articulating Kurdish national ideals. Smith observes the correlation between the rise of nationalism and the 'mushrooming of local journalism' in the rise of Egyptian nationalism from 1875 onwards. This coincided with the arrival of writers, like Nimr, Ishaq and Sarruf for example, from greater Syria, and the growth and spread of the Arabic press and journals. He further cites the emergence of Serbian nationalism as being intimately influenced by Serbian publications (Smith, 1971: 30).

In addition, modern means of communications such as radio and television have not yet been available on the scale required to encourage Kurdish national sentiment. Kurdish radio stations are to be found only in Iraqi and Iranian Kurdistan. In Iraqi Kurdistan there was also a television station in Kirkuk broadcasting Kurdish programmes but this was not received in the Bahdinan region, and was of course under the control of the Iraqi government. In Syrian and Turkish Kurdistan no such facilities have been available.

8) COMPETITION AND SPORT

As the quest for excellence in sporting encounters between nations has evolved in modern times to involve a strong sense of national pride and honour (for example, the annual football match between England and Scotland), nationalism has found its way into this field by exalting success as a matter of national pride and failure as a national disaster. When England failed to qualify for the 1994 football World Cup, the headline of the tabloid paper The Sun, was simply 'End of the World'. On the other hand, the impressive performance by Cameroon, the underdogs, in the 1990 finals in Italy, aroused not only Cameroon's pride but the pride of the whole of Africa and the rest of the Third World. Thus it is not strange to find an association between sport and sporting allegiance and nationality. Norman Tebbit's 'cricket test' speech aroused passionate debate as to whether the Asian immigrants in Britain should express and demonstrate their sporting allegiance to Britain or whether they could maintain their support for the teams of their former countries.

The instant transmission of sporting competitions has further enabled the people of each country to follow their teams and representatives with passion. It is often mentioned by the snooker commentators that James Wattana, the Thai snooker ace, when playing in Britain, attracts an estimated thirty million audience in Thailand including the King. His success in a British dominated competition has made him a national hero. The Catalans have taken sporting success one step further by making 'soccer the acceptable cause of separatism' (International Herald Tribune 2/11/1994, P.20).

However, the part that sport generates in enhancing nationalism has been missing from the Kurds. First, not being recognized as an independent nation and a state, Kurdistan is not a member of any of the sports organizations or committees, and hence cannot participate in any competitive event that would subsequently contribute to their pride and identity. Secondly, at home, the lack of facilities, education and other encouragement, has contributed to the slow development of sport, despite the love of the Kurds for it. Even if Kurdish individuals demonstrate their ability to compete, their selection for the national teams of the host countries is very unlikely.

SELF-EXPRESSION AND THE KURDS

In the absence of the above factors to assist the development of a political and secular nationalism, Kurdish sentiment has found other channels through which a strong national consciousness is expressed. Kurdish fairy tales, legends, myths, poems, dress, habitat, animals, dance, and music, have all inspired a strong sense of Kurdism and Kurdish consciousness. In the work of the most celebrated Kurdish poet, Ehmedé Xani (1650-1705), for example, one finds among his 2650 epic mam u zin couplets, many lines of explicitly expressing Kurdish identity, consciousness and prowess. The epic evokes sincere and strong nationalistic feelings and is seen as '..the real breviary of Kurdish nationalism' (Encyclopedia of Islam, V: 482).

Kurdish consciousness is enhanced by story tellers and bards who chant famous epics which have been handed down through time. Their contributions focus no less on history, culture and identity than written records. The bard-chanting

and story telling tradition has the advantage of being easily communicated to illiterate peasants. The story of Ibrahim Pasha Milli, of Viransehir, who occupied Damascus in the early years of the twentieth century with his tribesmen, for example, is still told by story tellers and bards with great pride and praise of Kurdish bravery, heroism, and prowess, as are tales of earlier events, whether about the mythical character Kawa the blacksmith who killed the despot al-Zaha'ak and liberated the oppressed Kurds from his tyranny, or factual characters like Xani leb Zerrin the Khan of the Golden Hand, who built the famous castle of Dem Dem, and fought the Shah of Iran to the last man. These events have always aroused a strong sense of identity, awareness and patriotism. Thus, the oral transmission of history and culture has continued to feed Kurdish national consciousness and maintain its separate identity in the absence of written and documented historical records. Nevertheless, this tradition has receded into the background over the last few decades on account of the displacement of the Kurds, the destruction of the countryside where such traditions flourish, and the creeping effect of television. The Iraqi regime under Saddam was keen to give a free television set to each family which gradually replaced the old-age custom of the village males whereby they meet, usually in the house of the chief or the Mukhtar, to spend the evening reciting those events.

Moreover, Kurdish nationalism has until the recent years drawn most of its continuity from symbols (Calvert in Smith, 1976: 147) in order to sustain its identity and character. Mountains, rivers, deserts, animals, etc, are neutral, but, once linked with a particular individual or a group as symbols of identity and history, serve as important factors in sustaining solidarity and loyalty. For the Kurds, therefore, symbols like dress, headgear, feasts and common activities, have been the major venue through which they have maintained and demonstrated their Kurdishness.

The political climate which followed the 1975 war was one of humilation and provocation. Officially (the government version) the Kurds were crushed by superior forces, unofficially, they were defeated by the Arabs. Therefore, the Kurds were being humiliated and provoked daily by the rising wave of 'victorious' Arab nationalism. In the past the Kurdo-Arab conflict in Iraq was regarded as a conflict between the government of Iraq and the followers of al-Barazani. After 1975, a new view was fostered by the triumphant Ba'athists.

The conflict was portrayed to Iraqi and Arab, youth as a conflict between Arabs and the Kurds (despite the fact that many Kurdish tribes were fighting on the government's side), in which, of course, the Arabs won.

As a result, Kurds became restless and frustrated by the new environment. High school and university students returned to the national dress as a gesture of defiance, and thereby indirectly registered their discontent. Notably, the popular outfit among the defiant students was not the traditional dress, shal ó shabk, but the version closest to the Peshmerg's outfits. It was a two-piece khaki suit with a small fabric belt around the waist. The most popular shoes were the old Kurdish ka'alk and kela'ash and the handwoven long wool socks. The most interesting piece was however, the tchough, a thick wool handwoven waistcoat worn over the khaki outfit. The outfit was completed with the traditional walking stick (goba'al) and the red headgear Dersawa Šor, the symbol of the Peshmerga.

Above all, the most important symbol through which the Kurdish national ideal is expressed, remains the celebration of the Nawroz Festival, which marks the Kurdish new year on 21st March. Although Nawroz is also celebrated in Iran and Afghanistan as the beginning of the new year, for the Kurds, Nawroz has become a symbol of nationalism. In post-1975 Iraqi Kurdistan, Nawroz became the symbol of Kurdish nationalism. Gatherings in places such as Bastora near Arbil were regarded by the Kurds as gestures of defiance against Iraqi Arab nationalism. In Turkey, since 1990 the PKK has successfully managed to bring out huge rallies throughout Turkish Kurdistan. Pictures of mass rallies carrying the portraits of Ocalan (Apo), and the flags of the PKK in cities like Cizre revealed growing Kurdish sentiment and defiance (The Independent 23/3/92 p.16; The Guardian 23/3/92 p.26). The 1992 rallies were overshadowed by the death of a Kurdish girl, Zekiye Alkan, who immolated herself below Diyarbakir's castle walls (Kurdistan Report, No. 8, April 1992). In an attempt to scale down Kurdish defiance during the celebrations, Turkish helicopters dropped leaflets in Istanbul underlining the government's claim that Nawroz is a celebration for the Turks and the Kurds and must be an occasion for 'peaceful celebration' (The Independent 23/3/92 p.16). This move was interpreted by the Kurds as an acknowledgment of Kurdish nationalism. The PKK in northern Kurdistan is probably the main Kurdish party that has attached political significance to Nawroz. In March 1991 the party declared Nawroz the

first Kurdish official holiday. Since then celebrations have extended to the rest of Turkey where Kurdish communities celebrate the occasion in Turkey's main cities of Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir (Voice of Kurdistan, No.4 May 1991).

As for Kurdish refugees in exile, Nawroz has become the annual occasion where they meet and get together. Public meetings and parties, for example, are held in European and Scandinavian cities such as London, Berlin, Stockholm, and Paris. Even Kurdish nationalists who are serving long prison sentences have shown their defiance by making the immortal fire. The most interesting incident was that of the imprisoned Kurdish singer Hassan Khanjr, serving a 15 years sentence in the Abu Graib prison south of Baghdad, who on the eve of Nawroz set fire to his mattress celebrating the occasion. His sentence was extended for an extra three years.

Among the means of cultural expression open to nationalists, art, music, ballads, folk songs and national dances have a particular role in ethnic and national self-expression. The role played by these has been of great significance in the development of Kurdish nationalism over the last few decades. Kurdish sentiment has also found in these arts an appropriate and effective means of self-expression. Over the last two decades Kurdish music has become a most effective channel through which national self-expression and aspirations have been made clear. During the volatile decade of Turkish politics, the 1970s, the political climate encouraged the emergence of a Marxist revolutionary Kurdish music. The broadcasting of this music twice a week from the Kurdish section in Yerevan Radio Station in the Armenian Republic, found unprecedented audiences throughout Kurdistan. Despite the short hours of broadcasting the Kurds of Iraqi Kurdistan for example, would eagerly await Thursday evening to tune in and listen to the inspiring music. The availability of this music on cassettes on Turkish streets, especially in the second half of 1970s, encouraged widespread smuggling of the tapes into Iraqi Kurdistan. Singers like Shivan Perwer and Golustan became household names especially among the youth. The late 1970s and the 1980s witnessed a harsh clampdown on this music. In Turkey, it was banned altogether after the military coup of 1980, and almost all the artistes took refuge abroad, while in Iraq, long prison sentences were passed on those caught with such material. Nevertheless, songs like Distar and Layla Qassim by the late Tahsien Taha (d. 1995) and Mohammed Ta'ieb became inspirational for youth. The popularity of

the music of defiance grew to such a level that during one of his regular meetings with his regional Ba'ath representatives, Saddam Hussein, asked the representative of the Dohuk section, Muzher Mutny, about the situation there. Mutny assured Saddam that everything is under total control. It is said that Saddam rebuked him and said that the efforts and energies spent over ten years could be wiped out by Shivan singing ke'ena em, ('Who are we') in Germany.

The Kurds have also adopted the partridge as their national emblem. From being a mere house pet and a bird for contest (where birds are brought together and the one which sings louder and longer is the winner), the partridge became a protected bird by order of the nationalists in the early 1970s. A further emblem that appears in Kurdish folklore is the narcissus which is considered a national flower by many Kurds. Nergiz (narcissus) is a popular name for Kurdish girls and appears in many songs with a nationalist message. As it blossoms in the spring it adds an additional scent to Nawroz where girls decorate their plates with the flower as well and men wear it in their headgear, waistbands and the barrel of their guns.

Mountains, too, have been significant in sustaining Kurdish identity and sentiment. For the Kurds, Entessar writes, 'mountain dwelling has been the bond that kept them distinct' (Entessar, 1989: 67). One of the most popular Kurdish proverbs is 'we have no friends only our mountains'; hence, to a Kurd, the mountain remains the most tangible object representing natural identity, pride, romanticism, and refuge. Therefore, mountains have played an important and consistent role in Kurdish culture and literature. Stories whether fictional or true have almost always involved mountains. Love epics such as Xajoo ó Siaband or the Nawroz festival, for example, are set in the mountains. In southern Kurdistan the Kurds have even extended their sentiment to include the differences in landscape and climate between them and the rest of Iraq. Thus Kurdish nationalism often invokes the beauty of landscape. And although tourism is non-existent as far as the outside world is concerned, it is a haven for Iraqis and recently, since the second half of the 1970s, for some tourists from the Gulf. This has given the Kurds additional pride in their landscape, mountains and climate.

As nationalism involves, so to speak, a search for roots, it is worth noting the tendency of Middle Eastern nationalisms to involve the search for old

names and titles to match the objectives of the given nationalism. In Turkey, which was the first to break away from the Islamic heritage, the names of places such as Constantinople, Angora and Smyrna were changed by 1930 to Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir (Robinson, 1963: 298). In Iraq the official campaign to Arabize names since the mid-1970s led the Kurds to reinstate Kurdish names instead of the Arabic/Islamic names, despite some opposition from the religious old guard generation who see this trend as anti-Islamic. Ethnic Kurdish names for people such as Kurdo, Gieha, K'evr, Jandar, Shivan, Serbest, Khonav, Jalenk, Trash, Bakteir, Govan, Pasar and Reşien, have become fashionable since the late 1970s especially in southern Kurdistan, to replace Arabic/Islamic names such as Ali, Hussein, Hassan, and Ahmad.

Last but not least, other symbols such as the national anthem, flag, colours and popular slogans have always aroused sentiment among the Kurds, particularly the young. The Kurdish national anthem Raqyb, or the slogans yan kurdostan yan na' man (either Kurdistan or death) have always evoked strong emotional reactions. In addition, Kurdish centres like Klallah and Haji Omran, the headquarters of nationalists in Iraqi Kurdistan, Mahabad, the centre of the Kurdish Republic in Iranian Kurdistan, Dersim in Turkey's Kurdistan - a town which was wiped off the map - and most recently, the town of Halabjah (also referred to by the Kurds as the Kurdish Hiroshima), where Saddam Hussein's forces used poison gas, arouse painful memories which consolidate the common grievances and sympathy of Kurds everywhere. These centres have, as a result, acquired symbolic value and become powerful images for Kurdish nationalism.

CONCLUSION

Overall, Kurdish nationalism has not yet been able to hold people together in common support for national objectives. It is described as underdeveloped, because it has not hitherto formulated a conceptual definition for Kurdishness based on a secular approach; only the PKK has laid the foundation for that. In the safe haven, the Kurdish nationalist parties, the KDP and the PUK, in control of southern Kurdistan since 1991, have not undertaken or even spoken of promoting Kurdish nationalism and a Kurdish state. The barriers which have for centuries isolated the Kurds from outside the world have not yet been

dismantled completely. Limited contact with the outside world has broadened the horizon of only a small segment of Kurdish society, but it has not included so far self-criticism or any real challenge to tribal and traditional thought.

Furthermore, Kurdish nationalism still lacks its living heroes. Despite his popularity, the late leader, Mustafa al-Barazani (d. 1979) who articulated the ideal for half a century, failed to capture the admiration of all the Kurds in the way that, for example, Nasser did for the Arabs. The Kurds are still awaiting their Bismarck. It is also important for Kurdish nationalism to clarify its objectives rather than continue as an ambiguous movement. Cultural self-determination should be a priority on a nationwide scale. And the preoccupation of the articulators should extend to include socioeconomic goals and not just political objectives. The immediate objective should not be exclusively statehood, but also Kurdish unification - a cultural unification to start with, a revival of Kurdish spirit which will aspire and become the core of political nationalism. As the Kurds have not been part of an industrial, social or political revolution, the least the Kurdish nationalists could do is to embark on a Kurdish romantic movement.

CHAPTER III

KURDISH LIBERATION MOVEMENT

THE ARMED STRUGGLE 1975-1995

The idea of national liberation has become very popular and widespread in the post-war era (see for example, Calvert, 1984, especially chapter 3; Miller & Aya, ed, 1971; Brutents, 1977). A National Liberation Movement (NLM) is essentially 'a politically organized group of indigens of a state who have resorted to the use of armed force to resolve their differences with the established authority of the state' (Vchegbu, 1977: 63). An NLM could either be organised and conducted mainly from within the state as was in the case of the NLF in Algeria, or could be largely organised in a neighbouring state or states where its members are trained by the military and intelligence organs of those states with their consent or acquiescence as has been the case with the KLM, the PLO and the Polisario.

The rise of political consciousness in the peoples of the colonies and the mandated territories, coupled with the decline of the empires, encouraged many groups to stage armed struggles to achieve national independence. These movements, usually claimed by the nationalists as revolutions, aimed to do away with alien domination and to establish independent national states. Among these struggling peoples were the Kurdish people who have taken every opportunity to stake their claim for a national state. Since the mid nineteenth century the Kurds have staged endless armed struggles, and as a result, Kurdistan has been the battlefield for 'revolts', 'rebellions', 'insurgencies' and 'uprisings', which have become an inseparable part of the nature of Kurdish social and political life. These Kurdish revolts, although imbued with national ideals, were partly efforts by individuals - aghas, aristocrat and princes - to fulfil ambitions, or to retain their power or status or to fill a vacuum created by political upheaval. In 1832, for instance, Mohammed Pasha al-Rawanduzi, better known as mir e kurd, 'the prince of the Kurds', was

> inspired by the example of Mehmet Ali [in Egypt], Mir Mohammed established armaments factories in his capital, Rawanduz, to turn out his own rifles, ammunition and even cannon. More than two hundred cannons were made in this way...the Mir was working towards the creation of a regular army. Having thus prepared himself, he embarked upon the conquest of Kurdistan.

The Mir then rose against the Ottomans. By May 1833 the Mir had extended his control over the whole of southern Kurdistan. He then embarked in October 1835 on liberating Iranian Kurdistan which he 'conquered ..from end to end and advanced to the borders of southern Azerbaijan. Everywhere he was greeted as a liberator by the Kurdish populations'. To halt him Persia had to call upon 'its protector', Russia, for help. The Mir was only defeated when people seemed to be respond to a fatwa declaring 'He who fights against the troops of the Caliph is an infidel'. The prince of the Kurds was eventually assassinated by Sultan Mahmoud II's men in Trebizond in 1837 (Kendal in Chaliand, 1980: 27).

Between 1843 and 1846 Bedir Khan, the prince of Butan, managed to extend his influence 'over all of Ottoman Kurdistan' (Kendal in Chaliand, 1980: 28-30). In 1855, Yezdan Şher Bek, Bedir Khan's nephew, took advantage of the Russo-Ottoman war, which had gone on since 1853, and revolted against the Ottomans. He marched southwards and captured Mosul and then marched back to conquer Siirt, the administrative centre of Ottoman rule in Kurdistan. Within months he had extended his control from Baghdad to Lake Van and Diyarbakir, and by the end of summer 1855 his army had grown to 100,000 strong. But as, Kendal notes, Yezdan might have been a 'warrior chief, but he knew little of diplomacy'. He fell victim to Russian promises and British bribery (Kendal in Chaliand, 1980: 30). In 1880 Sheikh Obeidullah al Nahri, the Kurdish spiritual leader, declared war on Persia from Shemdinan. He succeeded in gaining control of large areas, but again the regional power politics of Russia, Persia and the Ottomans proved decisive.

At the turn of the twentieth century similar Kurdish individuals were still treading in the footsteps of their nineteenth century predecessors. Southern Kurdistan witnessed a major uprising in 1911-2, under Sheikh Abdul Salaam al-

Barazani, the elder brother of Mullah Mustafa al-Barazani, This uprising, also known as Barazan's First Uprising, was put down by the Ottoman authorities and Barazan region was destroyed. Sheikh Abdul Salaam was arrested in Hakkari and executed in the city of Mosul in 1914. The year 1914 witnessed two other uprisings. Sheikh Ali Ibn Al-Sheikh Jalal al-Din led a popular uprising in the Hizan-Bitlis region in northern Kurdistan, which had the support of Bitlis' nobility, especially Mullah Saliem. As the uprising was militarily no match for the Turkish force, the leaders of the uprising were executed. Even Mullah Saliem was forced out of the Russian Embassy where he had taken refuge and was executed, while in southern Kurdistan the uprising of Sheikh Sa'id Barzingi was again brutally put down and the Sheikh was assassinated in the city of Mosul. (Kurdistan Patriotic Salvation Movement: Directive, Kurdistan, 1992: 3).

Though reminiscent of the old pattern, the modern KLM began when Kurdish dreams were finally destroyed by the Lausanne Treaty of July 1923. Kurds have since sustained an armed struggle with objectives ranging from a demand for cultural rights, through autonomy to outright independence as in the case of the PKK. In 1924, the Kurdish general Ihsaan Nori Pasha led a movement, with the help of some Kurdish officers, against the Turks in Hakkari. In 1925 Sheikh Sa'id Pirani revolted against the new Turkish state. Because of his religious authority, he managed to mobilise support, especially as the pro-Sultan religious sentiment was strong among the Kurds, who regarded the Sultan as the only rightful head they would follow. Failing, however, to mobilise urban Kurds, to capture any big town, or when besieging Diyarbakir - to get the town's inhabitants to respond, the uprising was brutally put down in April 1925 by the new Turkish nationalists, and the Sheikh was executed in Diyarbakir (McDowall, 1992: 37). As repressive policies were being imposed upon the region, another revolt, Brohski Tili, broke out in 1926. In 1927 Gen Ihsaan joined the uprising and was appointed the military commander of the uprising which was supported by a new Kurdish organisation called Khoybon (Independence) based in Lebanon and Syria, which founded the tricolour Kurdish flag and was attempting to bring together all Kurdish groups in order to coordinate support for the rebellion (McDowall, 1992: 37). This revolt marked the beginning of a pattern whereby the newly created states used the Kurds as political pawns. Iran's Shah Reza supported the revolt (ironically this pattern would repeat itself in the coming decades in the very same manner again and again). The rebellious Kurds controlled large areas with an

administration strong enough to negotiate, only to be cut off from the Iranian assistance after the Shah had reached an agreement with the Turks and allowed Turkish troops to move through Iranian territory to encircle the Kurds (McDowall, 1992: 37).

Throughout Kurdistan, the name of Simko is synonymous with rebellion and national liberation. In 1918 the handsome agha rebelled against the Persians and managed to establish an autonomous Kurdish government to the west and south of Lake Urmieh which lasted from 1918 to 1922. Again, while Simko's uprising was influenced by the rising tide of nationalism in the region (especially Armenian), its nationalist aspirations, as Kamali points out, were traditionally associated with the 'traditional phenomenon of rebellion against the central authority' (Kamali in Greyenbroek & Sperl, 1992: 175). If Simko was yet another traditional agha rebelling against the central authority, the Mahabad Republic, established by the nationalists under Qazi Muhammad in Iran in 1945, was, on the other hand, a nationalist republic both in aspiration and structure, set up mainly by urban intellectuals (Roosevelt in Chaliand, 1980: 135-150, Talabani, 1971: 258-268). Like Atatürk in Turkey, the Pahlavis of Iran spared no effort to force the Kurds into submission and bring them under the control of the central authority. The President of the Republic, Qazi Mohammed, and four Kurdish officers were hanged in Jawar Jra Square (Kurdish National Salvation Movement: Directive, Kurdistan, 1992: 4).

Having been severely punished by both Turks and Iranians, Kurdish nationalism found another venue. The southern Kurds had been engaged in a struggle in Iraq, during the period of British mandate after the end of the First World War, but their various revolts had been put down with help of the RAF ('Birds of Death', Channel 4 TV, 20 April 1996). The Kurds resumed their armed struggle in the late 1950s which was to continue until the present day. The armed struggle of the 1960s forced Iraq, a country torn by military coups and power struggles, to reach an agreement with the Kurds in March 1970. The agreement, for an interim period of four years, was the best the Kurds had yet earned through their armed struggle (apart from the Mahabad Republic of 1945).

The 1970 accord was, however, doomed to failure from the outset. The reasons for its failure are numerous (McDowall, 1992: 92-3), but perhaps the political shortsightedness of the Kurdish leadership was among the chief factors. They

failed to understand the power of the Ba'ath ideology and strategies. Exercising de facto control over the Kurdish region during the interim period, the nationalists managed, to the delight of the central government, to alienate a sizable section of the Kurdish population. Tribal chiefs (aghas) who had paid allegiance to the Kurdish leadership, gradually broke ranks and sought central government blessing. Baghdad's hotels (especially the Shtora, Carlton and Accessoire) were filled by Kurdish aghas and politicians, some openly and others secretly seeking the government's patronage. The image of the Kurdish leadership was rapidly becoming one of incompetent groups of individuals seeking to settle old scores and some, if not all, regional commanders becoming entrepreneurs. The interim period came to an end as agreed in 1974 with no settlement in sight. The crisis came to a head over several points among which the oil issue was a major one. The Ba'ath government, observes David McDowall, was fully convinced of the divisions in Kurdish ranks (McDowall, 1992: 94). More importantly, however, the government had different plans altogether from the very beginning. The central government in Baghdad was not ready to fulfil the vital articles of the accord, having been forced into negotiation only because of its weak position.

At the start of the 1974 conflict the Iraqi government, backed by a rebuilt army equipped with new weapons, was full of confidence. It launched a massive campaign on all fronts. But as the fighting intensified, and the Kurdish resistance became more real than imagined, it became apparent that dislodging the Peshmerga was almost impossible. The countryside remained under the control of the Kurds, while the urban centres were in government hands. Throughout summer and autumn the stalemate indicated a return to the old pattern of the 1960s. Government forces and the pro-government Kurdish militia remained confined to the towns and cities they had controlled as early as April 1974. No further advances could be made. The case of the city of Dohuk was an obvious example, where government forces could not advance beyond the mountains surrounding the city, while Peshmerga units camped on the other side of the mountains (personal).

However, the emerging pattern seemed no longer acceptable to the ambitious Ba'ath government in Baghdad. To pursue their regional ambitions the Kurdish question had to be solved. From the beginning the Ba'athists of Iraq had set out a pan-Arab socialist ideology with aspirations which had raised alarm, for

example, in the Gulf region (Abir, 1993: 125). The Kurds, meanwhile, continued receiving support from the Shah of Iran and ultimately from the US CIA (Bulloch and Morris, 1992: 5. on the role of the CIA see the Pike Report reproduced in the Village Voice, New York, 23/2/1976 as noted in Chaliand, 1980: 14,18). The supplying of a few ground-to-air anti-aircraft Hawk missiles led to the shooting down of two Iraqi jets between 14 and 16 December 1974. It caused the government great concern and forced them to reduce their air attacks. On the other hand, the shooting down of the two jets boosted Kurdish morale (in 1983, a Peshmerga by the name Ra'aof Zevinki recalled how he and friends had to walk but a short distance to see the wreckage of one of the jets).

Thus, evaluating its strategies, the Iraqi government was faced with the only option open to them and that was to talk to the Shah on his terms. Iraqi diplomats in Istanbul were, accordingly, engaged in talks with the Iranian diplomats from 13 August to 1 September. The talks, arranged through King Hussein of Jordan (Bulloch and Morris, 1992: 137) opened the way for the foreign ministers of Iran and Iraq, Abbas Ali Khalatbari and Sa'adun Hammadi, to meet in secret, starting on 17-19 January 1975. Finally at the meeting of the heads of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Counties (OPEC) in Algiers, the Algerian President, Houari Boumédienne, announced that the Shah of Iran and Saddam Hussein of Iraq had signed an agreement to end the conflict between the two countries. The two sides agreed to end the infiltration of 'subversive characters', the Kurds, who had earlier free access across the frontiers. The Algiers Agreement marked Iraqi concession on two issues. Firstly, Iraq abandoned its long standing claim to the Shatt al-Arab waterway, and secondly, land frontiers were to be delimited on the bases of agreements preceding the British presence in Iraq, ultimately therefore recognizing the status of Iran as the strongest power in the region. In return, Iran agreed to stop supporting the Kurds.

In retrospect, the events which led first to the March Accord and then the 1975 war and the quick collapse of Kurdish resistance can be summarised as Realpolitik. Politically, the Ba'ath government was weak due to internal divisions within the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC). Economically, the country was on the brink of bankruptcy. According to confidential military sources in the Iraqi Ministry of Defence, the army was not able to wage war

for more than 2 to 3 months on account of shortages of ammunition and spare parts (personal sources). Thus, political and financial difficulties forced the government in Baghdad to yield to Kurdish pressure and offer the Kurds the autonomy package in the March Accord. Iraq needed a cease-fire at any cost. Hence the interim period of four years, 1970-74, was in reality a period during which the regime intended to reorganise its strategies and priorities.

At the top of the government's agenda was the need to reconstruct its finances. There followed the nationalisation of oil in Iraq in 1970. In 1972 this provided the finance for the government to start the programme of rebuilding its army. The Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation with the Soviet Union followed, also in 1972. This provided military hardware and expertise. Internal rivalry in the RCC was narrowing with the Bakr/Saddam axis emerging as the winner. As a result, the government was by 1974 in a strong position, armed with modern Soviet weapons, with massive revenues from oil at its disposal. It was so confident of dictating its own terms to the Kurds regarding the application of the autonomy rule to the Kurdish region, that when hostilities broke out in April 1974, it did not call upon the customary assistance of the pro-government Kurdish tribes.

As for the Kurds, the interim period had given them de facto control over the Kurdish region. Central authority was either non-existent or partly symbolic. Cross-border smuggling and free trade with Iran and Syria made Kurdistan a free market with goods at very low prices. Kurdistan became a mecca for the rest of the Iraqis who visited the region for tourism and shopping. There is no hard evidence from the Kurdish camp of any serious preparation for the end of the interim period. They felt confident that things would go their way, and even if there was no settlement at the end of the period, they thought they could easily go back to the pre-1970 situation. Although the Peshmerga remained under arms, the Kurdish leadership seems to have underestimated the determination of the Ba'athists to solve the Kurdish question at any cost. No evaluation of the changing environment was made, although it is important to bear in mind that the Kurds did not and do not have an open option over the political decisions concerning their affairs; the Algiers Agreement is testimony to that. Thus, Barazani's rejection of the implementation of the self-rule package cannot be attributed to his fear of losing power. McDowall, in his authoritative work, The Kurds: A Nation Denied, quotes a statement made

by a son of al-Barazani, Ubaidallah, who had defected to the government ranks with another KDP member, Hashim Aqrawi, in which he claims that his father's unwillingness was because he 'doesn't want self-rule to be implemented even if he was given Kirkuk and all of its oil. His acceptance of the law [autonomy] will take everything from him, and he wants to remain absolute ruler' (Ghareeb, 1981, quoted in McDowall, 1992: 95). McDowall suggests that there are reasons to think that Ubaidallah had put his finger on his father's greatest flaw as a Kurdish leader, who clearly thought that integrating an autonomous region into the state of Iraq would 'regularize and develop the region, there could be little place for traditionalist tribal leaders. Autonomy would mark the end of rule by chiefs' (McDowall, 1992: 95).

However, Ubaidallah's defection was not a political defection as much as it was personal. His other brothers, particularly Massoud, the son of al-Barazani's second wife, Halimah from the Zebari tribe, and Idris, were more significant figures. Barazani's fear of losing his authority would have been well founded thirty years earlier. By 1975 he had grown to be the indisputable leader of the Kurdish people, not only in Iraqi Kurdistan but all over Kurdistan. He had become a legend, and was virtually unopposed (his opponents either kept quiet or opposed him in exile).

The defeat of the Kurds in the 1975 war was not a military defeat but a political one designed and executed behind their backs. In fact they had the upper hand militarily, but as history repeated itself, once they had fulfilled the objectives of the Shah of Iran they were abandoned. The Kurdish rejection of the Local Autonomy Law and the decision to go to war again seems to have come not from Haj Omran where al-Barazani led his war, but rather from Teheran and the US State Department. In No Friends but the Mountains, Bulloch and Morris point to the growing Soviet influence in the region through Iraq, and as a counter-measure to this, US-Iranian co-operation aimed at weakening Iraq

> by maintaining the Kurdish rebellion at a constant level, never allowing the Iraqi army to triumph, or the Kurds to succeed, and thus steadily bleeding both, something which particularly pleased the Shah, the main American ally in the region, the best customer for arms the world had ever seen (Bulloch and Morris, 1992: 138).

A further motive can be argued to have been behind the Kissinger-Shah support for the Kurds to go to war against Iraq. In 1974 Kissinger was still busy arranging the disengagement between the Arabs and Israelis after their war of October 1973. To weaken further the Arab opposition front to his plans, disengaging Iraq through a war in the north of the country seems to have been a plausible calculation on the Shah's part, who and therefore encouraged the Kurds to go to war instead of accepting the Autonomy Law.

Having been left, so to speak, naked, the Kurdish leadership had to reach the crucial decision whether to carry on fighting, or abandon the armed struggle. In the view of the strength of their army (estimated 100,000 to 150,000 armed Peshmerga) some commanders wanted to continue. But al-Barazani, who was given the option by the Shah either to fight on his own, to surrender to the Iraqi government, or to take refuge in Iran, opted to go into exile in Iran. He argued that without a land corridor and outside help continuing the fight would be national suicide (Iran provided 90 per cent of the hardware the Kurds needed, as well as refuge - Bulloch and Morris, 1992: 138). The killing of Issa Swar (Isso), the military commander of the Bahdinan region, is alleged to have been carried out by defiant Peshmerga mutineers who refused to abandon the armed struggle and thus murdered their commander (Vanly in Chaliand, 1980: 188). Swar's killing was not, as Vanly claims, an act of rebellion and mutiny by the Peshmerga, but because of a personal vendetta between him and Sayed Aboush Sulyvani. As Swar was on his way to join Barazani to go into exile, Aboush's brother Ali Bek and three other relatives took the opportunity to kill him (see also under Political Parties, Chapter Four). The chapter of the Kurdish war of 1975 was finally closed when al-Barazani and about 200,000 of his followers (including families) crossed the border into Iran. Having fought the central authorities of Iran and Iraq for about half a century, al-Barazani left Iran for the US for treatment. He was never to return to his homeland and mountains alive. In the following weeks thousands of bewildered and scattered Kurds returned and surrendered to the Iraqi authorities in various centres set up especially to receive and register them in humiliating televised processions.

KLM SINCE 1975

In the shortest time possible the best Kurdish Lashker (army) assembled hitherto was completely abandoned. For probably the first time ever, the entire southern Kurdish region was under the control of the central authority at Baghdad, which wasted no time in extending its authority to ensure that the Kurds would never again achieve their strength of 1974. The years from 1975 to 1980 can be described as the harshest in Iraqi Kurdistan so far. The government's new strategy was reminiscent of Atatürk's campaign against the northern Kurds in the 1920s and 1930s: mass deportation, resettlement and re-education. The deportation plans were put into effect immediately, removing all the inhabitants along both the Turkish and Iranian borders for a distance of 20km. Establishing an effective security zone involved not only the removal of humans but also the destruction of rich arable land along the Turkish border. The Barwari, Sindi and Muzziri tribes were forced southwards. All the famous Barwari apple farms were sprayed with acid, and the water wells and springs were sealed. In the beginning the deportees were reasonably compensated for their homes and farms. As the scale of deportation increased in the following months and years, however, little or no compensation was made. The first waves of the deportees were resettled in purpose-built 'model villages' inside the Kurdish region, although some decided to settle in cities like Dohuk and Mosul. However, the model villages were soon overcrowded by newcomers, who arrived daily. The model village at Baakira, north of the city of Dohuk, for example, was designated for the Rekani tribe. Then families from other tribes were housed there. The shortage of houses meant three or more families to the three bedroom houses. The Kurds were confined to these villages; under the watchful eyes of the army and the security forces, and unemployment and other social problems increased. As the government ran out of model villages, the new deportees were sparsely resettled outside the Kurdish region as far as the Arab cities of Kut, Ramadi, Nasiriyya and Basra in the south of Iraq. Deportation to the south was confirmed by the Iraqi Information Minister, Tariq Aziz, on 27 November 1975, as reported by The Times correspondent in Baghdad. Further official confirmation came when on July 1976, Saddam Hussein, then the deputy chairman of the RCC, stated in a published directive that the deportations of the Kurds would now be halted since the Iraqi government had achieved stability and security in Kurdistan.

Meanwhile, the government undertook the task of re-educating the Kurds. Teaching the Ba'ath ideology became compulsory not only in schools, but also

for the illiterates and peasants now living in the model villages. They would be assembled once or twice a week and given lectures in the Ba'ath ideology. Membership of the Socialist Ba'ath Arab Party became more or less compulsory (although the party's title makes it exclusively Arabic).

The absence of any serious Kurdish opposition gave the government of Iraq, especially the rising star of Iraqi Arab nationalism, Saddam Hussein, a free hand to draw up plans for a gradual but total depopulation of southern Kurdistan. There were some reports of guerrilla activities in May and June 1976, but these did not amount to anything serious. Top secret memos were sent to the heads of security to prepare initial studies and plans for this deportation. Saddam's plan was to disperse the Kurds abroad, among friendly Arab countries such as Yemen, Morocco, and Sudan, and resettle Kurdistan with Arabs. By doing this, he seemed to think he would solve the Kurdish problem once and for all. The plan was to expel all Kurds, peasants as well as townspeople, pro-government as well as those who had been neutral and of course those who once opposed the central government. For the 'victorious' Ba'ath government, the only permanent solution was to uproot anything Kurdish for ever. Kurdish fears of the plan increased when Iraq, with total control over the Kurdish region following the chemical attacks on the Kurds in 1988, entered an economic alliance with Jordan, Egypt, and Yemen. The Kurds claimed that the Iraqi government proposed to replace the Kurds already moved out of Kurdistan by Arab immigrants from Egypt and North Yemen (<u>The Independent</u> 3/6/1989). In an RCC meeting in Baghdad which was, attended by both the then president, al-Bakr, and Saddam Hussein, the cabinet and the military commanders held a discussion on Kurdistan and the ways of preventing any future disturbances. Another option was proposed by Gen Sa'id Ḥamw, an outstanding Iraqi soldier, to rearm the pro-government tribes who had been disarmed immediately after the end of the 1975 war and who had been loyal to the central government since the beginning of the Kurdish armed struggle in the late 1950s with each <u>agha</u> responsible for his tribal territory. In return the <u>aghas</u> would ensure that their tribal territory was not used by cadres and infiltrators. And by securing the tribal territories and ensuring the loyalties of the <u>aghas</u>, the government would not have to worry about the security question. The proposal was rebuffed by Saddam Hussein who was quoted as saying 'There is no difference between a white dog and a black dog' (Hamw: personal).

Kurdish rebels, however, had started towards the end of 1976 and the beginning of 1977 to try to come back into Iraq, in small numbers. The inaccessibility of the border with Iran made it difficult for the Iraqi government and its army completely to prevent cross-border infiltration. The infiltrators were largely self-sustaining, and highly mobile small units. The KDP cadre (now under the Provisional Command: see under Political Parties, Chapter Four) and the newly formed PUK cadres started on a programme of rebuilding morale. Small 'hit-and-run' operations against army posts and government targets, though insignificant, became more frequent.

At the beginning of the new phase of guerrilla warfare, the activities of the infiltrators were concentrated along the border areas with Iran and to a lesser extent Syria. The guerrilla units were successful in their hit-and-run raids. Characters like Mahmmod Yezidi and Qasem Shasho (also a Yezidi from Shingar) became living heroes for their daring and their ability to evade the Iraqi forces. With the activities of the Kurdish guerrillas becoming more and more frequent, government policy became increasingly repressive, especially towards Kurdish students who became more defiant day by day. Clandestine cells proliferated at high schools and in the universities of Sulaimaniya and Mosul. Throughout southern Kurdistan, arbitrary arrest, torture, and life imprisonment became routine, and on occasion summary executions and rape, as for instance the rape of two girls by the security forces near the village of Baroshkeh in Dohuk province who were then killed and buried in a shallow grave (personal).

The character of the post-1975 Kurdish struggle, however, was different from those of its predecessors. Two radical changes took place. First, and most importantly, the movement was no longer the monopoly of a single party. Out of the humilation of 1975 sprang several new political parties, notably the PUK under Talabani, whose socialist manifesto attracted support from the middle class and the educated (see Political Parties; Chapter Four). Secondly, the hierarchy of the movement, unlike in the past, was to be influenced by urban elements including teachers, students, medical personnel, engineers, etc (Sherzad in Kreyenbroek & Sperl, 1992: 137).

The events in Iran which subsequently led to the overthrow of the Shah and the establishment of the Islamic Republic in February 1979 gave Kurdish

nationalism a new lease of life. As the unrest in Iran increased, the Iranian Kurds wasted no time laying seige to the army barracks and camps, and taking control over them. While the country was drifting towards the unknown in the last days of 1978 and the first few days of 1979, the Kurds established and extended their control over most of eastern Kurdistan. In the absence of any form of central authority their control was solid and comprehensive. The wide coverage of the events in Iran, including those of the brief Kurdish de facto rule, brought back hope to the Iraqi Kurds. They were even more joyful when the news came of the return of Barazani to Iran from the United States.

By August the Kurds were in full control of most parts of Iranian Kurdistan and were in a strong enough position to conduct negotiations with the new government in Teheran. The Kurdish spiritual leader, Sheikh Izze-din Hussaini, confidently declared on September 1979, that he could 'see no use in keeping open dialogue with the mullahs who so obviously lack the credibility and competence for running the country' (Malek, 1989: 85). However, the situation in Iranian Kurdistan subsequently posed a dilemma for the Iraqi Kurds and their leadership who had taken refuge in Iranian Kurdistan since 1975. As the Iranian Kurds under the leadership of KDPI chairman, Ghassemlou (see under Leadership, Chapter Four), and the Kurdish spiritual leader, Hussaini, were consolidating their position with demands for real autonomy from Teheran, the Iraqi Kurds were not able to remain neutral. They had to make the decision whether to support the eastern Kurds or their new host, Ayatollah Khomeini. Eventually they opted for the latter.

As the hostilities inevitable broke out between the Kurds and the government in Teheran, the government forces, mainly the Revolutionary Guard, the Pasdaran, managed to recapture important cities and towns such as Saggiz, Sanandaj and Paveh from the Kurds. By the end of 1979, the Iranian government in a fourteen point document offered minority rights with considerable freedom to locally constituted councils. The KDPI argued that the offer fell short of Kurdish demands. The KDPI's objection was that being recognised as a religious (Sunni) minority, did not mean recognition of their ethnic and cultural rights. The KDPI also expressed its unhappiness over the government's insistence on naming police commanders for Kurdistan (McDowall, 1992: 76). Disagreement on the above principles, as well as on others such as the territories designated by the Kurds, led to the renewal of hostilities. By

mid-1980 the countryside remained in the hands of the Kurdish parties, KDPI and Komalah, while government control remained over the cities and towns they had recaptured earlier. The situation was developing into the traditional style of rebels against government forces. Neither side seemed able to achieve its objectives and a guerrilla war was in prospect (McDowall, 1992: 76).

The time had come for the Iraqi Kurds in Iran to take sides. They opted to support the Islamic government in its efforts to bring Iranian Kurdistan back under central authority. The options available to them were limited. The retreat of the Iranian Kurds to the mountains by the end of 1979 was not an encouraging sign. The Iraqi Kurdish leadership in Iran clearly could not commit itself and the fate of thousands of refugees to an uncertain gamble. Iran was their only haven and refuge. Exiled Iraqi Kurds also came under pressure from Khomeini who threatened them with yet another exile, this time inside Iran, if they did not cooperate with him. According to an eyewitness it was widely rumoured among the Iraqi Kurds in exile in Iran that Khomeini would remove them to Xowea Camp (Recorded interview with a KDP member of the Peshmerga, Mustafa Salman Abdullah, Dohuk, 7/10/1994).

For the Kurds in Iraq, the power change in Iran came as an unexpected gift. Popular hopes surged that since two out of the three signatories of the infamous Algiers Treaty (the Algerian president and the Shah of Iran) had gone, the third, Saddam Hussein, would soon follow. Hopes rose for the rapid return of the rebels to Iraq and for the resumption of the struggle. The veteran leader, al-Barazani, was due to return to Iran, supposedly to resume 'his' war in Iraqi Kurdistan. the Kurds were reorganizing for a new chapter in their struggle, when, shortly before his planned return to Iran, al-Barazani died of his long illness. The news of his death shocked the entire Kurdish people. Having fought in all fronts since 1930s, and having survived many battles and assassination plots, he had become a revered leader who commanded the respect of foes and friends. As the news of his death reached Iraq, the Iraqi authorities immediately banned any manifestation of grief such as wearing black, the colour of grief, and banned the traditional beahi, or lament.

However, unconfirmed Iraqi intelligence reports suggested that a deal had been struck between Al-Barazani and Khomeini on the resumption of a new armed

struggle in Iraqi Kurdistan, of course with support from Khomeini (personal sources). Although it is difficult to test the authenticity of these intelligence reports, it can only be concluded that Saddam Hussein (now president of Iraq and its supreme ruler) and his powerful propaganda machine were preparing for the worst with respect to the new Iranian government. For Saddam the danger or the threat of Khomeini was far greater than anticipated. On the presumed deal between Khomeini and Barazani, Mullah Hussein, a political officer of the KDP since the early 1960s, said that 'there was what amounted to an understanding between the two'. Barazani had sent Khomeini, when the latter was still in Paris, a congratulatory telegram on the triumph of the Islamic Revolution. Mullah Hussein said that the Kurds were confident that the Islamic Revolution would be supportive of their cause (Recorded interview, Dohuk, 4/10/1994). However, Khomeini's brand of revolutionary Islam was seen as a direct threat to the purportedly secular Ba'ath ideology in Iraq. Ruling over a population in which about 70 per cent of the Arab population belongs to the Shi'ite sect traditionally linked with a predominantly Shi'ite Iran, Saddam's quite probably feared insurrection and responded by deploying army units near the Iranian border around the end of 1979. More units were added during the first half of 1980. This did not seem unusual at the time as the Ba'ath regime continued to mobilise the army regularly, possibly to divert the army from taking an interest in power (a tradition in Iraqi politics). Only a few people knew the eventual destination of the units involved.

Internal affairs in Iran remained uncertain and unclear, with mass arrests and summary executions especially among the army. And as the activities of the Kurds were on the increase with the prospect of renewed insurgency in Iraq, as a confidential source at the Iraqi Ministry of Defence has stated, Saddam approached the Iranian government with three top secret delegations to Khomeini proposing, respectively, the following:

1) The handover of the bulk of the Iraqi Kurdish refugees in Iran to Iraq, or

2) A joint expedition between the forces of the two countries, financed by Iraq, to combat the rebellious Kurds of both countries, or

3) That Saddam's troops would, with permission, encircle the Kurds from inside Iran and flush them towards the Iraqi border where his waiting troops would finish them off (personal sources).

Saddam's strategy, therefore, appears, if the above statement was true, to have been to destroy any Kurdish opposition that might possibly grow in the new environment. It also seems that Saddam was confident of a positive response from Khomeini who was facing his own Kurdish rebellion with an Iranian army that was unable to put it down quickly. But as the confidential source confirmed, Khomeini rejected the proposals outright.

Iranian revolutionaries were keen on claiming the exportability and the expansionist nature of the Revolution. This naturally made the Iraqi ruler fearful. Dilip Hiro writes that Saddam's fear of

> any recurrence of widespread Shia riots would encourage Kurdish secessionists to revive their armed struggle and plunge Iraq into a debilitating civil war. In his [Saddam's] view the only certain way to abort such a possibility was by destroying the source, moral and material, of Shia inspiration: the Khomeini regime (Hiro, 1990: 37).

In August 1980 Saddam's paranoia took him to Saudi Arabia where he met both the Saudi monarch and representatives from Kuwait. The visit was successful, for Saddam secured the backing of the Gulf states for his invasion of Iran (Hiro, 1990: 39, on the concern of the Gulf states, especially Saudi Arabia, see for example, Abir, 1988: 145-60). Thus, a combination of factors encouraged Saddam to send the bulk of his army divisions and the air force in a pre-emptive strike on the morning of 20 September 1980. The objective was to overrun eastern Iran and gain control of oil rich Abadan. Most Iraqis believed this would ensure the Iranian mullahs would yield to Saddam's demands. This calculation proved premature. The following reasons partly explain Saddam's decision to invade:

1. The possibility of a renewed Kurdish armed struggle sponsored by Khomeini, or if the Iranian Kurds sustained their strength and position that would naturally encourage the Iraqi Kurds.

2. The ideological impact of the Iranian Revolution on the Iraqi Shiite majority,

3. The expansionist preaching of the Iranian Islamic Revolution which threatened the very existence of Saddam's regime and his ambition to become the hero of the Arab nation.

4. The demoralized, dismantled and disarrayed state of the Iranian army from which many top and high ranking generals had fled to Iraq.

5. The American hostage crisis and possible Western support.

6. The financial promises made by the Gulf rulers.

McDowall writes that the war 'opened up the greatest opportunity for the Kurdish people to establish a new negotiating position with the governments of the two concerned'. He correctly observes that this opportunity depended on a general agreement between the Kurds on both sides on a general policy and position, but they did not achieve this (McDowall, 1992: 103). In Elusive Kurdistan, Hyman goes further by suggesting that the war provided Kurdish leaders with what could have been their greatest opportunity in half a century to negotiate their demands from a position of strength, or even to declare full independence. Yet Kurdish disunity prevented the nationalists exploiting the crisis; rather it permitted Iran and Iraq to play off the rival Kurdish parties against each other (Hyman, 1988: 13). The problem for the Kurds has been the bitterly-learnt lesson that concessions won under such circumstances are not guaranteed. Once circumstances have changed the Kurds have usually been the losers. The 1970 March Accord experience was still fresh in the minds of the Kurds, when a weak government in Baghdad responded positively to Kurdish demands. The same government, when stronger in 1974, broke its promises and offered the Kurds a new package on its own terms. Kurds are no strangers to betrayals.

Also significant among the other reasons that the Kurds of Iraq did not make the most of this opportunity was the disarray within their ranks after the death of al-Barazani. His death, at this crucial time, threw the party and the

movement into a state of flux. There was a struggle to fill the power vacuum. Calmness in Iraqi Kurdistan during this period, in terms of Kurdish anti-government activities, could, in large part, be attributed to:

* Iraqi's euphoria about its successes in the early stages of the war; these confused the Kurds with the belief that Saddam would soon win the war.

* The efficient harassing of the rebels by a highly trained special commando unit assisted by fleet of modern helicopter gunships based in Kirkuk.

* The efficient network of roads established by the Iraqi regime from 1975 to 1980 throughout the Kurdish region which made the mobilization of army units and security forces much easier.

* The network of informers which managed to penetrate the highest levels of the Kurdish organizations.

* Punitive measures such as arbitrary arrest, torture, and summary execution for any suspected Kurd.

As the main Kurdish party, the KDP, could not reorganise itself quickly, other political groups were emerging as contenders. This divided the Kurdish struggle. Thus, the Kurds of Iraq, thought of as having been presented with an opportunity, did not make the expected comeback. Like other opposition groups in Iraq such as the Communists and the Shi'ites, the Kurds, too, were seriously weakened by the punitive policies of Saddam in the late 1970s and early 1980s. They were 'hit extremely hard' (Sluglett & Sluglett, 1990: 264). Although Massoud Barazani, the 35 year old son of the late Mullah Mustafa al-Barazani, had returned in mid July 1979 to Iraqi Kurdistan with several hundred of his followers, the guerrilla warfare which the Kurds were waging against the Iraqi authorities, contrary to Sherzad's suggestion (Sherzad in Kreyenbroek & Sperl, 1992: 137), did not intensify during the war with Iran.

The main reason behind the increase in the number of the rebels was the desertion from the Iraqi army of the Kurdish conscripts who refused to fight

the war for Saddam. For them the only way to avoid being sent to front was to take to the mountains. The Kurdish presence in the north of Iraq did not amount to a serious war front or at least a confrontation that would worry the Iraqi regime. Desertion, however, was more worrying than the rebels, for desertion had an immediate affect on the Iraqi army. Iraqi Arab soldiers were resentful of the Kurds not for deserting but because the Kurds had a safe place, the mountains, to desert to.

As the strategic balance of the war changed in Iran's favour, and after Iran gradually ejected the Iraqis from most of her territory by the beginning of 1983, the Iranians became confident of a speedy triumph. Their successes, however, were more apparent on the northern (Kurdish) sector than other fronts. As the Iranian army made significant advances, Kurdish control in Iran was almost eliminated by early 1984. Kurdish opposition, thereafter, was reduced to guerrilla warfare. This now consisted of hit and run raids, usually at night, on military and Pasdaran posts and checkpoints. And so Kurdish hopes for autonomy on their own terms withered as the year 1984 went by. As they had failed to continue as a viable opposition in Iran, it was evident that winning any concessions from Teheran was operationally impossible.

The KDPI leadership reached the conclusion that the best way out was a policy of accommodation, although some members of the KDPI, mainly those living in exile in Paris, rejected this policy (McDowall, 1992: 78). The KDPI leader Ghassemlou was searching for an agreement with the Iranians. His search for a peaceful settlement, however, ended with his assassination on 13 July 1989 in Vienna during a secret meeting with Iranian representatives. Prior to the assassination, the initial contacts had resulted in an agreement in principle to legalize the 'illegal' KDPI and to begin development projects in the Kurdish province. Also killed in the assassination was Ghassemlou's deputy, Abdullah Qadderi and an exiled Iraqi Kurd, Fatah Rasol. The Austrian authorities strongly believed that Iran was responsible for the assassination. The Austrian police issued warrants for two men said to be in the Iranian delegation. One suspect, Mir Mansour Bozorgian, was given refuge in the Iranian Embassy in Vienna and the Embassy refused to hand him over to the police. Austrian sources were reported as saying that the killers might be linked 'more specifically to a radical faction within the Iranian government which was hoping to discredit Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani [the president] who

had authorized the peace talks with the Kurds' (The Independent 25/7/1989). The Austrian authorities, however, allowed one Iranian who had been wounded during the killing to return to Iran despite police requests to arrest him in connection with the murder. Another request by the police for a warrant to arrest another Iranian, known by his diplomatic accreditation documents as Mohammed Jaffari Sahranoodi, six days after the accident, was turned down by the state prosecutor on the ground that the evidence was not strong enough. Iran was naturally the party which had the most interest in Ghassemlou's death; as he had been for the last few years the most able Kurdish politician in the whole of Kurdistan, his removal left a big gap in the Kurdish leadership. With Ghassemlou's departure, the Kurdish struggle in eastern Kurdistan suffered a major blow. He had provided the movement's personality and doctrine. He was the main character upon whom a united consciousness could be founded. He was able to bring together the tribal elements, Komalah's communists and the intellectuals.

Meanwhile in southern Kurdistan, Kurdish activities remained insignificant. The disarray in the KDP gave Talabani's PUK the opportunity to contest its leading role. The PUK was gathering support and its membership was growing as more deserters took to the mountains. However, in order to sustain its retreating army, the Iraqi regime was forced by the end of 1982 to withdraw more units stationed in the Kurdish region to reinforce the front against a possible Iranian breakthrough. This step created a vacuum which could not be filled by units from the Popular Army, al Jyash al sha'bi, which replaced the regular units. The Popular Army was composed only of high school and university students as well as retired citizens. The regime's only remaining option now was to arm the Kurdish tribes. Although some chieftains had been eager to enlist their tribes since 1980, Saddam had been reluctant to arm them, at least for as long as he could fight Iran and maintain control inside Iraq. But the Light Brigades, al Afwaj al Khafifah, were formed. Each tribal chief became officially known as Mustashar (adviser) and to each brigade an army officer was attached to coordinate its activities with the government and the army. The manner in which these brigades were set up followed the earlier proposal by General Sayed Hamw.

The tribal units were initially set up to control and secure tribal territory. Each tribe, armed with light weapons and some artillery and financed, with

each enlisted tribesman receiving a salary of Iraqi Dinar 85 (255 US$); this was to ensure that the guerrillas' free movement was halted and to stop them establishing bases. The enlisting of tribes was, however, not simply a countermeasure against the guerrilla movement. Among the government's other objectives was to stop deserters joining the Kurdish opposition groups operating in the mountains. Most Kurdish conscripts were allowed legally to join their tribal brigades and this stopped them taking refuge in the mountains. This measure proved productive, in that not only were the numbers of deserters decreased, as Kurdish soldiers in the active service in the Iraqi Army were allowed to enlist in their tribal Light Brigades, but also many Kurdish deserters abandoned the mountains and enlisted with their tribes. When the author questioned a young Kurd on his reason why he joined the Peshmerga of the KDP, the reply was that in 1980 when his name was drawn for army service, he joined the Peshmerga only to avoid that conscription. When the tribal Light Brigades were set up he returned and enlisted in his tribal brigade in 1983 (Recorded interview, Dohuk, 7/10/1994).

One of the most interesting developments in southern Kurdistan in the first half of the 1980s, however, was the growth of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) to the point of conducting negotiations and reaching an agreement with the Iraqi regime in October 1983 (McDowall, 1992: 104-5). Initial conclusions from the agreement indicate the PUK's desire to negotiate a quick settlement so that it could fill the political vacuum in southern Kurdistan. The PUK-government negotiations were not the result of Kurdish pressure as there was no serious Kurdish threat in northern Iraq. Rather it was another manoeuvre by Saddam, playing off Kurdish groups one against the other. It did not take Saddam a great deal of effort to lure the PUK into negotiations. The tactics employed in playing the Kurdish groups off against one another were quite simple. If offered opportunity to talk to the government, Kurdish groups do not often hesitate to take the offer in the hope of reaching an agreement with the government for which they would in return claim the credit. Ironically, the PUK was said to have been behind a joint attack in collaboration with Turkish forces against the Kurdish and Communist stronghold in Julamerk in May 1983 (Sluglett & Sluglett, 1990: 264).

Meanwhile, suggestions that the Turkish army's push 20 miles into Iraq was a response to the increasing Kurdish pressure on the Iraqi government can be

challenged, since no fighting took place between the Kurdish rebels and the Turkish troops. The Turkish incursion into Iraqi Kurdistan could be analysed first as an indirect message to the Iranians, who were making gains in the war, and secondly, to fulfil an agreement with the government of Iraq to hold joint security manoeuvres regularly. Although reports of the Turkish incursion on 27 May 1983 spoke of around 2,000 casualties in a fierce confrontation with Kurdish rebels, in July 1983 an eyewitness dismissed these reports and insisted that the Kurds were alerted by the Turkish troops in advance about the incursion and that they only arrested a'tea smuggler' who was released the following day. The eyewitness, Haji Kuremai, was in the border area trying to sell an AK-47 rifle to the tribesmen across the border. After all that he did not risk the crossing anyway.

Kurdish activities in Iraqi Kurdistan in 1983 remained symbolic rather than productive. In fact their activities can be described as counter-productive, for after every guerrilla engagement, government reprisals were severe. Progressively more repressive measures were applied. Villages were emptied and the inhabitants were deported after any engagement nearby. Less repressive measures included the summoning of the male members of the village to appear before the chief of the local security forces or the Ba'ath representative for questioning, arrest, indefinite detention, imprisonment and torture. No allowances were made for their farm work or for the Friday prayers. This remained the norm well into 1987. Thus despite an increase in numbers, the rebels failed to establish a strong foothold or to engage the army in any significant battle. They were effective only at sunset and before dawn.

In addition to the Light Brigades, mafarz (details) made up of fifty men apiece were formed in the late 1970s, and directly attached to the Army Intelligence Services, Istikhbarat. These units, made up of local people, functioned as the spearhead for the army and the special commando force because of their knowledge of the local terrain. They reflected the government's determination not to depend totally on the traditional chieftains who could, as they had done in the past, bargain with the government and sometimes refuse to perform certain duties. By the mid-1980s, however, the rebels had managed to set up a few bases along the Iranian and Turkish border respectively. These 'liberated strips' were intended to provide logistic support to the rebels operating further inland. More importantly, the KDP set

up a radio station along the border. The PUK's control over the roads and the countryside between Kirkuk and Sulaimaniya (McDowall, 1992: 107) was, however, confined to the night time during which the rebels would erect 'symbolic' checkpoints in order to enhance PUK propaganda. At daylight the government troops would, as usual, reassert their control.

Although the government was trying to keep a firm grip on the Kurdish region, it was, nevertheless, more worried about the setbacks it sustained in the war with Iran. It was the Iranians and not the Kurds who represented the real danger to the regime in Baghdad. But as it became clear that neither side was able to score an outright victory, the insurgency in Kurdistan also slowed down. No serious engagement took place with government troops. Kurdish rebels were waiting for the outcome of the war, and were in no hurry to take on the Iraqis. The pro-government light brigades seemed to be in an undeclared truce with the rebels. The tribal chieftains were under less pressure as the activities of the rebels were not serious. The financial benefits from enlistment in the light brigades brought economic activity back to southern Kurdistan. Tourism from other parts of Iraq increased noticeably. More importantly the rebels themselves were enjoying relaxed conditions. Covert understanding between them and the pro-government tribes was common. Local rumours suggested that some pro-government conscripts stationed further north were sharing their free rations distributed by the government and even their duties with the rebels. The joke was that the members of a certain pro-government tribe were serving the government for fifteen days each month and the rebels for the other fifteen.

Hopes rose for significant resurgence of Kurdish opposition when the rivalry between the two principal parties, the KDP and PUK, was ended. Having clashed on few occasions, the two parties concluded an agreement in Teheran on 8 November 1986. The policy shift by the PUK was a step forward as it allowed the forces of the two parties to cooperate instead of fighting each other. By forcing the PUK to abandon its accords with Saddam, a mere tactic by Saddam to win time and divide the opposition, the alliance bore fruit for the PUK, as it was now eligible for Iranian aid after having discussed possible cooperation with the Teheran based Supreme Assembly for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SAIRI).

The situation in southern Kurdistan was disturbed once by the possibility of a revolt by a tribal chieftain, Ja'afar Agha al-Besifki, in May 1986. After four months of growing tension between the Iraqi government and Besifki, though no fighting took place, Mr Besifki was invited by Arshed Zebari, a friend of his and Kurdish Minister of State in Saddam's government, to meet and hold talks with the army commander of the Kurdish region in Kirkuk. Mr Besifki left Manguish in an army helicopter, accompanied by his friend, Mohammed Agha al-Rekani, the chieftain of the Rekani tribe. After a brawl in the commander's office in Kirkuk Mr Besifki was arrested and subsequently executed in Manguish, north of the city of Dohuk, on 31 May 1986.

With regard to this development in Manguish, the KDP announced a military breakthrough against the Iraqi army. It claimed the capture of Manguish, a key military target in northern Iraq with a strategic position close to the international highways and the oil pipeline through Turkey, as well as the surrender of 800 Iraqi soldiers with enough equipment to hold the town for two years. The KDP also claimed that it was besieging the strategic city of Dohuk, 20 miles south of Manguish (The Guardian 19/5/1986). The KDP also claimed that its new policy was 'seizing territory and pushing back the Iraqis..' so repulsing the extensive Iraqi operation backed by powerful air support. Another 700 Iraqi soldiers (a total of 1,500 in one week) were claimed by the KDP to have been taken prisoner (The Guardian 22/5/1986).

In examining the KDP's claim one finds contradiction, misrepresentation, and distortion. Following the arrest of Mr al-Besifki, his seventeen year old son Azad took to the surrounding mountains with some of his tribesmen. He was soon forced by the KDP to hand over most of the light weaponry they had taken with them, including two artillery pieces. But there was no fighting over the town of Manguish. This remained in the hands of the government troops who had installed Hukmat Najman as their protégé in the town. Neither did a single soldier surrender. A further point to observe is that the town of Manguish, contrary to the KDP statement, has no strategic position as it has control over neither the communication network nor the oil pipeline. The situation was contained and life returned to normal for all sides. The undeclared modus vivendi in Kurdistan, because of the uncertainties of the war with Iran, was suitable for all parties. Thus, no serious accident or confrontation occurred to upset the climate until late in 1987. Contrary to KDP claims of important

victories, the party was not ready or willing to engage the Iraqi troops.

The increasing pressure on the Iranian army to make a breakthrough in the now-deadlocked war, especially after it had repeatedly tried and failed narrowly to capture the southern port of Basra, then forced Iran to call upon the assistance of the Iraqi Kurds, in the hope of better luck on the northern front, the Kurdish region. The Kurdish Peshmerga were involved in joint assaults with the Iranian army and the Revolutionary Guard. The Kurdo-Iranian gains included the capturing of Khormal and Halabjah after heavy fighting between 13 and 16 March 1988 in Sulaimaniya province. The territorial gains of the Iranian and the Kurdish forces gave them the opportunity to hold a position on the shores of the Darbandikhan lake, threatening the Dokan dam and hydroelectric power station. It was at this stage of cooperation between the Iraqi Kurds and the Iranians with more promising outcomes in sight, that Saddam Hussein decided to retaliate and retrieve the lost territories by using chemical weapons against the 'occupiers' of Halabjah, including the civilian population of the town.

The Iraqi regime had used poison gas against the Kurds on previous occasions. Following clashes with the Iraqi Army on 14 April 1987, it was alleged that the Iraqi authorities carried out a number of gas attacks against twenty Kurdish villages killing 30 people and wounding around 450, mostly civilians. It was also alleged that gases were used in Qara Dagh region between 21 and 26 March 1988 (Bulloch and Morris, 1992: 143, 162-3). But in Halabjah gas was used on a large scale as a reprisal for Kurdish collaboration with the enemy, Iran. The March 1988 chemical attack marked a major setback for the Iraqi Kurdish struggle. After they had slowly regained some of the shattered confidence which they had lost in 1975, the Kurds were suddenly thrown back again into chaos. Since the collapse of their war in 1975, Kurdish activists had been working hard to rebuild confidence and raise morale. People were beginning to believe again that another struggle was possible especially during the war between Iraq and Iran. The gas attack put the Kurds back to their starting point. Horror and fear negated all the efforts undertaken since 1975.

The position of the Iraqi regime must also be considered. Having come under extreme pressure to retrieve the strategic Fao peninsula from the occupying

Iranian forces, they could not tolerate Kurdish activities and open collaboration with Iranian forces. Thus, facing troop shortages, low morale, and Iranian advances in the northern sector, the regime appointed Ali Hassan al Majid, later known variously as 'the butcher of Kurdistan', 'the butcher of Kuwait', and as Hassan 'Kimiawi' ('chemical') to reestablish 'order' in the Kurdish region. But in Kurdistan, Hassan faced an uncontrollable situation. The pro-government Kurdish tribes could not be relied upon. They were showing signs of reluctance, dislike, and unwillingness to fight the Iranians, although subsequently most light brigades, for example, the Suorichis and the Hurkis from the Bahdinan region, were sent to the war front in the northern sector. Therefore, Majid Hassan had to make a decisive first move; he bombarded the town of Halabjah on 17 March 1988 with chemical weapons (cyanide and mustard nerve gas). Casualties, mostly civilians, were over 5,000 dead; thousands were wounded. The gas attack, which shook the whole of Kurdistan, was further enforced by the possibility of future deployment of chemical weapons if required. Barrels were left along road sides throughout the Kurdish region as Hassan's warning to the people of what they could expect in the future. The terror, recollected by an eyewitness living in the mountains at the time was of such scale that '..the sound of any aircraft, helicopter or an artillery would cause panic among the people and made them run aimlessly to the nearest high ground...' (mother of the author). This policy of terror forced many Kurds to come down from the mountains and surrender to the authorities. Of those who managed to cross the border into Turkey, some were handed back to the Iraqi authorities. Earlier, in 1963, Kurds had appealed to the UN complaining about the use of chemical weapons by the Iraqi government. And in 1987 twenty-one separate chemical attacks were reported in 'isolated valleys'. For instance, 'a raid on the Balasan valley in April Province on 16 April 1987, 286 injured Kurds made their way to Arbil city for medical attention. They were all captured and killed by the Iraqi army' (Bulloch and Morris, 1992: 143).

Meanwhile on the war front, the Iranians had come to realise that an outright victory over Iraq was now more remote than ever, especially since the US was now committed to the security of the Persian Gulf, which in turn meant, in effect, support for Saddam Hussein. This realization, along with the expulsion of its troops from Fao, forced the Iranian government in July 1988 to accept UN Resolution 598, calling for a cease-fire between the two countries. On the

day following the Iranian announcement, 19 July, the infamous Iraqi Anfal campaign was launched in the Kurdish region in order to clear out the last remaining Kurdish resistance. This was designed to coincide with the formal ending of the war with Iran. The Iraqi drive was to clear the Kurdish countryside of any group who might offer resistance and included the destruction of the remaining villages.

At the end of August 1988, the number of the Kurds fleeing towards the borders was doubling by the hour. Estimates by Turkish army officers on the border put the number of the Kurds waiting for entry into Turkey as having risen by about half to some 150,000 over the previous twenty-four hours (The Times 31/8/1988). Turkey, under international pressure, opened its border to the stranded Kurds on 30 August. Turkish anxiety, especially the army's fear about the influx, led the Defence Minister, Ercan Vuralhan, to tell the national daily Cumhuriyet 'if you take all people along the Iraqi border into Turkey, you would upset the balance in the Middle East' (The Times 31/8/1988). Meanwhile conflicting accounts about the Kurdish resistance were being reported. The Kurdish spokesman in Europe, Hoshyar Zebari, stated that the continuing heavy fighting had resulted to date in the total annihilation of the 66th Special Forces Brigade of the Iraqi Army, while Turkish army sources put Kurdish casualties at about 2,000 guerrillas dead and 200 villages destroyed (The Times 31/8/1988). The token Kurdish resistance before Saddam's determined and loyal troops was, however, rapidly disintegrating.

Contrary to the claims of heavy fighting and 'brave resistance', an estimated force of 3,000 Kurdish Peshmerga was reported to have crossed the border into Turkey. Furthermore, although the Kurdish leadership (Talabani and Barazani) had pledged, according to a Kurdish radio monitored in Van in eastern Turkey, to fight to the death, in reality Talabani himself had, according to a report, asked for asylum in Turkey and affirmed that no weapons would be carried into Turkey by Kurdish rebels and refugees (The Independent 2/9/1988). Although al-Barazani and his men were reported to be putting up as much resistance as possible in the border town of Zilasilvan to halt the onslaught, Kurdish disarray and lack of real resistance was largely due to fear of the use of chemicals by the advancing Iraqi troops.

The issue of chemical weapons reached international level. While the Turkish

Prime Minister, Turgut Özal, said that the Kurds were '..fleeing death, and...it is a debt of humanity to help them' (The Independent 2/9/1988), Turkey, nevertheless, denied reports of poison victims, a step most probably taken to damp down the potential publicity and international concern. Although the Iraqi ambassador in London, Mohammed al-Mashat, on 7 September, categorically denied the allegations against his country's use of chemical weapons, on the following day the United States accused Iraq of having used gas against the Kurds. The State Department spokesman, Charles Redman, told reporters that 'As a result of our evaluation of the situation, the United States government is convinced that Iraq has used chemical weapons in its military campaign against the Kurdish guerrillas' (The Independent 9/9/1988). The KDP said that 430 Kurdish families sheltering in a gorge at the foot of the mount Mateen, above the town of Amadia, had been killed by nerve gas. Six Iraqi jets were reported to have made two sorties over the gorge and saturated it with poison gas on 30 August (The Times 17/9/1988).

As government troops found no effective resistance, they managed to push the remaining Kurdish rebels across the borders and then the operation to clear the Kurdish countryside was easy. Most people having already fled their homes, a total of around 5,000 villages were razed to the ground, while the inhabitants were forced into temporary camps. The government simply dumped some of the displaced people in the open air with no shelter, food, medical care or sanitation. Thousands from Dohuk province, for example, were literally left on a site near the city of Arbil (about 150 km from Dohuk). The site, which acquired the name Baherkiah, was simply a strip of flat land with no trees, vegetation, water or even a single hut. The remarkable survival for over two years of the camp's residents was due to the defiance of the people of Arbil, who were generous enough to provide refugees with food, water, and tents. Relatives from the city of Mosul, 80 km away, also braved the authorities and regularly smuggled food and clothes in. The heroic survival and endurance of the camp's detainees has, as a result, become a symbol of present Kurdish nationalism and is deeply ingrained in Kurdish consciousness. The survivors were overwhelmingly old people, children and women as young men were taken away separately by the security forces and never seen again

The aim of Saddam's government to find a final solution seemed to be within his reach. Kurdish opposition was, in effect, over. The 'scorched earth'

policy meant no more isolated villages. No villages meant no grass-roots support for the rebels. No support meant no food and information. This meant simply no more guerrillas. Kurdish leaders, however, rejected the Iraqi amnesty which usually follows every campaign. On 7 September, the KDP leader, al-Barazani, for example, formally rejected Baghdad's amnesty. He defiantly declared that 'the Kurds have not embarked on their present struggle to earn pardon, but to achieve national and democratic rights' (The Times 8/9/1988). On 6 October 1988, the Iraqi government declared a full amnesty for all the Kurds in and outside Iraq. The offer came partly as a result of the international outcry over the use of chemical weapons.

Resistance in Kurdistan was by now virtually non-existent. Apart from the odd urban attacks on security and Mukhabarat personnel, mainly in and around the city of Sulaimaniya, the stronghold of Kurdish nationalism in southern Kurdistan, Kurdistan was brought under submission. The claims of the KDP representative in Europe, Hoshyar Zebari, that the army's attempts from 5 to 7 September to dislodge guerrilla bases on Mount Khakork and Mount Lolan in the Sidakan region, had failed and that the army had suffered 200 dead (The Times 8/9/1988), were difficult to confirm. The KDP's claims had to be doubted since it had a poor record of reporting (as was the case in May 1986 in Manguish). Even if the reports were true the remote mountain peaks were insignificant to the Iraqi authorities. It is impossible to control every mountain top in Kurdistan, yet the government had total control over most of Kurdistan. In an interview with the British paper, The Independent, Jalal Talabani pledged to move the struggle to the Iraqi cities. He stressed that the Kurdish rebels were planning to take an urban guerrilla campaign into Iraq as a whole, against strategic (military, economic, oil and state companies) targets. He went further by saying that they would avoid civilian casualties and that there was no intention to take the campaign outside Iraq. He argued that the new strategy, not to be linked to terrorism, was forced upon them by Saddam's policies in Iraqi Kurdistan since July 1988, and he admitted that Iraqi Kurdistan was now empty (The Independent 18/11/1989). Talabani, however, failed to carry out his threat.

IRAQI KURDISTAN AND 2 AUGUST 1990

From the end of 1988 and until August 1990, the Iraqi regime was jubilant. The cease-fire with Iran on August 1988 was interpreted as a victory over Iran in the eight year war, a triumph of Arab nationalism over the 'Fars'. International outrage over the chemical weapons had passed, with almost no damage to the regime's credibility, and the condemnation remained verbal. Saddam Hussein was becoming more powerful, more assertive, and more adamant. No countermeasures were taken and business went on as usual. Aid, assistance, and expertise were pouring into Iraq. By the end of the first half of 1989, Kurdistan was, as mentioned above, under the total control of the Iraqi army. The depopulation policy was going according to plan. The gravity of Saddam's policy was such that the Director of the London based Minority Rights Group, Alan Philips, told the UN Human Rights Commission in March 1989 that the government policy towards its Kurdish minority 'constituted genocide' under the Genocide Convention of 1948. 3000 villages and hamlets were razed and over half a million Kurds were deported to detention camps in the desert areas of south and west of Iraq (The Independent 20/3/1989).

According to The Independent's Diplomatic Editor, John Bulloch, messages from Iraqi Kurdistan confirmed that the army had swept through Kurdistan, burning and destroying all buildings in evacuated villages to stop people returning, and blowing up Kurdish shrines to prevent them making pilgrimages to their old areas. Meanwhile, Kurdish leaders, Barazani and Talabani, were appealing to western governments to stop a mass deportation of the 200,000 inhabitants of the town of Qala Diza and the surrounding areas where residents 'were barricading themselves into their houses as the Iraqi army began enforcing the deportation orders'. The Iraqi ambassador to London confirmed the deportation was being implemented for security reasons (The Independent 3/6/1989).

In March 1990, on a visit with other Swedish MPs who had been critical of the Iraqi policy in Kurdistan and were invited by Iraqi the government in an attempt to improve its image, Anders Forsstrom reported that Kurdish claims put the number of villages destroyed by Saddam at 3,968 and cities or large towns at 20. The delegation were taken to Halabjah and thirty other towns, all of which had been depopulated and destroyed. The reason for this destruction was said by the escorting security forces and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs interpreters, to be security. Interestingly, however, Forsstrom observed that if it was in the name of security, then it was odd that the authorities were

building a summer house for Hussein less than a mile away, and a new tourist development nearby (The Observer 18/3/1990). Kurdistan was, in fact, being turned into a playground for Saddam and his guests. The building of lavish palaces on and around Mount Kaara was clearly an index of the government's control and confidence.

On 2 August 1990, Saddam's tanks rolled into the neighbouring country of Kuwait. The occupation of the small 'city state' emirate which took only a few hours required the mobilization of the larger portions of the million-strong army of Iraq. As the dispute over Kuwait intensified between Iraq and the international community, and escalated into confrontation with the rest of the world, Kurdish hopes were revived again as if Allah had answered their prayers, especially as the outcome of the coming confrontation with the US-led powers was never in doubt.

The Kurdish position during the period from August 1990 to January 1991 was, however, a difficult one. The remote possibility of solving the dispute peacefully and without war made them fearful of antagonizing Saddam, a luxury they could ill afford. They could not even appear, though in exile, to be taking sides, a move which would certainly bring further immediate retribution from Saddam if he survived the dispute. A leading member of the Iraqi Kurdish Front admitted on 3 April 1991 that in September 1990 they had suspended their activities against the Iraqi government because 'we did not want to be perceived as the fifth column' (The Independent 4/4/1991). Thus, they were hopeful that the western powers would either formally ask them to open a northern front against Saddam and support them in doing so, or even better, that western armies would march to Baghdad and overthrow Saddam's regime. The possible new front in the north never materialized. Also, although the KDP offered and did provide the coalition camp with some intelligence reports, these were often discredited, and the Kurds continued to wait for the outcome. For them and the rest of the desperate Iraqis, this was a golden opportunity and they hoped that the days of the regime were numbered.

Of course, the popular hopes of pre-February 1991 that the Allied forces would march into Baghdad, as they marched into Paris during the Second World War, and free the people of Iraq from Saddam, were not realised. For reasons outside the ambit of this investigation, the land war lasted only 100 hours

(perhaps the shortest in history), and Saddam remained in control in Baghdad. However, the hasty retreat by the defeated army units encouraged the Iraqi people, beginning with the Shi'ites in the south, to rebel against Saddam. As the news of the Shi'ite uprising reached Kurdistan, a spontaneous people's uprising, Serhildan, was in the making. As everyone was talking about the imminent downfall of Saddam, the inhabitants of Kurdish cities and towns did not think twice before attacking the police stations, security headquarters, and, most eagerly, the headquarters of both the Mukhabarat and the Ba'ath party offices. The initial success of the uprising and the speedy seizure of the towns and cities, despite fierce resistance by the Mukhabarat and the Ba'athists, was largely due to a U-turn by the pro-government Kurdish Light Brigades who seized the initiative against their former employers. In Dohuk, for example, an Advisor of a Light brigade, Ibrahim Ali, the chief of the Muzziri tribe (living in exile in Canada since 1992), was among the first to take the initiative. By mid-March, Kurdish flags were flying above the abandoned Iraqi forts and the customs posts of Khabur. In his first speech since his defeat in the Kuwait war, Saddam told the Kurds that fighting 'would not bring independence, saying that other countries with Kurdish populations would never tolerate an independent Kurdistan' (The Independent 17/3/1991).

As Iraq sank into chaos, fighting was stepped up with attacks on government installations and offices even inside Baghdad. The KDP leader, Massoud al-Barazani, appealed to all the opposition parties to Saddam's regime to join him in Iraqi Kurdistan to form a 'provisional government' (The Independent 23/3/1991). The call was, of course, made in a climate, which though shrouded in uncertainties, seemed considerably in favour of the Iraqi opposition. Jalal Talabani of the PUK left Damascus together with Sami Abdul Rahman with other Iraqi opposition groups, such as defecting Ba'athists like Hassan al-Naqib, and the Communists; seventeen opposition parties in all, headed for Iraqi Kurdistan. As the Kurds were in control of the region, including the oil city of Kirkuk, Kurdistan became the destination of all Iraqi opposition groups. Messages, transmitted on the Kurdish Radio, Voice of Kurdistan, hailed their successes: 'The battle for Kirkuk is over! The airport, the secret police headquarters and television station are under the control of the Peshmerga! The oil fields are in our hands' (The Independent 24/3/1991).

Almost total control over Iraqi Kurdistan was claimed by the Kurdish rebels.

All Kurdish governorates (Sulaimaniya, Dohuk, Arbil, Kirkuk, and parts of Mosul) were in their hands, and they claimed to be trying to capture Mosul itself. However, the Kurdish successes were in reality not decisive. They had taken control, but not won the battle, since there was no battle. The Iraqi army was finishing off the Shi'ites in the south first. The battle for Kurdistan was yet to come. Meanwhile, time was running out for the Kurds. Saddam's quick success in putting down the Shiite rebellion with his intact Republican Guard, gave him the opportunity to turn his troops northward to deal with the Kurds. This looked easy as the Allied policy was neutral as to what was happening inside Iraq. The attitudes of the Arab experts in the State Department were to oppose any US involvement in the internal affairs of Iraq, and to oppose any contacts with the opposition (The Independent 24/3/1991). US 'wishful scenario' did not materialize that someone from the dominant Sunni élite, preferably an army officer, would overthrow Saddam. The way was now open for Saddam to quell the growing rebellion. On 25 March, a counter offensive was launched by Saddam's troops to retake the Kurdish northern cities and towns.

The Kurds did not seem worried about the counter-offensive at the beginning. The return of Talabani to Kurdistan from exile in Syria, on 26 March 1991, to a hero's welcome in the border town of Zakho, was seen as 'a morale boost to rebels bracing themselves for a bloody counter-offensive by government forces to retake the key oil city of Kirkuk' (The Times 27/3/1991). Being fatalists as ever, the Kurds were hopeful of support from the coalition. To their disappointment this did not happen in their hour of need, and were left on their own. The US State Department confirmed on 27 March 1991 that Saddam's forces were massing for a major counter-offensive to retake the city of Kirkuk (The Independent 28/3/1991). Iraqi opposition groups, by now, were wary of Saddam's build up, especially as the uprising in the south had already been brutally crushed. Their fears were increased as Saddam's interior and defence ministers, Ali Hassan al-Majid and Saadi Toama Abbas, were absent from a cabinet meeting chaired by Saddam. They were believed to have been dispatched to organize the coming assault on the Kurds. The dispatching of Majid to Kurdistan had a special significance since it was him who masterminded the gas attacks on Halabja and then the Anfal campaign in 1988. Kurdish rebels, meanwhile, were claiming they had made significant advances and captured Khalid air base (20km south west of Kirkuk), and captured an officer and two

technicians. They also claimed to have destroyed two Soviet made SU-22 fighter bombers and seven M-8 helicopters. (The Independent 28/3/1991).

While both sides were preparing for a showdown, regional fears of a possible victory of the Iraqi opposition groups, including the Kurds, gathered in Kurdistan which might lead to the breaking up of Iraq, led to an agreement between the Permanent Members of the Security Council to allow the Iraqis to use their fighter aircraft in the forthcoming battle. The one accommodation to the Kurds, wrote Leonard Doyle from New York, was that Iraq must promise not to use chemical weapons against them (The Independent 28/3/1991). This formula (which supposedly, from the western point of view, made for fair play on both sides) gave Saddam's forces the upper hand and an invaluable advantage, and proved decisive to the defeat of the Kurds in the big cities.

As the duel began, Saddam's forces launched their offensive to retake the city of Kirkuk on Thursday 29 March. The Times reported 'a merciless air, artillery and missile barrage on Kirkuk as tens of thousands of his [Saddam's] troops moved into position for a ground offensive ...with tank-led assault to recapture the important northern oil city from the rebels' (The Times 29/3/1991). Soon after the assault began, Baghdad Radio celebrated the retaking both of Kirkuk and Dohuk and claimed that the Vice-Chairman of the RCC, Izzat Ibrahim, was touring the former. Western journalists in the region denied this. In London a spokesman for the Kurdish front, Latif Rashid, claimed that Sukhoi bombers, Mig fighters, and helicopter gunships had flown several sorties as government forces pounded Kirkuk with long range artillery, rockets and surface-to-surface missiles. Meanwhile, Kurdish leaders where playing down the loss of Kirkuk by saying 'the loss of Kirkuk would not be a great setback since Saddam's forces would be unable to hold the city for long against their highly experienced guerrilla fighters who would retaliate with hit and run attacks' (The Times 29/3/1991).

Kurdish statements seemed over optimistic, but they gave a clear indication of the Kurdish recognition that they were no match for the government forces. Moreover, in Washington, the Pentagon confirmed that Iraqi forces had mounted a big assault on Kirkuk. A spokesman admitted that forces loyal to Saddam were using tanks, helicopter gunships, heavy artillery, and possibly multiple rocket launchers (The Times 29/3/1991). The KDP also declared that the

bombing of the city was indiscriminate. Furthermore, claims by the Kurdish spokesman in London, Latif Rashid, that the large armed Kurdish force made up of guerrillas, militiamen, and freshly armed civilians, which had advanced and was now ringing the city of Mosul (The Times 29/3/1991) were ill-founded. As mentioned earlier, no attempt was made to take Mosul even at the beginning of the uprising. As at least six Iraqi divisions and 300 tanks, supported by helicopter gunships and artillery attacked Kirkuk, Kurdish forces withdrew and conceded the city to the advancing troops. Brent Sadler, reporting from the front line outside Kirkuk where Kurdish tribesmen and guerrillas had gathered for a last stand against the Iraqi army, described the Kurdish resistance as no match for the Iraqi army: 'The Kurds' don't seem to have the weapons, training or organisation to hold out for long against Saddam's forces'. As the Kurds were not trained for this kind of 'set-piece warfare on the green plain', he summed up 'that the superior fire power of the government forces looks like becoming a decisive factor'. (The Mail on Sunday 31/3/1991).

After 24 hours of fierce fighting, the city was finally retaken by Saddam's troops. While the Kurds were claiming that the entire population (around 1,500) of Kala Hanjir village, east of Kirkuk, had been massacred, an estimated 60,000 crack Republican Guards were involved in the assault on Kirkuk with aircraft support flying from Tikrit (The Observer 31/3/1991). Hundreds of thousands of Kurds were, by now, on the roads escaping the advancing troops. Even Kurds loyal to Saddam were on the run. The Zebari brothers (Latif and Arshd, the minister of state), for example, were arrested by the Iraqi forces while trying to flee to Syria. According to refugees fleeing from Kirkuk, the attack on the city was apocalyptic, with the streets of the city littered with thousands of bodies. On a visit to the outer zone of the city, al-Barazani accused the government of committing a massacre 'that borders on genocide'. And as Washington repeated its 'neutrality' and refused to intervene, the whole of Iraqi Kurdistan, in the words of Julie Flint, turned into a 'human caravan' (The Observer 31/3/1991). The advancing Republican Guards were killing everyone.

The unfolding tragedy in Iraqi Kurdistan was probably the biggest set-back yet in their modern history. A vivid account by Martin Woollacott, which brought the plight of the Kurds to the world, described the situation: 'A monstrous crime is being perpetrated in Kurdistan ...the fear must be that the Kurds of

Iraq are about to suffer blows which could indeed be mortal. Certainly it will be the worst reprisal in 100 years of nationalist struggle' (The Guardian 4/4/1991). Having overcome the Kurdish resistance, the Iraqi forces recaptured the Kurdish stronghold, the city of Sulaimaniya, on 3 April 1991. Then almost the entire Kurdish population (with thousands of Iraqi Arab families who had gone to the Kurdish region under the pretext of tourism during the allied campaign on Iraq in January and February 1991) were on the run.

The events in southern Kurdistan turned into a spectacular human tragedy. By early April, the mountain peaks and valleys along the Turkish and Iranian borders were packed with hundreds of thousands of Kurds. They were to spend the coming weeks in the freezing open air. France responded, suggesting there was a moral duty to help. On 7 April 1991, the US administration policy appeared to shift. President Bush, under heavy criticism, said that the US would urge the UN to take action to protect the fleeing Kurds from northern Iraq. The breakthrough came, however, from the Turkish president, Turgut Özal. Speaking on American television, he urged the UN to take over territory in northern Iraq in order to provide a haven for the refugees. He further offered Turkish troops to assist in the proposed havens (The Independent 8/4/1991). In an effort, however, to dampen criticism of Mr Bush's mishandling of the post Gulf War Iraqi crisis (the uprisings in the south and north), and the fall in the popularity of the president from 91 percent in mid February to 78 percent on 12 April (Washington Post/ABC poll), White House officials were, by Saturday 13 April, giving the impression that the US had assumed responsibility for the coordination of the relief programme until the international organisations were ready to take over (The Sunday Telegraph 14/4/1991).

As the Allied involvement became more evident with the likely sending of British, American and French troops (estimated 5000, 10,000 and 1000 respectively), plans for a safe havens were taking shape. The British Minister for Overseas Aid, Lynda Chalker, said after arriving in Turkey on 18 April that the Allied forces would guard the Kurdish havens for several months, and called on the UN to deploy civilian personnel as a matter of urgency (The Guardian 19/4/1991). Thereafter, a new phase began in Iraqi Kurdistan. It was the beginning of the return. In Baghdad, meanwhile, high level negotiations were under way between Kurdish representatives and Saddam's regime for a

peaceful settlement. As the cease-fire held, Jalal Talabani, representing the seven parties in the Kurdish Front, went to Baghdad on 19 April accompanied by three other leaders to initiate talks with the Iraqi Foreign Minister, Ahmad Hussein Khodair. The task of the Kurdish delegation, according to Kurdish officials (The Independent On Sunday 2/4/1991), was to revive the March 1970 Accord on autonomy. The Kurdish negotiators warned that the demographic changes since then, because of the Arabization policies, might hinder the talks. With the entry of the Allied forces into Kurdistan, preparations were made for the Kurds to start returning to the city of Dohuk. A UN monitoring team accompanied by 60 experts from the Allied forces, toured the city of Dohuk in preparation. The people themselves were, however, very wary, reporting the presence of the Iraqi police force and more importantly the secret service, Mukhabarat, in the city.

Talks with Baghdad ran into difficulties soon after the first formalities. The dragging on of the negotiations then, gave Saddam the chance to strengthen his shaky position. He refused to include the city of Kirkuk or other towns on the Iraq/Iran border in the autonomous zone. Even on the issue of a democratic constitution, Saddam was reported to be insisting that it should be dictated by the ruling Ba'ath Party (himself), which would preserve its (and his) leading role. However, as life began to return to the Kurdish centres under the protection of the Allied forces, hopes of an agreement with Saddam for autonomy were rising among the exhausted Kurds, and conflicting attitudes were emerging. In an interview with The Independent, published on 25 June 1991, Massoud Barazani said; 'Twenty years of bloody war, of bitter experience has taught us that we could not remove them, and they could not finish us off. So the only way out is peace'. Briefing hundreds of local Kurdish leaders about the agreement with the Iraqi government, he said that it would mean free elections in Kurdistan within three months and within Iraq as a whole within six months. He also said that the agreement promised reparations and an amnesty for the Kurdish rebels. Barazani seemed to have secured a deal with the regime, or at least to have one within reach. Barazani's rival, Talabani, seemed not to be pleased. On his way to the Kurdish Front, he asserted that neither he nor the Kurds could accept Saddam's new conditions, which required that if the Kurds were to share in the new government, they should support Saddam's revolution, sever links with foreign powers or aid agencies and work with the Ba'ath party against political organizations created by outside

governments (The Independent 26/6/1991). In effect, these conditions meant that the Kurds had to refuse international aid and assistance and Allied protection and submit to Saddam's authority.

The autonomy talks, therefore, proved more productive for Saddam's regime than for the Kurds. By conducting the negotiations slowly, Saddam gained enough time to reorganize his forces. His control was reimposed steadily over those parts of the country still in his hands. In addition, the regime remained determined to bring the Kurdish region back under its authority. Having restored security in the safe haven, the Allied forces were reported on 25 June 1991, to be scheduled to withdrew in two days time. This caused widespread confusion and fear. Although the US Army Major General, Jay Garner, commander of the Allied forces, denied that any specific date had been fixed to withdraw, he claimed 'We have never had a schedule to pull out combat forces; we still do not have a schedule. When security conditions are right for withdrawal, when the Kurds feel secure, we will pull out' (The Independent 26/6/1991).

However, to counter the new threat, the Allied powers finalized plans for a rapid-reaction force (RRF) based in Turkey which would enable the allied warplanes to overfly Iraq. This would serve both as a deterrent to Saddam and as reassurance to the frightened Kurds (The Independent 26/6/ 1991). British commitments to the RRF were confirmed by the British Prime Minister, John Major, in the House of Commons on 25 June 1991 when he effectively conceded that guarding the Kurdish safe haven, monitored only by the UN police force, would not be sufficient to protect the Kurds against Saddam (The Independent 26/6/1991). Meanwhile, the Peshmerga was slowly filling the vacuum created by the departure of the allied ground troops from the safe haven. They established a de facto Kurdish entity, and a degree of normality began to return to southern Kurdistan.

The allied air force, based in Turkey, continued to provide protection for the Kurdish safe havens under the codename Operation Provide Comfort II or OPC II. This involved regular daily flights over the region in order to deter Saddam from re-entering Kurdistan (Kurdistan remained part of Iraq as far as the Allies were concerned. Their intervention was humanitarian only). A contingent of 48 aircraft from the US, UK and France, including war planes and

reconnaissance aircraft, were stationed at the big US military base at Incirlik in southern Turkey. Supporting war planes were also available from the aircraft carrier USS Forrestal in the Eastern Mediterranean (The Independent 6/12/1991). OPC II was subject to extension every six months given, of course, the approval of the Turkish authorities. It was indeed the most important factor for stability to return to Kurdistan. In the negotiations with the Iraqi government, no breakthrough was made. At a press conference at Westminster, Barazani, on a visit to Britain for talks with John Major, said that talks had been suspended since Saddam had imposed a blockade on Kurdistan on October 1991. He also stated that Saddam was not compromising either on the boundaries of the autonomous region or on the question of Kirkuk. Saddam demanded nothing less than the total control over the city. The Kurds did, however, take the golden opportunity, as Kurdistan was relatively peaceful, to call a general election to elect a Kurdish Parliament, and an overall leader for the 3.5 million Kurds in Iraq.

The promised elections, originally scheduled for April 1992, were delayed several times, and a last-minute problem forced the polling to be delayed again until 19 May 1992. To avoid multiple voting, Germany had sent a consignment of indelible ink as a gift to the Kurds. At the last minute it was discovered that the ink was washable. Kurdish chemists at the University of Sulaimaniya had to come up with an alternative. Fears were growing that the long-awaited elections would not take place at all. But on Thursday 19 May 1992, the first ever free elections were held in southern Kurdistan. On the day, the Independent correspondent, Hugh Pope, wrote from the Kurdish capital city, Arbil: 'Unless disaster strikes the Kurds again, today's unprecedented election in Iraqi Kurdistan may enter history as another step towards what most other nations would be allowed to call an independent state' (The Independent 19/5/1992).

The official turnout of over one million voters, in a celebrative and festival mood and dressed in green and yellow - the colours of the PUK and KDP - however, failed to elect an outright leader or a party. The parliamentary election should, according to The Independent report, have given Mr Barazani 51 seats, with 49 seats to the Talabani's PUK. But as neither of them won enough votes for the leadership contest, the Kurds decided to split the bulk of the Assembly seats equally between the KDP and PUK. The remaining five

seats went to two small Assyrian (Christian) parties, despite complaints by the smaller Kurdish parties who did not cross the 7 per cent threshold required for double voting. Michael Meadowcroft, head of the Electoral Reform Society, coordinating the international election monitors, said that there was no evidence of corruption that would have significantly affected the result (The Independent 26/5/1992). The significance of the elections, therefore, was:

* They gave the Kurds self-confidence.

* They helped reestablish law and order.

* They set up a Kurdish governmental machinery to oversee the reconstruction.

* They helped bring back the bureaucratic machinery to run the region's internal affairs; and, most importantly,

* They showed the outside world that Kurds could rule themselves.

The Kurds were keen to show the world that they can run their own affairs. They set up all the institutions necessary for the running of an effective government. Politically they have come under pressure from Turkey, because of the PKK, and from Iran because of the KDPI. Although competition between the KDP and PUK has not declined (see under Political Parties, Chapter Four), the Kurdish parliamentarians from all parties have been keen to demonstrate their competence to run their affairs. International, mainly European, parliamentary delegations have continued to visit the safe haven and hold talks in the Kurdish Parliament. However, as the situation in southern Kurdistan normalised with the Allied protection continuing from the Turkish base, and as the guns of liberation were silent in southern Kurdistan, the northern part, in Turkey, was becoming the arena for yet another round of the armed struggle.

THE PKK AND THE KURDISH ARMED STRUGGLE IN TURKEY

The denial of the existence of the Kurds by the republican Kemalists since the 1930s and the brutal suppression of Kurdish identity, coupled with mass displacement, managed to keep the Kurds quiet in Turkey for about four decades. The Turkification of Kurds seemed to be successful. Most Turkish Kurds were forced to learn the Turkish language and young Kurds were either unable to learn or barely understood their mother tongue. Although Kurdish nationalism was not uprooted totally, Kurdish uprisings or armed struggles remained for long in the realm of wishful thinking. The strong grip of the army over Turkish politics in the post-war era and the position of Turkey in NATO as a first-line member in the Cold War strategies and containment policy vis-à-vis the Soviet Union meant unlimited support from the Western allies for the Turkish state. In addition, the poor economic conditions in Northern Kurdistan, with no will to introduce any development, meant the preoccupation of the Kurds with their daily lives. These difficult economic conditions led to the migration of many Kurds to other parts of Turkey. This situation seemed to satisfy the Turks, especially the army, and it was thought that the assimilation policies had paid off.

The ethnic question of the Kurds had been 'solved' in Turkish official ideology by labelling the Kurds as 'Mountain Turks' who had lost their native Turkic tongue. This ideology of the new republic, born in 1923, was based on the assumption of the organic purity of the Turkish people living within its boundaries. In Turkey 'everyone is a Turk, all Turks are equals..' (Besikci, 1991: 4). The Kurds were banned from claiming to be Kurds and stripped of their ethnic name. Thus, officially, there were no other ethnic groups living in Turkey apart from the Turks. Ideological differences were confined to classes and class struggle. However, as the Kurds were severely persecuted for any manifestation of Kurdishness, Kurdish activists and nationalists found in the concept of class struggle a channel for self-expression. From the mid 1960s, Kurdish intellectuals and nationalists turned to the Turkish Labour Party (TLP) which had been established in 1961, as a result of the growing Turkish nationalism. The Kurds initially found the Turkish left and the Turkish Labour party, which had shown an interest in the Kurdish question, an appropriate political and social vehicle. This next encouraged the birth of the Kurdish Democratic Party of Turkey (KDPT) in 1965. The KDPT, unlike other Kurdish leftists seeking equal rights in Turkey, was a separatist party, supporting its sister party in Iraq (McDowall, 1989: 13).

However, the TLP was not trouble-free. It had begun to set up Revolutionary Cultural Centres in the Kurdish provinces. And in the Autumn of 1967, a series of Eastern meetings were held and the Progressive Eastern Cultural Associations were set up. This, however, led to the Eastern Hearings - a series of trials in Diyarbakir. This led to a 'significant transformation' and made necessary a rethink in the expression of official ideology. The concept of 'Kurdish Turks' emerged (Besikci, 1991: 4). Because of internal dissensions the TLP lost most of its voters in the big industrial cities in the 1969 election, though it gained voters in the Kurdish region. In March 1971, moreover, the Turkish Labour party was subject to examination by the public prosecutor in Ankara who had prepared a case against the party for 'Communist propaganda and separatist activities'. This was followed in April by the closing down of the party's centres. The party was finally dissolved by the Constitutional Court on 2 July for 'having sought to perpetuate differences among various ethnic minorities' (Lewis, 1974: 186-187).

Hence, it was through the Turkish left, who in the 1960s and 1970s expressed an interest in the Kurdish issue, that Kurdish political, cultural and revolutionary organization began to grow both in and outside the Kurdish region. This association with the left, however, led to confrontation with the Turkish right, which usually enjoys the support of the local police. This confrontation was marked by political murders (McDowall, 1989: 13). Since then in Turkish Kurdistan it has become commonplace for political murders to take place, which usually include Kurdish or pro-Kurdish politicians, activists, unionists, journalists, and suspected members of the banned Kurdish organizations.

However, as Kurdish nationalism began to assert itself on the Turkish street (in the form of revolutionary music), the increasing awareness of the people of their Kurdishness led to the imposition of Martial Law in 1979. This step, as is correctly observed by McDowall, was not because of 'the rumours of armed Kurdish freedom fighters seizing areas and declaring them liberated zones', but 'on account of the development of a more or less overt Kurdish nationalism, in which Diyarbakir had become the main centre of activity' (McDowall, 1989: 13). The imposition of martial law was also a counter measure to the events in Iran following the Islamic revolution, which had in turn led to the rise of a strong Kurdish national sentiment in Iran and Iraq. In

addition, the 1980 presidential election created a sense of crisis with politicians unable to solve the deadlock. Using all the parliamentary options, but to no avail, led to the end of the fragile 'Turkish democracy' and 'legitimised' military intervention on 12 September 1980 - only one week before the outbreak of the First Gulf War. To sum up, then, the period leading to the military takeover in 1980, was marked by;

* Continuing economic crisis.

* An increase in the level of internal violence - in 1979 alone 1500 people were killed.

* A political crisis which had, inter alia, made it impossible for parliament to elect a successor to the outgoing president Fakhri Koruturk.

* Disturbing and potentially dangerous developments in Iran and especially in Iranian Kurdistan.

When the Turkish army felt that it was necessary to step in and take over the machinery of the state, fear of the developments in the Kurdish provinces seemed to be among the main reasons. The possibilities of any Kurdish advance in Iran impelled the Turkish army to save their 'eastern provinces'. The coup leaders were quick to deliver their first speech in Turkish Kurdistan stressing their determination not to permit any expression of Kurdish nationalism. This was followed by articles in the national press arguing that the Kurds are 'true Turks' (Turkkurtleri) (McDowall, 1989: 13).

The tense atmosphere in Kurdistan in the early 1980s, however, forced the small Kurdish Workers Party - Partiya Karkaeran Kurdistan (PKK) to take up armed resistance on 15 August 1984. Of course, the PKK's initiative cannot be attributed solely and fully as a result to the 1980 coup, though the coup hastened it. The causes for the rebellion were deeper: sixty years of repression and the denial of Kurdish identity and rights. Since the second half of the 1970s 'something' was always expected to happen in northern Kurdistan. It was a matter of time, as many Kurdish politicians in Iraqi Kurdistan, for example, used to predict or perhaps wish, before the Kurds in

Turkey would take up the armed struggle. The 1980 coup only brought forward the date for the Kurdish rebellion.

In response to the PKK the government sought to recruit local Kurds into a village militia, similar to the Light Brigades set up by Saddam in Iraqi Kurdistan. The PKK and its military therefore started a campaign in 1987 to attack and punish the Village Militia. Villages such as Pinarick in Mardin province (on 20 June), Kilickaya (on 18 August) and Cobandere in Siirt province (on 10 October), were attacked by the PKK as a warning to the villagers not to enlist in the pro-government force. Around 75 people were killed in these attacks. With the increasing activities of the PKK, the last four provinces under Martial Law (Hakkari, Mardin, Diyarbakir, and Siirt - all Kurdish provinces), were placed under a State of Emergency on 19 July 1987. Furthermore, the state of emergency was extended to four more Kurdish provinces: Elazig, Bingol, Tunceli, and Van.

However, the rapid escalation of unrest in the Kurdish provinces forced the National Security Council - dominated by the army - to introduce, on 28 March 1990, new measures to curb the unrest. The package, announced on 13 April, imposed new restrictions on media coverage of the Kurdish war. All media reports had to be vetted by or coordinated with the Interior Ministry. Publishing houses were to face up to TL 100,000,000 (US$40,000) in fines as well as immediate closure if found guilty in printing any material deemed to 'pose a threat to the rule of law'. Moreover, the governor of the south east was empowered to exile individuals to other Turkish regions. Powers were given to local officials to ban strikes and shop-closing protests. The new measures also doubled the jail sentences for anyone assisting the separatists. The measures were described by the press council on 10 April 1990 as similar to the 1925 'Law of Silence' (Tukrir-e Sukun) and were in no way relevant to 1990s Turkey. Despite protests by the media, the measures seemed to have the support of all political parties for the sake of national security and national interest.

The Kurdish war in south-eastern Turkey nevertheless continued to grow. The spread of unrest led some leading Turkish newspapers to describe the Kurdish uprising as an Intifada similar to the ongoing Palestinian uprising in the Israeli-occupied territories. The Kurdish war appeared by April 1990 to be

turning into a mass nationalist uprising. The scale of the unrest was reflected in a statement broadcast by the Turkish Radio Station Anatolia on 11 April 1990 stating that 95 people had been killed since the beginning of March [1990] in the Kurdish region compared with only 160 in the whole first quarter of 1989.

With the approach of the Kurdish New Year, Nawroz, preparations for mass demonstrations and general strikes were under way throughout Kurdistan. An incident which fuelled further determination by the people to show more defiance was the killing by the Turkish forces of two coal collectors and around 200 mules near the coal mines of Sirnak. This was seen by the Kurds as yet another bold attempt to force the local people to abandon the coal mines which are a main source of the local economy. The killing of the mules was a doubly severe measure, since they were the main transport resource for the poor local community. This act by the security forces on 28 February 1991, served as a pretext for large and unprecedented demonstrations in the region. Over 20,000 people demonstrated on 1 March in Sirnak. On the following day general strikes took place in Lice, and the entire population of Idil protested on 4 March.

Demonstrations and general strikes followed in the coming days in the cities of Kulp, Nusaybin, Cizir'a Botan (Cizre), Kozluk, Kerboran Dargecit, Midyat and many other towns and cities (Voice of Kurdistan, 1991: 4-5). In this explosive climate, the Kurdish National Liberation Front (ERNK), in a public statement, proclaimed the coming Nawroz festival as the first official holiday. To contain the situation, celebrating Nawroz was permitted, though the occasion was officially interpreted as a Turkish festival. As a result, the mass celebrations passed without any major incident. Only two people were killed and some injured in a confrontation with the security forces. The Turkish concession, recognizing Nawroz, was, however, interpreted by the Kurds as a victory and a reward for their resistance and defiance. Clashes occurred again on April 1991. In the city of Diyarbakir, in the heartland of Kurdistan and its self-proclaimed capital, fierce street fighting was reported on 17 April 1991. The Turkish police fired on several thousand Kurds demonstrating against the government and demanding self-rule. The demonstration, the worst rioting in the city, was also partly instigated by government's failure to

alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi-Kurdish refugees, and the forced return of about 15,000 refugees, from a camp near the Turkish [Kurdish] village of Isikeeren, by the Turkish soldiers who rounded up the refugees and marched them on to the mountains, straight into the freezing snowstorm (The Independent, 8/4/1991).

The measures taken by the Turkish Contra-Guerrilla Units (CGU) were often intended to spread as much fear and terror among the people as possible. Blindfolded bodies, riddled with bullet wounds and torture marks, were left on the streets. On 16 February 1992, for example, Mr Sabri Kizilkan was abducted and his body dumped three days latter on the outskirts of Bingol. The crowd turned his funeral into a demonstration against the state of terror (Kurdistan Report, April 1992: 25). Abduction, torture, street shooting, random arrests and killings, thereafter became part of the population's daily routine. This in return, sparked mass protest and demonstrations against the CGU murders in Midyat, Dargeiet, Idil and Nusaybin. As eight peasants were murdered by the security forces in a raid on the village of Kudis on 15 February, over 1,500 local people blocked the E-24 (better known as the Silk Road). The road was again blocked on 17 February by 3,000 people at the city entrance of Nusaybin. The protest continued when on 21 February 8,000 demonstrators defended themselves with sticks and stones against the army and the police (Kurdistan Report, April 1992: 25).

During the time of Nawroz, as anticipated, large-scale violence erupted throughout Kurdistan. Mass demonstrations marking the New Year took place in support of the PKK. As confrontation intensified in the towns of Nusaybin, Yuksekova, Van and Sirnak, the violence in Cizire turned into a street battle between the security forces and PKK youths using assault rifles. In Sirank, houses were searched one-by-one for arms and PKK members. The imposed curfew remained in operation in Sirnak, Idil, Slopi, Cizire and other places. Responding to the scale of violence in northern Kurdistan, Kurds living in Europe organized demonstrations and protests against the ongoing government's violence, and various Turkish towns and cities witnessed retaliatory attacks. In the summer of 1991 Kurdish demonstrations continued in most European cities. In London, for example, Kurdish demonstrators stormed the Turkish Embassy on 12 July, in protest for the continuing violence in Turkish Kurdistan in 'which Kurds were reportedly shot dead by the police'. And in

Brussels 50 Kurds occupied the offices of Amnesty International 'to protest against clashes in Turkey' (The Independent 13/7/1991).

The continuation of violence led 49 Turkish and Kurdish MPs, drawn mainly from the Social Democratic Populists (SHP) and the People's Labour Party (HEP), to publish a document on 27 February 1992 in the Turkish Parliament, calling for urgent steps to stop the fighting and to put an end to the conflict. It called for the removal of the material causes of the violence, and a tolerant environment where human rights were respected. The document further called for a general amnesty removing all the consequences of the 12 September 1980 military coup, for the state of emergency, in force since 1987, to be lifted, and for the Village Guard Militia system, sponsored by the government to be abolished. It also demanded the lifting of the anti-democratic laws and decrees, particularly, with reference to the anti-terrorism laws. In addition, torture and attacks on people should end and its perpetrators should be exposed. The document went on to stress the importance of permitting every political view to be organised legally (Kurdistan Report, April 1992: 12).

As the day of the Nawroz celebrations was nearing, unprecedented preparations were under way to celebrate the feast on the largest scale possible. Attention was centred on Cizre, where local and foreign media had gathered to cover the celebrations and the likely confrontation with the security forces. More importantly, Cizre had become one of the main centres of PKK support; it was also the place in which the popular Sirhildan (uprising) had started in April 1990. Nawroz was celebrated by large crowds (for example, 200,000 in Cizre). Kurdish MPs including Leyla Zana and Hatip Dicle, with a crowd of about 250 people, visited the grave of the murdered chairman of Diyarbakir's HEP, Vedat Aydin. The visit was carefully watched by the plain clothes police. Security forces and police started firing on the crowds in Cizre. Hans Dubber, a Swedish journalist, was arrested by the security forces as they begun firing at the crowd. Local people were 'raked with bullets' when they reacted in anger to the police searching Kurdish women (Kurdistan Report, May 1992: 2-3). In Cizre and Sirnak over 50 people were killed, many injured and hundreds were arrested. Accounts of continuing street battles were reported in Cizre between the security forces and the Kurdish rebels. Among the casualties was Izzat Kezer, a Turkish press photographer, who was shot dead near the police station (The Guardian, 24/3/1992).

The PKK was clearly heading for a showdown with Turkish forces. In the second half of 1992, PKK activities increased considerably. PKK raids now consisted of large numbers of guerrillas. The organisation mounted a 'show of strength' attack on 18 August 1992, on the military and administrative building in the town centre of Sirnak. The 40-hour gun battle set many properties on fire with tanks directing their fire at houses indiscriminately. The critical climate had led by now to an increase in the number of Turkish troops deployed in the Kurdish region. One third of the Turkish army was now estimated to be stationed in the troubled south-east. However, because of the scale of the confrontation at Sirnak in August, it was difficult to conceal the hitherto underestimated strength of the PKK. Journalists were banned from reporting from Sirnak as well as from the towns of Curkurca and Dargecit. The pro-government Turkish Daily News called for an enquiry into the claims that it was the army who had gone on the rampage and were responsible for the destruction, while the pro-Kurdish paper, Yeni-Ulke, accused the army of 'running amok'.

As a reaction to the rapidly spreading violence and the rising tide of Kurdish nationalism, a campaign by the Turkish nationalists, including those in the CGU and the army, started concentrating on Kurdish activists and pro-Kurdish journalists. At least 9 journalists were killed in the Kurdish region. Among them were 4 who had worked for the pro-Kurdish Ozgur Gundem. One of the victims was the 74-year-old veteran Kurdish journalist Musa Anter, an author and founder-member of the HEP. He was shot dead by the Goz-ok (Grey Arrow) nationalist group in Diyarbakir in 10 September. To make things worse, President Özal, on a tour in the Kurdish region on 12 September 1992, told the Kurdish inhabitants of Uludere near Sirnak that 'many problems would be solved' if the 500,000 Kurdish population of the region left the area and accepted resettlement in other parts of Turkey (Keesings Contemporary Archive, 1992: 39114). This was a clear indication of the government's intention to continue with a 'military solution' for the Kurdish question instead of a political one.

By October 1992, a large Turkish air and ground campaign against the PKK was under way. It was not just an exercise to comb the border region, but took the Turkish forces into Iraqi Kurdistan in a plan coordinated with the Iraqi Kurdish leaders of the Safe Havens in order to eject PKK guerrillas from their

bases inside Iraqi Kurdistan. The operation, backed by extensive air support, was also intended to cut the PKK escape routes. However, the campaign failed to dislodge the guerrillas from all their bases. As the deadline for leaving Iraqi Kurdistan was extended several times by the Turkish troops, the PKK, for their part, retaliated by imposing its own blockade on the Iraqi Kurds, assisting the Turkish troops by preventing hundreds of trucks from entering Iraq through Kurdistan every day. Turkish lorries had been carrying goods to Iraq, sometimes breaching the UN embargo imposed on Iraq since 1990, a process which had given the Kurdish authorities in the safe haven an invaluable source of income from transit fees for the trucks. However, the blockade by the PKK of the main highway between Iraq and Turkey was an obvious and clear indication that the PKK had survived the onslaught and had passed its greatest test yet in the nine years war.

The military solution remained the strategy by which the Turkish authorities planned to stamp out 'terrorism'. The Prime Minister asserted that 'there is only one solution....If political solutions could have solved this problem, it would have been done in the last nine years'. His armed forces chief, meanwhile, spoke of the need for 'all-out psychological war' (The Independent 6/10/ 1992). On 23 October, Turkish Radio reported that Turkish troops, backed by aircraft had, yet again, thrust up to four miles into northern Iraq in pursuit of Kurdish rebels. Agencies in Ankara reported Prime Minister Demirel, warning that attacks on Kurdish bases would continue until the militants were wiped out. He added, as the military pounded areas near Zakho for the second day running, that 'the operation will continue until the annihilation of separatist militants taking refuge in northern Iraq' (The Guardian 24/10/1992).

Concern over the PKK led Turkish officials to link any development in Iraqi Kurdistan with the threat to Turkey. Turkish officials, thus, stressed that 'nothing will happen in northern Iraq that is not permitted by Turkey'(The Independent 6/11/1992). This should have been a clear message to the Iraqi Kurds, who, though assisting the Turks, were showing by now signs of hesitation and reluctance, that for as long the PKK operated from bases inside Iraqi Kurdistan, Turkey wanted to dictate the future viability of Kurdish self-rule and of the safe haven. On 5 November 1992, however, Turkish diplomats flew to Iraqi Kurdistan to assess and discuss the week-old offensive

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against the PKK. This again indicated that the early euphoria over the crushing of the PKK and ejection them from their bases was unjustified. The 15,000 Turkish troops now involved in the assault were consolidating their control over 160 square miles of mountain territory. The PKK, however, announced that it had negotiated 'an undefeated tactical withdrawal'. The delight of the Turkish officials, and the reports that the PKK had suffered a major blow (The Independent 6/11/1992) were to a certain degree confusing, especially as some Turkish generals were quoted to have said that the army should stay in what was seen as by now the security zone. Their hesitation over the withdrawal of the 15,000 troops indicated that the PKK had not been satisfactorily crushed.

The PKK had certainly come under strain as a result of the joint assaults of the Turkish forces and the Iraqi Kurds. Nevertheless, militarily it had passed its hardest test to date. In addition, there was considerable support and sympathy for the PKK among ordinary people inside Iraqi Kurdistan, though there was also understanding of the position of their own leaders and the Turkish pressure. Thus the mounting pressure, especially from the Iraqi Kurdish leaders, paved the way for the PKK leader to announce on 17 March 1993 a unilateral cease-fire (initially from 20 March to 15 April). In his announcement Abdullah Ocalan offered negotiations to the Turkish authorities in order to find a political solution to the Kurdish question in Turkey. The offer was conveyed to the authorities by the Iraqi PUK leader Talabani.

Hence, a truce was suitable for all sides. The PKK needed a breathing space to reorganise its lines, as well as to relieve some of the pressure imposed on the Iraqi Kurds by Turkey. The Turkish authorities were under criticism, especially as the army was not able to uproot the PKK. The Iraqi Kurds wanted to avoid any further involvement in the conflict. Although they were confident that the PKK would appreciate their difficult position, they had no alternative but to comply with the Turkish conditions. The cease-fire would at least lead to the reopening of the international highway upon which the economy of the fragile safe haven was almost totally dependent. Iraqi Kurdish leadership also had come under considerable criticism from the ordinary people for assisting the Turkish forces. All sides were hoping, thus, to find an exit without losing face. In a report compiled from Istanbul by Hugh Pope on 3 April 1993, the spokesman for the Turkish government, Akin Gonen, was

reported, following a three-hour cabinet meeting on Thursday, as saying 'The existing calm is pleasing for us. The state will do whatever possible to extend this calm' (The Independent 3/4/1993).

The calm was, indeed, needed, especially for the government to defuse the rising tension, media criticism, and local Kurdish frustration with the security forces, particularly the Contra-Guerrilla Units which were in effect death squads. The effects of war had fallen heavily on the Kurds. 500 villages had been razed, and casualties were put at over 6,000. Violence was spreading rapidly in other parts of Turkey where Kurdish communities were subject to attacks and harassment. They were attacked in Antalya, Izmir, Alanya, Fethiye and many other Turkish cities and towns. In a press conference in Lebanon on 16 April 1993, the PKK chairman extended the cease-fire he had announced in March. Seemingly under pressure, Ocalan stated in his press conference that the PKK had 'opened a new era. What we want now is a more positive atmosphere'. He went on to stress that 'the operations aimed at our annihilation should be stopped' and 'the arbitrary killing of civilians must be brought to an end forthwith'. He further demanded that:

1) All military operations should cease immediately.

2) A general amnesty should be declared. 'Although we are not criminals a general amnesty would be an important step'.

3) Legal guarantees should be made to the Kurds of their rights to cultural activities and unfettered use of the Kurdish language,

4) The state should help people to return to their homes and they should be compensated for the loss of their homes and livestock.

5) The system of regional governors should be abolished.

6) Village guards should be disarmed.

7) The government should 'recognise the Kurdish reality' with given statutory and constitutional backing. (Extracts from the speech at the press conference on 16 April 1993, released in London by

the Kurdish Committee on 17 April 1993).

However, the truce, which had held for about two months (though not free from minor incidents), came to an end in May 1993. Respect for the unilateral cease-fire, after all, was not to be expected from the Turkish Army, which had constantly taken a hard line towards the Kurds and had often shown more determination to fight them than to recognize them. In a report for The Guardian from Ankara, Jonathan Randal observed that, despite the cease-fire, the 120,000 strong Turkish security forces in the 13 south eastern provinces ruled under the emergency regulations since 1987 had taken advantage of the truce to move into PKK-held villages. Although no significant PKK attacks were reported, government forces had killed at least 90 guerrillas and about 20 villages were evacuated or destroyed (The Guardian 29/6/1993).

Hostilities, therefore, resumed. Clashes were reported daily with casualties on both sides. On 8 June 1993, The International Herald Tribune reported that over 300 people had been killed over the previous two weeks (since 25 May). In a news conference in the Syrian-controlled Beka'a Valley, Abdullah Ocalan, the PKK Chairman, declared a new all-out war against the Turkish government, promising the most ferocious campaign yet. He promised to take the war outside Kurdistan and into Turkey by hitting Turkey's economic and tourist targets. He admitted that the May attack and the killing of the soldiers was not authorised, and promised to punish those responsible (The Guardian 29/6/1993). The Turkish Interior Minister, Ismet Sezgin, had expected the PKK to lay down its arms and surrender unconditionally, to prove its sincerity in its unilateral cease-fire. The PKK leader was, as suggested by Hugh Pope, The Independent correspondent in Istanbul, over-optimistic about a lasting peace, since 'his PKK is viewed in Turkey in a way similar to that in which the IRA is viewed in Britain' (The Independent 9/6/1993). Pope's report diagnosed the problem simply and correctly: while 'Turkey's suspicious army generals gave the cease-fire little chance... Turkish politicians...dragged their feet in responding to Mr Ocalan's demands for a federal Kurdish state and Kurdish cultural rights'. Thus, the 'limited guerrilla amnesty' which was published on 8 June 1993, was in fact too late to save the one-sided cease-fire.

Turkey's political climate, however, was by this time in a state of confusion following the death of the reformist and advocate of the free market, Turgut

Özal, in April. Although the new PM, Tansu Çiller (the first female prime minister in Turkey), was keen to assert her government's determination to continue with the reform programmes that Özal had initiated, especially these concerning the Kurds, by granting them cultural rights. Sources close to the Prime Minister indicated that she was determined to pursue, according to The Wall Street Journal, the granting of full democratic and cultural rights to the Kurdish minority, but at the same time to pursue and punish the 'rebellious' members of the PKK (Al Watan 3/7/1993). On the ground, this was not so simple.

The death of Turgut Özal had thrown the country off balance. As the tide of violence increased with the PKK and Islamic activities and political confusion, it was feared that the time was right to reassess the Kemalist ideology which has dominated the Republic since the 1920s. In an article by Hugh Pope for The Independent from Istanbul, it was observed that there was a broad desire for a change in the image, and exasperation with old-school politicians (The Independent 21/7/1993). But the problem, however, was that a leader of the very same old school, Demirel, was still steering Turkish politics, and the armed forces were still adamant in their approach to the Kurdish issue. The army was engaged in a war in Kurdistan, a war that they had failed to finish one way or another but were willing to continue. The chief of staff, General Dogan Gures, went on the front page of the national daily, Hurriyet, arguing for 'martial law if the Kurdish rebels were not wiped out by the end of winter'. With the inexperienced Prime Minister, the army was set to impose its own vision of a military solution to the rebellion. Gures, thus, went further, stressing the army's 'sensitivity' towards secularism and that any change to the Kemalist ideology set out in the military's 1982 constitution would be a constitutional crime (The Independent 21/7/1993). Thus, hopes for a political and a democratic solution were more remote than ever. With the death of Özal, Kurdish hopes for a possible rapprochement with the Turkish establishment were dashed. This was clear especially as the military solution was given priority in Ankara (Al-Riyadh 1/7/1993).

As it had warned, the PKK was now ready to seize foreign personnel visiting the region as the only means whereby international publicity could be achieved and world attention drawn to the ongoing struggle in Kurdistan. Thus following the kidnapping of a British engineer and his girlfriend, the PKK announced

that its Garzan battalion had seized four French nationals from among 24 French tourists near Lake Van (The Independent 26/7/1993). As the PKK kept its promise by hitting tourist targets and taking foreign, western, tourists as 'compulsory guests' of the Kurdish rebels, it seemed that the strategy was paying off, as the western media, especially in Germany, was showing an interest in the Kurdo-Turkish conflict. As the commander of the PKK promised to make the summer of 1993 the 'bloodiest summer ever' 60,000 Germans cancelled bookings to Turkey in the first half of the year, a figure which was expected to have passed 100,000 by August. However, the media coverage of the conflict in Germany was seen by people like Britain's Honorary Consul in Marmaris, Dogan Tugay, as an exaggeration of the conflict (The Guardian 5/8/1993). Targeting tourism, however, represented a major worry for the Turkish authorities since tourism was and is an important source of income (£2.7bn in 1992) and a significant way by which Turkey can further its claims for membership of the European Union.

The war continued in the south east of Turkey with heavy casualties on both sides. In face of the increasing violence and its inability to curb the activities of the guerrillas, Turkey warned the Iraqi Kurds to keep their promises in helping the security forces secured their side of the border. Responding to Turkish pressure and Turkish air raids inside Iraqi Kurdistan in the beginning of October 1993, the Iraqi Kurds warned the PKK to pull out and close their bases in the Safe Havens. A Turkish source, however, said that the warning by the Iraqi Kurds to the PKK in itself was a recognition of the fact that there were bases and the PKK was operating from inside the safe haven. The source stressed that only time would tell how far the Iraqi Kurds were sincere in keeping their promises (Al-Hayat 21/10/1993).

CONCLUSION

Since 1975 three parts of divided Kurdistan have experienced a high level of armed conflict. First, in eastern Kurdistan, the Kurds were the first and only ethnic group to take up arms against Khomeini's government following the overthrow of the Shah. They were in possession of sufficient weapons taken from the Shah's barracks and garrisons to demand autonomy from the new Islamic government in Teheran and waged an armed struggle which lasted until the mid-1980s. They were successful at first, but were then pushed up into the hills and mountains. As they lost control over the main population centres, their struggle became guerrilla warfare, which was in turn subdued. Then the Kurdish leadership in Iran sought a reconciliation with the Islamists in Teheran. But, as has already been mentioned, after two rounds of talks in Austria in 1989, the symbol of Kurdish nationalism in Iran, Dr Ghassemlou, was assassinated during a secret meeting with Iranian delegates. His assassination is widely believed to have been masterminded by a radical faction within the Iranian government. With Ghassemlou's death, the Kurdish armed struggle lost its most dynamic element, and since then the KLM has lost its momentum.

Secondly, in southern Kurdistan, the Kurds partially recovered from the sudden collapse of their armed struggle in 1975. The southern Kurds were determined to continue their opposition to the government of Iraq. In 1976, they set up the Provisional Command and began guerrilla warfare. Although, their campaign was on a small scale, it was a thorn in the side of the ambitious Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein. Their cooperation with the Iranian forces during the Iran/Iraq war in the second half of the 1980s brought down upon them the vengeance of the Iraqi leader, who became the first leader to use chemical weapons on his own population. With the chemical attack on Halabjah in March 1988, the KLM in southern Kurdistan suffered a fatal set-back. The chemical attacks were followed by the Anfal campaign which within a few months cleansed southern Kurdistan of both the nationalists and the population. Beside the main Kurdish cities only a few small settlements remained in Kurdistan. By 1990 southern Kurdistan was tamed and was being turned into a game park for Saddam and his parties. The KLM in southern Kurdistan seemed to have been uprooted and even those claiming the leadership of the KLM were keeping a low profile in exile. Until the early hours of the morning of 2 August 1990, Kurdistan had never been so calm and subdued. The Kurds had not lost but they

had given up hope.

Out of this desolate environment came a ray of hope for the Kurds as Saddam invaded Kuwait on 2 August 1990. The reaction of the international community was immediate. As the coalition forces were being prepared to eject the Iraqi invaders from Kuwait, Kurdish forces were getting ready to return to southern Kurdistan. Since the defeat of Saddam's forces in the Second Gulf War in 1991, southern Kurdistan has been put under Allied protection in a safe haven arrangement to protect the Kurds from Saddam. As a result, the Kurds have been enjoying the longest de facto control over their region and affairs since the creation of Iraq.

The last struggle is still being waged in northern Kurdistan, where since the mid-1980s the Kurds have been fighting the Turkish government. Within the first five years of its campaign the PKK, leading the armed struggle, has managed to force a major concession from the dominant Kemalist Turkish ideology. In 1991, the Turkish state had to repeal its own law and acknowledge the existence of the Kurds. And since 1991 the determined Turkish army has carried out major campaigns to defeat the PKK's armed struggle but has done so without any success.

CHAPTER IV

SUCCESS OR FAILURE

The Kurdish Liberation Movement (Sowrash) is among the longest-running political and military movements of the twentieth century. But unlike contemporary movements such as the PLO and the Eritreans, the story of the Kurdish struggle has always been one of failure, and it has hitherto failed to achieve both recognition and its main objectives. Its weakness springs from limitations of the movement itself. The reasons for its misfortunes are numerous, some stemming from within, and others without. This analysis will attempt to highlight and diagnose the relevant factors. These factors are divided into three categories - internal, regional and international. The following two chapters will attempt to look into the first two categories, internal and regional, as they are the most important and central to this study.

Hence, Chapter Four will focus on and attempt to highlight some of the internal factors which have weakened the KLM since 1975. Among the internal factors which are considered below are tribalism, leadership, political parties and ideology. Thus an analysis of these factors will be made in order to assess their impact on the movement. It shall be argued below that because of these factors, the KLM, particularly in southern Kurdistan, has not been able to radicalize itself in order to mobilize a largely passive population. Ideologically, it has not been equipped with a well defined set of values in order to stimulate people to offer sacrifice. As to leadership, the KLM in the south has since 1975 lacked an overall leader who could guide the course of the struggle militarily and politically. Equally, the movement has been weakened by the proliferation of political parties. Instead of one party, several parties have been claiming leadership of the movement. This in turn has fragmented the movement and has forced various groups to fight each other. Thus, lacking these three factors which are not only important for the conduct of the armed struggle but also for national unity, tribalism in Kurdistan has continued to play a part in swaying political loyalty.

Unlike similar movements, however, the KLM is constrained by its unique geopolitical conditions. Chapter Five, hence, will focus on KLM's misfortune for being encircled by four states none of which is willing to tolerate a Kurdish state. During the course of the investigation, the analysis will inevitably involve comparison and contrast between two strands within the KLM, namely the southern and northern liberation movements.

INTERNAL FACTORS

This section will attempt to look into the elements that exist within both the liberation movement in particular and Kurdish society in general. It is intended to assess the impact and influence of tribalism, leadership, political parties and ideology.

1) TRIBALISM

In order to understand Kurdish politics and social organisation, it is vital to shed light on tribalism and the tribal chieftains, the Aghas. Kurdish society, especially in the Iraqi and Iranian parts, is still highly tribalized. Thus, tribes and their chieftains have often directly or indirectly contributed to and influenced the course of events.

Contrary to the general perception of tribe as understood only in connection with simple societies, most Kurdish tribes are highly organised social structures with a high degree of political stratification (on tribes see for example, Rivers 1926; Gellner and Caton in Khoury & Kostiner, 1991; Bretton, 1973). Kurdish tribes are historically evolved political and social units with a high levels of tribal loyalty and identity. In his authoritative work, The Kurds, Bois observed that all Kurds regardless of their social backgrounds, whether nomads, peasants or skilled workmen in the cities, 'have a tendency to bond together through certain affinities of which the most obvious seems to be a common tribal origin' (Bois, 1966: 3). Due to the romantic notion of nomadism, and Kurdistan's remoteness, the political and socioeconomic

discourse of the Kurdish society was and is often characterised by the salience of primordial identities of clan and tribe. Though it might seem to the foreign observer as a simply structured society of many tribes, in reality, however, it is a stratified pyramid structure consisting of the agha, élite and the peasant. Kurdish tribes are not open institutions. Unlike the East African tribes which were 'pre-eminently political formations' which families joined and left (Harris, 1990: 7), Kurdish tribes are to a large degree exclusive families whose members cannot claim, simultaneously, to belong to more than one tribe. An outsider who joins a tribe, seeking refuge from a feud, for example, usually retains his original tribal badge. Hence, to understand the nature of Kurdish politics it is necessary to consider the tribal structure and its power sources.

To do this, the tribal system in southern Kurdistan is selected as a model for analysis for several reasons:

1. Southern Kurdistan has experienced the longest period of conflict; the Kurds there have been engaged in armed struggle since the late 1950s.

2. Because of the first reason, the tribal role in southern Kurdistan has been most evident.

3. Personal knowledge.

One of the persistent patterns which has dominated Kurdish politics has been tribal loyalty. For decades all the concerned cores (Baghdad, Ankara and Teheran) have taken it for granted they could count on the service of this tribe or that in the hour of need. As it has been difficult for the central authorities to quell Kurdish rebellions, insurgencies and armed uprisings in conventional ways, they have frequently needed to call upon local help from the Kurdish tribes. Recruitment of the Kurdish tribes has been a regular feature in government campaigns, partly because of the unfamiliarity of the government's troops with the rugged Kurdish terrain. And for one reason or another, Kurdish tribes have provided their services time and again to the central authorities. Even Turkey's political pluralism and European style 'democracy' had to give way to the revival of alliances between the state and

the tribes via the recruitment of tribesmen into village militia to combat the PKK (Bozarslan in Greyenbroek & Sperl, 1992: 112). Before we look at the reasons behind this continuing pattern, a brief description of the tribal structure is essential. Broadly speaking, the structure of the tribe is made up of two main strata, and the exercise of power is both horizontal and vertical.

a) VERTICAL POWER

AGHA: THE CHIEF

A tribe is normally headed by an agha, or chieftain. This is often an inherited title but sometimes earned through power struggle (the latter can take place within the agha's family such as competition between two or more brothers left contesting for the title, or between a young and ambitious son and his ailing father). Occasionally an outsider might appreciate being called agha by friends, relatives or beneficiaries when he 'strikes it rich'. Characters of this category are usually insignificant and wither away with time. Furthermore, although males rather than females are preferred for the title mainly because of the likeliness of going to war in which the agha plays the leading role or the interaction with the outside world, several xanem or xatoon (females) have performed the duties of an agha. The role of women is still significant, moreover, even if they are not leading directly. A female would often be consulted by the male on various tribal affairs. The wife or the sister or even the daughter of the agha is often approached either to take the matter to the agha or for the purpose of winning her over so as influence the decision of the chief.

The inherited title is usually handed down with the death of the agha. Usually, but not as a rule, the eldest son inherits the position. At the funeral ceremonies, which usually last a few weeks during which all the tribesmen will attend the house of the agha, the eldest son or the son who the tribesmen think is most likely to serve them best, or the son that the late agha might have often put forward, will be selected as the successor.

There are no ceremonies as such in the selection of the new agha. It is usually done by the tacit consent of the heads of the moieties and clans. As to any power struggle, it usually takes place during the funeral period where each son or contender will attempt to sway tribal opinion in his favour. Competition between brothers, cousins and nephews of the deceased chief might lead to the emergence of several aghas within one tribe. Following the death of Haji Qadir Agha, the chieftain of the Zebari tribe, three contenders emerged: Faris Agha, Ahmad Agha and Mahmmod Agha. Competition between their heirs led to power concentration in three factions. Following the assassination of Ahmad Agha by the Barazanis, his sons (Latiff, Arshad, Sa'ieb, Abdullah, Kaddri, Marwan and Aseff) led one faction of the tribe, while the sons of Mahmmod Agha (Zubair, Hoyshiar, Tater, Omar, Sabah and Antr) leads another faction. And Mohammed Agha, the son of the late Faris Agha, led a third section of the tribe with his brothers, Simko, Haji Nisko and Abdul Qahar. Latiff managed to surpass others in the 1970s and 1980s, as the chief of the Zebaris.

A strong agha usually holds control over the affairs of the tribe and exercises a strict discipline. In fact in some cases the terms, the agha and the tribe, are synonymous, for the chief might even have the decisive say in personal matters such as marriage or divorce. The politics of the tribe and its relations with neighbouring tribes as well as with the central authorities are usually conducted by the agha. In fact it is still largely the agha who is the sole spokesman of the tribe, and a strong agha is the symbol and the pride of the tribe. Thus, the politicisation of the tribe as a unit is coherent.

A modern agha is no longer the government's 'chief tax collector'. The main function of the agha is twofold. First, it is to provide justice for the tribe. This usually involves settling of disputes and maintaining the balance between various clans and moieties. This function is widely practised by aghas especially since the Kurds continue to believe in settlement from within without going outside even if that meant action of the law courts. The agha, however, can reinforce his decision by an official sanction and support for his final settlement from the local authorities and local courts of justice. Common disputes are over water, land and, sometimes, honour (for further details see; Bois, 1966: 31-43). The second function of the agha is to serve

and secure the tribe's best interest in relation to other tribes and the central authorities. While in bygone days aghas earned their livelihood largely from dues levied on their tribesmen, present aghas have turned to business and big construction contracts. They have become capable entrepreneurs (see below), with the majority of them living in the big cities away from their tribal territory. The main aghas of the Bahdinan tribes in southern Kurdistan, for example, live in the city of Mosul. The present generation of the aghas are not illiterate individuals who have no perception of the modern world. but often graduates with college and university degrees speaking several languages; some have spent years in Europe.

b) HORIZONTAL POWER

1) Rê Spî: The White Beards

The White Beards are the elders of the tribe. Each moiety, clan and village has its Rê Spî. In practice they are the senate of the tribe and exercise a form of horizontal power. Their function is to serve the interest of their village or moiety. They also function as advisors to the agha during tribal crisis and disputes. Their advice is carefully considered by the agha, who cannot always afford to overrule their opinion and advice (horizontal power). In serious disputes, the tribal Rê Spî gather for as long as it takes, usually in the Kowjik, a large room in the agha's house where men usually meet every day for tea and food, and to discuss daily affairs.

The Rî Spî role is sometimes crucial in swinging the balance of power between contenders for the aghaship. Therefore, the contenders awaiting succession usually try to build a good working relationship with them. However, the influence of the White Beards is normally confined to the internal affairs of the tribe and to the conduct of relations with other tribes. Once the agha has established the form of his principal relationship with the central authorities, the politics of the tribe with the government, be it local or central, are mainly conducted according to the agha's own judgement. However, an agha cannot afford to alienate his White Beards, and therefore has to take into account their position and opinion when making a decision. In fact, the agha's consideration extends to which White Beard occupies the passenger seat

in his car, or which one will accompany him to a dinner or a public function. The importance of the White Beards lies in the fact that they control their moieties (this can be a sizable portion), and they can distance themselves from the agha, but not from the tribe. For instance, when an agha decides to serve the central government by arming his tribe, the Rê Spî of a moiety (though this is rare) may refuse to enlist. Finally, as spokesmen for their moieties or villages, the White Beards are the link between the agha and his people.

2) Kermanj: The Peasants

At the base of the tribal hierarchy come the peasants. These are the village dwellers who are totally engaged in husbandry. Owing to the absence of industrial development in Kurdistan, the overwhelming majority of Kurds are still dependent on the land for their livelihood. As the feudal relationship has declined over the last few decades, most peasants are landowners (reference here is made to southern Kurdistan). Although their possession of land usually consists of a small plot of land barely large enough to make only marginal profits, nevertheless, at the end of each harvest, the patch usually yields enough to provide a living for the farmer. Politically, peasants have no role in the decision-making process of the tribe.

THE POLITICAL ROLE OF THE TRIBE/AGHA

Since the conditions, both external and internal, that govern each tribe vary, their political behaviour and vision varies accordingly. Internal factors such as the divisions in the tribe and the interest and the vision of the agha, as well as external factors such as the government's attitudes, leverage, and the relations with the neighbouring tribes, dictate the political behaviour of each tribe and channels its loyalty. Thus, tribal support for the national liberation movement has oscillated between fighting for and taking up arms against the nationalists. However, the phenomenon of a tribe or agha assisting the central authorities against the nationalists is not new. In fact, modern Kurdish history is fraught with this repeated practice. This tendency has

developed into a pattern or a tradition that during any armed struggle, the government would arm and finance the tribes in order to fight with the government troops. Reasons for this practice among some aghas vary. Below are some of the main factors which are thought to be behind this behaviour (it is important to note that the listing is not in any order of priority).

1. <u>AMBITION</u>

Among of the strongest characteristics of the Kurds in general and the aghas in particular are their individualism, personal ambition, and pride. Seeing no further than their local horizons, many aghas continuously assist the central authorities against the nationalists. This assistance has often satisfied their ambitions materially as well as in terms of power. It usually earns them leverage in government offices and enhances their political power locally over competing aghas or any possible rival from within the tribe. It is after all, the government that strengthens or weakens an agha and the tribe by arms and finance. In Iraqi Kurdistan, for example, the central government demonstrated its generosity to the aghas in the late 1970s following the oil boom. Some aghas like Jahwar Hurki and Latif Zebari in the Bahdinan region reaped financial rewards that were unprecedented in modern tribal history. Financial benefits have thus played a role in channelling the loyalty of some aghas, for it has brought them higher standards of living personally, but more importantly, it has given them the resources to enhance their own position and strengthen it within the tribe. A clear case is the Zebari tribe where competition for the overall leadership over the tribe was eagerly entered.

Also the tribal mentality, 'my tribe is as good as yours if not better', has led some aghas to view the national liberation movement in terms of tribal rivalry. This was and is a sensitive issue, since the leadership of the nationalist movement in Iraqi Kurdistan has also been traditionally tribal. Thus, the mentality of some aghas was an obstacle to joining a movement being led by another agha. It is difficult for a strong and well-known agha to take orders from another one. It is easier for an agha to be subdued to the authority of central government than to obey or be subdued by another Kurdish tribe.

2. FEUDING

The feud is deeply engraved in the Kurdish tribal mentality, under which the honour of the tribe is either lost or restored. Thus the feud remains one of the main preoccupations of the tribe and its leader until it is settled one way or another. The settlement of feud is either by an eye for an eye, or by the intervention of a neutral agha from a third tribe. This usually involves a visit by the neutral chief to the tribe of the victim accompanied by the chief of the second tribe. During the visit a settlement is reached between the two tribes, which is often permanent.

Thus, since the politics of the tribe is sometimes orientated upon the feud, various tribes have traditionally opposed the nationalist movement in southern Kurdistan. The murder of Ahmed Agha Zebari, Kelhai Agha of the Rekani tribe and Hafiz Sheikh Mahmmod of the Sourichi tribe, by the late Mustafa al-Barazani in the Bahdinan region, subsequently alienated these tribes from the Kurdish armed struggle. The feud not only stopped them from participation but their regarding the issue as cause for a feud between them and Barazani (who was both the chief of the Barazani tribe and the leader of the KLM) led them to carry arms against the movement. The heirs of Ahmed Agha Zebari have maintained that because of the murder of their father, they cannot, as the tradition dictates, join a movement led by a Barazani despite the fact that Barazani's favourite wife, Halimah, is from the Zebari tribe, and the second man in the KDP and its representative in Europe is a Zebari, Hoyshiar, the son of Mahmmod Agha.

3. TRIBAL DIVISION

In the case of a big conglomerate tribe made up of various clans which are roughly balanced, it is not uncommon to find clans changing sides thereby causing clashes with the respective loyalties of the other clans in the tribe. Again feuds play an important part in determining loyalty. The most obvious case in the Bahdinan region was the Doski tribe. The tribe consists of three

main clans, Jiayi, Himbi and Atrissi. The feud between Jiayi and Himbi which lasted about forty years (c.1940-1980) played a part in their alliances. The reason behind this behaviour is that allying with one side gives the clan or the tribe extra leverage and prestige. It becomes more powerful. The other clan has to find an equal if not stronger ally, to restore the balance.

4. DISAPPOINTMENT

Many tribal chiefs fought along with the nationalists in the 1960s and 1970s. But many of them changed their loyalty and attitudes towards the movement as they were either neglected by the leadership or did not receive what they expected. Being tribal, the Kurdish movement in Iraq failed to accommodate the concerns of the tribal leaders in order to secure their services. For a start, the tribal chiefs who joined and fought for the nationalists expected in return to be given the command of their regions and tribal territories. Instead regional commanders, mainly Barazanis, were appointed to the various regions. This was of course seen by the tribal chiefs as a snub to their local prestige.

5. ECONOMIC REALITIES

The tribal role has also been influenced and shaped by unchanged economic realities. The poor economic conditions which have persisted in Kurdish society over the years have often forced many tribes to opt out from supporting the nationalist movement and side with the central authorities. Supporting the government has usually meant better standards of living not in terms of luxury but in terms of tribal sustainability. The difficult economic conditions under which the nationalists have been operating mean that for a tribe to join it has to evacuate its tribal territory and take refuge either in the liberated zones or in the refugee camps in neighbouring countries. In other words, the tribe loses its geographical base, and because of the uncertainties of the outcome of the struggle, many tribes are unwilling to take the risk of gambling with their land and therefore their social cohesion.

Thus, although the aghas have the power to dictate the politics of the tribe they have still to consider the interest of the tribe as a whole, as well as the judgement of the elders of various moieties before deciding which action to take.

Therefore, opting for the government camp has meant sustaining the tribe and securing it from forceable reallocation, and secondly, keeping it together instead of being scattered here and there. More importantly, enlisting in government ranks has always meant a regular source of income, something which the nationalists could not offer to the tribes. In the 1980s, enlistment meant two things. First, it obviated military conscription into the war with Iran. Secondly, it earned each enlisted tribesman a monthly salary of ID 85 (twice the rate paid in 1975). This extra sum of income (then about US$ 260 per month), adding to the normal income from farming and other activities, meant far better living standards for the ordinary members of the tribes. This was not only beneficial to the tribesmen but to the chiefs whose income increased astronomically. The government was generous in distributing both oil royalties and the huge financial assistance it was receiving from the Gulf states in order to ensure the loyalty of the Kurdish tribes.

The above factors have regularly led to the alienation of many tribes from the liberation struggle. But more significantly, it has meant that over the years some have taken up arms against the nationalists, a move that has caused the nationalists more concern than the central authorities have done. It is often pointed out by the Kurds themselves that they are responsible for their own setbacks because of their internal divisions and diverse allegiances. It is certainly true that the politics of the tribe and its alliances have weakened the nationalists and effectively prevented any major breakthrough in their struggle. For a tribe siding with the central authorities restricts the nationalists' and rebels' movement in its territory as far as it can. In Iraqi Kurdistan, the tolerant attitudes of the 1960s were replaced by rigid and intolerant policies imposed by the government on its allied tribes in order to combat the nationalists in the 1980s. Thus, the rebels not only lost a significant material source of food and clothes often supplied by tribes, but also lost access to tribal territories as well as the important intelligence supplied by the villagers about the army movements. In addition, the movement's access to manpower was curtailed for the aghas were under pressure

from Saddam to ensure that all the tribesmen were accounted for.

The pattern of the 1960s was no longer acceptable to the government in Baghdad. In the 1980s, tribes had only two options; either to be with the government or against it. For the tribes there was no neutrality and no 'sitting on the fence'. And as the nationalists themselves were in disarray for the most of the period after 1975, the tribes had little or no room for bargaining with the central government. During this period the government was able to dictate its own terms and call the bluff of the heavyweight chiefs. When the powerful chief of the Hurki tribe, Muha Agha, for instance, privately made some remarks about government policy concerning the recruitment of tribes, he was killed in Baghdad by government agents in 1981 without any fear that his powerful tribe might take to the mountains and join the nationalists, a move that the authorities had to take into account carefully in the past. In 1982, Iraqi Kurdish aghas were summoned to the city of Kirkuk where Saddam's Deputy, Izzat Ibrahim, addressed them directly, saying 'you are either with us or against us' (personal).

In southern Kurdistan, tribalism suffered a major set back between 1988 and 1990. With the forced deportations and the scorched earth policy, tribalism, as a social and political structure, lost its main element, territory. The government's cleansing policy resulted in the destruction of 4,200 villages and 25 towns (Sami Abdul Rahman, Chairman of the People's Popular Party, recorded interview, 1991). During this turbulent period there was, indeed, an immense pressure on the very existence of tribal structure and its continuity. By 1988 Saddam Hussein had eliminated some powerful aghas like Muha Hurki, Ja'afar Besifki and Dewalli Doski. Others, like Muhammed Rekani, Latif Zebari, Sabir Sourichi, etc, kept a low profile and were subsequently bent to the will of the regime. Thus, had the conditions of post-1988 and pre-1991 continued, the whole tribal structure in Iraqi Kurdistan would have probably been radically undermined.

The tribal crisis during this period was both demographic and structural. Tribes like the Barazanis lost a large number of their menfolk. 8,000 males were taken away by Saddam's security forces one night in the mid-1980s and have never been seen again. A further 200,000 Kurds, mostly males, have disappeared since the Anfal campaign of 1988. In addition, the tribes were

displaced. Most tribes were scattered in and around the Kurdish region in temporary camps awaiting unknown destinations. With this displacement and separation, tribal cohesiveness was inevitably weakened. By 1988 the government policy of bringing the tribes to submission first and then dismantling them was on the brink of success. The government's policy seemed to have been successful in dislodging the Kurds and disconnecting them from the very soil that sustains tribalism.

At this juncture, some tribal chiefs were torn between trying to preserve their status and authority and offending Saddam. They were forced to send their armed tribesmen to the war front with Iran or wherever Saddam wanted them. In the past the pro-government tribes had been armed mainly to guard their tribal territory. But in the 1980s, they became a mobile militia used wherever they were needed. This began with Sabir Sourichi from Bahdinan sending his armed tribesmen to fight along the border with Iran, a development which was then forced on other tribes. The gentleman's agreement between the government and the tribes was swept away by Saddam. He was in a position to dictate to the aghas rather than to cooperate with them.

The second Gulf crisis and the subsequent war, uprising and mass exodus and the return to the safe haven under the protection of the Allied Forces, led to a revival in tribalism and tribal loyalty. The critical conditions of poverty, party politics, and the uncertainties about the future of the safe haven, plus the strong belief in the return of the central authority, led to the strengthening of the tribal bonds by which people found some kind of security. The revival was also due to the alliance between the main Kurdish party, the KDP, with the tribes to maintain its parity with the rival party PUK. The establishment of the safe haven represented a serious threat to tribalism. Moreover, when people returned from the mountains to the safe haven at the end of April 1992, enthusiasm was overwhelming for the Kurdish administration. But soon enthusiasm for the new administration dwindled. With the slide of the Kurdish parties deeper into party politics and the new authority showing signs of incompetence and corruption, the role of the tribal chieftains was revived.

In an overall assessment, it can be argued that the politics of the tribe and the aghas' role contributed to or represented a handicap for the nationalists.

To start with, the tribal chiefs could allow the rebels neither free access to the tribal territory nor a free hand to recruit from among the tribes, especially when the tribe was on the government's payroll. In the early days of the Kurdish struggle, a working relationship between the tribes and the rebels, between the pro- and anti-government Kurds, was often taken for granted. This understanding of the 1960s came about when both sides, the nationalists and the government, reached the belief that the conflict could not be settled one way or another. In fact the conflict served the interest of both sides because it gave legitimacy to both to consolidate their positions. This attitude helped the government of Baghdad to enhance its position in the name of national unity. From the second half of the 1970s onwards, with Saddam Hussein emerging as the sole and supreme ruler of Iraq, the flexible policy was no longer acceptable. To fulfil his wider ambitions in the region, Saddam had to ensure the loyalty of every subject in the country. Those who opposed him soon found themselves in prison, exiled or eliminated. His determination to head a unitary Iraq left no room for any tolerance or understanding between the tribes and the nationalists. Thus, Kurdish opposition had to be dealt with severely. As a result, the pro-government aghas lost most of their previous freedom. They were now subject to suspicion, and were under scrutiny.

The collapse of the Kurdish armed uprising of 1975, and the period which followed, represented a serious threat to tribal structure. Immediately after 1975 the government embarked on a programme of building 'modern villages' and a military road network in Kurdistan. This meant employment for the local people. This, in turn, meant a semi-mobile boom for the tribesmen, many of whom left their villages seeking employment in the cities. And as the scale of deportation was increased, the tribal structure was under an immediate and serious threat. The uncertainties and the chaos of March 1991 in Iraqi Kurdistan, however, gave the tribal chiefs the chance to take charge of their tribes as well as to play a part in the party politics which flourished in the run up to the local elections in 1992.

In Turkish Kurdistan, the campaign against the nationalist PKK forced the government to call upon the assistance of the tribal chiefs. Although not as cohesive as in the Iraqi part, the tribes in Turkey could grow stronger as the conflict developed further. Therefore, the PKK has from the beginning declared

its opposition to tribes and aghas. This has come from the realisation of the tribal impact on the course of the struggle as has been evident in the experience of southern Kurds.

To suggest, however, that tribalism is the cause of all the ills of the Kurds and an obstacle to the liberation movement is simply an excuse for the failure of the nationalists themselves. Tribalism has, indeed, like any other living practice, sought to maintain its status. But it has rarely resisted nationalism and liberation. The crux of the problem has not been the tribe, but rather the nationalists and the political parties. As parties are aggregates of interest, no Kurdish party in southern Kurdistan has yet addressed the issue of tribalism in order to accommodate tribal interest. No plausible solution or arrangement has been proposed by any party to benefit from and capitalise on the manpower of tribes. Kurdish nationalists and party cadres visiting Kurdish tribal villages in the late 1970s and 1980s, denouncing tribalism and the role of the aghas, did not provide any real alternative. No Kurdish party has approached the tribal structure in order to integrate it into the national liberation struggle. The lack of a visionary leader coupled with the disappointing results achieved by the KLM forced most Kurdish tribal aghas to seek friendship with the central governments. No political party in the KLM has functionally and realistically sought to win the loyalty of tribes. Instead, each and every party usually proposes its antagonism to tribalism. Naturally, then, tribes retaliate, as a measure of self-preservation, by seeking sanctuary under central authority. Thus, central governments have always been able to recruit tribes against the KLM. Being a useful force available at the hand of the central governments, tribalism is unlikely to vanish. As there is no Kurdish civil government under which tribalism can gradually be integrated into the larger unit, nor an economic development and prosperity that would undermine the tribal structure, then it will remain a powerful force. To revive tribalism, a central authority requires little effort to lure tribal chiefs. Therefore, and as a necessary measure for the present conduct of the liberation struggle, a leader must act as a broker to win the support and services of the tribes instead of alienating them.

To predict the future of tribalism and the role it plays is difficult. Having come to the brink of dissolution and returned, Kurdish tribes still seem

solid. The case of Turkish Kurdistan is particularly interesting, for after seventy years of efforts to dismantle it, tribalism still prevails and can easily be revived. Today in Iraqi Kurdistan tribalism is still strong and competition between tribes is growing. As to the role of the aghas, they will continue to try to maintain their authority and position at any cost. This naturally means that alliances with the central authorities will always be an option for a dissatisfied agha. Tribalism may be deplored, but it cannot be ignored as a social and political fact.

2) LEADERSHIP

Cartwright points out that when we speak of leadership, what comes to mind most frequently is the activity of a larger-than-life individual who draws his people to pursue goals that it has already committed itself to (Cartwright, 1983: 19). Thus, if leadership is described as 'a special subset of a more general power relationship in which leaders induc[e] followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and motivation...the wants and needs, the values and aspirations...of both leaders and followers'. Then leadership can be seen as 'the ability to obtain non-coerced, voluntary compliance which enables followers to attain goals which they share with the leader' (Cartwright, 1983: 21).

In Leaders and Elites Welsh defines leadership as 'the ability to mobilize human resources in pursuit of political goals' (Welsh, 1979: 18). Welsh argues that leadership is more than simply having influence or power, or being able to bring others to do what you want them to do. He says that leadership involves authority and authority implies legitimacy (Welsh, 1979: 18). Leadership, however, has two sources for its authority and power: coercion and persuasion. Coercion is associated with intimidation and terrorism (Bell, 1973: 107). It can be subdivided into pre-and post-independence coercion. In the post-independence stage, coercion is usually used as a tool to consolidate power and position when it lacks legitimacy. The methods of authoritarian leaders such as Saddam Hussein of Iraq include the habitual use of force as a means to remain in office. To justify coercion, however, a leader might be

seen as devaluing his subjects and distancing himself from them, thus reducing his inhibition against using more coercion (Cartwright, 1983: 22). In the pre-independence phase, on the other hand, a revolutionary leadership might use coercion to force the neutral section of the population to support the movement, or to punish those who have shown disloyalty. A measured amount of coercion seems to be indispensable in order for the leadership to command obedience from the population. It can also generate support and popularity if applied to traitors and collaborators as in the case of Hammas in the Occupied Territories in the late 1980s.

Persuasion, on the other hand, involves dialogue and peaceful means. It requires time and effort by the leadership to win the support of the people. The problem with persuasion is that when we try to determine what creates the ability to persuade, we enter a 'nebulous region' in which subjective attitudes toward a personality and toward symbols, perceptions of effectiveness, and other elements equally hard to pin down, play a major role (Cartwright, 1983:19). For a liberation movement to be led successfully, mass support is certainly a sine qua non (Adamolekun, 1988: 96). And to win this mass support, leadership must employ both measured coercion and persuasion. Furthermore, a leader must be able to personify the need and dreams of the masses. Leadership must personify the cause it is pursuing.

In both the pre and post-independence stages, leadership must be clearly identifiable. In order to command support, sympathy and compliance it must be well defined and identified. The personality of the leader has grown to be sometimes as important as the ideas and the cause that the leader champion. Personality is important to transmit ideas and to implement policies effectively and quickly. It is the presentation of the leader's personality that gives the struggle momentum. Cole & Cole write that 'to fight a political struggle without a presentable personal leader who is able to conjure up powerful emotions in his followers is to fight with one hand tied behind the back' (Cole & Cole, 1934: 348). More than an established and settled political system, a national liberation struggle or revolution requires a strong minded leader with a clear vision and keen wit.

In addition to authority, Philip Cerny identifies charisma as a primary property of leadership (Cerny, 1988: 132). Charisma, a concept first developed

by the German sociologist Max Weber, is crucial in accounting for the extraordinary hold some leaders have over their followers. The charismatic leader, for Weber 'derives authority not from any long experience or connection with established power but rather from some supposed special insight and power of appeal to people' (Williams, 1988: 65). Charisma, then, is a natural quality (one necessarily available in every leader) that enables a leader to capture the love, respect, and fear of his people. It operates in a manner that it gives the leader legitimacy and authority to articulate the interest of the people he leads and represents.

As to why people follow revolutionary leaders, Calvert in Revolution and International Politics, identifies three mechanisms: identification, vicarious satisfaction and moral respect. In the first, people accept leadership because the leader 'represents for them what they would like to do but cannot do'. The second mechanism is where the leader is 'doing what they would very much like to do; and not just what they would like to do but cannot'. The third kind of leader, is the one who 'acts out what people ought to do but are not really trying to do'. The Ayatollah Khomeini is identified as an example of this kind. Calvert writes that 'People do not really want to be good, moral or uplifting, but it salves their conscience considerably to have other people going around being good, moral and uplifting' (Calvert, 1993: 161).

Clearly common and dominant values restrict a leader's freedom of choice (Cartwright, 1983: 23). But equally they are important in the making of a leader. Values, defined as modes of conduct and not mere motives (Burns, 1977: 271), are vital for the foundation of a leader's base. A purposeful leader must comprehend many roles; he must accommodate his followers' needs and wants without sacrificing basic principles, he must mandate group conflict without becoming a mere referee or conciliator, and he must be with followers but also 'above them' (Burns, 1977: 272). A successful leader, then, must be the bearer of values like honour, courage, honesty, fairness, patience and sacrifice.

Finally, not all leaders are successful. Adamolekun points out a number of factors for successful leadership. The first of these factors is a clear-cut and well-defined objective. Adamolekun illustrates this point by making reference to leaders like Samora Machel and Amilcar Cabral in Africa. Each had a clear and sharply focused objective, the quest for national independence or

self-government. Secondly, a successful leader must rely on successful political party organization whose structure and function emphasise mass support. The third factor upon which leader's success depends is his or her vision and dedication. A leader must have a comprehensive vision of what is needed and must be totally dedicated to the objectives. Among other factors contributing to successful leadership is the external support a leader might enjoy, be it from other groups within his/her own environment or support from the outside (Adamolekun, 1988: 100). Furthermore, pragmatism must be regarded as an important factor in the making of a successful leader. Since politics is inter alia about compromise, a pragmatic leader is the one who can pull together compromises out of the diversity of conflicting interests and commitments.

KURDISH LEADERSHIP

Among the many proverbs that are cited by the old as well as the young are; '<u>Em bêa serin</u>' ('we have no head - Leader') and '<u>Haker ma serak habaa, em huw naboina</u>' ('if we had a head [leader] we would not have been like this'). Thus, the issue of the political leadership of the KLM in particular and of the nation as a whole, is the factor central to the internal dimension of the movement. From the beginning of the nationalist movement more than seventy years ago until 1975, the Kurdish struggle remained a cause for articulation by traditional chiefs, and as in the case of the Iraqi part in the 1970s, in the hands of one main family, the Barazani (Fouad Maşwm, first Kurdish Prime Minister of the safe haven: interview, 1994: 6). And since 1975 al-Barazani's heirs have continued to play a leading role in the struggle.

It is always stressed that the Kurds are a disunited people. The Kurdish failure to achieve any of their objectives is often attributed to their disunity (Bulloch and Morris, 1992: 217). This central fact could be largely ascribed to the fact that they have not had a national leader under whose authority the nation can or will be inspired to unite. If we were approached by a visiting Martian whose spaceship had landed in Kurdistan with the famous request 'take me to your leader', then we will have difficulty deciding whom the Martian should meet. If the visiting Martian had landed in the United

States, he would be taken to meet the present occupant of the White House. In Kurdistan, on the other hand, the decision would depend on which part of Kurdistan the Martian has landed. Even if we were to narrow the locality, say to Iraqi Kurdistan only, the question will still be that of which leader the Martian should meet.

The aftermath of the 1975 collapse of the armed struggle, together with the subsequent emergence of a diaspora, moreover, has led to the polarization of leadership in the Iraqi part. Meanwhile, a different kind of leadership has emerged in Turkish Kurdistan. In Iranian Kurdistan the leadership has lost a significant degree of effectiveness since the assassination of Ghassemlou in 1989. The death of Mullah Mustafa al-Barazani in 1979 opened the doors for contenders and challengers for the already vulnerable position in southern Kurdistan. Looking at the leadership patterns since 1975, the following types can be categorized.

1. CLASSICAL

In this part, southern Kurdistan will be the focus of emphasis since it displays this type of leadership very clearly. Two main types of classical leadership can be identified;

a) Traditionalist:

As Massoud Barazani succeeded his father, Mullah Mustafa, in the leadership of the KDP and ultimately the armed struggle, no fundamental change has occurred. The emphasis has continued to be on the same pattern of thinking and approach as that of his late father. The traditionalist pattern has continued to lean toward the old social order for support and recruitment. Being tribal himself, Barazani has maintained, especially since 1990, a strong link with the tribal leaders, who in turn have cocooned his leadership in order to preserve their own status. On a visit by the author to southern Kurdistan in September 1994, it was evident that the supporters of al-Barazani were mainly

tribal and from the Bahdinan region where tribalism is more concentrated (see also Political Parties below). The essence of this type of leadership is the continuity of leadership in the same family. There is, therefore, active resistance to any challenge.

b) Urban:

Urban leadership can best be described as 'old wine in new bottles'. Following the disaster of 1975, and the departure of the traditional sole articulator of the Kurdish movement, Mullah Mustafa, a new contender to the leadership emerged. In 1976 Jalal Talabani set up the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and within a few years Talabani became a leading figure in Kurdish politics in southern Kurdistan. The difference between Talabani and Barazani is not primarily in their characters, they both are from the 'old school', an extension of the same movement. Talabani was among Barazani's comrades. He was pushed aside by the elder Barazani in the 1960s, as Barazani extended his control over the KDP, following his return from the Soviet Union and the early honeymoon with the first republican government in Iraq under Abdul Karim Qasim. The break with Barazani came in 1963 when Barazani agreed to a cease-fire with the new Ba'ath government under Abdul Salaam Arif. On the ground that Barazani had not consulted the party on the cease-fire process, Talabani and Ibrahim Ahmad split from the KDP, and led a smaller faction within the party. McDowall, however, points out that the split was on more fundamental grounds than simply not consulting the party. He points to Barazanis' style of 'operation and objectives' as being completely different from the Talabanis' 'urban intelligentsia which called for consultation and consensus' (McDowall, 1989: 20). Eventually, in the second half of the 1960s, Talabani ended up carrying government arms fighting Barazani and the nationalists of the KDP. He and his new group became known as Jalallean. Talabani's urban-style leadership lies in his association with the Kurdish intellectuals and middle-class Kurds with whom he succeeded in surrounding himself. Nevertheless, the articulation of Kurdish politics remained more or less the same as had been the case with the traditionalists. Although Talabani's power base is solidly founded on the intelligentsia, no radical or revolutionary thesis has been introduced to update the leadership in southern Kurdistan, or

to establish a new position for the liberation movement.

2. REVOLUTIONARY

Revolutionary leadership, the most radical in contemporary Kurdish politics, is to be found in northern (Turkish) Kurdistan. For over sixty years, until the 1980s, Turkish Kurdistan was without a leader and without a cause. There were no contenders to take on the leadership of the Kurds in the country. This was largely due to the oppressive Turkish policies of intolerance in the Kurdish region. More significantly, for the northern Kurds the struggle in southern Kurdistan, and the leadership of Barazani, were seen, as they were by the Kurds everywhere, as an extension of their own struggle and dreams. For them the Barazanis' leadership was carried on in their name too, and for their liberation. Thus, until the end of the 1970s all eyes were focused on southern Kurdistan. However, in the troubled period of Turkish politics, a group of Kurdish activists set up the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) and Abdullah Ocalan emerged as the General Secretary as well as the most powerful man of the PKK. Since the PKK embarked on an armed struggle for liberation on 15 August 1984, Ocalan has emerged as the supreme leader of northern Kurdistan.

Talking about different types of Kurdish leadership since mid 1970s, Abdul Rahman Gassemlou of Iranian Kurdistan appears to be the embodiment of both traditionalist and urban styles. Born to a landowning family in 1930, he left Iran after the collapse of the Mahabad Republic in 1946 for France and then Prague. He returned to Iran in the 1950s, where he was arrested and imprisoned for two years following the CIA-organised counter-coup against Dr Mosaddaq and the restoration of the Shah. In 1957 he returned to Prague where he took his doctorate and taught economics. He also established contacts with the Prague Spring movement, but left the city after the Soviet invasion. In 1973 he was elected to head the KDPI and in 1979 returned to Iran to lead the party which had been transformed into a mass organization with a programme for autonomy for Kurdistan. He was assassinated in Vienna on 13 June 1989. Gassemlou represented the European-educated leader who had to accommodate both the traditional and intellectual strands within Kurdish society.

What differentiates Ocalan, the northern Kurdish leader, from the southern leaders is his personal background. While the leaders of southern Kurdistan are and have been from the nobility and well known families, Ocalan's family background, on the other hand, is peasant. He has not inherited a position but rather worked his way up. Born in 1948 to a peasant family in the village of Omerli in the Orfa province, he studied at the vocational school of the Land Registry and worked in Diyarbakir for a while. He went to Ankara to study at the School of Political Science. There he became actively involved in politics and the student movement. He served seven months imprisonment for his activities in 1973. He returned to Kurdistan in 1975 with his comrades to continue his political activities and then launched the PKK in 1978 (Ocalan, 1992: 6). A further distinction has been his ability as a transformative leader to transform the norms and structure of the Kurdish armed struggle. His authoritarian style, complete organizational structure, his dedicated and even suicidal prosecution of war, and coercive measures against traitors and collaborators, have all made him the rising leader throughout Kurdistan.

In an overall assessment of the Kurdish leadership over the last few years, a number of observations can be made. First, the personal qualities of the various leaders in southern and northern Kurdistan differ considerably. The leadership in the north has earned the trust of the people partly because of its youth and commitment, while the southern leadership has been 'in the game' for too long with no substantial achievement. Whereas the northern leadership has made a considerable impact on the politics of the region, the southern leadership has not yet achieved anything substantial in terms of armed struggle. If we look into the personal qualities of the southern leaders, we find Massoud Barazani (born in 1946), a soft spoken, humble and shy person. He often seems to carry the burden, the leadership of the movement, which his father left him, with reluctance. Perhaps his political naivete and unassuming personality have given his rivals the edge in the leadership contest. Jalal Talabani, on the other hand, seems to be, according to one of his own MPs, (Reference A., September 1994) a 'fox', a cunning politician, creating and taking any opportunity which comes his way to assume the overall leadership of southern Kurdistan.

But if Talabani's political manoeuvring was suitable for his local environment, he has not left that impression on the outside world. Even among

the Kurds, his unreliabilty and changing of sides during his long political life has discredited him. His infamous handshake and kiss, with Saddam Hussein, shortly after the tragic Kurdish exodus in 1991, not only discredited him, but more importantly, dented sympathies the Kurds had earned throughout the world. If Barazani is quiet and prudent, Talabani appears to be impetuous and unguarded. During a visit by Ali Agha Muhammedi, the adviser on Iraqi affairs to the Iranian President Rafsanjani, to the safe haven in January 1996 an mediate end to the 'civil war' (Asharq Al Awsat, 4/1/1995), Barazani was judged while to be cautious and discreet. Talabani was observed by an eyewitness to walk hand in hand with Muhammedi and to have publicly raised the hand of the Iranian guest in Sulaimaniya declaring brotherhood between the Shi'ite and the Kurds, as well as making anti-American slogans (Kurdish eyewitness returning from Sulaimaniya, London, February 1996).

Moreover, the northern leadership has brought together a number of followers who are committed to the cause rather than being drawn in for any individual interests. The methods deployed by them have produced a new breed of revolutionary who would stop at nothing to achieve the objectives of the party and leadership. For the first time in the contemporary Kurdish struggle the followers of the northern leaders are fighting a suicidal war, whereas the southern leadership was never able to breed such a calibre of fighters so dedicated to their cause and leadership. Personal accounts were given to the author by Iraqi Kurds who had fought for the KDP, alongside Turkish troops, against the PKK. Tales of PKK Peshmerga fighting to the death and even tying their hands in chains together so no one would flee had aroused admiration even among those fighting them. Furthermore, the task the northern leadership has set itself is no less than the liberation of Kurdistan. At least ideologically they have not put compromise on the agenda yet, whereas the southern leadership has been forwarding various proposals which have lost them credibility. It was evident to the author during a visit to southern Kurdistan in September 1994 that the northern leadership was gaining respect and popularity among the southern Kurds mainly for their adherence to the task they had set themselves.

Finally, if we look at the conditions under which Kurdish leadership operates, we find that in both north and south they have been difficult. In the south, the Kurds barely recovered from the 1975 collapse and the subsequent harsh

policies of the Iraqi government which managed to scatter Kurdish activists all over the place. The outbreak of the war between Iran and Iraq also conditioned the manoeuvring of the Kurdish leadership and forced them into further alliances with regional governments and groups. These, of course, were complicated by competition between the two main parties which led to many clashes and in turn weakened the position of both leaders, Barazani and Talabani. The situation also involved changing sides. Having failed to reach an agreement with Saddam, Talabani was forced to change alliances and forge a new partnership with Barazani's KDP, and ultimately with Iran, in 1984. The situation was worsened in 1988 with the gas attacks on Halabjah and the subsequent Iraqi army Anfal campaign. The leadership could not maintain or was not in a position to maintain its control over the situation.

Yet with the onset of the Kuwait crisis, the Kurdish leadership in Iraq seemed to lack any coherent policy for the coming days. Even when the southern uprising took place in March 1991, the Kurdish leadership had no prior arrangements for any such eventuality. In fact the leadership was in such disarray that when the uprising broke out it was the civilians who forced their way into the government's offices.

Contrary to a statement by a politburo member of the PUK that the uprising was arranged six months prior to 16 March 1991, the day of the uprising, and that the party had put the final touches for this outcome (A'arf Rushdy, recorded interview: 1/10/1994), the Kurdish leadership clearly had no plans, particularly in the Bahdinan region. The statements of dozens of people who participated in the uprising clearly tell a different story, including a ratification from reference A. In the town of Summail, for example, Muhammed Agha al-Kojer taken over the garrison on his own initiative. Captured armed vehicles from the Iraqi garrison bore the legend 'the forces of Muhammed Agha al-Kojer'. A further statement, written by a leading member of the PUK, Nau Shirwan, also contradicts Arif Rushdy's assertion. Shirwan writes that among the reasons that turned the spectacular success of the uprising into a sensational defeat was 'the lack of a united political and military leadership capable of planning to recruit the masses for the defence of the borders of Kurdistan against the counter attacks of the Ba'ath occupation army' (Shirwan, 1993: 10).

Even after the setting up of the safe haven, the southern leadership failed to take advantage of the circumstances. Having the whole of southern Kurdistan to themselves, they failed to supplement the parliamentary elections which took place successfully on 19 May 1992 with a leadership election. According to Shirwan, a proposal was made by Dr Mahmmod al-Sorani to elect a 'shepherd', a commander for the Kurdish liberation movement. This was agreed upon by all groups without any debate (Shirwan, 1993: 21). In fact the Kurds went to the polls to elect an overall leader, but failed to give a mandate to one of the two main candidates, Talabani or Barazani. This was perhaps the greatest set-back for the new Kurdish administration in southern Kurdistan, for having successfully elected a parliament, they failed to select a leader. Shirwan argues against the idea of electing a leader at the same time as a parliament by suggesting that they are contradictory to each other. He goes on to suggest that a leader is for exceptional circumstances, during crisis and war, and that a parliament is most suitable for times of peace, law and order. His arguments were based on the assumption that the Kurds have moved from 'revolutionary legitimacy' to 'constitutional legitimacy' (Shirwan, 1993: 21-22).

The salient point is, however, that southern Kurdistan had not and has not achieved independence. The situation since 1991 can simply be described as a temporary solution to one of the by-products of the Kuwait war. Constitutional legitimacy does not grant the Kurds recognition and guaranteed status that will ensure the survival of their institutions once the temporary conditions are changed. This became clear in 1995 when the Kurdish Parliament in Arbil ceased to function following intense fighting between the PUK and the KDP. Henceforth, the idea of 'constitutional legitimacy', popular among Kurdish politicians and parliamentarians, as the author noticed on a visit to the Kurdish parliament in Arbil in October 1994, was nullified. This was clear in the failure of the PUK MPs from Bahdinan to go through the KDP-controlled territory to discharge their duties in the parliament. Some brief and informal conversations with Kurdish MPs in Arbil and Dohuk showed clearly that their strategies did not stretch beyond a post-Allied protection operation. To them the present meant the end of their armed struggle. There was, however, no clear simple answer or strategy for the day the safe haven will possibly be reincorporated into the Republic of Iraq.

As the election of an overall leader failed, the power was shared between the two contenders, Barazani and Talabani, on a 50:50 basis. In a written answer to the author, (20/10/1994) Dr Fouad Maswm points out that the reason for not carrying out a second-round election for the leadership was largely because of a fear that if they failed again to elect a leader there would be fighting between the followers of the two parties. But the absence of an overall leader, did, in fact, lead to conflict in the summer of 1992 and the winter of 1994/95 in which fierce fighting took place. This situation resulted from the absence of an overall leader who could run, with the parliamentary machinery, the affairs of the safe haven during this critical moment in their modern history. Even threats made by the US adminstration to Kurdish leaders in the summer of 1994 that if they did not cease fighting, the US administration had an alternative personality to replace them both, did not stop the inter-Kurdish fighting over leadership (an account of this threat was given to the author by some Kurdish politicians when visiting the region in September 1994 but the name of the alternative personality remained unknown). Hence, because of the unsolved question of leadership, only one conclusion makes sense; namely that the conflict between the two leaders will continue until one of them is prepared to allow the other to assume the vacant position, but this is unlikely. As a result the people of southern Kurdistan are victims of their own leaders as well as of the Iraqi leadership. The situation in northern Kurdistan is different in that there is an overall leader, Abdullah Ocalan. He has not, at least at present, any rival. Having stood firmly against the Turkish onslaught, particularly since 1992, the northern leadership has managed to monopolize the armed struggle, and has become the sole representative of Kurdish aspirations there.

In conclusion, the crisis of leadership in southern Kurdistan remains central to the crisis within the KLM as a whole. Eastern Kurdistan - the Iranian part - has not been discussed in this section since it has effectively been brought to near submission by the Iranian regime following the assassination of Gassemlou in 1989. Since then the eastern Kurdish leadership continue to exist and operate mainly in exile either in Iraq or Europe with little effect. The failure of leadership in southern Kurdistan is all too evident. The struggle in the south has been ill served by its leaders, for they have failed to show any inclination to learn from their many setbacks, while, as shown above, in northern Kurdistan a new leadership has introduced a radical revolutionary

task for the liberation of Kurdistan. If the Kurds had an overall leadership personified in the person of Barazani in the pre-1975 period who had crossed the divided boundaries of Kurdistan to represent the aspirations of the whole Kurdish nation, the situation post-1975 has been radically different. Since 1975 the Kurdish leadership has not been able to present itself as a representative of a nationwide Kurdish cause. In each region a framework of leadership has emerged. None of the existing leaders have been able to overcome the physical borders dividing Kurdistan.

It is still too early to assume that the PKK chairman, Ocalan, is the leader to fill the leadership gap, for there is strong opposition from two directions to his leadership in southern Kurdistan. First, the existing leadership will not allow him to assume overall leadership and campaign freely throughout the region. This is further complicated by the intervention of regional powers directing the policies of the southern Kurds (see under Regional Dimension). Secondly, conservative opposition is likely to oppose the Marxist revolutionary rhetoric of the PKK, which advocates war against the old social order. The second opposition, however, is far less instrumental than the former; the masses are far more likely to sway this way or that depending on the ideology representing their aspirations. For although loyalty to local leadership is stronger than a national one, this could be reversed easily once a strong charismatic personality emerged whom the masses could trust.

3) POLITICAL PARTIES

The twentieth century has witnessed the growth of the political party as an inseparable part of the political and social process. A contemporary political society is governed, managed, and its interest articulated, by political parties. The role and importance of political parties are best summarized by Bell: 'Politics almost never rewards the efforts of isolated individuals who insist on working alone. Success in politics depends fundamentally on organization' (Bell, 1973: 90). The development of human societies into complex structures indeed requires a high level of organization and management. Whether it is the running and managing of the affairs of a

society, or seeking to do so, requires the combined efforts of many individuals who can only be brought together under one labelled organisation-party.

In Political Studies, Leeds points out that the main functions of and reasons for the existence of political parties include the organisation of the electorate, by acting as brokers of ideas, in which parties clarify issues which are meaningful to the electorate and on which policies can be formulated and implemented. Secondly, parties undertake research and provide information, and educate the public about problems and issues. Political parties also act as 'bridge organisations' linking citizens and organisations with government. Finally, political parties provide the machinery for the selection of personnel for public office, organise election campaigns and seek popular support for their candidates. They are prepared to assume power to govern the country and to run government (Leeds, 1981: 125). To add to Leeds' observations, Neumann points out that among the roles of party in open forum, parliament, is making the voters choose at least the lesser of the two evils, and thus forcing political differentiation into major channels. Neumann also stresses that more importantly, parties play a major part in transforming the private citizen himself. On this parties;

> make him [the private citizen] a zoon politikon [political animal]; they integrate him into the group. Every party has to present to the individual voter and to his powerful special-interest groups a picture of the community as an entity. It must constantly remind the citizen of this collective whole, adjust his wants to the needs of the community, and, if necessary, even ask sacrifices from him in the name of the community (Neumann, 1965: 397).

Almond, Powell, and Mundt link the party's function to interest aggregation. Political parties 'nominate candidates who stand for a set of policies, and then they try build support for these candidates'. The writers observe that in both democratic and authoritarian systems, interest aggregation 'may well take place within the parties, as party conventions or party leaders hear the demands of different groups...and create policy alternatives'. Among the functions of the political parties, 'mobilization of support for policy and

candidates' is pointed out as the distinctive and defining goal of a political party. They also cite political socialisation as a function whereby parties shape the political culture as they organize thinking about political issues, in order to build support for their ideologies. Parties also affect 'political recruitment as they mobilize voters', and are involved in selecting would-be office holders. Another function is that parties articulate interests of their own and 'transmit the demands of others'. As for governing parties, they have the additional function of making public policy and 'overseeing its implementation and adjudication' (Almond, Powell and Mundt, 1993: 108-9).

In his comparative study of political parties, Neumann observes that the functions of dictatorial parties in power, do not, at least outwardly, differ from the four main functions in democratic and open systems. For both types seek the organisation of the 'chaotic public will' and the integration of the individual into the group, as well as representing the connecting link between government and the public opinion, and above all, the selection of leaders. But since the conceptions of leaders and followers differ in democratic and dictatorial systems, so the meanings of those functions changes fundamentally. Whereas in democracy there is an open forum for debate and control, in the dictatorial system, on the other hand, there is 'monolithic control', 'enforcement of conformity', a one-way propaganda apparatus and a web of secret agencies serving as 'necessary listening posts' (Neumann, 1965: 398).

Sartori concludes in his rationalization of the 'party' by pointing out that parties are instrumental to collective benefits. They link a people to a government, and enhance system capabilities. In short, Sartori argues, they 'are functional agencies - they serve purposes and fulfil roles' (Sartori, 1976: 24). Perhaps the most important point raised by Sartori about parties is that they are channels of expression, that they are an agency for representing the people by expressing their demands; 'As parties developed, they did not develop.....to convey to the people the wishes of the authorities but far more to convey to the authorities the wishes of the people' (Sartori, 1976: 27).

KURDISH POLITICAL PARTIES SINCE 1975

Political parties do not function solely in stable societies and established political systems. They are also needed in the course of a liberation struggle. Rarely has a liberation movement succeeded in its struggle for independence without the efforts and the organisation of political parties. In the case of the Kurdish liberation struggle, at the turn of the twentieth century political parties grew gradually from clubs and societies to take over the role of the traditional chieftains. In the period between the two world wars, revolutionary ideals, especially those flowing southward from the Soviet Union, inspired Kurdish political parties to come to the fore.

Southern Kurdistan

1) THE KURDISH DEMOCRATIC PARTY - KDP.

Also called Partyia Democrati Kurdostan, and some times just Parti, the KDP is the oldest political party in southern Kurdistan. Set up in 16 August 1946 as a sister party to the Iranian Kurdish Democratic Party, the KDP has since taken the leading role in the continuing Kurdish armed struggle. After the collapse of their armed struggle in 1975, the party and the leadership took refuge in Iran. While in Iran, the party tried to maintain its grip over events in Iraqi Kurdistan. But there was widespread disappointment and criticism of the party and its failure. The KDP was quick to respond to the criticisms and launched a new armed campaign on 26 May 1976 following the establishment of the Provisional Command. The purpose of this was to restore faith, not necessarily among the disappointed people, but importantly among its members as a sign of strength against the newly created PUK. The death of Barazani in March 1979, however, caused the party a major problem. For about three decades al-Barazani had run and controlled the party the way he wished. Now the party was at a crossroads. Criticism, dissent, and opposition surfaced.

In al Badiel al Thawry fey al Harakah al Taharurya al Kurdiah (The Revolutionary Alternative in the Kurdish Liberation Movement), Sami Abdul Rahman, criticising the party in the period of the late 1970s as being under

the feudal and reactionary forces in Kurdish society, suggests that it is 'not strange but natural' to speak of a real alternative to the party which has failed the Kurdish people. For Abdul Rahman and the other 'progressives' and the 'frustrated', the alternative was a proletarian leadership and party (Abdul Rahman, 1981: 19). The KDP was under pressure to come up with an alternative in order to stop the possible break-up of the party. And thus the Provisional Command served its purpose for a while. But Abdul Rahman stresses that while the leadership within the party and the Provisional Command was leaning towards Massoud al-Barazani with the consent of most factions, Barazani's brother, Idris, was plotting with the 'reactionary' forces to capture the leadership for himself. With the assistance of the new Iranian government (especially, the Minister of Defence, Mustafa Chamran) Idris started recruiting fighters among the refugees in the town of Zywa, and around the end of May 1979 began openly advocating the importance of his family in leading the KDP and the liberation movement. From mid-June the right wing began an open campaign to discredit the Provisional Command as being Marxist and against the Barazani (Abdul Rahman, 1981: 31).

In mid-July, a long-awaited meeting of the Provisional Command took place in the village of Shanawa near Shnow, this was attended by all members except Nori Shawish and Ali Abdullah, who were abroad. Idris was not invited, a move which 'upset him most'. The importance of the meeting was that, according to Sami, three factions emerged; the 'reactionary' right wing, the progressive faction, and the centrists led by Massoud. Sami's account of the meeting as tense indicates the power struggle which was taking place, and Massoud's dilemma over placating the left and the right of the party. The meeting, however, elected Massoud as a provisional leader, set up the politburo and chose Sami Abdul Rahman as General Secretary (Abdul Rahman, 1981: 32).

However, dissension and a split in the party were, according to Sami, inevitable, as the right wing collaborated with the Iranian authorities in their war against the Kurds and the KDPI (Abdul Rahman, 1981; 36-39). And as the preparations were being made for the party's ninth congress, the position of the three factions in the party crystallised. Massoud's faction moved towards the right, who were led by his brother, Idris. According to Sami's account of the congress which took place on 4 October 1979 in a small village in Markafer near Urmieh, the large tent erected specially for the congress

collapsed; Sami suggests that it was a bad omen, for, on the ground, the congress failed. With that failure the Provisional Command came to an end; the leadership of the party went back to the Barazanis. The party split, and the progressive faction, led by Abdul Rahman, set up the People's Democratic Party of Kurdistan (Parti Gál) or PDPK (For further details on this period see Sami Abdul Rahman, 1981: 23-45). The Barazani brothers restored their control over the KDP. The KDP's position, however, was challenged in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s by its rival party the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, PUK. The rivalry has continued until this day.

Meanwhile, the KDP's popular support remains firmly based in the Bahdinan region of southern Kurdistan, the provinces of Dohuk and Mosul, and parts of Hawller (Arbil). Today, the KDP draws most of its support from traditionalist Kurds rather than the intelligentsia or the left. Mushir Agha, the eighty-two-year-old chieftain of the Al-Kiesh clan, part of the Goran tribe, made it clear to the author in September 1994 that from the tribal point of view the best party available is the KDP and the best leader to follow is Massoud. This opinion was popular among many aghas we met with in southern Kurdistan (personal sources). Objectively, however, the KDP enjoys support in the Sorani region of southern Kurdistan as well, and is not confined only to the Bahdinan part.

The KDP also remains the richest party in southern Kurdistan. It has large financial resources. For most of its life, particularly from the beginning of the Kurdish armed struggle in September 1961 and until late 1980s, Iran was its main financial supporter. After 1975, Syria too, gave support, in both finance and weapons. (The Syrian support was confirmed in a recorded interview with a KDP political officer, Mullah Hussein). The hereditary nature of the KDP has meant the regular rise and decline of factions. At present, the existing factions within the party can be identified as: a) Fathel (Mirani) Mutny, b) Qadeir Qajakh, and, c) Abdul Aziz Tayyb. In addition, the young Nejirvan, the grandson of Mullah Mustafa Barazani, is seen at the top of these factions in a league of his own. Other identifiable figures of the party are Hoyshiar Zebari (Massoud's uncle) and Sami Abdul Rahman.

It is important to stop and consider, briefly, the KDP's alleged association with tribalism especially since 1991. It is true that the KDP enjoys support

among the tribes of Bahdinan. This, however, is due to several reasons. First, the leadership of the party, the Barazanis, is tribal and hails from the Bahdinan region. Secondly, and since the second half of the 1970s, the rival party, the PUK, has managed to regionalise loyalty, setting Bahdinan against Soran. Thirdly, tribal identification with the KDP is due to the KDP's readiness to embrace any possible force willing to join or to associate with the party.

However, being a traditional party does not mean that the KDP is simply a tribal party or a party of or for the tribes. The history of the KDP does not show any consistent pattern of tribalist behaviour. It is the tribes who seek patronage of a higher authority in order to sustain their status and structure. Thus, we find that until the end of the 1980s, most tribes of southern Kurdistan had allied themselves not with the KDP but against it. It was the central government which provided the resources for the preservation of tribalism. As tribes could neither unite to form a stronger unit due to their divergent interests, nor remain neutral, they were forced to find an understanding with either the nationalists when in control (as in 1970-4, and since 1991) or with the central government in Baghdad. If we look at the Central Committee of the KDP we find no tribal chief as a politburo member or as a regional commander. The nature of the KDP can simply be observed from its slogans such as 'Barazani, Party and Kurdishism' (shown regularly on KDP's TV station since 1991).

Hence, the KDP may be described as a traditional party seeking limited objectives which may appear to the outsider as tribalistic, but in reality the essence of these objectives is self-preservation. The party has publicly denounced tribalism and blamed the tribal chieftains for the ills of the Kurdish society. Yet it has shown willingness to be seen as tribal since it is the tribes who have maintained the KDP's equilibrium with the PUK.

2) THE PATRIOTIC UNION OF KURDISTAN (Yeaketi) or PUK.

After the unfolding of the 1975 tragedy in Iraqi Kurdistan, the PUK was set up as an alternative and replacement for the defeated KDP, or as in the words

of Bulloch and Morris 'a radical alternative to the old guard, which he [Talabani] denounced as reactionary and anti-revolutionary because of its association with the Shah, the CIA and the Israelis' (Bulloch and Morris, 1992: 148). Established by the veteran Talabani on 1 June 1975, the PUK is composed mainly of intellectuals, students and professionals who were attracted to the PUK and its socialist doctrines.

The origins of the PUK can be traced to three small groups who were active in the first half of the 1970s. Firstly, there was the Marxist-Leninist Komalah League founded by the trio Ja'afer, Anwer and Xa'al (Uncle) Shahab in 1972. These people were secretly active, seeking to win over the intellectuals during the first half of the 1970s when the KDP had de facto control over the Kurdish region. The League was active only politically, in political recruitment and organization, and was subject to harassment by the parstien, the KDP's Intelligence Unit. The second group was Xa'ate Geshti, the 'General Line' and thirdly, Komalahi Rajdarani Kurdostan, the Kurdish Toilers League, set up by Uncle Shahab then led in turn by Aram and by Nau Shirwan. Other leftist activists like Dr Khalid, Ali Asker and Sheikh Biazid were also campaigning to build a new Kurdish movement based on the progressive element in Kurdish society.

As Kurdish intellectuals and students were disillusioned by the events of 1975, Talabani moved in at the right moment to replace the KDP, the party he was once involved with in the 1950s. The departure of Mullah Mustafa al-Barazani and the KDP leadership left southern Kurdistan open to new contenders for Kurdish leadership. Talabani wasted no time in filling the vacuum. The PUK's strongest point of appeal in Kurdistan is its non-hereditary structure. The PUK's main front runners at present are: Nau Shirwan, Kosrat Rasoul, Fouad Maswm and their military commander, Jabar Ferman.

3) PEOPLES' DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF KURDISTAN (Parti Gál) or PDPK.

A splinter group from the KDP, the PDPK was set up in July 1981, after the failure of the KDP's ninth congress in October 1979 to reach agreement. Headed by Sami (Shingari) Abdul Rahman, the PDPK was composed of the left-wing and

progressive elements of the Provisional Command (two thirds of the members) who opted out when the Barazani family restored its control over the KDP. Based on what they called 'scientific socialism', the party remained small compared to the KDP and the PUK. After the elections in the Safe Havens in southern Kurdistan in 1992, the party was dissolved because it did not get the 7 per cent of the votes required in the parliamentary election. Sami then rejoined the KDP, instead of the socialist PUK which would have been the more natural option since he had been advocating a socialist alternative to the KDP. This step (rejoining the KDP), even though he had strongly criticized the KDP and in particular Idris al-Barazani for being behind the collapse of the Provisional Command, was probably the only way in which Sami could continue his political career, since he was involved in the Hakkari Massacre in 1978, in which hundreds of PUK cadres were slaughtered including Ali Asker, Dr Khalid and Sheikh Biazid. This, however, cannot be the decisive reason for his choosing the KDP. In 1991 Sami returned to southern Kurdistan hand in hand with the PUK's leader, Talabani, and he enjoyed support in the Sorani region, the PUK's support base. Since rejoining the KDP, he has become the spokesman of the party.

4) <u>THE ISLAMISTS</u>.

Since the setting up of the safe haven, several Islamic groups have been established. These include:

a) An Islamic group led by Muhammad Khalid Barazani (father-in-law of Massoud Barazani). Although independent, it supports Massoud's KDP. The group is backed by Iran.

b) <u>Hizbullah</u>, the Party of God, led by Sheikh Ahmad Barazani, again a relative of Massoud. The party controls the Diana region and has helped the KDP against the PUK.

c) **The Islamic Movement** under Othman Halabji. The group is militarily strong. It is independent but openly against the socialist ideology of the PUK. Sheikh Othman is quoted having said to a British diplomat 'we thank you for getting rid of Saddam for us, but you have brought us another one', referring to Jalal Talabani of the PUK. As some members wear the Afghani-style dress, they are referred to sometimes as Afghani Kurds, similar to that applied to the Afghani Arabs. The Afghan connection obtains via their military commander, Fatah KreCa'ar, a former communist turned Islamist. When the group came under pressure in the fighting with PUK, KreCa'ar went to Afghanistan and came back with a mujahedin force (discussion with Nazir Haji Jamil, London, March, 1996).

d) Rabitta al-Islamia, the Islamic League. This is a Saudi sponsored party. When it was set up, it claimed no political orientation, but by 1995 it started showing political inclinations by building a headquarters and holding meetings. The party's activities were marked by building hospitals, schools, mosques and giving free food and medicine, it has been paying for 1500 charity members in Dohuk alone. It has no figurehead as a leader.

e) Salaffi (Puritan). A small group which leans towards the KDP and is thought also to be sponsored by the Saudis.

5) THE KURDISH CONSERVATIVE PARTY.

With the political liberalization following the establishment of the Safe Havens in 1991, the small Kurdish Conservative Party, Parezgaran, - also known as the League of the Kurdish Tribes - was set up. Some Kurds were invited to visit Saudi Arabia by the Saudi Crown Prince, Abdullah, who is believed to have an interest in tribal societies such as the Kurdish and Afghani societies. Among the Kurds who went to Saudi Arabia were Shawkat A'abid, Ibrahim Ali and Jahwer Sourichi. Subsequently a small party was set up with the brothers, Hussein and Omar Sourichi, as front leaders. It was initially hoped that the party would be a forum for all tribal leaders so they can

preserve their tribe and status. Although the party still maintains an office in the city of Arbil in southern Kurdistan, it has failed to attract interest and has practically no followers. On a visit to Arbil on October 1994, the author made several telephone calls to meet Omar, but the office was shut. However, a squabble over the Saudi financial support arose between the visiting Kurds (discussion with Bahjat M.T. Zinavayi, London, 25 May 1995).

The Conservative party suffered a fatal setback to its ranks when on 16 June 1996 the KDP forces attacked the village of Glgeen, north of Arbil and killed one of the leading brothers, Hussein, together with thirty of his followers (Asharq Al Awsat 18/6/1996). Following the raid on the village, Hussein's younger brother Omar was reported to have joined the PUK. The reason behind KDP's attack was put down to collaboration between Omar's son, Zeyd, and the PUK.

6) KURDISTAN PATRIOTIC SALVATION MOVEMENT - KPSM

KPSM is the newest Kurdish organisation and was set up from exile on 16 June 1992. The organisation's front man is Ibrahim Ali Mallou, one of the chieftains of the Muzzeri tribe in Dohuk. In 1983 Ibrahim Ali, an agricultural engineer by profession, set up his tribal Light Brigade, along with other Kurdish chieftains. In the chaotic days following Iraq's defeat in the Second Gulf War, Ibrahim Ali was the Kurdish tribal leader who initiated the uprising of March 1991 in Dohuk. Returning from the mountains following the Kurdish exodus, Ibrahim joined the KDP. He was assigned to safeguard Saddam's palaces and properties in Ashawa and on Mount Ka'ara, because Saddam's Republican Guards were still stationed in the area while initial negotiation were taking place between Saddam and the Kurds.

A personal conflict is alleged to have developed between Ibrahim Ali and Ba'abaker Zebari (in 1995, KDP's military commander of the governorate of Dohuk). Ibrahim Ali was subsequently asked by the KDP to take his men to fight the PKK; he refused and eventually separated from the KDP. Ibrahim then left the safe haven and has since taken refuge in Kitchener in Canada. It was from exile that he and some disillusioned Kurds set up the KPSM. Some members of

the KPSM in southern Kurdistan were arrested by the KDP and put on Xabat (now Kurdistan) television, KDP's Station. They were publicly humiliated and forced to say that the KPSM was a front for the Iraqi Mukhabarat in the safe haven.

NORTHERN KURDISTAN

KURDISH WORKERS' PARTY - PKK

The political unrest in Turkey and the economic crisis in the mid-1970s gave rise to a new Kurdish party. In 1974 a small group of Kurds from the Turkish Revolutionary Youth (Dev Genc) moved from Ankara to the Kurdish region (McDowall, 1989: 15). And in 1979 the group set up a radical party called the Kurdish Workers Party (Partia Karkarani Kurdostan or PKK) under the leadership of Abdullah Ocalan, known also as Apocus after Ocalan's nickname, Apo. The PKK's campaign was marked from the outset by violence, and their argument was that peaceful approaches had failed to bring about a Turkish change of attitudes. From the beginning a gulf appeared between the PKK and other Kurdish parties who accused the PKK of using violence against them as well (Abdul Rahman, 1981: 139). However, since the coup d'état of 1980 in Turkey, the PKK has managed to eclipse all other parties in Turkish Kurdistan to become the undisputed articulator of the Kurdish liberation movement.

What differentiates the PKK from the rest of the Kurdish political parties is that it is not totally dependent on any regional or external power for its financial resources. It has managed through a sophisticated network at home and abroad to collect contributions and party subscriptions from the Kurds. For instance, in Europe, where there are large Kurdish communities, contributions are collected on a regular basis either in the form of voluntary contributions, or are collected under duress. Being financially independent, the PKK has room to manoeuvre. Having survived the Turkish onslaught especially since 1992, the PKK has become the most serious and most feared Kurdish political party in the Middle East.

The latest Turkish military campaign, March 1995, with 35,000 Turkish troops

entering the safe haven in northern Iraq, proved yet another failure. In a telephone conversation with a relative in the city of Dohuk at the end of March, 1995, the author was told that PKK fighters had not disappeared or vanished; they are 'still storming the valleys and mountains around here'. A western observer in the north of Iraq was reported as saying that after two weeks of the Turkish push, more than 35,000 Turkish troops are still desperately fighting to make a success of the campaign, but it seems that the events were going against Turkish expectations (Asharq Al Awsat, 4/4/1995).

Based in the Beka'a Valley in Lebanon, under the eyes of the Syrian government, the PKK has managed to set up bases inside Turkey, Iraq and Iran. With rigid ideological and military indoctrination, it has succeeded in engaging Turkey in a costly protracted war which has so far been too difficult for the Turkish civilian governments to sort out. The cost of the March 1995 campaign was by 4 April 1995 estimated by western observers in north of Iraq to be around one billion US dollars (Asharq Al Awsat, 4/4/1995). This, of course, leaves the door open for the army to take charge of the state, as they did in 1961, 1971 and 1980.

Classifying Kurdish political parties, particularly the two main parties of southern Kurdistan, requires caution. The problem comes from the environment in which these parties exist. There is neither a constitutional nor national framework. The Kurds do not live in constitutional political systems; neither do they have their own national independent political framework, or state, where, again, parties can be studied and analysed. Hence, Kurdish political parties tend to change with the changing environment.

Prior to 1975, the KDP was the only political party articulating Kurdish national aspirations. Then the KDP was clearly a 'narrow one-party system (Jupp, 1968: 16) where it had not shaded off into the personal clique of Mullah Mustafa al-Barazani. After 1975, the KDP could no longer continue on the old lines. The son could not maintain the leading and sole position of the party in southern Kurdistan as the father had successfully managed, in the face of the emerging forces to do. Thus, the KDP has lost its leading position and a large segment of its support, in the Sorani section of southern Kurdistan, the PUK stronghold. Nevertheless, the KDP in its own zone can still be categorised as a 'narrow one-party' system but with less power and

authority. The PUK, in its zone, on the other hand, can be classified as a 'broad one-party system', for although it is similar to the KDP in most aspects, it is only different in the rules of succession. Succession in the KDP has been through inheritance, whereas for the PUK, this is unlikely since Talabani has not put forward any member of his family.

As to the classification of the PKK, one is not faced with similar difficulties simply because the party is clearly identifiable as a dominant party with authoritarian tendencies. It is 'dominant', and there are other smaller parties existing in its shadow. Its authoritarian feature comes from its ideological determination to systematise and coordinate the political and social order of the Kurdish nation according to its vision. This has included regular use of violence.

If we take Jupp's observation of the use of violence to silence opponents as a trait of totalitarian parties, then, it becomes evident that both the PUK and KDP can be classified as totalitarian parties. The history of the relationship between the two parties since the late 1970s is dominated by the extreme use of violence towards each other(see below), as well as against others.

In southern Kurdistan the political parties are engaged in bitter rivalry not on an ideological basis but rather on personal criteria. The proliferation and polarization of parties in southern Kurdistan after 1975 led to armed confrontation between them and not against the common enemy, Saddam. Since 1978, for example, the two main parties have regularly been at war with one other. In 1978 800 members of the PUK were killed, injured, or captured by the rival KDP (Bulloch and Morris, 1992: 148; see also above under PDPK). Rivalry between the political parties led to increasing suspicion between them while in opposition to the Iraqi government. In 1982, for example, a force of 360 PUK Peshmerga ambushed a KDP group at Gez Kea; 19 rebels of the KDP were killed and three of the vehicles were burnt. According to Mostafa Salman, who was a member of the KDP Peshmerga in Iran between 1980 and 1983, fighting between the PUK and KDP was regular. He says 'we would come under attack from PUK forces joined with members of the smaller Komalah Party and the KDPI of Gassemlou, crossing from Iraqi Kurdistan into Iranian Kurdistan where the KDP had its bases' (Mostafa Salman Abdullah, Recorded Interview; Dohuk, 1994).

In this interview, Salman speaks of atrocities committed by the PUK against the Peshmerga of the KDP; for example, in the Kashan base, a PUK unit invited some of the KDP's Peshmerga (mainly of the Sindi tribe) to a dinner and slaughtered them while they ate. Kurdish Parties of southern Kurdistan have not worked towards building trust among themselves. As each is sponsored by a regional power, the major obstacle then is for them to agree on a united programme and to work together. Thus, there is not even minimal trust between the Kurdish parties of southern Kurdistan. In 1982, for example, at a meeting at Ka'aw Pereh between Massoud of the KDP, Talabani of the PUK and Gassemlou of the KDPI, Talabani recorded the proceedings with a small tape-recorder. Soon after the meeting, the tape was in the hands of Saddam Hussein. Again this led to further distrust in the PUK and fighting was renewed (Mostafa Salman, interview, 1994). This shows the level of competition between the two parties. For even in the mountains while fighting the Iraqi government, the PUK, and its leader, Talabani have made alliances with the enemy to achieve his ends. This alliance became clear in 1983 when Talabani reached an agreement with Saddam which lasted for about 13 months. Ever eager to negotiate an accord, Talabani was lured by Saddam into a 'false' negotiation of Kurdish autonomy.

This led to further political distance between Kurdish parties. The only time the parties were willing to form a united front was when Halabjah was gassed. As the inter-party war had led to widespread criticism from the public, especially when southern Kurdistan was going through one of its darkest periods in modern history, the parties were forced to form a united front. But this united front came too late and did too little. The parties did not join the front genuinely, but under pressure of circumstances. Neither the parties nor the individuals were sincere in their obligations and duties, and relations among them remained tense (KPSM, Directive; Provisional Command Committee Document; 1992: 7). Even in exile when driven out of Kurdistan following the Anfal campaign in 1988, cooperation between Kurdish parties remained minimal.

Kurdish parties continued to play party politics even when exceptional circumstances in their favour prevailed following the defeat of Iraq in the Kuwait war. They managed to elect a Kurdish parliament in the safe haven, but it is widely suggested that elections for a parliament only materialised

following advice [or pressure] from the West. But the parties failed to run the second ballot for an overall leadership election. This was because of 'fears of internal problems' (Fouad Maswm, written interview, 20/10/1994). Neither party was ready to accept the leadership of the other. Thus, there was the 50:50 compromise. Following the elections and the establishment of Kurdish self-rule, administrative positions were equally distributed between the KDP and PUK. This in turn meant appointment on party allegiance rather on merit.

Party politics in southern Kurdistan has brought further splits in the region since 1992. The absence of a central authority and the control of the Kurdish parties over southern Kurdistan has contributed to the intensification of competition between the Kurdish parties. The conflict between the PUK and the KDP has reached new heights. This has deeply dented the international support the Kurds had earned in 1991. They have in fact fallen victim to the 'enemy within': 'Kurds are often inclined to blame their problems on the hostile countries in which they live. But the recent fighting between rival factions in northern Iraq shows that they also have reason to fear themselves'. Trying to make the picture less dramatic, Rugman writes later:

> It would be unfair to conclude that Iraq's Kurds have shown themselves incapable of self-rule, given the problems they face: their lack of experience in government, the lack of long term regional development, the crippling effect of UN sanctions against Iraq, and the fact that they are surrounded by countries set against their dream of nationhood (The Guardian 10/6/1994).

Rugman's reasoning, however, fell short of the central problem. The Kurds do not lack experience in government as such irrespective of the nature of their social structures. If the leaders of the two political parties had agreed to maintain the Kurdish technocrats who were already in administrative positions under the authority of the central government, then, it is likely that the administration of the safe haven would have been more efficient, especially given the sizeable revenue coming from Zakho. Instead, relatives, friends and party loyalists took over the existing machinery. As a result it came to the brink of collapse and the revenues collected went mainly to fund party politics.

In 1994 the parties' determination to fight each other continued. Serious fighting between the PUK and KDP broke out, allegedly after a KDP commander, Hussein Mirkan (better known as Husso Dullamari) had killed some people. It was alleged that Mirkan, having returned to the safe haven from Europe, sought to reclaim the properties in Qala Diz which he had lost years previously. As properties had changed hands several times, the new owners refused to drop their rights, as a result, Mirkan 'killed some of them'. He also 'killed the PUK representative for telling him that he cannot kill people as he wishes and he should pursue the matter in law courts'. This sparked retaliation by the PUK, which took the form of arresting Mirkan's Peshmerga and burning 18 of them alive. In Dohuk, the KDP for their part retaliated and arrested PUK members. In Sulaimaniya, the PUK destroyed the statue of Mullah Mustafa al-Barazani. The conflict between the two parties became intense as Jabar Ferman, PUK's military commander, marched with an estimated force of ten thousand Peshmerga to control the area between Sulaimaniya and Shaqlawa. In return, the KDP imposed its own sanctions on Sulaimaniya and Arbil (Sardar Ismail, interview, London 1994).

Here, the irony was that the safe haven was already subject to a double sanction, one imposed by the UN on Iraq and another by the Iraqi government on the 'rebellious' Kurdish region. By now the Kurds were comparing the deteriorating situation in southern Kurdistan with the Lebanese civil war. As law and order were collapsing in the Kurdish region UN observers stationed there withdrew to the border towns, and the Clinton adminstration called upon the warring factions to refrain from further conflict. An official from the State Department was reported as saying 'we spoke with the Kurds about their latest domestic problems and we have asked them to avoid violence and sustain unity' (Al Hayat 28/5/ 1994). Massoud Barazani was reported saying 'when someone has failed, he should dare to confess it'. Barazani went on to compare Kurdistan's political paralysis to the situation in Somalia and Afghanistan and stated that Kurdish society 'still needed time to become civilian'. He also proposed on 6 July 1994, 'that the United Nations should turn Iraqi Kurdistan into a protectorate staffed by international peacekeepers..' (The Guardian 7/6/1994).

Competition between the two parties took the armed conflict to the heart of the Kurdish region, the city of Arbil. On 28 December 1994 unprecedented

fighting was raging on the streets of Arbil and even inside the main Rizggary Hospital (Asharq Al Awsat 30/12/1994). The impact of this was irreparable, as the city of Arbil is not only the seat of the Kurdish parliament but also houses the headquarters of all international agencies which have worked in southern Kurdistan since 1991. Thus, the Kurdish national image was at stake, a factor that both parties have overlooked.

The conflict between the PUK and the KDP in 1995 led them to accuse each other publicly of having relations with the 'common enemy', Saddam Hussein. Their respective radio and television stations continued during the first week of 1995 to accuse each other of having received weapons and ammunition from Saddam while his media were 'welcoming....Kurds killing each other' (Asharq Al Awsat 9/1/1995). Although the KDP's European representative, Hoshyar Zebari, had denied these allegations of a secret working relationship with Saddam, as reported by Asharq Al Awsat, in the summer of the same year, 1995, it emerged that the KDP had received over twenty tanks from Saddam. In addition, Saddam promised in February 1996 to restore electricity supplies to Dohuk, the KDP's base, which he had cut off in August 1993 (Asharq Al Awsat 8/2/1996). As the 'brotherly' fight continued in and around Arbil, both parties were bringing in fresh troops and supplies. And despite the efforts of other Kurdish groups, the Iraqi National Congress (based in Arbil), and the call made by about 60 Kurdish MPs who had gathered inside the parliament and called upon both leaders to stop fighting (Asharq Al Awsat 16/1/1991), fighting continued. As the situation was deteriorating, a UN official, Mohammed Zijari, warned of the worsening situation and admitted that fighting between the Kurdish factions had led to the breakdown and collapse of the system in northern Iraq. The Iraqi government, meanwhile, made its first comment by inviting the Kurdish parties for talks (Asharq Al Awsat 17/1/1995).

By July 1995, 3,000 people from both parties were reported to have been killed in the previous fourteen months (The Guardian 1/7/1995). In addition, this continuing pattern was and is bound to weaken the overall Iraqi opposition front, which is based in the Kurdish safe haven. Concern about the deteriorating situation led the American government to sponsor talks between the rival Kurdish parties in the Republic of Ireland. Talks were held between the PUK and KDP in a hotel in Drogheda, north of Dublin, and were expected to

end on 11 August 1995. The American fear was attributed to the fact that the continuing conflict between the Kurdish parties and the existing political vacuum in northern Iraq 'could let Iran extend its influence' (BBC Ceefax Service, 9/8/1995).

Fighting between the PUK and KDP in 1992, 1994 and 1995, with thousands of casualties, indicates the disadvantage of having many political parties operating in a political climate like that of southern Kurdistan. Pretexts for fighting are always found. According to the PUK, the 1995 clashes between the two parties were officially put down to differences over the customs revenue at Ibrahim Khalil in the border town with Turkey, Zakho. The KDP's politburo member, Sami Abdul Rahman, said in an interview with the Iraqi opposition paper Al-Wifaq, that arrangements were made with the PUK and its leader, Talabani (4 and 19 October 1994) to sort out the question of the revenues. The real problem, he asserted, was Talabani's desire to capture the leadership (Al-Wifaq No.150, 9/2/1995). Both parties have been accusing each other of seeking total control and the establishment of a dictatorial leadership.

Hence, although many Kurdish politicians in southern Kurdistan insisted that party polarization is a 'healthy process' (Arif Rushdy's recorded interview, 1 October 1994 and written interview with PUK politburo member Dr Fouad Maswm, 20 October 1994) by pointing out that a one-party situation will lead to dictatorship, references in this context are usually made regarding Mullah Mustafa al-Barazani. The fact is that polarization in southern Kurdistan has not been of any value to the Kurds. It has widened the gulf between them and caused irreparable damage to all sides.

The only time both parties contended for power in a 'civilised' manner was in the 1992 election campaign. Both parties showed a reasonable level of political sophistication while campaigning. In Dohuk, for example, both parties ran a free campaign through public meetings, advertising, and peaceful parades. This peaceful behaviour won the Kurds worldwide praise for having peacefully and successfully gone to the ballot box.

But since then, Kurdish parties have returned to their old military rivalry. Despite the positive environment in the safe haven since 1991, Kurdish parties have failed to separate party politics and parliamentary authority. Thus their

infant parliament ceased to function only five years after it was set up. The continuing violent competition between the two parties, whose leaders have turned into mere warlords, has led to the failure of the first democratic experience in Kurdistan. In May 1995, Mohammed Abdul-Jabar, an Iraqi writer living in London, wrote, lamenting this failure:

> the symbol of the experience of parliamentary democracy then failed, and before that the regional government had fallen and with that the administration had fragmented and Kurdistan was turned into two independent regions; one ruled by Mr Jalal Talabani and his party and the second by Mr Massoad Barazani and his party (Al Hayat 3/5/1995).

Criticism of the KDP, however, has increased as it has been 'forced' into an alliance with the Turkish army and government. As the Turks have grown impatient about war against the PKK, southern Kurdish parties have come under pressure from Turkey since 1992. Either they have to cooperate with the Turkish army or it will not renew permission for the American-led protection operation based in Turkey. However, cooperation with the Turkish army has meant deploying Kurdish fighters to assist the Turkish army. This has led to open war between the PKK and the KDP. Throughout October 1992, KDP and PUK Peshmerga accompanied the Turkish army to destroy the PKK's bases inside southern Kurdistan (news releases by Kurdistan Information Centre, London, 6, 7, and 9 October 1992). In the summer of 1995 serious fighting broke out between PKK and the KDP. According to travellers from southern Kurdistan, the PKK had destroyed several large bases of the KDP, and was setting up its own checkpoints in KDP's territory. They even controlled Čaelia Şadeah, a mountain peak, overlooking the city of Dohuk, and fired at the city. In Atrosh and Gani Maseh, the PKK set up their own administration, openly defying the authority of the KDP. Although fighting between the two has ceased since the beginning of 1996, tension has not receded. According to a Kurdish traveller from Dohuk on 13 March 1996, the PKK was demanding back money paid to the PUK who had, allegedly, agreed with the PKK to open a second front against the KDP.

In northern Kurdistan, on the other hand, the PKK has emerged as the undisputed leader of the movement against Turkey. Although it is dictatorial in operation, it does not have to fight other Kurdish parties for the

leadership and its resources are totally directed towards the enemy rather than its own people. Since the late 1970s the PKK has managed to further the Kurdish cause far more than the parties in southern Kurdistan, which are much older than the PKK. The political organisation of the PKK has been the decisive factor, for it is almost impossible for members to leave the party. A PKK deserter, encountered in the town of Summail near Dohuk in October 1994, was too fearful even to talk about the party. The PKKs' principle is 'do not join us unless you mean it', whereas membership to political parties in southern Kurdistan is more a question of which party pays more. While the author was in southern Kurdistan in 1994, rumours abounded that the PUK was about to open branches in Dohuk region (the KDP's stronghold) with handsome salaries for new recruits. Many of the KDP's supporters were ready to shift loyalty, an indication of the state of the parties in southern Kurdistan. It seems from the Kurdish experience that during an armed struggle, it is best to have one party speaking for the people rather than several parties furthering their own group's interests first.

As to the recruitment of members, the process varies between the north and the south. From 1975 and until the end of the 1980s both the KDP and PUK campaigned in southern Kurdistan to win villagers as well as townspeople over to their cause, either through clandestine cells in the urban centres or through the efforts of political cadres travelling in the countryside. Recruitment was based on criticism of the existing social order, and denunciations of the power and position of the tribal chieftains. Since 1991, however, both political parties have made a U-turn in their approach to recruitment. The parliamentary election campaign of 1991 was marked by appeal by both parties to the very principle that they had denounced before, namely aghaship. Since 1991 all Kurdish political groups have made a direct approach to the tribal chiefs rather than their tribesmen (see also under ideology.

Among all operational Kurdish parties, only the PKK can be identified as a fully-developed modern political organisation with both its political and military arms performing in support of policy and action. Like other organisations such as the IRA and Sinn Fein, the PKK has recognised the importance of the political presentation of their cause. Therefore, it has deployed huge resources to rally public support at home and abroad. Kurdish Information Centres (KIC) in most European cities have successfully performed

as fronts for the party by presenting the struggle in political and ideological terms. Links with other movements such as the Tamil Tigers have been established with regular social and political functions held in support of these movements. In addition, the party has, through the KICs, employed western writers and journalists as well as inviting parliamentarians and politicians to meetings and conferences. Kurdish political parties in southern Kurdistan, on the other hand, have failed to do this.

4) IDEOLOGY

Central to the foundation of any political party or movement is the set of ideals, the system of norms and values, on which it is based. For a party or a movement to be effective it must be based on clear ideas, a well defined doctrine, a coherent ideology. An ideology is central to the party's success. The aim of the analysis below then is to briefly look at the role of ideology in the course of the Kurdish liberation movement. Discussion will focus on the role of political ideology since 1975, and how various political parties have used ideological concepts to win mass support.

'Ideology', probably the most popular political concept among the nationalists and leftist intellectuals especially those of the Third World in the last fifty years or so, stood as anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist ideal that must be proclaimed in their debates, in prison cells or in street cafés for liberation and salvation. For many of them the term 'ideology' in itself meant or contained the seeds of revolution. A product of the French enlightenment, ideology stood first for a science of ideas with which the thinkers of the enlightenment hoped to reduce the concepts of commonsense discourse to the simplest elements and then reconstruct them into precise instruments of scientific understanding and control. This was to be achieved in strict empirical and logical formulas. In politics the assumption was that misery and discord were the product of prejudices and the inexact reasoning of commonsense. This meant that ideology, as the science of politics, could produce a 'sure plan' for political well being, a religion for the just and happy polity (Bluham, 1974: 1-2). In its earliest meaning, then, ideology stood for a body of revolutionary thought aimed at destroying traditional belief and structures associated with them.

Since then the term ideology has been transformed in its usage. It gradually came to lose its critical connotations and to be widely used simply as 'a handy term for designating systems of ideas' (Calvert, 1993: 80). Bluhm cites MacIver's definition of ideology which says that a political and social ideology is simply 'a system of political, economic and social values and ideas from which objectives are derived. These objectives form the nucleus of

a political program' (MacIver, as cited by Bluhm, 1974: 3). Hence ideology came to be seen in terms of ideas and values from which political objectives can be derived and sustained.

Ideology, then, can be summed up as an intellectual, functional and rational structure consisting of a set of beliefs and values addressing a given social group in a given epoch. It is intellectual for it analyses the existing conditions, rational in the values it present and functional in the cures it professes. Ideology identifies what is good or ill for man, what is conducive or an obstacle to the good society. Hence, on the importance of ideology, Drucker says that although ideologies come and go, some are peaceful while others are violent, some old and others new, nevertheless they are 'collectively the only serious vessels in which political ideas are transmitted in our age' (Drucker, 1974: xi). Ideologies are transmitted basically as grand designs for the political, social and economic future of mankind. An intellectual and coherent national ideology then should provide a blueprint on how to construct and build a nation, run a state and create citizenry.

KURDS AND IDEOLOGY

Perhaps one of the vital missing factors in the history of the Kurdish liberation movement hitherto has been ideology. This, of course, does not mean that Kurds were unaware of different political and social beliefs in their region and the world. In the period leading to the Second World War and after, for example, socialist ideals had already captured the imagination of many intellectuals as well as ordinary Kurds, especially in eastern Kurdistan. Thus, Marxism was at the heart of the Kurdish organisations in the 1940s, and Kurdish leadership was composed of people like Abdul Rahman Zabihi, who was not from the traditional Kurdish elite but rather from the masses and it was the first Kurdish political organisation which criticized feudalism and tribal chieftains (Sherif, 1989: 218).

However, to talk about ideology and its role in Kurdistan is a sensitive matter, for that ideology is closely associated with the concepts of classes and class struggle. The difficulty here lies in the fact that Kurdish society

has not experienced such a division of its classes, nor any extensive division of labour. Differences in material conditions between Kurds themselves were not too deep to activate an ideological struggle from within, or between the various competing parties and groups. Also, there is the religious factor and how it is used by the traditionalists from time to time to combat possible threats. Before we look into the role of ideology in the Kurdish liberation movement since 1975, it is necessary to go back to the late 1950s, to southern Kurdistan where the longest armed struggle began, and examine the role of the Kurdish Democratic Party, the KDP.

From its beginnings in August 1946, the KDP was effectively controlled by Mullah Mustafa al-Barazani, a tribal chief with religious authority that had been inherited in his family for generations. He managed to steer the party according to his vision and ideals. The party did however have intellectual elements from the small Kurdish middle class. This small and educated Kurdish middle class was influenced by the revolutionary anti-colonialist, anti-imperialist slogans flowing from the north, from the Soviet Union. The influence of socialist ideals is clearly apparent among Kurdish intellectuals. In Kurdostan wa al Harakah al Qawmia al Kurdiah (Kurdistan and the Kurdish National Movement), Jalal Talabani is undoubtedly impressed by socialist ideals, which he sees as the only way forward for the Kurds. In fact Kurdish thought and literature of the period was, as it was the case with the rest of the region, much influenced by Marxist values. By the mid-1960s, however, al-Barazani had extended his total authority over the KDP and people like Talabani and Ibrahim Ahmad had left the party. Ideologically, the KDP did not stand for a well-defined belief nor did it promote any specific set of values and ideals or a rationalization of them, apart from the general values which could only be classified as nationalist demands. These ranged from the use of the Kurdish language to the demand for a wider self-autonomy where Kurds could rule and organize themselves within the framework of the Republic of Iraq (the same can be said about the KDPI of Iran). The Kurdish liberation struggle was confined to a vague nationalism with a loosely outlined socialist ideology which was often swept away by the demands of realpolitik.

The KDP continued to play and still does play a leading part in what was left of the Kurdish armed struggle in southern Kurdistan after 1975. Prior to 1975, however, the KDP had no rivals challenging its leading position in the

movement. Southern Kurdistan, especially the Bahdinan region. had remained 'deprived' of progressive ideals because of its tribal traditions (Abdul Rahman, 1981: 21). Following the tragedy of 1975, the KDP was forced by the stunned leftist and progressive elements to go through a process of self-reassessment. The new ideological foundation of the KDP, Sami points out, came in a statement issued by the party for May Day, 1978, which declares that the Kurdish 'revolution' cannot achieve its desired objectives under bourgeois and feudal leadership. Therefore it was not strange but natural to seek the 'real alternative' for the leadership of the Kurdish liberation movement. That alternative is a proletarian leadership (Abdul Rahman, 1981: 19).

By 1979, the Provisional Command, set up by the KDP in 1975, was disbanded and the traditional leadership was restored (see also under Political Parties). On the dispersal of the Provisional Command and its progressive elements, and the subsequent set-backs to the rebellion of 26 May 1976, Sami Abdul Rahman blames the leadership for neither spreading a revolutionary ideology nor attempting to mobilize the masses (Abdul Rahman, 1981: 23). Perhaps an observation here is in order on the points which Sami, being a leading member of the KDP Provisional Command, had raised earlier. He mentions that the party was ideologically active, especially in the Bahdinan region, in educating and mobilizing the masses guided by the 'revolutionary alternative' following the outbreak of guerrilla warfare on 26 May 1976. Then he claims that the party and the leadership did not spread a revolutionary ideology. The fact was that the KDP was not in a position to undertake any radical changes in its composition at the time, owing to the fact that it had been forced out of the country, its ranks were scattered, and its leadership in Iran kept a low profile in the period immediately after 1975, both because of the Shah's pressure and on account of the poor health of its leader Mullah Mustafa al-Barazani. The Party's ideological cadre in the Bahdinan region amounted to small groups of self-disciplined partisans who refused to surrender to the central authorities. With the restoration of the party's authority to the Barazani brothers, Idris and Massoud, in the beginning of the 1980s, the party was to follow its traditional programme set up by their late father. This meant leading the party on a nationalistic and patriotic programme free from any Marxist, revolutionary or leftist values and ideals.

In the party's Tenth Conference pamphlet of 1989, Article (5), dealing with

the ideology of the party, makes no reference to any specific set of ideals by which the party takes its guidance. Instead, it reads 'the party benefits in its political, social and economic struggle from scientific theory..' (programme of KDP, Tenth Conference, December 1989: 3,4). Four years later, at the Eleventh Conference of the party, held between 16 and 26 August 1993, no reference was made even to the vague 'scientific' theory mentioned at the Tenth Conference. Article (1) of the programme only hints at the party's ideology. It presents the 'United Kurdish Democratic Party as a mass democratic progressive party which believes in human rights and the right of nations to self-determination' (KDP Eleventh Conference pamphlet, 1993: 3). It can be noticed here that the KDP not only had dropped its belief in 'scientific theory' as its ideological doctrine, but had also changed its very outlook.

Moreover, the creed of 'scientific theory' [scientific socialism] had never been elaborated by the party. For the illiterate member or sympathizer or supporter it accounted to nothing. Even for those who could read and write, 'scientific theory' would have been difficult to comprehend without detailed elaboration. In an interview with KDP representative in Europe and the politburo member, Hoshyar Zebari [Massoad's uncle], was asked 'To what extent are the KDP's objectives underpinned by a coherent political philosophy'? Hoshyar's answer was;

> Certainly, these objectives are based on a sound and progressive political orientation which is outlined in the party's programme. The party advocates the national and social liberation of the Kurdish people and believes in the unity of struggle between Arab and Kurdish people to achieve freedom and social progress (<u>The Kurdish Observer</u>, No.3, April 1988: 11).

The party's programme, however, fails to define 'sound and progressive political orientation'. It calls for the liberation of the Kurdish people but gives no detail of how that might be achieved. It is also worth noting in the above statement a reference to Arab and Kurdish unity of a kind which appears often in the literature of the Kurdish national movement. On that particular point the author asked Hoshyar Zebari in an informal meeting in London in the summer of 1989, why Kurdish literature is full of references to the Arab

struggle, whereas, Arab literature seldomly mentions the Kurdish struggle and if it does, it does so only pejoratively, always biased to Arabic Iraq, portraying the Kurds as agents of imperialism and 'Zionism'. Only a few Arabs, such as the Palestinian writer, Mahmmod Darwish, acknowledge openly the right of the Kurds to struggle for national liberation. Hoshyar was also asked if time had come for the Kurds to make fewer declarations of solidarity with the Arab struggle since they have not been equally reciprocal. He acknowledged that they had only recently discussed this point, but gave no clear answer as to whether they were going to adopt a new strategy.

By contrast, ideology was at the heart of the newly formed Patriotic Union of Kurdistan party in 1976. The PUK's creation was intended to fill the political vacuum left by the departure of the KDP for Iran in 1975. By denouncing the KDP as 'reactionary and anti-revolutionary' (Bulloch and Morris, 1992: 148), the PUK was quick to capture the support of the socialist and leftist Kurds. Several factions had again come to life and reorganised themselves in small parties such as the Socialist Movement of Kurdistan, the Association of Marxist-Leninists of Kurdistan and Kurdistan Action Command. As the PUK moved in, it managed to absorb these small parties (Hazen in McLaurin, 1979: 65) and rapidly reached parity with the KDP. The Ba'athist repression in Iraqi Kurdistan which followed the collapse of the Kurdish war in 1975 led to a counter-Kurdish nationalism, mainly, among high school and university students and educated elements of the middle class. From its very beginning the PUK was presented as a 'radical alternative' to the previous guardian of the Kurdish movement, the KDP. Vanly writes that the PUK was:

> violently critical of all the old leadership, including General Barazani. It accuses them of having conducted the revolution 'by tribal methods' and of being 'in cahoots with imperialism' (Vanly in Chaliand, 1978: 203).

The new socio-political environment after 1975 was tailor-made for the PUK. The party had been set up in exile in Syria as 'a nationalist organization incorporating a pseudo-Marxist faction' and seeking the leadership of the Kurdish movement (Committee Against Repression and for Democratic Rights in Iraq, CARDRI, 1986: 157). To challenge the KDP for the leadership of the Kurdish movement, the PUK had to make alliances with leftist groups and

factions in Kurdistan. Armed with socialist ideology, the PUK, therefore, swiftly filled the political vacuum.

The PUK's ideological pretensions, however, were exposed when the party signed a political and security agreement with Saddam Hussein in December 1983. The PUK's response to criticism of this pact was that its forces could not fight on four different fronts: the Turkish army, which had on May of the same year, 1983, made an incursion into Iraqi Kurdistan; the Iranian forces who had made advances in the Haj Omran area in July; the KDP forces, and Saddam's forces (MacDonald in Esman and Rabinovich, ed, 1988: 249). For many Kurds and other observers such as Iraqi intellectuals in exile, the PUK's alliance with Saddam seemed to contradict its ideological stand and nationalist demands. It had already, early in May 1983, attacked the headquarters of the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) and its allies including the KDP and Kurdish Socialist Party. The latter had joined forces in 1980 in the Democratic Patriotic Front (DPF) in the region of Pesht Ashan, killing 62 partisans and wounding many others (CARDRI, 1986: 156, 157). This can be seen by PUK critics as a prearranged move by agreement with Saddam Hussein's government, which was itself in difficulties on the war front with Iran. Therefore, it is often suggested by his critics that the PUK's leader, Talabani, is a Machiavellian opportunist rather than an ideologist, one who would override his beliefs in order to achieve his objective, the leadership of southern Kurdistan. These are harsh criticisms, indeed, for a man who has spent most of his life pursuing the socialist dream for the Kurdish movement. His eccentric conduct has sometimes, however, raised doubts about his overall political skills and competence.

Among the ardent advocates of a socialist ideology and the 'scientific theory' in Kurdistan for the last two decades is Sami Abdul Rahman. An engineering graduate from England in the late 1950s, he was among the group which led to the setting up of the Provisional Command of the KDP in November 1975. He and his fellow-comrades had hopped to radicalize the KDP and with it the path of the Kurdish liberation struggle. As power and authority in the KDP were restored to the Barazani brothers in 1979, Sami went on to set up his own Peoples Democratic Party of Kurdistan (PDPK) in July 1981. In the Political Report presented by Sami to PDPK's inaugural conference held between 26-30 July 1981, he passionately argues against the Kurdish bourgeoisie, which has been leading the movement, and stresses that the only way for success is the

creation of a progressive party built and based on scientific socialism. He compares the importance of ideology in a progressive party as to that of the 'head on the body', and he observes that 'in general and for a long time ideology remained absent from the political and revolutionary action in our liberation movement' (Abdul Rahman, 1981: 51, 54, 55). For Sami and others of like mind, the real alternative to the Kurdish political parties is the leadership of the proletariat, which they hold can break the stalemate in the Kurdish movement (see for example p. 19 in Abdul Rahman, 1981).

The problem here lies not in this ideological thinking of these people, but in the fact that there is no proletarian element in Kurdish society in general, and in southern Kurdistan in particular, to carry out this task. Israel Naamani observed this very point in the mid-1960s:

> There is no Kurdish proletariat to speak of - an element certainly important in a modern revolution. The urban Kurds are mostly in the civil service or in professions related to the government and they cannot be counted on for an all-out push. It is, therefore, the agrarian element that at present is the main support of the insurrection. Yet it is the middle class and the proletariat who must ultimately decide the fate of the revolution (Naamani, 1966: 295).

Since then, the situation has not changed much. The Kurds still can be described as an agrarian community. No industrial infrastructure exists in Kurdistan which could support a proletariat large enough to take over control of the leadership of the movement. Even in the big urban centres, occupations range from white-collar bureaucrats to daily wage-earners. In the city of Dohuk, for example, there is one small textile factory specialized in manufacturing fabric for the Kurdish national dress, and one factory for processing fruits and vegetables, both employing no more than 600 workers. Neither is there an environment for the activities of trade unions.

Ideology, on the other hand, has become the cornerstone of the movement in northern Kurdistan. While still at the university in the early 1970s, Abdullah Ocalan and a number of his comrades studied Kurdish history and the state of Kurdish society, and from their investigation The Manifesto was published

(first edition 1978, fourth edition, 1992) which became the founding constitution and programme for the PKK (Abdullah Ocalan, Interviews and Speeches; September, 1992: 2). Since the PKK embarking on the armed struggle in 1985 with a clear ideological programme, The PKK has developed into a most successful Kurdish party of recent times. The reasons behind the PKK's ideological success and their ability to mobilize the masses are numerous. As mentioned above, the party consists not of the élite, as has been the case in southern Kurdistan, but rather of ordinary people, usually the poor and dispossessed. For them the only path to follow is an ideological one which promises betterment. The PKK's realisation of the importance of an ideological outlook was probably due to the weaknesses of nationalism in Turkish Kurdistan, while in southern Kurdistan, nationalism was neither defeated by Arab nationalism, nor remained dormant. Nationalism in southern Kurdistan had always been, and still is, active. In northern Kurdistan, on the other hand, the Kemalist ideology had to an extent succeeded in corroding some, if not most, of the symbols of Kurdish nationalism.

Thus, in order to organise a counter-resistance and later an armed struggle, the PKK's founders had to rely on a living body of thought to get support for their organisation. Therefore, the Kurds in Turkey had associated themselves with the Turkish left in the 1960s and 1970s and had taken the debate to Kurdistan in terms of class-struggle. The class struggle debate in Turkey was sharply expressed in an ideological context and turned into a violent and bloody confrontation between the left, including the Kurds, and the right, including the army (McDowall, 1989: 14-15). It should also be noted that the influence of trade unions has been significant in northern Kurdistan. The Kurdish proletariat in Turkey has grown, not out of an industrial environment in Kurdistan, because there is none, but as a result of the migration of many young Kurds to western Turkey seeking work. Another factor in the PKK's ideological success has been youth. In southern Kurdistan, the struggle was continuous from the 1950s (in fact Barazani was active even in the 1940s). In northern Kurdistan, the last uprising was harshly put down in the late 1930s. In order to be different from the traditionalists, therefore, the PKK was able to claim the Marxist-Leninist ideology as its doctrine for a new kind of Kurdish armed struggle.

Moreover, unlike the political parties of southern Kurdistan, the PKK has

adhered to an ideological campaign in the north to rationalize their behaviour and aims. Since ideology is a form of 'personal rationalization' (as it was seen by Freud in his analysis of ideology; Apter, 1964: 20), and as it aspires to transfigure the individual in order to structure the community, the PKK has embarked on rationalizing its doctrine and goals to the people. In his bid to rationalize the PKK and its Marxist ideology to the traditional Kurdish society, the Party's General Secretary, Abdullah Ocalan, has written extensively about ideology and its vital role in the liberation of Kurdish society. In Abdullah Ocalan, Vol. 1, January, 1994, Arabic edition, for example, we find throughout attempts to rationalize the PKK's social, political and military action. The volume is fraught with self-criticism, pointing out ills and shortcomings from within Kurdish society. It seeks to cure them by ideologically 'restructuring' the individual and make him/her objectively rationalize the PKK, its leadership and its demeanour. Again, Ocalan's 'Ten Theses on the Uprising' outline the PKK's strategy for a successful revolutionary war (Abdullah Ocalan, Interviews and speeches, September 1992: 27-32).

The PKK has taken on the task of explaining to the Kurds in ideological terms their historical misfortunes. It deploys ideological arguments about the injustices committed against the Kurds in Turkey in order to create solidarity not only in the party but in society as a whole. The PKK has also used its ideological approach to build the Kurdish identity as a separate one from the Turkish. Even within Kurdish society, the PKK's ideological adherence has gradually succeeded in introducing a greater coherence, in the course of the competing new and traditional socialization processes. As a result, the PKK has built a common bond of solidarity and identity firstly among its members and cadres, as well as among those Kurds who even if not supportive of the PKK's campaign are in a position of being able to see the injustice done to them. A Kurdish taxi driver from Slopi admitted that the PKK's war has caused a further hardship in eastern and south eastern Turkey due to the state of war and the martial law, 'but at least it [PKK] promises us something...' (September, 1994). The PKK's use of ideology was probably the most effective measure in countering the official ideology of the Turkish state, which had long denied the existence of the Kurds as a people.

Dr Ismail Besikci, a pro-Kurd Turkish sociologist, observes that all the

theories developed in the 1930s by the Turkish state, were aimed at the Kurds:

> like the Sun Language theory, were produced with the Kurdish question in mind. It was claimed that all world civilisations had been established by the Turks, who had migrated to all corners of the globe from Central Asia. It was claimed that Turkish was the mother of all languages. In this way the existence of the Kurds, their language and Kurdistan was refuted.

Although these theories were later refined, Besikci writes that 'the theories relating to the denial of the Kurds continued to be propagated energetically' (Kurdistan Liberation, No. 3, March 1991: 4). Hence, the PKK was careful to formulate its programme foundation on an Marxist-Leninist base so also attract wider support and reach a wider audience. Campaigning under nationalistic banners was not sufficient to build the solidarity and support it required. The PKK took the struggle to the masses in terms of hegemony and economic deprivation, for which the Kemalist ideology had been devised to keep control over the Kurds and other nationalities.

The success of the PKK over the last ten years in growing into a major political party in Kurdistan has led to a counter-attack on the party by the KDP of Iraq. The KDP's 'unholy alliance' with the Turks in combating the PKK (the alliance includes the PUK) was accompanied by a campaign by the KDP's activists arguing that the PKK's ideology, is atheist and an alien value to 'our' culture and tradition. In September 1994, the author was involved in a heated discussion on the KDP's campaign against the PKK and its ideology with a local KDP cadre in Dohuk in southern Kurdistan. The cadre was trying to justify his party's attitudes and campaigns against the PKK in terms of religion. Once the argument was lost, he took a different line by pointing to and interpreting the collapse of the Soviet bloc as the bankruptcy of the Marxist ideology: 'Why should we [the Kurds] adopt a bankrupt ideology?' he argued.

The PKK has been accused by southern Kurdish parties of being dictatorial. For the southern Kurds, it seems, adherence to an elaborated ideology leads to dictatorship, and a party should in the course of revolution or liberation be less ideological and more flexible so that it can enter into alliances with

other groups and parties. A glance at the achievements of the PKK, on the one hand, and these of the southern Kurdish parties, on the other, shows that an identifiable and elaborated ideology has been at the core of the PKK's success. Thus to suggest that an ideology, particularly Marxism, would not take hold in Kurdish society because it is alien to Kurdish values and tradition is misleading.

To sum up then, ideology, as an overall framework in which ideas and values are consciously manipulated for the purpose of building authority and broadening a power base as well as winning the argument, has hitherto been absent or ineffective in the course of the Kurdish struggle in southern Kurdistan. As the debate has rarely reached the level of class struggle within the society itself and between competing groups, political parties have been keen to avoid the introduction of an ideology to which they themselves would have difficulties in adhering. The structure of the society itself, on the other hand, does not freely allow the spread of ideas and values such as those preached by Marxism and socialism. The limits of ideological success in southern Kurdistan can be attributed to the fact that socialism as an ideology repudiates prevailing hierarchies of authority and prestige associated with traditionalism. Such an ideology will challenge the authority of the very same people or élite who are manipulating and leading the movement. Therefore, the parties of southern Kurdistan have not been willing or able to undertake the task of academically formulating a 'new moral consensus' (Daly, 1972: 18) in order to indoctrinate the masses in the tenets of socialism.

Central to the KLM's crisis in southern Kurdistan since 1991 has been the tendency of the political parties, leaders, and personnel to concentrate on private interests than concern themselves with public good and the national interest. For the ordinary Kurd today, the whole concept of the KLM in southern Kurdistan is seen not in ideological terms but simply as a business operation. Hoarding wealth and property has become a notable feature of the process. Since taking control over the safe haven in 1991, their main concern has been to gain control over resources.

Under the safe haven arrangements, the KDP has been the biggest beneficiary since it controls the trade route from Iraq, its main lifeline through Turkey. It has maintained sole control over revenues collected from the two Customs

and Excise points at A'aluwka and Zakho. KDP officials charge 10 percent duties on oil taken overland by Turkish trucks from Mosul at A'aluwka, and again at Zakho the same oil is taxed by volume. All goods going to Iraq are taxed as well. This huge source of income for the KDP has forced the PUK, with no such source of income, to demand that the revenue collected by the KDP to be handed over to the Kurdish Parliament in Arbil. In the summer of 1995 the PUK blamed the fighting with the KDP on the KDP's refusal to share the revenue with them.

In an analysis in the Voice of America in the summer of 1995, Kurdish leaders in southern Kurdistan were estimated to have accumulated wealth as follows:

Jalal Talabani	PUK	$170m
Nau Shirwan	PUK	$190m
Massoud Barazani	KDP	$45m
Nejirvan Barazani	KDP	$160m
Fathel Mutni	KDP	$120m
Sami A.Rahman	KDP	$150m

For the deprived Kurd who has lost almost everything mainly because of the armed struggle, such revelations have indeed caused a deep sense of distrust and betrayal. Exiled Kurds and refugees in Europe, for example, have often expressed astonishment at the conduct of the parties representatives in European capitals. The gap between the masses and those supposedly representing them has widened. In southern Kurdistan ordinary Kurds are outraged by the behaviour of party officials. While many people still collect UN handouts five years after the Kurdish adminstration of the safe haven, basic municipal services remain largely useless. Yesterday's revolutionaries have been building dream houses and splashing the much needed money on their favourite motor cars. When the 'revolutionaries' came down from the mountains to take control of the safe haven, people extolled them, and trusted them with their lives. The majority of the Kurds turned their backs on tribalism, but soon whispers became loud about the 'revolutionaries' demanding the lion's share in business. As a result, the people of southern Kurdistan lost trust in the 'revolutionaries'. Having lost trust in the new administration, they lost respect for them as well.

In the north, the PKK has committed itself and its programme of conduct for the liberation of Kurdistan to a strict interpretation of the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist values and ideals elaborated and explained in relation to Kurdish society. This has been an easy task for the leadership of the PKK because of their working-class roots. Such commitment has consequently led to a rapid growth of the party in strength, membership and popularity. It has effectively applied moral prescriptions to collectiveness, thus operating under a powerful political ideology. This in turn has exposed other Kurdish political parties, mainly those in the south, and the PKK has become a possible rival to them in southern Kurdistan, where they have captured the respect and admiration of the masses in general but particularly the educated. These last have reached the conclusion that their own political parties are representatives not of the nation's interest but their own particular one. The success of the PKK has been due to the intellectual structure of the party's ideology. The party's presentation of the national struggle has been carefully laid down with an intellectual and rational explanation. Unlike those of the parties of southern Kurdistan, the PKK's ideology has provided the framework for the future of the political, economic and socio-cultural configuration of the national organisation.

Therefore, the PKK has succeeded in taking the struggle into the streets by organising civil disobedience and strikes. This innovative success is largely due to its ideological creativity which has enlarged the horizon and the role of the individual in the movement and in society in general. And for its ideological propaganda, PKK has spared no effort to employ all channels and means available. In its ideological striving for eventual independence, and the transformation of the old social system, the PKK has been careful in its selection and recruitment. The PKK's message to those who wish to join the party is simple; it says, 'do not join us unless you heartily believe in us, in our struggle, our ideology and our aims'. There is no compulsion, and one has to display one's willingness to join the party. However, once one does join the party, commitment and membership are for life. There is no change of heart, no parting from the organisation. The new recruits, they are sent first to the party's academy, where they spend months in ideological indoctrination and education. The famous Kurdish singer Shivan Perwor was sentenced to death for quitting the party. Intense appeals for clemency by many Kurds eventually earned him a pardon.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, then, the role of ideology is vital for any liberation movement. Without ideological guidance, especially in less developed communities such as Kurdish society, it is difficult to sustain support and loyalty. Ideological adherence shapes the dimensions, personality, and character of the political party, who in return ideologize political life. Without an ideological manifestation, parties not only attract less support and trust from the masses, but also from their own members. Ideology's role then, is that of establishing the dimensions of party (Calvert, 1993: 83).

CHAPTER V

THE REGIONAL DIMENSION

More than any other factor, internal or international, regional inter-state politics has been hitherto almost the determinant constraint on the Kurdish liberation movement and the main stumbling block for any progress either on the political or military front. The regional dimension in the case of the Kurdish problem, however, is the interaction and cooperation between the four countries administrating the Kurds.

Rarely have a people been so trapped in their own homeland, because of their geographical location, as the Kurds have been. Though living on their own land, they are parcelled out between three historically antagonistic races, Turks, Arabs and Persians. This unfortunate 'natural' dimension has persistently contributed to their exploitation by the surrounding powers. From as early as the seventh century, they came under Arab and Muslim occupation. They fell prey to the Persians only to be divided between them and the Ottomans following the battle of Tchaldyran in 1514. The present shape and division has followed from losing out in the peace settlements which followed the First World War. As the region was carved up by the new European super-powers (Britain and France), the Kurdish people and Kurdistan were divided into four portions; one given to Iraq, the second incorporated into the new Turkish state, the third part to remain under Persia, now Iran, and the fourth inside the borders of Syria. Since then the Kurds and Kurdistan have been used time and again as pawns in the regional conflicts and disputes between these countries. It has become a norm to expect one of these countries to be behind each Kurdish armed uprising or even an unrest in any part of Kurdistan. This is the regional politics into which the Kurds have been drawn.

Modern Kurdish political history is fraught with a repetitive and predictable pattern of the regional states using the Kurds in their disputes. Back in classical times, the importance of Kurdish support and the strategic position of Kurdistan were acknowledged by the Ottomans in their conflict with the Persians. Following the settlement of 1514 the Kurds were seen as 'Ottoman

lords of the frontier' (Bulloch and Morris, 1992: 71). The Kurdish irregulars formed the backbone of the famous Ottoman Hamidiye Regiment. They were a viable and a potent force who, for example, were sent in 1908, under Ibrahim Pasha Mili, to conquer Damascus (Benjamin in Bertelsen, 1977: 71). On the Hamidiye Regiments, Vanly says that the regiments, formed by and under the direct control of Sultan Abdulhamid II, in 1891, were entirely Kurdish. Officers, sons of Kurdish chieftains, were trained in a military Academy in Istanbul, with recruitment confined to the Sunni Kurds only. These regiments, first 50, then raised to 64 under the Young Turks, were instrumental in the Balkan Wars, in Syria and against the Armenians in 1895-6 (Vanly in Kreyenbroek & Sperl, 1992: 196-7).

During the course of the armed struggle in the 1960s Iran was the main supporter of the Kurdish war in Iraq. Kinsman observes that the coup of July 1968 in Iraq met with little foreign policy success. To make things more difficult for the Ba'athist government in Baghdad and distract its attention from the Gulf area, the Kurds were being used by Iran to achieve this objective (Kinsman, 1970: 25). To counter Iranian support for the Kurds, Iraq, on the other hand, was supported the Baluchi movement in Iran between 1969 and 1973. Harrison points to the Iraqi feud with the Iranians by stressing the involvement of the Iraqi government in subsidizing the Baluchi movement through Jamma Khan, Mir Abdi Khan and other Baluchi leaders linked with the Baluchi front until 1973 (Harrison, 1981: 96, 107).

More recent examples of this practice are recalled in the painful memories of the Algiers Agreement of 1975 between Iraq and Iran, which still invoke bitter outrage for betrayal by their major mentor, the Shah of Iran. By March 1975, the Kurds had the upper hand in the ongoing war with the Iraqi government. On the capabilities and size of the Kurdish army, Bulloch and Morris write that:

> This time the peshmerga were not guerrilla fighters secure in their mountains and only occasionally launching hit-and-run attacks on the Iraqi army on the plains; the Kurds had been transformed by American, Israeli and, above all, Iranian support into an army able and willing to engage in set-piece battles with their enemy (Bulloch and Morris, 1992: 136).

But even before the implementation of its articles, the spread of the news of the Algiers Agreement was enough to bring to an end the Kurdish armed struggle. It is often argued that Kurdish overreliance on outside powers, and especially, in the case of 1975, on the Shah of Iran, has proved to be catastrophic (for example see Entessar, 1989: 91).

Kurdish strategies since the setbacks of 1975, however, have not changed. As Kurdish leadership and nationalists (KDP) took refuge in Iran, having abandoned the armed struggle, they were putting their fate and policy making yet again in the hands of the Shah, who had just betrayed them. This dependence continued even after the fall of the Shah and the advent of the Mullahs to power. Meanwhile, Syria sheltered another Kurdish group and the PUK was set up under its blessing. Hence, by the end of 1970s, Kurdish strategies were being dictated in Syria and Iran, both of whom had long-standing tensions with Iraq. The objectives of both countries towards Iraq differed however; the Iranian aim was to set up a similar theocratic government, the Syrian objective has been the creation of an Arabist regime. The relationship between the two rival Ba'ath factions ruling Iraq and Syria has been traditionally tense. Thus, sponsoring a Kurdish party was always an additional factor in Syria's policy of giving the Iraqi Ba'ath party an additional worry. This was clearly the same policy as that of the Shah of Iran who had forced concessions out of the Iraqi government in 1975 by using the Kurds as bargaining chip. Although the Syrian support and sponsorship of the PUK did not equal that of the Shah for the KDP, nevertheless, it was significant for the mere fact that an Arab state was sponsoring a non-Arab separatist movement in order to cause instability in an Arab country, Iraq, a move which contradicted the pan-Arab Ba'ath ideology. By the end of 1970s the Kurdish movement was too weak to cause any significant regional alliances between the regional states for and against each other. The Kurds were involved in sporadic hit-and-run operations which did not seriously bother any country. The interstate relations of the regional states by the end of the 1970s were overridden by the events in Iran. The Kurdish issue was by now marginalised.

To sum up the regional situation in the 1970s, it can be concluded that the Kurds were still the best and most readily available pawn for both the Iranians and the Syrians in their conflict with Iraq. As for the Iranians, gambling on the Kurdish factor with Iraq paid off. Iraq's role in the Gulf was

marginalised. The Shah was seen as the policeman of the region, and there was not much opposition to his occupation of the three islands in the Gulf. Iraq, the largest Arab state in the region, was in no position to challenge growing Iranian power. The ideological split between the ruling Syrian and Iraqi Ba'ath parties had set in place a pattern of antagonism between the two governments, each attempting to undermine the stability of the other and seeking to be the major power in the Arab east. Relations between the two countries never recovered from their deep suspicion and distrust of each other. The Syrians were quick to embrace Kurdish dissidents such as Jalal Talabani and support the setting-up of the PUK. Meanwhile, Iraq had little success in sponsoring any Kurdish groups either in Iran or Syria owing to the weak Kurdish movement in Iran under the Shah and the absence of a Kurdish movement in Syria. Turkey, meanwhile, was not involved in regional politics to the extent that she would be involved in the regional competition for hegemony between Iraq, Syria and Iran. Turkey's internal political and economic crises, as well as the Kurdish threat, were enough to keep her outside the regional rivalry. There was no immediate threat to her security and stability as far the Kurdish issue was concerned.

Both rivalry and cooperative patterns of interstate relations were undermined by the fall of the Shah and the advent of the Ayatollahs to power. On the one hand, the Iranian Revolution had given the Iraqi Kurds fresh hope of resuming their armed struggle, as Mullah Mustafa al-Barazani was to return to Iran with the blessing of the new revolutionaries in Teheran. Meanwhile, the Kurdish uprising in Iranian Kurdistan had started and was in full swing. The tangible achievements of the Kurdish armed uprising in Iran raised the alarm both in Turkey and Iraq. Having realised this potential threat to their internal security, both Turkey and Iraq were quick to formulate a common policy. The revolutionary chaos in Iran and the events in Iranian Kurdistan, thus, prompted the Iraqis and Turks to hold talks on the new developments along their eastern frontiers. In April 1979 the head of the Turkish armed forces, General Kenan Evren, who led the 1980 coup and later became president of Turkey (until 1989), paid a visit to the Iraqi capital, Baghdad, to 'coordinate the two countries' Kurdish policy'. The visit resulted in an 'agreement on the suppression of the Kurdish separatism in the border regions between the two countries and Iran' (Robins, 1993: 672).

In the 1980s, Turkey was drawn into a more direct involvement in regional politics. For two decades, the 1960s and 1970s, Turkey had kept out of the regional conflicts as there was no Kurdish threat to her internal security. Back in February 1955, she had concluded a pact with Iraq known as the Baghdad Pact, Great Britain, Pakistan and Iran signed up to the pact later in the year, while the US, though not a signatory, served on some committees and was seen as the main architect of the alliance. The Turko-Iraqi alliance was dissolved following the 1958 revolution in Iraq. The Baghdad Pact was reconstructed in 1959 as the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), made up of a network of bilateral accords between the US and Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan (Ismael, 1986: 144). It is often argued, mainly by Kurds, that among the chief objectives of the Baghdad Pact, and then CENTO, was to undermine the Kurdish national movement (see for example Talabani, 1971: 169-170). But a more objective assessment of the Pact was that it was designed mainly to bring the leading Arab countries in the region into the western orbit as a precaution, following the Free Officers' revolution in Egypt which overthrew the pro-western monarchy in 1952 and established the republic, to prevent other countries, especially the pro-western Iraq, following the Egyptian example. The Pact backfired, and most leading Arab countries went instead to the Soviets for support (Hale, 1992: 681).

However, the impact of the Islamic Revolution in Iran and its potential side-effects were enough to force a U-turn in Turkish regional foreign policy. The Kurdish armed struggle, which had started in Iraq in 1961 and ended in 1975, though supported by Iran, rarely moved the Turks (always on guard) to take the Kurdish threat seriously, especially since Kurdish nationalism was then dormant in that country. Turko-Iraqi relations came under pressure immediately after the July 1958 coup in Iraq, when Turkey massed three or four army divisions along her borders with Syria and Iraq. But with the coup in Turkey on 27 May 1960, relations between the two countries were normalised. A minor incident in September 1961, in which Iraqi jets, pursuing Kurdish rebels, carried out a raid inside Turkey led to some tension. However, tension between the two was put down to lack of communication and coordination over the Kurdish rebellion in Iraq (Al-Arif, 1986: 158-9). Regional rivalry was mainly between the Shah of Iran and various Iraqi governments.

By the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s the regional

configuration of power and interests had changed. To begin with, Turkey, which had remained on the periphery of the regional alignments and realignments of Middle Eastern politics, was to play an active role in the new regional political setting. For Turkey, threats to her national security historically came from the north from Tsarist and Soviet Russia. Therefore, the regional politics of the Middle East was of secondary importance in Turkish foreign policy. And it was not until the mid 1970s that the Middle East regained importance in the Turkish foreign policy, on account of its economic crisis following the sharp increases in oil prices (Hale, 1992: 680). Turkey's post World War II 'neutral' position in Middle Eastern politics was changed in the face of the new developments in the region, mainly the new Iranian political system. Turkish position in regional politics was also influenced by the birth of the Kurdish Workers Party, the PKK, as well as by the outbreak of the First Gulf War. The Turkish role was to attract further importance during the build-up to the Second Gulf War. Following the Kuwait crisis, Turkey emerged with a leading role in regional politics.

The departure of the Shah in 1979 and the rise of the Islamists to power in Iran caused a major shake-up. The Iranians' enthusiastic preaching of an expansionary revolutionary political form of Islam was to draw the regional states into new alliances. Iraq was the first to take action against the 'Shi'ite threat', by launching an all-out war against the new Iranian government on 22 September 1980. The Iraqi president Saddam Hussein saw the opportunity to achieve several objectives in his offensive against Iran. The apparent fragmentation of authority and order in Iran, hitherto the biggest power in the Gulf region, was an ideal opportunity for the ambitious Iraqi leader to establish his country's primacy. And as the Gulf states were threatened by the radical Iranian brand of Islam, Saddam was quick to exploit this ideological threat, despite the Carter Doctrine of late 1979 which committed the US to defending Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States against foreign aggression (Miller & Mylroie, 1990: 107). Thus under this pretext, the threat to the Gulf, and to protect the eastern gate of the Arab world, under the banner of Arab nationalism, Iraq attacked Iran.

Other regional states were drawn into the conflict between Iraq and Iran. The long-standing rivalry between the ruling Iraqi and Syrian Ba'athists was politically sufficient reason to make Syria position sympathetic to Iran.

Turkey, meanwhile, was drawn into the conflict on two grounds. First, close links and cooperation between the PKK and the KDP from 1981 culminated in the Protocol of Solidarity between the two Kurdish parties in 1983. This alliance between the Iraqi and Turkish Kurdish parties assisted the PKK in setting up bases in the liberated zones in southern Kurdistan at a time when the Iraqi government was busy on the front with Iran. As a result, Turko-Iraqi cooperation reached its peak in October 1984 when both countries concluded a security accord authorizing 'hot pursuit' (Robins, 1993: 672). Regular visits were made by Turkish officials and army officers to the governorate of Dohuk. Frequent meetings between them and the Mayor of Dohuk, Namiq al-Sourichi, and the head of security (Amin) and intelligence (Mukhabarat), as well as the regional chief of the Ba'ath Party, meant the exchange of information and intelligence. Turkish delegates were also entertained in Mosul. The growing Turkish cooperation with Iraq was also due to the lucrative market it opened for Turkish business. The Middle East market had always attracted Turkish business, and Turkish trade with the region represented (20 %) of the country's total foreign trade (Hale, 1992: 681). As the war with Iran crippled all shipping lanes to Iraq's only seaport, Basra, Turkey and Jordan became Iraq's only routes to the outside world, and the most important of Iraq's imports and exports, oil, had to come and go through these two countries (oil exports were mainly through Turkey). The border town of Zakho, henceforth, was permanently congested with hundreds of Turkish trucks entering Iraq daily. Iraq was becoming a lucrative market for Turkey as Iraq, while at war with Iran, continued her development projects, especially the military related industries and infrastructure. By the late 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, Turkish interest in the region was well established.

The picture of the region's politics and interstate relations in the 1980s was dominated by the alliance between Iran and Syria against Iraq, while Turkey was promoting her interests with both the belligerents, Iraq and Iran (Harris, 1985: 182-3). It was closer to Iraq than Iran because of:

1) Common opposition to Kurdish nationalism.

2) A state of economic interdependence, as Iraq became the prime Turkish market in the Middle East.

3) The strategic Iraqi oil pipeline which accounted for a half of Iraqi oil exports through Turkish Mediterranean port of Yumurtalik.

4) The fact that Syria was [and still is] hosting and supporting the PKK, and as the Syrian and Iraqi governments are antagonistic by nature, Turkey's relations grew stronger with Iraq to put pressure on Syria (Hale, 1992: 682).

Furthermore, Turkey's closer links with Iraq than to Iran can also be attributed to the Islamic ideology of Iran. Both Iraq and Turkey's secular ideologies felt threatened by Islam. It is also noteworthy that while Iran broke off from the western orbit following the overthrow of the Shah, Iraq was moving back from the Soviet orbit into the western orbit after years of preaching, at least publicly, a revolutionary anti-western ideology; this step would naturally be welcomed by Turkey, a member of NATO.

Regional relations were complicated further by the emergence of the PKK as a radical party in Kurdish politics and the launching of the Kurdish armed struggle in Turkey. This complication came as Syria embraced the PKK by sponsoring and supporting the party. In 1980 Turkey launched the South Anatolia Project (GAP) for development of the Tigris and Euphrates basins. The GAP project consists of three big dams, of which the Atatürk dam (completed in 1992) is the showpiece, alongside the Keban and Karakaya dams. In total the project will contain 21 dams and 17 hydro-electric plants, and extends from the Kurdish provinces of Gaziantep, Adiyaman, Urfa, Diyarbakir, Mardin and Siirt covering a total area of 74,000 square kilometres (equivalent to the combined size of Belgium, Holland, and Luxembourg). The planned irrigation system, which is due for completion by the year 2000 and which includes the two parallel Urfa tunnels with a length of 27 kilometres and a height of 7.62 metres, should irrigate an area of 1.6 million hectares. The GAP project is also expected to generate over 7500 megawatts of energy. The Turkish aim in the GAP project is believed not only to make Turkey a major agricultural exporter (it is officially projected that the GAP will eventually double Turkey's agricultural output (The Independent 9/11/ 1994), 'but also a major exporter of energy for the Near East' (Kurdistan Report, No.8, April 1992: 19).

It is also suggested that the Turkish government has recognized the centrality of the economic deprivation in the Kurdish region in generating support for the PKK. Therefore, to improve the economic conditions of the South East, the GAP 'is aimed at regenerating the economy of the south east'. But the project will not be economically significant until the end of the century; 'it does not cover all the areas of greatest support for the insurgency', areas like Hakkari, Batman, Van and Şirnak where the PKK has greatest support (Robins, 1993: 664). The social consequences of the GAP project for the Kurdish population have already taken effect. Initial resettlement included 100,000 Kurdish families who 'were moved forcibly to western Turkey'. It is also estimated that the region's 4.5 million population will rise to 12 million. The fear has been that the resettlement of the Kurds in Western Turkey is to be followed by 'the settlement of Turkish families from the densely populated Black Sea regions' (Kurdistan Report, No.8, 1992: 19-20). Future negative consequences will probably include the depopulation of the eastern parts (where the PKK enjoys popular support) under the pretext of resettlement in the GAP project region.

The GAP project, however, has not only a domestic dimension in terms of development. As to the regional effects of the project, Turkey was getting into deep waters with her southern neighbours. From the beginning, the project has had an enormous impact on the other countries bordering the Tigris and Euphrates. The downstream states of Syria and Iraq were alerted to the certain eventuality of water shortages. It was probably the fear of water shortages that the Syrians were keen to foster in the PKK from the beginning. An agreement was reached between the concerned governments in 1987 whereby they agreed to maintain the flow of 500 cubic metres of water per second (Hale, 1992: 682). The flow of the Euphrates at the Syrian border had once averaged 900 cubic metres per second (The Independent 9/11/1994). In 1989 Syria and Turkey 'agreed by contract' on the daily amount of water, but Syria maintained that the agreement was not adhered to by the Turkish government (Kurdistan Report, N.8, 1992: 20). Turkey came under criticism from Syria and Iraq, a rare joint action between the two rival governments, when in January and February 1990 the dam's gates were closed for one month in order to fill the reservoir. This led to the reduction of the river to a 'fraction of its normal level' and provoked sharp protest from Syria and Iraq (Hale, 1992: 682). While the headline of the conservative Turkish newspaper, Milliyet, about the GAP

project was that 'This is the power that makes them [Syria and Iraq] jealous' and that 'Turkey is beating its [inferiority] complex about oil with water', views from other regional capital cities were different. Pope notes Milliyet's headline and points to the fears raised by other regional Arab states over the Turkish project. Pope cites the disapproval from the Arab world of 'Turkey's new uses for one of the most ancient and vital arteries of the Middle East'. Egypt and Jordan, for example are cited as being worried over the Turkish policy for setting bad precedents 'about downstream rights' (The Independent 9/11/1994).

Meanwhile rivalry between Syria and Iraq intensified. As Syria became 'the Arab world's most [probably the only] inveterate backer of Iran' (The Guardian 12/10/1988), the Iraqis were keen to make life as difficult as possible for the Syrians. As the Syrians were already and deeply involved in the Lebanese civil war, Iraq was to take the vendetta to Lebanon. At the same time Iran has maintained an interest in Lebanon's Shi'ite faction by supporting and sponsoring Hizbullah. To counter the Iranian-Syrian axis, Iraq supported and financed the Moslem Brotherhood in Syria in the beginning of the 1980s (Abdul Rahman, 1981: 226). At the height of the brotherhood rebellion in Syria in 1982, Syrian officials have maintained that Iraqi troops were sent to the border area (The Guardian 12/10/ 1988). The Iraqi government went to the extreme of defying its own ideology and in 'utter disregard of all that Ba'athism ever stood for' arming and supporting the Lebanese right-wing Christian militia and particularly the faction led by General Aoun (The Guardian 12/10/1988). It is even suggested that Saddam Hussein was behind the Israeli invasion of Lebanon:

> It was widely known throughout the Middle East that Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Defense Minister Ariel Sharon wanted to drive the Palestine Liberation Organization from Lebanon. But an excuse was needed. Yasir Arafat, fearful of the consequences, was trying desperately not to give Israel any pretext. However, the near-fatal shooting of Israel's ambassador to London on June 3 set the Israelis in motion. The British arrested and tried the man who organized the assassination attempt, who turned to be a colonel in Iraqi intelligence... weapons for the operation came

> from the military attaché's office of the Iraqi embassy in London (Miller & Mylroie, 1990: 114).

Miller and Mylroie cite further the accounts of New York Times as well as those of the two Israeli journalists Schiff and Yaari, who had reported on the source of weapons:

> Iraq had sought to precipitate an Israeli attack on Lebanon, which would perhaps provide the occasion for a cease-fire with Iran, and at the very least would tie up Syria and prevent Damascus from aiding Iran in Baghdad's desperate moments (Miller & Mylroie, 1990: 114-5).

As the war continued on the eastern gate of the Arab world, support for Iraq came from the conservative Arab countries. In the early 1980s the Baghdad-Amman-Riyadh axis helped the Iraqi government to withstand Iranian advances. Further support came from Egypt, where Soviet weapons were sold to Iraq by the late president, Anwar Sadat (Abdul Rahman, 1981, 226-7). Egypt's support continued under Hosni Mubarak throughout the 1980s. The Egyptian labour force in Iraq numbered several millions (no data available), and each worker was entitled to transfer 75% of his/her salary back to Egypt in hard currency. This meant considerable revenue for Egypt. Even when world public opinion was outraged by the gas attack on the Kurdish town of Halabjah in March 1988 and the resulting death of over 5,000 civilians, the Arab states 'stayed firmly on Iraq's side'. In a response to a Kurdish delegation appeal to protest against the use of poison gas on civilians, the delegates were asked by a Kuwait official 'What did you expect to be sprayed with, rose-water' (Bulloch and Morris, 1992: 143).

Interstate relations and alliances during the 1980s, then, can be summarized in terms of a Syrian-Iranian axis and an Iraqi-Arab axis, as well as a Turko-Iraqi axis. Although Turkey maintained good relations with Teheran, her interest was more with Iraq. While Iran and Iraq were engaged in a bloody and costly war which lasted eight years, other regional states were dragged into the conflict for reasons of security, as were the Gulf states, who viewed the Iranian Revolution as a direct threat to their survival. The Gulf states were very concerned about Teheran's propaganda and subversive activities,

especially as all of them Shi'ite minorities. The Iranian advances in southern Iraq and their conquest of Iraq's most southern peninsula, Fao, in February 1986, led to increased concern on the part of the Gulf states, particularly the Saudis and Kuwaitis, as the 'Persian Shi'ite soldiers' were positioned along their northern borders. This development meant increased financial help for Iraq. The Saudis were, for example, quick to increase their financial and logistical assistance to Iraq (Abir, 1993: 144). Moreover, Jordan, beneficiary of the flow of business and trade to and from Iraq, was probably the Arab state most supportive of Iraq. Regular visits were made by the Jordanian ruler, King Hussein, who often appeared on Iraqi television side by side with the Iraqi president, Saddam Hussein, particularly when both were visiting front-line troops. Iraqi-Jordanian relations seemed most cordial. The cautious Gulf rulers were not so keen to be seen publicly with the Iraqi ruler. On a rare occasion King Fahd of Saudi Arabia was shown receiving a gold AK-47 rifle from the Iraqi ruler.

With the cease-fire of the Iran-Iraq war in August 1988, the Iraqi president claimed to the Iraqi people and the world that he had won the war. Abir says, however, that Iraq had practically been driven to bankruptcy. Iraq owed the Gulf states about 40 billion dollars, and more than that to her French, Soviet, and other arm suppliers, foreign banks and trade partners. And with the cease-fire, the rich Gulf states refused to finance Saddam's plans. Iraq's revenue from oil in 1988 was about 12 billion dollars (oil price at $15 per barrel) which was 'hardly sufficient for a nation of 17 million people with ambitious economic development and military programmes and an enormous foreign debt' (Abir, 1993: 160).

The Iraqi president was determined to capitalize on the cease-fire. He began by setting up the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) in Baghdad on 16 February 1989. The ACC was made up of Iraq, Egypt, Jordan, and North Yemen. As a political organisation, the ACC was, in the words of Abir, 'a strange collection of unequals, with different types of regimes.... The only factor common to all the ACC members was their need for financial aid'. But the Gulf Cooperation Council, GCC [the six Gulf states] were 'no longer willing, or able, to grant' it. The ACC, which was seen as a counterbalance to the Saudi led GCC, however, served the ambitious Iraqi president, Saddam Hussein, as a platform for his pan Arabism and his drive to become the hero of the Arab

world and a platform from which to force and bully the rich Gulf states to grant him more money. Following an ACC meeting in Sana'a in North Yemen, in September 1989, Iraq was becoming a thorn in the side of the Gulf countries. Commenting on Saddam's drive, Prince Bandar, the Saudi Ambassador in Washington, described Iraq 'as the most immediate potential threat' to Saudi Arabia. He declared that he expected US protection for Saudi Arabia in the event of an Iraqi attack (Abir, 1993: 162, 163).

Having financed the arming of Saddam to keep the Iranian threat at bay, the Gulf state had created a Frankenstein's monster. 'Armed to the teeth, politically confident but financially bankrupt, the Iraqi leadership was convinced that the regional balance of power had shifted in its favour' (Miller & Mylroie, 1990: 189-190). Thus, in his search for a regional role the Iraqi president moved his armies southward. Eventually his tanks rolled into the small emirate of Kuwait on 2 August 1990. And with this action new regional alliances were to emerge. As the world gathered against Iraq, yesterday's allies were to turn against Saddam. The Gulf states lost no time in inviting in western troops. Meanwhile, at a meeting of the Turkish National Security Council (NSC) attended by the president, the Prime Minister, the cabinet, and army chiefs, on 3 March 1990, it was reported that Turkey was not to close the Kirkuk-Yumurtalik oil pipeline or take other steps against Iraq. The Turks at first assumed that the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was purely an inter-Arab dispute (Hale, 1992: 683).

But on 8 August 1990, the Turkish authorities said that they would close the Iraqi oil pipeline in accordance with UN resolutions [Resolution 660 of August 1990 approved trade and financial embargo against Iraq]. Turkey also made available her air space for future air attacks on Iraq. Among Arab states, Syria and Egypt sent the largest Arab contingents to Saudi Arabia. Jordan and Yemen remained pro-Iraq. The most bizarre turn of events, however, was the Iranian position. This was not anti-Iraq as everyone expected, and it became positively supportive of Saddam Hussein following the defeat of the Shi'ite uprising in southern Iraq in February 1991. This support was more in the nature of anti-American propaganda rather than actual support for Saddam. As the conflict developed as a showdown between Iraq and the USA, the Iranians were keen to capitalise on the anti-US fervour which swept parts of the Middle East.

Attempts have been made since then to normalise relations between the two countries. Iran and Iraq have been desperate to break up the US dual containment policy directed at both governments and emerge from semi-international isolation but to no avail (Asharq Al Awsat 20/10/1993). Distrust between and the memory of eight years of war are unlikely to bring the two states closer. To sum up the regional alliances in the first half of the 1990s, then, relations between the four countries, Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey are at their lowest ebb. Syrian-Iranian relations remain normal, but Syria has been paying more attention to the Middle East peace process. Regional alliances have declined since the defeat of Iraq in the Second Gulf War, as its potential threat was removed. Iran has been facing domestic upheavals on account of economic crisis. And as the Iraqi threat has diminished, Syria is now on course for a peace settlement with Israel. In the post Cold War and post Second Gulf War, Turkey, on the other hand, sees itself as a major power in the region as well as in the Caucasus and Central Asia. The Turks believe that they have regained their strategic importance once again (Abramowitz, 1993: 164): (On the Turkish role after the Cold War and the Kuwait crisis see also The Independent 3/4/1992, p. 15). But Turkey's problem is internal rather than external. The threat of the Kurdish minority 'has exposed a serious contradiction in the Kemalist ideology, at a time when authoritarian ideologies are deeply unfashionable in the world' (Robins, 1993: 658).

In the light of the above summary of regional alliances and interstate relations, the Kurds have come to play their part in the volatile regional politics of the Middle East. The making of their own regional policy, however, has not been of their own initiative but rather dictated to them by their regional mentors. Kurds dislike being political and military pawns for regional powers. In a written reply on a question on the regional dimension, the first Kurdish Prime Minister of the safe haven Fouad Maswm, asserted that 'Kurds were not tools in the hands of this state or that one' (Fouad Maswm, interview. 20/10/1994). But the painful fact remains that throughout their contemporary history the Kurds have been 'directed' to fulfil the foreign policy of regional powers. As they are trapped between four hostile states they have no alternative but to accept the terms of this government or that one. On this handicap, Benjamin writes:

> The upshot is that the Kurds remain a group seeking national autonomy but constrained severely by the international environment. The Iranian-US aid, while providing resources, was essentially an environmental factor...in that the Kurds themselves could not control its continuity (Benjamin in Bertelsen, 1977: 69).

At the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, the making of policy for the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), living and operating in exile in Iran, was in the hands of the Iranians. Sami Abdul Rahman points out that following the disaster of 1975, the KDP came under constructive criticism from the newly established Provisional Command, for allying with the Shah of Iran and depending on his support. He writes that despite all the criticisms of the conduct of the party in the past, the first band of rebels arrived in Iraqi Kurdistan in October 1977, organized by the right-wing elements of the party under the direct supervision of the Shah's secret service, Savak. The sending of rebel groups back into Iraqi Kurdistan, however, stopped soon after the Iraqi vice president paid a visit to Iran to clear some minor differences between the two countries (Abdul Rahman, 1981: 24-25). In the same vein, Abdul Rahman criticises the party for its relations with the new Iranian government. Following a meeting between the KDP and the KDPI in June 1979 in the village of Lkbin near Mahabad, it was agreed, on the advice of the KDPI, that the KDP should explore the possibilities of establishing a working relationship with the Islamic government in Teheran. The Provisional Command of the KDP was encouraged to do so as the PLO had mediated and spoke in favour of them. But the right-wing elements in the KDP were already active talking to the Defence Minister, Mustafa Chamran. Idris Al-Barazani headed a KDP group of four (Idris, Karim Shingari, Rashid Sindi and Abdul Wahab Atroshi) for a brief meeting with Khomeini. And around the middle of May, Idris paid a visit to the Iranian army chief of Staff. Regular meetings were to follow (Abdul Rahman, 1981: 29).

Meanwhile, the Syrians were keen to have some leverage over their rival Iraqi Ba'athists. Therefore, they sheltered some Kurds who set up a rival party to the KDP, the PUK, in 1976. Both countries, Iran and Syria, therefore, had Kurdish parties at their disposal to be used to cause instability for Iraq. As rivalry between Syria and Iraq was contested in the Lebanese civil war since Iraq was supporting the Christian militia, Syria was to support Kurdish

parties fighting the Iraqi government. War between the two sides was, in the words of Hirst, by proxies (The Guardian 12/10/ 1988). Furthermore, Iraqi Kurds supported and participated regularly in Iranian offensives against Iraq when the two countries were at war. In the spring of 1983, for example, Iran launched the Vali-Fajr (Dawn) offensives in the Kurdish sector of the war front. Kurdish Peshmerga fought alongside Iranian troops and were left in control of many of the 43 villages captured in the region (Bulloch and Morris, 1992: 153).

Iraq, for its part, did support and finance the Iranian Kurdish parties, KDPI and Komalah (McDowall, 1989: 24). Iraq not only financed the Kurds against Iran, but also sheltered and supported the largest Iranian armed opposition group, The People's Mujahedin, who in 1983 set up a major base in the 'valley of the parties', a valley north of Sulaimaniya at Nawzeng, where opposition parties to both the Iranian and Iraqi governments had headquarters since 1978 (Kurdistan Report, No. 9, May 1992: 24). Bulloch and Morris also note that, in late October 1983, for example, the Iranians went on the offensive again along a 90 mile front east of Sulaimaniya in order to close two mountain routes through which the Iraqi government was supplying Iranian Kurds fighting Khomeini troops (Bulloch and Morris, 1992: 153). To that effect, it is argued that Kurdish parties in both Iran and Iraq did not capitalise on the opportunity available to them during the war between Iran and Iraq by uniting their forces, but rather sustained their livelihood from both governments (Programme of the Kurdish Patriotic Salvation Movement; 1992: 6). As Iran and Iraq were locked in war, then, each used the Kurds in every possible way to cause problems for the other side.

In northern Kurdistan, as worries over water supplies from Turkey grew, Syria was to play the old game of using the Kurds as a bargaining chip. As the PKK campaign gathered momentum, the Syrian were quick to embrace them and shelter them, first in Syria itself, and then by moving them to the Beka'a Valley in Lebanon, which was still under Syrian control (Bulloch and Morris, 1992: 168). Syrian support for the PKK has, therefore, brought sharp criticism from Turkey, which has often threatened retaliation. As Turkey was conducting its military campaign against the PKK deep in northern Iraq in the spring of 1992, its Interior Minister, Ismet Sezgin, paid a visit to Damascus and allegedly secured an undertaking that Syria would neither continue supporting the PKK

nor allow it to use Syrian territory to launch attacks on Turkey. The PKK base in the Beka'a valley in Lebanon would be closed (Milliyet 19/4/1992, as cited by Hale, 1992: 682).

As the Syrian position remained almost the same, Turkish attitudes became stronger. For instance, in an interview with the Turkish daily newspaper, Sabah, on 8 November 1993, the Turkish Prime Minister, Tansu Çiller warned the Syrians not to support the PKK. She asserted that the Syrians had promised a Turkish delegation visiting Damascus the previous week, that they would cooperate with Turkey against the PKK. The Turkish Prime Minister was adamant in her demands and offered the Syrians no room or time to reevaluate their support for the Kurds (Al Arab 9/11/1993). Syrian political sources told Asharq Al Awsat that Turkish accusations of Syrian support for the PKK were baseless and they were made only to divert Turkish public opinion from the real internal problems and political violence Turkey was facing (Asharq Al Awsat 3/11/ 1993). Ten days later, the Turkish Foreign Minister, Hikmet Çetin, appearing before a parliamentary committee, accused Syria of using PKK terrorism for water. Mr Çetin told the committee that he had told his Syrian counterpart, Faruq Al-Sharah, 'you resort to terrorism for water, stop that. Turkey will solve the problem of terrorism, but you [Syria] cannot solve the water issue without Turkey' (Al Hayat 19/11/1993). Turkish frustration with the Syrians resulted in Turkish commando units, backed by combat helicopters, crossing the border into northern Syria on 7 January 1994 in pursuit of Kurdish rebels. The Turkish PM was quoted saying that 'cross-border operations remain high on our agenda and we will be relying on our neighbours' co-operation to help combat [Kurdish] terrorism this year'. The Turkish Interior Minister stated that 'The Syrians have become extremely co-operative in our fight against the PKK'. The operation had, however, resulted in the death of only six Kurdish rebels (The Daily Telegraph 10/1/1994).

As PKK's activities and influence increased, Turkey turned to Iran, accusing her in turn of supporting and accommodating the PKK. Relations between Turkey and Iran had come under pressure over the previous five years. In 1992 they reached another low. Turkey suspected Iran to be supporting the Turkish Kurdish population and other Islamic elements in the fierce competition to fill the vacuum left in the region following the collapse of the Soviet Union (The Economist 22-7 March 1992). A Turkish source in Ankara confirmed that

Iran was providing 'logistic and military' assistance inside Iran to 'Kurdish insurgents'. The Turkish Foreign Ministry summoned the Iranian ambassador to Turkey, Reza Baqeri and presented him with a 'huge dossier' allegedly containing concrete evidence, including photographs of PKK military personnel in Iranian military camps particularly in Urmieh region (Al Arab 21/7/1993). Although Iranian diplomats in Ankara denied any knowledge of this, the Chief of Security Affairs in the Iranian Interior Ministry, Kolam Hussein Bolandian, stated at the end of a meeting of the joint Turkish-Iranian border Security Committee that Iranian territory would not be a haven for terrorists (Asharq Al Awsat 4/12/1993).

Turkey's search for a way to contain and defeat the PKK meant that a bigger regional role was needed. Events in Iraq in the beginning of the 1990s were causing the Turkish government serious problems. The exodus of the Iraqi Kurds in March 1991 to the Turkish border not only added to Turkey's own Kurdish problem, but also put Turkey in the spotlight of the world media. Turkey, therefore, could ill afford to ignore Kurdish tragedies elsewhere, and its policy was to change to one characterized by a determination to go all the way to defeat the PKK, and more importantly not to allow the rise of Kurdish nationalism. On the more active role Turkey was poised to play, the Turkish Prime Minister, Suleiman Demirel, addressing journalists in the Kurdish city of Diyarbakir, stated on 8 December 1991 that:

> faced with events in northern Iraq, Turkey was just a bystander. For instance, there was the Halabjah incident. We said 'that's outside our frontiers, it's nothing to do with us'. This policy ought to change. Turkey's new policy should be as follow: if Baghdad commits another barbarity in northern Iraq, it will find us opposing it (Milliyet 9/12/1991 as cited in Hale, 1992: 690).

Demirel's statement was not a mere caution to Iraq warning her not to push the Kurds into another mass exodus (Hale, 1992: 691). Between 1988 and 1991 southern Kurds had twice fled Saddam's vengeance. In 1988 thousands of them fled to the Turkish border following Saddam's Anfal military campaign to destroy Kurdish resistance. In 1991, almost the entire Kurdish population of southern Kurdistan escaped the advancing Iraqi Republican Guards by fleeing towards the Turkish border. Both times Turkey had come under pressure to help

the Kurds. More significantly, the statement seemed to indicate a new Turkish position in the region. It carried with it Turkish determination to carve out a regional role for herself, especially in relation to the Kurdish question. Turkey was willing to go beyond her boundaries if required to defeat Kurdish nationalism. Turkey's new position was clearly different from the passivity of the past decades. Rumours of the old territorial aggrandisement in northern Iraq, though officially denied, were emerging.

Major sweep-out operations since 1992 have taken the Turkish army into northern Iraq. Having failed to dislodge the PKK and defeat them and assisted by the Iraqi KDP and PUK, Turkey has turned to the idea of security zones. Following international criticism and scrutiny, the Turkish Prime Minister, Tansu Çiller, called for an 'international solution' for the situation on the Turkish-Iraqi border area. Çiller suggested that she wished to invite Iraq to participate in the American led operation 'Provide Comfort' for the Iraqi Kurds in the safe haven in northern Iraq. Other Turkish officials were asserting the need for mobile Turkish army units to remain inside Iraq to check PKK movements. Meanwhile and, according to the Qatar News Agency reporting from Teheran, the Iranians and the Syrians were alerted by the news of Turkish plans to set up a security zone 20 miles deep inside Iraq (Asharq Al Awsat 4/4/1994).

Such a security zone, similar to the Israeli zone in southern Lebanon, would mean the deployment of Turkish units inside Iraq. Arrangements were announced for the Turkish security plans after talks with Iraqi Kurdish leaders in the safe haven. A delegation from the Turkish Foreign Ministry held talks with Iraqi Kurdish leaders concerning border security (Asharq Al Awsat 15/4/1995). As if the threats of establishing a security zone inside Iraq were not enough, Turkish newspapers published on 2 May 1995 a statement by the Turkish President, Suleiman Demirel, demanding the redrawing of the border with Iraq. Demirel told Turkish editors that the new line should fall further inside Iraq so that Turkey could control the mountain ranges in order to stop PKK infiltration. He further asserted that the Americans had been informed of this plan (Al Arab 3/5/1995).

The new international border suggested by the Turkish President would mean moving the existing line which cut across the mountain peaks down to the

plains. Mr Demirel had started by lecturing the Turkish editors on the history of the border dispute with Iraq (or rather with Great Britain) in the 1920s and making references to the fact that the disputed area was not left for Iraq according to the Lausanne Treaty of 1923, this was in effect a rekindling of the old Turkish demand for the Vilayet of Mosul (or Iraqi Kurdistan). Demirel emphasised that 'Mosul [the Vilayet and not only the city] still belongs to Turkey' (Al Arab 3/5/1995). The central point in Demirel's declaration was not only the determination of Turkey to put down the PKK, but also, and as significantly, his reference to oil. He was quoted as saying 'this border [reference to the suggested new border line] is the oil line. Turkish border begins where oil ends' (Asharq Al Awsat 3/5/ 1995: 1, 2, 4). Since then Turkish involvement in Northern Iraq has not decreased. In the first week of October 1995 units of the Turkish army again entered northern Iraq under the pretext of chasing PKK rebels (Kuwait, Saudi, and Egyptian Radio broadcasts). The Turkish army continued entering northern Iraq on a regular basis. In the first half of June 1996, the army was still conducting its 'clean-up' operations. In the meantime, Turkey expressed discomfort about reports of an agreement between the KDP and the PKK by which the KDP has allowed the PKK to set up a radio station and take shelter in KDP controlled territory. In addition, joint exercises between the forces of the two parties were reported of which the Turkish political circles had expressed disapproval (Asharq Al Awsat 18/6/1996).

The striking point about the Turkish declarations was the suggestion of the possibility of partitioning Iraq. Since the end of the Second Gulf War and the defeat of Iraq, and the subsequent turmoil in Iraq where the central authority of Baghdad's government over most parts of the country has been minimal, the question of dismembering Iraq has not disappeared. The retreat of the Iraqi units from Kuwait in February 1991 sparked popular uprisings against the government in the southern and northern of the country. Iraq was on the brink of disintegration. Scenarios were presented for a pro-Iranian Shi'ite state in the south of the country, a Kurdish state in the north, and a Sunni minority state only in the Middle. Fears of such an eventuality raised sharp objections from the majority of the Arab world. At the first meeting of the Arab League following the Kuwait War, in Cairo at the end of March 1991, Arab diplomats expressed worries over the situation in Iraq. A senior Egyptian military source dismissed any support for the rebellions in Iraq since they

would mean 'the end of Iraq'. He added 'we hope the Iraqis can choose a legitimate government, to keep Iraq whole and as a member of its Arab family' (The Independent 1/4/1991).

For the Arabs, partition was inconceivable. The Kuwaitis and the Saudis, in whose interest a war was fought, were in no position to accept a Shi'ite state on their borders (Bulloch and Morris, 1992: 12). Egypt has consistently dismissed the thought (see for example The Guardian 23/3/1992). More recently, and as a reaction to the large-scale Turkish drive into northern Iraq, the Arab League issued a strong condemnation of the Turkish intervention and demanded the immediate withdrawal of the Turkish forces. The Arab League statement considered the Turkish action as nothing but violation of the sovereignty of an Arab state (Al Arab 10/7/1995). Fears of increasing Turkish involvement in Northern Iraq led King Hussein of Jordan to propose a Sunni, Shi'ite, and Kurdish federalist Iraq and offered a confederation between his kingdom and Iraq. This proposal was rejected immediately by Iraqi Arab nationalists in exile (Asharq Al Awsat 4/12/1995).

On the Turkish ambitions to retrieve the Vilayet of Mosul, it is worth pausing on the impact of such a possibility on the Kurdish liberation movement. At present the Kurdish struggle is directed against two centres, Baghdad and Ankara. If the Vilayet of Mosul was retaken by Turkey, that would mean Turkish control over Iraqi and Turkish Kurdistan. It would also mean uniting both parts of Kurdistan under one central authority. This would mean combining Kurdish energies temporarily against one enemy rather than two. Although the Turkish power to stifle Kurdish nationalism is far greater than that of Iraq, nevertheless, the strength of the Kurdish resistance would be more effective than its present divided strength and energies.

With her growing frustration with failing to uproot the PKK, Turkey has turned to a new regional alliance with Israel in order to put pressure on Syria. On 23 February 1996 Turkey and Israel signed a military pact allowing each country to use the air space of the other for 'training exercises' (Asharq Al Awsat 4/7/1996). Although the pact has drawn sharp criticism from the Arab world and is regarded as intimidation against Syria, the Turks were determined to warn the Arab Summit in Cairo at the end of June 1996, in the form of an official letter from the Turkish Foreign Ministry which was styled firman (an

Ottoman decree) by the Turkish press, not to criticise the pact at the summit. The Turko-Israeli Pact may have a wider impact on the politics of the region especially when it comes to water disputes and the peace process. For Kurds it might carry the possibility of Turkish aircraft using Israeli airspace to hit the PKK's academy in the Beka'a Valley in Lebanon, as well as pressurizing the Syrians further especially with the new right wing Israeli government which won the elections in the summer of 1996.

CONCLUSION

The Kurdish region is characterised by a unique pattern of interstate relations. Historically these regional states - Iraq ,Iran, Syria and Turkey - have been at odds for most of the recent past. Iraq and Iran have been in conflict for the best part of the last three decades and at war from 1980 to 88. Tension between Syria and Iraq has led both governments to plot against each other time and again since the 1970s. Iranian and Turkish relations have come under fresh pressure since the Iranian revolution. While Turkey and Syria have come closer to open conflict as a result of Syrian support for the PKK and Turkey's water politics, Iraqi-Turkish relations have been nearer to normal. Turkey became Iraq's major trade partner during the war with Iran, and afterwards her gateway to the outside world following the UN sanctions of 1990. However, Turkey, Syria, and Iran still share one common denominator, which is the Kurdish question. Since the end of the Second Gulf War, the three states have been holding regular meetings at the foreign ministerial level or higher in each others' capital cities. In November 1992, the foreign ministers of the three countries, meeting in Ankara, decided to hold regular meetings to monitor the situation of the Kurdish controlled safe haven of northern Iraq. The tripartite meetings are but an arrangement not to allow Kurdish aspirations to grow wider (Asharq Al Awsat 7/6/1993). In October 1993, for example, Iran reinforced its troops in the Kurdish region and the border area with the safe haven in Iraqi Kurdistan. The reason was put down by analysts to a real fear of a possibility of opposition groups, mainly the Kurds, controlling territory inside Iran and then asking for international protection (Asharq Al Awsat 26/10/1993). Fears had risen at the time as rumours were spreading about a Kurdish declaration of a Kurdish state. At the Kurdish Information Centre in London there were reports of the PKK's intention to

declare a Kurdish state at the beginning of 1994.

In conclusion, then, the impact of the regional factor on the Kurdish movement has been most evident in the regional interaction between the concerned states. The primary factor which has continuously led to setbacks in the Kurdish struggle is its geopolitics. Robins says that due to the distribution of the Kurds between four countries, it does not remain exclusively an internal issue. Hence, since the establishment of the modern states of the region, the Kurdish factor has emerged as a 'significant factor in the regional and interstate politics' (Robins, 1992: 670). It is evident, then, that the concerned regional states are in no position to tolerate any Kurdish aspirations. Kurdistan's location then places decisive limitations on Kurdish freedom of action. As a result of this handicap, the Kurdish struggle has since 1961 been dependent on external help. Under these conditions the Kurds have no choice but to accept what is dictated to them (Bulloch and Morris, 1992: 15).

With the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war in 1980, Iran concentrated on building a Shi'ite opposition (The Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq) as the main Iraqi opposition to Saddam. But by 1984 the Iranians had begun to court Sunni and nationalist groups in Iraq (Sherzad in Kreyenbroek & Sperl, 1992: 140). The Sunni and nationalist opposition groups, including the Kurds, were clearly seen as the main opposition group to Saddam Hussein. The Iranian reversal of strategy could contribute to the realisation of the Kurdish factor when needed. On the other hand, Kurdish dependence on regional sponsors was evident in a statement issued by the KDP on 17 August 1982 following a meeting of its Central Committee. The statement stressed the importance of joining all forces against Saddam Hussein who had 'launched and continues to wage the biggest imperialist war against the Islamic Republic of Iran....'. The statement also reiterated the KDP's 'faith in the necessity of furthering friendly relations with the glorious revolution of the Iranian peoples ...[and] the importance of blustering friendly relations with the progressive Arab regime of the Syrian Arab Republic' (KCA, 1982: 31519).

The position of the Kurdish parties, shown in the statement above, indicates their environment. Appeasement of their regional mentors (Iran and Syria as the statement openly identifies) is the first of many constraints the Kurds

have to overcome for their survival and operational continuity. The Kurds then have little or no choice in their own policy and politics. Dependence on a regional mentor has been vital for their communications, aid and assistance, for medical services, for advance and retreat, and for a link with the outside world. As they are a landlocked nation and have no access to a neutral or supportive country, they have to depend on a regional power. Therefore, Kurdish alliances with the regional powers have served these powers rather than the Kurds themselves. The difference between them and the PLO for example was simply access. If the PLO guerrillas were able to organize and reorganize themselves in any 'friendly' Arab country and retreat to it, the Kurds lacked that vital option. The KLM has not yet been able and is not in a position to enter into political relationships with the regional states, who often support them in the logistical sphere only. These states could not simply encourage and sponsor a Kurdish nationalism that would consequently touch and inspire their own Kurdish population. The Kurds are forced to operate under rules and within parameters not of their own making.

CONCLUSION

The Kurds have been waging the longest liberation struggle in the contemporary era. To assess the KLM since 1975, attention must be focused on two movements and two periods. Until the mid-1980s the southern Kurds were the bearers of Kurdish nationalism and the mouthpiece for Kurdish national liberation movement. Until then any assessment and analysis of the Kurdish struggle would have meant a study and analysis of the southern Kurds who had been engaged in an armed struggle for the best parts of the previous four decades. But in 1984 an armed struggle was launched in northern Kurdistan for the first time since 1930s. Therefore, to assess the achievements of the KLM since 1975, it is necessary to compare the methods, programmes and achievements of both armed struggles in order to measure their successes.

Furthermore, to assess and then measure the degree of the KLM's success in southern Kurdistan since 1975 and highlight its achievements, the period must be divided into two parts: 1975-90 and 1991-95. In the first period, 1975-90, one main observation emerges, namely that the KLM came to the brink of extinction at the end of the 1980s. The KLM in southern Kurdistan has had no sustained trajectory. The armed struggle in southern Kurdistan has run into difficulties and at present is at a crossroads. Southern Kurds began an armed struggle with a politicized nationalism that had not matured enough culturally to support the national cause. The KLM in southern Kurdistan has been suffering from shortages of vital necessities for the conduct of a successful liberation struggle. Yet there has been no revisionist approach and reassessment of its achievements.

The KLM lacks efficient organisation, and a leading political party. Since 1975, two balanced parties and several other smaller ones have all been pontificating in the name of the KLM. The absence of an efficient organisation has subsequently curtailed the effectiveness of the armed struggle. In contrast to the pre-1975 armed struggle which was more effective, the post-1975 one has become insignificant and ineffective. While in the pre-1975 phase places like Haji Omran and Kalalah were the headquarters of the KLM, in the

post-1975 phase, there were no such places functioning either as shrines for nationalism nor the headquarters of an effective leadership. Each valley became the headquarters of one group or another. There was no revolutionary centre from which the Kurds could be inspired. Hence, the proliferation of the political parties after 1975 reduced the effectiveness of the armed struggle rather than enhancing it.

Several Kurdish politicians from both parties argued in 1994 that the proliferation of parties within the KLM has been advantageous, for it has prevented the hegemony of one party. Fouad Maswm of the PUK wrote 'I am not for the idea of uniting the political forces in Iraqi Kurdistan in one party since such a move is a step towards dictatorship...' (written interview, southern Kurdistan, 20/10/1994). What these politicians failed to recognise is the cohesiveness, solidarity and impetus that one party generates in the course of liberation struggle. The increase in the number of political parties waging war against Baghdad from one to many did not only increase the burden on the Kurdish villages, which had to feed passing rebels almost nightly, but also led to divisions in loyalty and interests. In addition, the proliferation of political parties in southern Kurdistan has meant confrontation and not cooperation. Armed confrontation between the PUK and KDP since 1978 has seriously weakened the KLM. The internal dispute within the KLM has diverted the energies of the southern Kurds, and the enemy has come from within rather than from outside.

The Kurds have not yet achieved any settlement with a central government where they can freely choose the party they wish to join, or support and exercise political participation democratically. Kurdish politicians in the Safe Havens speak of having passed the stage of revolutionary legitimacy to constitutional legitimacy as if the arrangements of the safe haven are permanent and they can remain in their positions and maintain their authority. Since the withdrawal of the central authority from southern Kurdistan and the transfer of authority to the Kurds, Kurdish parties have not envisaged the end of Operation Provide Comfort and have made no preparations for the day they have to decide whether to accept the return of central authority or take to the mountains. Because of their internal feuding, Kurdish parties have wasted an opportunity to build and train a national army to defend the Kurdish region. Despite the availability of money, time, equipment and human resources to raise such an

army, they have opted not to take such an important step.

Another central weakness of the KLM in southern Kurdistan has been the lack of a leader who can oversee the running of the organisation. The increase in the number of the would-be leaders has alarmingly decreased the ability of the movement to devise a clear strategy. The KLM in southern Kurdistan lacks homogeneity, concrete programmes, and ideology, as well as a consensus on objectives and values. Each faction, keen on capturing the leading position, has shown willingness to compromise with the central government of Baghdad. Following the 1991 negotiations with Saddam Hussein, the KDP leader Massoud al-Barazani was ready to sign an accord with the Iraqi government. This was rejected by the PUK. The KDP for its part opposed PUK's negotiations with the Iraqi government in the first half of the 1980s. Opposition to agreement with Baghdad from either party can be put down to the fear in either party of losing leverage and position if the other party strikes an accord with the central government. This was also the case in the early 1980s, when the PUK forces fought the KDP alongside government forces.

Furthermore, the KLM in southern Kurdistan has chosen to demand autonomy for the Kurdish region and democracy for Iraq. It has restricted its objective to a narrow range. Until 1975, armed struggle in southern Kurdistan had support from all over Kurdistan because it cherished the aspiration of the whole Kurdish nation. Since then, this support has almost vanished. The crisis within the KLM in southern Kurdistan then has forced the legitimacy of the armed struggle in question among a wider section of the Kurds.

In the first phase of the period 1975-1990, the KLM had a degree of legitimacy for its actions. Although its achievements were negligible, it had support or at least sympathy from the masses. The leaders of the KLM managed to convince the people that the armed struggle was in the name of the nation and for the nation. Even when the competing Kurdish parties went to war against one another between 1975 and 1990, there was still the enemy that gave legitimacy to the KLM in southern Kurdistan. Since the beginning of the second phase in 1991, in which the party has taken control of the safe haven, the KLM has lost its legitimacy in the eyes of the Kurds.

Moreover, division and rivalry within the KLM in southern Kurdistan after 1975

exposed the movement to penetration and counter-insurgency policies. Iraqi intelligence services successfully infiltrated the ranks of all political parties opposing the government. Documents captured in the Kurdish uprising from government offices during the March uprising in 1991 revealed the vulnerability of the movement. In a British television documentary in 1992, film of seized files substantiated intelligence success; term mowaly (supporter) appeared on many files. Following the uprising in 1991, the KDP set up a tribunal in the town of Qa'adish near Amadia north of Dohuk for Iraqi officers and personnel captured during the uprising. An Iraqi security amin (officer) known as Captain Rajab was put on trial. During the proceedings Captain Rajab was insulted by Fatah Gulli, a regional commander of the KDP sitting on the tribunal panel, who was promoted subsequently. Captain Rajab addressed him thus:

> I would accept insults from anyone but not from you Fatah Gulli. I only gave you your salary, ID380 [government salary] few days ago on the fifteenth of the month, and not only you but many others like you. I have paid their salaries. I know my name is Rajab, I am working for my Arab government, for Saddam, and I am an Arab and an Iraqi, but somebody like you, for whom do you work? (Reference B, London, December 1995).

The impact of this vulnerability within the movement was devastating; it forced the nationalists themselves to suspect each other. Government agents sent to the mountains managed to join the ranks of the Peshmerga, subsequently eliminating activists like Mahmmod Yazidi. This successful penetration could be attributed largely to the proliferation of Kurdish political parties who were anxious to eclipse each other by recruiting as many members as possible without a vetting process.

One of the most critical and dangerous aspects resulting from the crisis within the KLM in southern Kurdistan over the last few years has been the fear of a possible polarisation of society. The ongoing hostility between the KDP and PUK has raised fears among the Kurds that if the two parties do not settle their belligerent relationship and reach a modus vivendi in this critical period in the course of the KLM, there is a possibility of long-term damage to the relationship between the Sorani and Bahdinani sections of the Kurdish

society. Since the setting up of the safe haven, southern Kurdistan has practically been run by two administrations, each at odds with the other. The PUK not only extended its control over the Soran section, but also managed to put the ongoing fighting into a sectarian context (Bahdinan against Soran) in order to eradicate the support that the KDP had in the Soran section. By doing this, the PUK hopes to capture the leadership from the Bahdinan-based KDP. Thus, the Soranization of the PUK would tip the balance in their favour and, as a result, take the leadership from the Bahdinani minority.

However, each party has set up its own administration in its power base, with nominal representation in the other part, while the elected Kurdish assembly in the city of Arbil is caught between the two parts. By 1995 the Kurdish Parliament was run mainly by the PUK. KDP members could not attend for security reasons, on account of the PUK's control over the city. The authority of the elected Assembly, however, applies mainly to Soran whereas the KDP governor of Dohuk in Bahdinan, has the power to ratify or reject laws passed by the Assembly. The fear of this administrative partition of southern Kurdistan is that it could possibly, and would if continued, create a chasm between the two parts. Both parties seem determined not to settle their differences. The humour of the past about the Soran and Kermanji dialects of the Kurdish language seldom found anyone even to harbour a sectarian thought. Now in the absence of the common enemy, competition between the Kurdish leaders themselves is likely to create a sense of division. This is already evident at the Qandil gorge checkpoint between Aqra and Arbil where duty on goods has to be paid for entering the Soran region.

While the KLM in southern Kurdistan has not only failed to achieve any of its objectives since 1975 but has also been weakened and has lost standing and legitimacy. The divisions within the movement are such that the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz was able to say 'Let them [the Kurds] do whatever they like for a while....but at the end they will come back to their homeland [Iraq]...' (The Gulf War, BBC1 16/1/1996). Aziz's confidence came from the belief that splits within the ranks of the Kurdish nationalists would eventually drive one faction or the other to seek reconciliation with the central authority. But as the KLM slides further into difficulties the initiation of more recent armed struggle further to the north, namely the PKK, is gradually becoming the main force in Kurdish politics.

The second period in the history of the KLM in southern Kurdistan, 1990-95, was characterised by a new and unexpected change in the political climate. Between the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990 and the American led liberation of Kuwait on 16 January 1991, the southern Kurds came out beating the drums of uprising again. To them, Saddam's invasion of Kuwait was like a wish come true. With the breakdown of authority in Iraq following the defeat in the war, the shortest land war ever, the Kurds were quick to take yet this fresh opportunity. However, they were to suffer the most spectacular defeat in their contemporary history as the entire population of southern Kurdistan took to the mountains fleeing the vengeance of Iraqi Republican Guards. Since this tragedy was a by-product of a western war, the Kurds were returned to their homes under the Operation Provide Comfort. As the Kurdish region was under the control of the Kurds in the absence of central authority, Kurdish parties managed to set up a Kurdish parliament and run an election in order to select a leader but failed, in the end, to elect one. The importance of the second period can be concluded by highlighting the conditions in southern Kurdistan.

It would have seemed natural to expect the Kurdish nationalist leaders to make the most of the special conditions prevalent in southern Kurdistan. Southern Kurdistan was for the first time in modern history under the authority of the Kurds, albeit with the consent and help of the Allied Powers. There was no presence, even minimal, of the central authority in Baghdad. This was the best opportunity yet to come the Kurdish way. Instead, the political conditions in southern Kurdistan deteriorated to the point where the nationalists lost popular support. And Kurdistan became effectively the battlefield for the warring Kurdish parties, mainly the PUK and the KDP. Furthermore, the same constraints that had inhibited the first period of the movement were to continue hampering it in the second period, but on a larger and more dangerous scale.

In No Friends but the Mountains, Bulloch and Morris begin their conclusion by saying that the Kurds lack the 'political sophistication needed to promote their cause' (Bulloch and Morris, 1992: 217). This has indeed been the case over the years in the course of the KLM in southern Kurdistan. But it does not mean that there is no élite sophisticated enough and willing to undertake the task of promoting the Kurdish plight. A glance at the modern history of the

region shows that the Kurds have provided over the years the political élite who have taken the leading role in, for example, Iraqi politics. Iraq's contemporary history is fraught with Kurdish names such as Baker Sidqi, the Baban family who played an important role in the political organization of Iraq. The same could be said of other parts of the region. The problem then is not so much a lack of the political sophistication but rather the reluctance of the existing Kurdish authorities to allow the political élite to undertake the leading role in the KLM.

Since embarking on its armed struggle in 1984 in northern Kurdistan, the PKK has become the only Kurdish party to have achieved so much in such a short space of time. A simple contrast between the PKK and the political parties in southern Kurdistan, KDP and PUK, shows the conditions under which both armed struggles have been carried out. It becomes clear that the conditions in the north have been harsher. If the Iraqi governments had been lenient towards the Kurds, they were so because the KLM gave the central governments some 'legitimacy'. The Kurdish question was always manipulated to serve Iraqi governments and it could be argued that prolonging the conflict served those Iraqi governments more than it did the Kurds themselves. In northern Kurdistan, the Kurdish question was not able to provide 'legitimacy' to the central governments in Ankara. Therefore, Turkish attitudes towards the issue were harsher than those of the Iraqi governments. Nevertheless, the PKK has succeeded in establishing itself as the most viable party to lead and manage the KLM. The PKK's success has been the result of its ideological programme, firm leadership, and efficient organisation.

Ideology is the backbone of the PKK. The founders of the party laid the programme for the party and struggle in the <u>Manifesto</u> as the basis for the liberation of the Kurdish nation. Nationalism alone did not seem sufficient to guide the armed struggle. Thus PKK's ideology, combined with nationalism, has created the vital element for an effective armed struggle, namely, readiness to make sacrifices. Creating the love of martyrdom in its members has been the most successful achievement of the party in its short existence. This spirit of sacrifice has been of two merits, first, in generating fear among the enemy, and secondly in winning respect and authority. The southern parties never succeeded in inculcating such a spirit among their people. In a tribute to the late Mullah Mustafa al-Barazani, Halgurd wrote that 'his

greatest quality, and perhaps the one which attracted men to serve him loyally..., was his respect for life. He would not tolerate a high number of casualties, and would abandon victory if too costly' (The Kurdish Observer, April 1988: 4). In contrast to this mentality, the PKK is fostering an armed struggle that takes pride in sacrifice. The PKK's sacrifices can only be seen as a reflection of their belief and faith in the supremacy of their nation. The heroic sacrifices of the Peshmerga of the PKK in the war with the Turkish army over the last few years is but confirmation of the PKK's vision.

The PKK's success was not confined to its ability to recruit the dedicated and staunch members; it also has managed to set up a competent organisation which has in the last ten years developed into a complex structure extending throughout the region and Europe. As the number of Kurdish refugees in Europe has increased, Kurdistan Information Centres and Committees have been set up in most European capital cities. These centres are the PKK's unofficial bureaus throughout Europe. The work of these offices is not limited to cultural events but to the organisation of Kurdish communities in terms of political education by organising regular demonstrations, lobbying in the European parliaments, appealing to public opinion for solidarity, recruitment, and tax-collection. In several visits to the Kurdish Information Centre in London between 1991 and 1992, the author noticed how efficient and organised the northern Kurds had become. Many visiting Kurds to the centre have been struck by the difference in behaviour and attitudes between the northern and southern Kurds. The dedication of the northern Kurds at the centres reflects the party's successful organisation. The small Kurdish Cultural Centre in London representing the southern Kurds has, on the other hand, become a battlefield between the respective supporters of the KDP and the PUK, and because of the attitudes and party politics at the centre many Kurds refuse to visit it.

In addition to an identifiable ideology and efficient organisation, the PKK's third component of success has been its leadership. Unlike the leadership in southern Kurdistan, the PKK's leadership has a humble and unassuming background. It has through its youth and vision stimulated and inspired a zealous young generation of Kurds. The PKK's leadership has been accused of being Stalinist and dictatorial by some Kurdish leaders in southern Kurdistan, but this style has proven necessary for the conduct of an armed struggle.

It is evident that the PKK have achieved in a decade what the southern Kurds have failed to do in decades. The party has spared no effort to advance the cause of the Kurdish nation. It was the first Kurdish party to realize the importance of communication and set up a Kurdish satellite channel, MED/TV, based in London, to take the Kurdish question into Turkey's front rooms. The modest lifestyle of the PKK's representatives in Britain in contrast to the lavish one of the representatives of parties from southern Kurdistan is one aspect in which a marked difference can be seen. More importantly, the PKK's success has been in its objectives. In contrast to the nebulous objectives of the southern parties, PKK's unequivocal objectives such as independence for the Kurdish nation have made the party a national party rather than a local one like the PUK and KDP. Whether the party can sustain its national objectives is not certain but at least it has not publicly localised its objectives as the southern parties have done over the last three years. Thus, the PKK's adherence to its doctrines and objectives has won the party support even among PUK and KDP MPs in southern Kurdistan. Public support for the party is on the increase throughout Kurdistan and abroad.

If factors from within have constrained the KLM in southern Kurdistan, then the regional factor has equally circumscribed the struggle and limited its achievements. The regional dimension places the KLM at a strategic disadvantage since it determines the margin which the Kurds are allowed to reach. Perhaps one misfortune of the Kurdish nation is to have been in a sensitive region where regional politics and relations have always been intricate. The politics of the region hence have not only limited the freedom of the KLM but have also generated a pattern whereby the Kurds are used as political pawns by the regional states. The relevance of regional constraints and their influence on the Kurdish question is paramount for it engulfs and determines the course of action of all parts of the Kurdish struggle. Thus, policy-making is in the hand not of the Kurds but their mentors. Each regional state maintains control over a Kurdish group or a party.

Since 1975 Iran has sponsored the KDP and since the mid-1980s supported the PUK. Since 1990 Iran has given its support to the Islamists in Kurdistan. During the war with Iran, Iraq, on the other hand, supported the KDPI by financing and arming them as well as providing shelter. Jalal Talabani of the PUK spent most of his years of exile in Syria, where he led the party. Syria

also has been the PKK's patron in the region. She has provided the base for the PKK's mass organisation. Since 1991, Turkey has taken on the task of practically formulating the KDP's policy and has forced both the KDP and PUK to participate in its war against the PKK. Thus, the regional dimension not only restricts Kurdish success but often has the effect of reversing any progress made by the KLM. By a simple act of cutting off support, as the Shah did in 1975, or closing the border, regional powers can bring the Kurdish armed struggle to a halt. However, since relations between the states immediately concerned with the Kurdish problem are not cordial for most of the time, keeping a Kurdish party or a group has always been an option for the central governments who wish to use them as a potent force to destabilize or at least cause trouble for a neighbouring state. The latest in this age-old practice can be noticed in Syria's dispute with Turkey over water. Turkey's uncompromising position over her GAP project led Syria to sponsor the PKK. The PKK's war against Turkey has subsequently been the major problem facing the Turkish state.

This exploitation of the Kurds in regional relations has served the Kurds only by keeping the flames of Kurdish nationalism alive. Under friendly, peaceful and cooperative relations between the concerned states, the chances of sustaining or even carrying out an armed struggle would be remote. On the other hand, it has been disadvantageous in that none of the states involved is likely to allow the Kurds to pass a certain point. Each of the four states involved in the regional politics has its own Kurdish minority. Thus, they are unlikely to encourage or support the establishment of a Kurdish entity across their borders. Evidence shows that the regional states have always reached a compromise in which the Kurds have ended the losers.

The lack of a neutral border with the outside world has forced the Kurds to recognise the fact that they have to depend on a regional state if they are to keep their nationalism alive. Thus, in the face of this bitter reality, on which all Kurdish politicians assent, they cannot be severely criticised for disunity and division. If the Kurdish groups in southern Kurdistan can, for example, unite in one group and under one policy, their position will undoubtedly be stronger vis-à-vis the Iraqi government. Under such conditions they can bargain successfully with the government of Baghdad. But their own source of strength is not in their hands. Therefore, when in a position of

strength, they can be weakened when their backer decides to pull the plug. In 1975 when the Kurdish armed struggle in Iraq collapsed as a result of the Algiers Agreement between Iran and Iraq, Kurdish commanders implored Barazani not to give in and carry on fighting without the Iranian assistance. Barazani's decision, however, to give in was mainly based on his recognition of the fact that without Iran, the prospects of the armed struggle were bleak.

The dependence on a mentor has been crucial for the Kurdish armed struggle; it provides not only material but equally important, the base to retreat to. Thousands of Kurdish families found refuge in Iran while the Peshmerga was fighting the Iraqi government. Hence once the supporting state decides to shut a corridor to the rebels, they are practically trapped and have to face the advancing troops on their own. Even when individual rebels are encircled there is always the chance of slipping through and disappearing in the rugged mountains and valleys, but evading capture is almost impossible when they have families accompanying them. Safe passage and shelter for the families, therefore, have been an important factor in the armed struggle in southern Kurdistan. Sanctuary, however, is ALWAYS provided by a neighbouring state, which as a result retains sway over the action and the decision making process of the Kurds. The PKK's success hitherto has been partly due to its force's ability to move freely. As they have no families to escort and shelter, in a safe place, they have managed to launch successful attacks and then slip away usually under cover of night. Their ability to vanish across the borders with Iraq and Iran has made it impossible for the Turkish army to find them. And when required to keep a low profile they basically manage to live in the mountains for as long as needed. But even allowing for their freedom of movement, the PKK's main shelter and base is provided by a regional state. If Syria decides to abandon the PKK and discontinue its support, then the PKK would find it difficult to operate.

The Kurds find some comfort, however, in the fact that regional relations have not been and are unlikely to be cordial. Regional politics has often been eruptive and volatile. Prospects of congenial interstate relations can be dismissed as the political systems remain antagonistic. And for as long as they remain contentious, the Kurds will always find a role to play, but they will also remain the most readily available pawn.

Moreover, for decades the Kurdish issue was eclipsed by the Arab-Israeli dispute. The Kurd's plight and struggle passed unheeded. Despite the scale of the Kurdish tragedy, the outside world paid no attention to the ongoing struggle in Kurdistan. Since its creation, the UN has failed to mention the Kurds even by name. During the Cold War both superpowers had vested interests in the Middle East. Each polar power was keen to maintain the status quo of the existing client states. Following the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, the preservation of the Ba'athist government in Iraq was of paramount interest for the West and its friends in the region.

The western need to contain Iran's radical Shi'ite Islam, which was envisaged as an imminent threat to the pro-western states in the Persian Gulf, enabled Saddam Hussein to take supreme control in Iraq. Despite his anti-Kurdish drive and abuses of human rights, he was the only leader in the region willing to contain the presumed Iranian threat. In the 1980s the Kurds became the forgotten victims of the longest war in the modern history of the Middle East. Though the Kurds were caught in the cross-fire for the best parts of the eight-year war, world attention remained focused on the shipping lanes of the Persian Gulf. Even when the Iraqi government used poison gas against the Kurds, the world remained uninterested in their plight. Iraq became the mecca for western industrialists and arms dealers. By 1989 Iraq was the ninth largest importer of agricultural products from the USA. Only eight months before the invasion of Kuwait, President Bush approved a $200m loan to Iraq (Asharq Al Awsat 16/1/1996: 16).

The flourishing Iraqi market and its newly established procurement offices, where the Iraqis were prodigal in their acquisition of western technology, overshadowed the gassing of the Kurdish town of Halabjah where five thousand people were killed instantly. Even the clandestine visit by the British documentary film maker Gwynne Roberts to southern Kurdistan to collect soil samples and investigate the gas attack (Bulloch and Morris, 1992: 163) came only after intense pressure from the Kurds. In 1989, the KDP's representative in Europe, Hoshyar Zebari, told the author in London, that it took them about three months to convince Roberts to go to southern Kurdistan. The western governments of the 1980s were only too happy to maintain the Middle Eastern markets for their chief export, weapons. The sale of the Supergun was a good example of the western attitude. Thus competition between western companies

over Iraqi's lucrative market compelled the western governments to ignore even the Anfal campaign, which bordered on genocide. The western determination not to invoke the Kurdish issue was explicit during the Paris Conference on chemical weapons in 1989. In the words of Najad Aziz Agha, the Deputy General Secretary of the Kurdish Parliament 'even at the Paris Conference on the chemical weapons, both camps [west and east] agreed not to mention the Halabjah crime, and instead focused on Libya as working for the production of chemical weapons' (written interview, 1/10/1994, Arbil). In other words, the western governments were not willing to risk its unemployment rate at home and investment in Iraq. Hence the misbehaviour of Iraq, including the execution of the British journalist Farzad Bazoft despite worldwide condemnation, was swept under the carpet.

If the western silence over Iraqi behaviour was due to contracts and the Iraqi willingness to protect the Gulf from the Iranian threat, western attitudes towards the Turkish handling of the Kurdish question has been formulated in the wider context of NATO. Turkey's position as NATO's southern flank ensured western support for Turkey. To appease Turkey, most western governments branded the PKK a terrorist organisation.

As for the rest of the world, support for the Kurdish question has not materialized. This can be attributed to several factors. First, both Iran and Iraq are big oil exporters. Secondly, the Arab lobby on behalf of Iraq has been effective especially since as a voting bloc in the UN it is very strong. Thirdly, other countries have similar ethnic secessionist problems and therefore cannot show support for the Kurds. Morocco, India, Sri Lanka, China, Russia, are but a few cases whence support for the Kurds is unlikely to come.

Since the end of the Second Gulf War, world politics has sharply changed. The Cold War is also over. The Arabs and the Israelis eventually sat down to talk and attempt to make peace. The peace process has been set in motion and the prospect of a Palestinian state, following the Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, is within grasp. As the Arab-Israeli reconciliation has solved the region's main dispute, the Kurds have an opportunity to force their plight to the top of the agenda. Bulloch and Morris conclude by saying 'The Kurds are still knocking on the door, but their knock is louder now' (Bulloch and Morris, 1992: 238).

Since the Israeli-Palestinian accord, the prospects for the Middle East to become the next boom region are good. The Amman Conference in 1995 was no more than a business gathering to draw the blueprint for development in the region. In the region's media, attention has been focused on peace dividends in terms of actual improvement in the conditions of the peoples and countries. Hence it becomes clear that the Kurds should not only knock louder but that they should make a breakthrough and impose their problem on the region and beyond. To do this the Kurds have to devise their objectives and strategy. Smith argues that:

> to make any real headway in the modern world, ethnic movements must stake their claims in political and economic terms as well as cultural ones, and evolve economic and political programmes. They must organize themselves in the political market-place, and demand political autonomy (Smith, 1981: 20).

As the political environment is changing, uncertainty in Kurdish objectives, hence, can no longer provide sanctuary and legitimacy for the articulators of Kurdish national aspirations. Seeking different ends has directly weakened the Kurdish liberation struggle. It is of pressing importance, therefore, for the Kurds to agree on a clear-cut objective to present their case to the world in the coming future. They have to formulate an overall strategy and dispatch qualified cadres and representatives to gather support. At present, however, trends within the KLM suggest that some factions are quite content with their present status. The southern Kurds seem to be satisfied with the quasi self-rule resulting from the break up of central authority in Iraq. Southern and eastern Kurds have reached the conclusion that the creation of an independent Kurdish state is just not possible, and have therefore resorted to demands for local autonomy for the Kurds and democracy at the state level.

Although the likelihood of even a partial democracy in the host countries remains only remote, calls for democracy by the Kurds, however, are bound to undermine the ultimate goal of the Kurdish nation. For if the countries where Kurds are part of became constitutional democracies, the Kurds are unlikely to be able to sustain their struggle for a state. Kurdish grievances so far have been over unequal opportunities, uneven development, and the denial of their national right. Hence a recognition of these inequalities and a

programme to solve them would force the Kurds to find another reason for secession. Demands for democracy and democratic rights by the Kurds of Iran and Iraq have evolved mainly because of their realisation that the chances of establishing even a Kurdish state within the respective states are very remote. This is not only because of the counter aggressive and more potent, central, nationalism of the two states, but more importantly, because the viability of such a state is doubtful. If the southern Kurds were able to establish an independent Kurdish state, the prospects of survival and continuity are bleak. A Kurdish state in northern Iraq on its own would be isolated and encircled by hostile states from all sides. Then even control over the Kirkuk oil fields would amount to nothing as it would be impossible to export oil without the cooperation of either Turkey, Syria, Iran or Iraq. An isolated state in southern Kurdistan, then, would be unworkable for the Kurds themselves. A Kurdish state would be viable only if it was created as a result of a total break up of an existing state, as happened in former Soviet Union and former Yugoslavia. Kurdish hopes were raised twice over the last five years. First, because they were hopeful that the sweeping changes in Eastern Europe would extend to their region. And secondly, because of the break up of central authority in Iraq following the war. Both cases turned to be no more than titillating day dreams. Democratic systems were not set up, neither was Iraq dismembered. However, even if Iraq was dismembered, and a Kurdish state brought into existence, Turkey, Iran and Syria would have been hostile to it.

Further to Bulloch and Morris's observation that 'their knock is louder now', the Kurdish armed struggle is unlikely on the other hand to shrivel. Parallel to the state-sponsored nationalism of the host states, Kurdish nationalism, as a counter-measure, is becoming more aggressive. As policies of integration and assimilation have failed, the Kurdish question has risen to the top of the agenda in Turkey and Iraq with no solution within sight. A military approach has, proven equally ineffective. Neither side seems capable of winning an outright victory. But the issue is neither going to go away by itself nor can it be ignored. It is no longer a domestic problem that a token force of gendarmerie could handle. The best divisions of the central armies are permanently deployed in Kurdistan. Yet it only requires a handful of guerrillas to keep the flames of nationalism alive.

To conclude then, a political solution for the Kurdish question is of pressing importance for at least two reasons. First, war in Kurdistan, whether in Iraq or Turkey, has meant a great burden on the resources of both states. The war in Turkish Kurdistan is estimated to be costing the Turkish state between seven and ten billion dollars a year. Therefore, the longer the Kurdish question is left unsolved, the slower the pace of Turkey's development and modernisation will be. Secondly, on the regional level, the Kurds will continue to be a provocative element and always available as a force for regional interstate disputes.

As to what kind of political solution is suitable, the Kurdish question is subject to several views. The Kurds of southern (and eastern) Kurdistan seem to be willing to accept any kind of local autonomy (as for example stressed by Najim al-Din Karim in an interview with the Voice of America on 7 May 1992). Since 1992, southern Kurds have been talking about a federal arrangement with the central authority in Iraq. However, a demand for autonomy within such a framework is problematic in itself. The ambiguity of the demand lies in the interpretation of the rule of 'autonomy'. This can be interpreted in terms of decentralization, local government, regional government, or self-rule, or merely cultural autonomy. These interpretations, however, tend to expand and shrink depending on personalties and circumstances. For the KDP, for example, autonomy was interpreted as a form of political decentralization which meant the distribution of duties between the central and local authorities. Autonomy is also seen as a local entity, within the framework of a state, and this will allow a small nation to cling to its local identity through the setting up of executive and legislative councils.

Several constraints obtain. First, an overall democratic framework is essential. The Kurds, however, cannot bring about such conditions for the whole country. They cannot continue claiming 'autonomy for Kurdistan and democracy for Iraq' and 'democracy for Iran and autonomy for Kurdistan' for they cannot determine the shape of the overall political system in either state. This was evident in the failure of the opposition groups in Iraq to reach a final agreement on a possible post-Saddam Iraq. Zubaida argues in his introduction to Kreyenbroek & Sperl's The Kurds: A Contemporary Overview (1992: 4-5), that the best chance for the Kurds is autonomy, but says that

autonomy would not make sense if the central government was not subject to the rule of law. Disrespect for the rule of law, however, is too conspicuous in the region for the Kurds to expect these governments to put law above the system. A third constraint is that the Kurdish problem is not confined to one state. Kurdish autonomy or federal arrangement is bound to have an impact on the neighbouring countries with their own Kurdish populations. Turkey might, for example, pressure Iraq not to grant the Kurds real autonomy because of fears about its own Kurdish population. A further objection to autonomy or federalism is that of commitment and interest. Iraq is part of the Arab world, and the Arabic part in the case of a federation would naturally continue to be inspired by Arab nationalism and an Arab political union. If an Arab union between Iraq and one or more Arab countries was successful then the Kurds would become part of that union; which would not necessarily be their own choice. The same problem would arise if the Kurds of Iraq were in a position to form a union with a Kurdish region in a neighbouring state.

The localization of Kurdish aspirations in the south and east of Kurdistan, however, has come about as a result of their realisation of their confining political and military environment. In contrast, the northern Kurds have embarked on a national liberation struggle with a clear goal. For them and for many other Kurds in and outside Kurdistan, the establishment of a Kurdish state is imperative. For them, it is only in their own state that Kurdish society can develop, since the ruling states have failed and are unlikely to pay any genuine attention to the needs of Kurdish society.

At this point in their struggle, the Kurds, mainly the southern Kurds, must pause for a critical self-assessment and an objective revision of their options and environment. Kurdish nationalists, particularly those in southern Kurdistan, need to address some crucial issues before they continue to articulate Kurdish nationalism and Kurdish national aspirations. Today the Kurdish nation has friends, not necessarily governments but people: therefore, the Kurds have to capitalise on the sympathy they have won in the west to enhance their position. All Kurdish groups must ensure that the plight of the nation is projected worldwide, because BBC and CNN cameras might not be there in the future as they were in March 1991. This requires active resistance at home and a campaign worldwide. Secondly, the Kurds must realise that in order to be effective in their struggle they must overcome their internal divisions

and unite in one front. Divisions within their ranks would continue to make it easy for their enemies to exploit them as pawns. The Kurds must also realise the power of sacrifice, both physical and material. For a nationalist movement to be effective all resources must be made available. Furthermore, the Kurds need to formulate an overall strategy and a clear goal for their struggle.

Finally, the findings of this study do not cover all aspects of the Kurdish issue. Therefore, further research is recommended, particularly into impact of international politics on Kurdish affairs. This is important as the region remains volatile with constant shifts in alliances and changes in environment as well as attitudes.

RECORDED INTERVIEWS

1. Rushdy, A'arf, (PUK's politburo member; Dohuk, 1/10/1994).

2. Baba Sheikh, Ido (MP for PUK; Dohuk, 5/10/1994).

3. Hussein, Mullah, (a political officer of KDP; Dohuk, 4/10/1994).

4. Abdul Rahman, Sami, (Chairman of People's Democratic Party of Kurdistan 1981-92, Now a KDP's politburo member, 1/2/1992).

5. Mustafa, Abdullah Salman, (Peshmerga - KDP, 1980-83; Dohuk, September 1994).

6. Ali, Hassan, (Deputy Commander of a KDP battalion, Dohuk, 29/9/1994).

7. Ismail, Sardar, (a Kurdish Civil Engineer witnessing the Kurdish exodus of 1991 on the Iranian border; Essex, England, 1/7/1991).

WRITTEN INTERVIEWS

1. Maswm, Fouad, (First Kurdish Prime Minister of the safe haven and a PUK politburo member; Arbil, 20/10/1994).

2. Najad Aziz Agha, (Deputy of the General Secretary of the Kurdish Parliament; Arbil, 10/10/1994).

N.B. Several MPs from both parties (PUK and KDP) including Fransw Hariri and Sami Abdul Rahman of the KDP did not reply to written questions while visiting Arbil on 1/10/1994.

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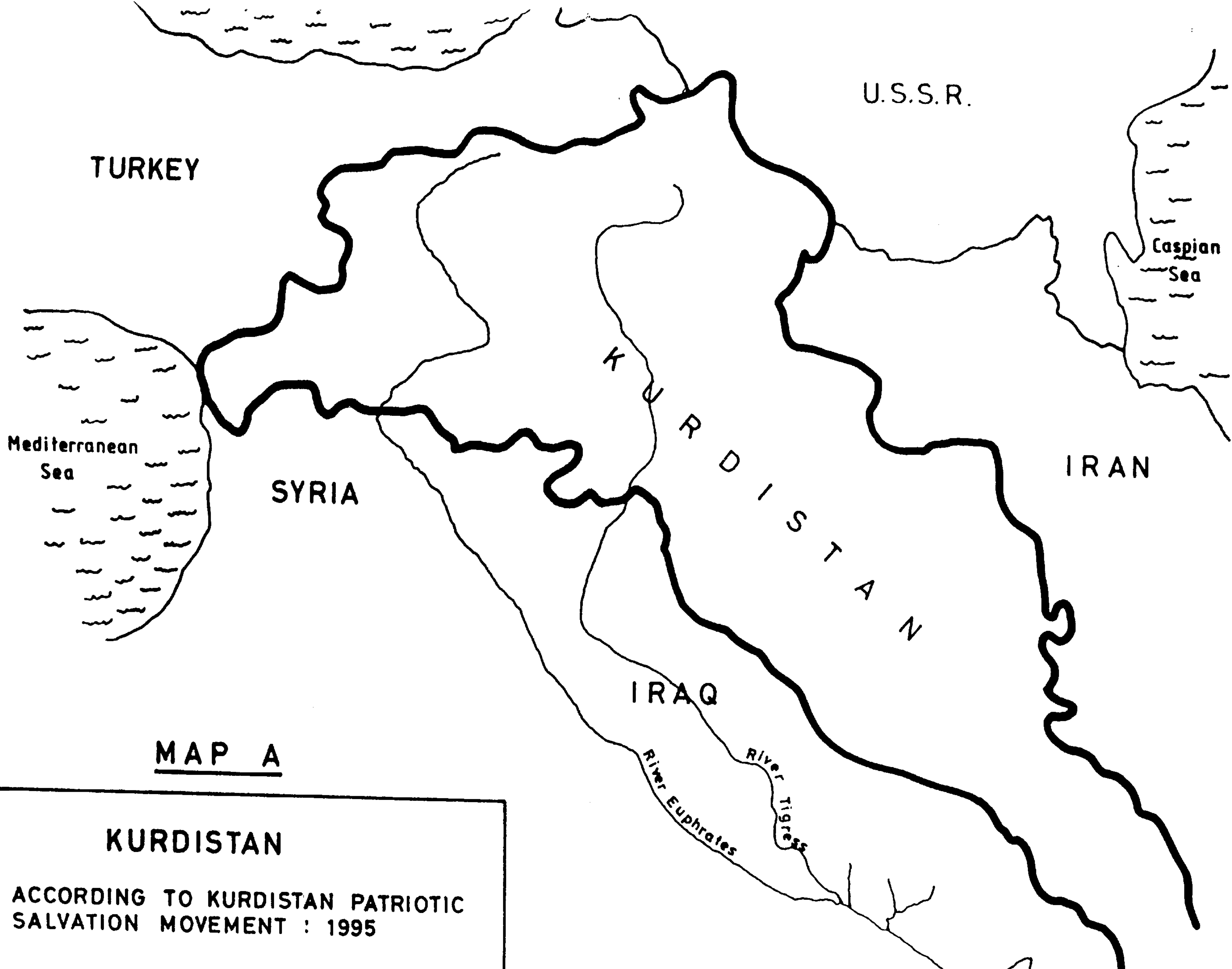
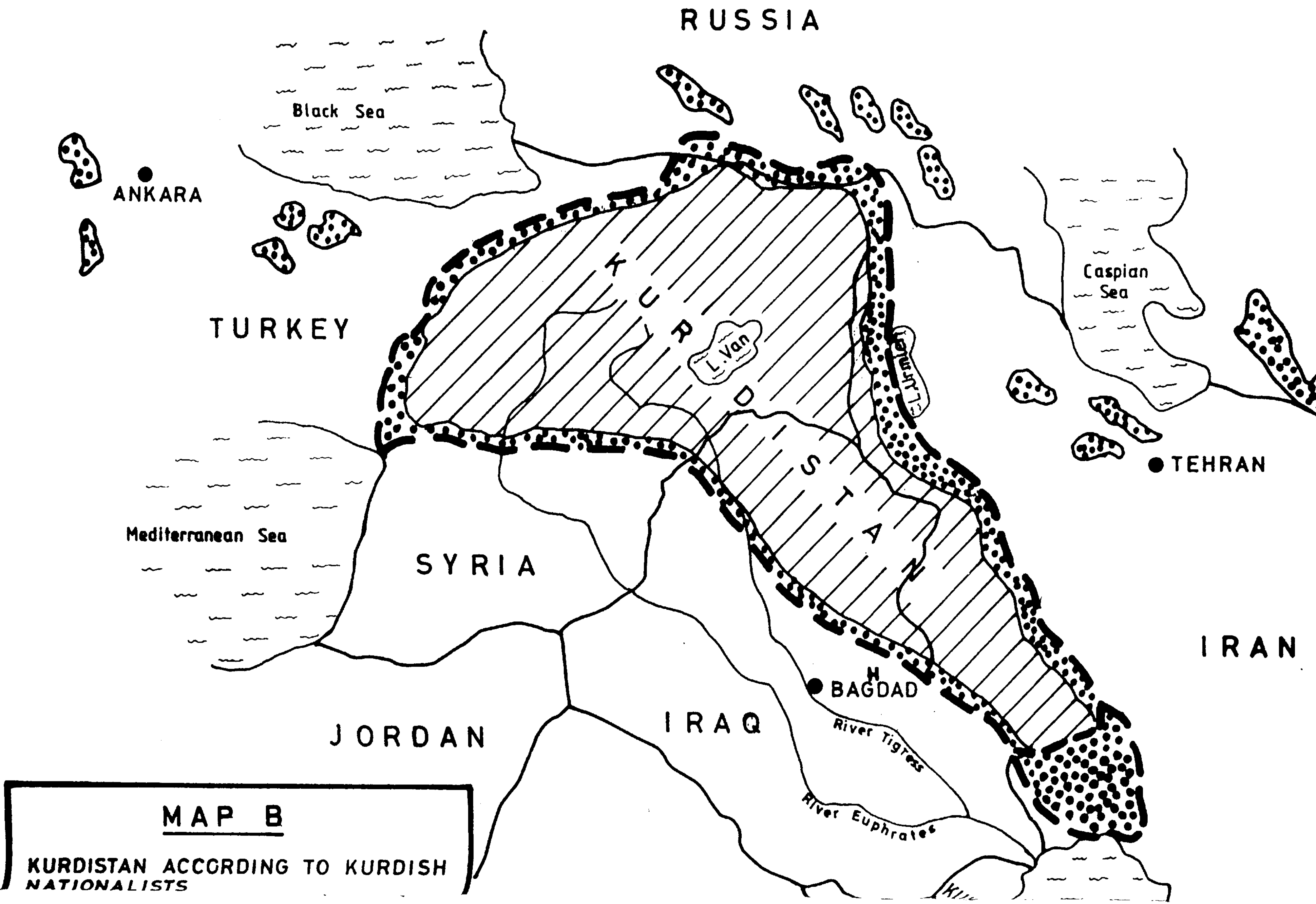
* Al Watan
* Asharq Al Awsat
* Al Arab
* Al Qabas
* Al Riyadh



MAP A

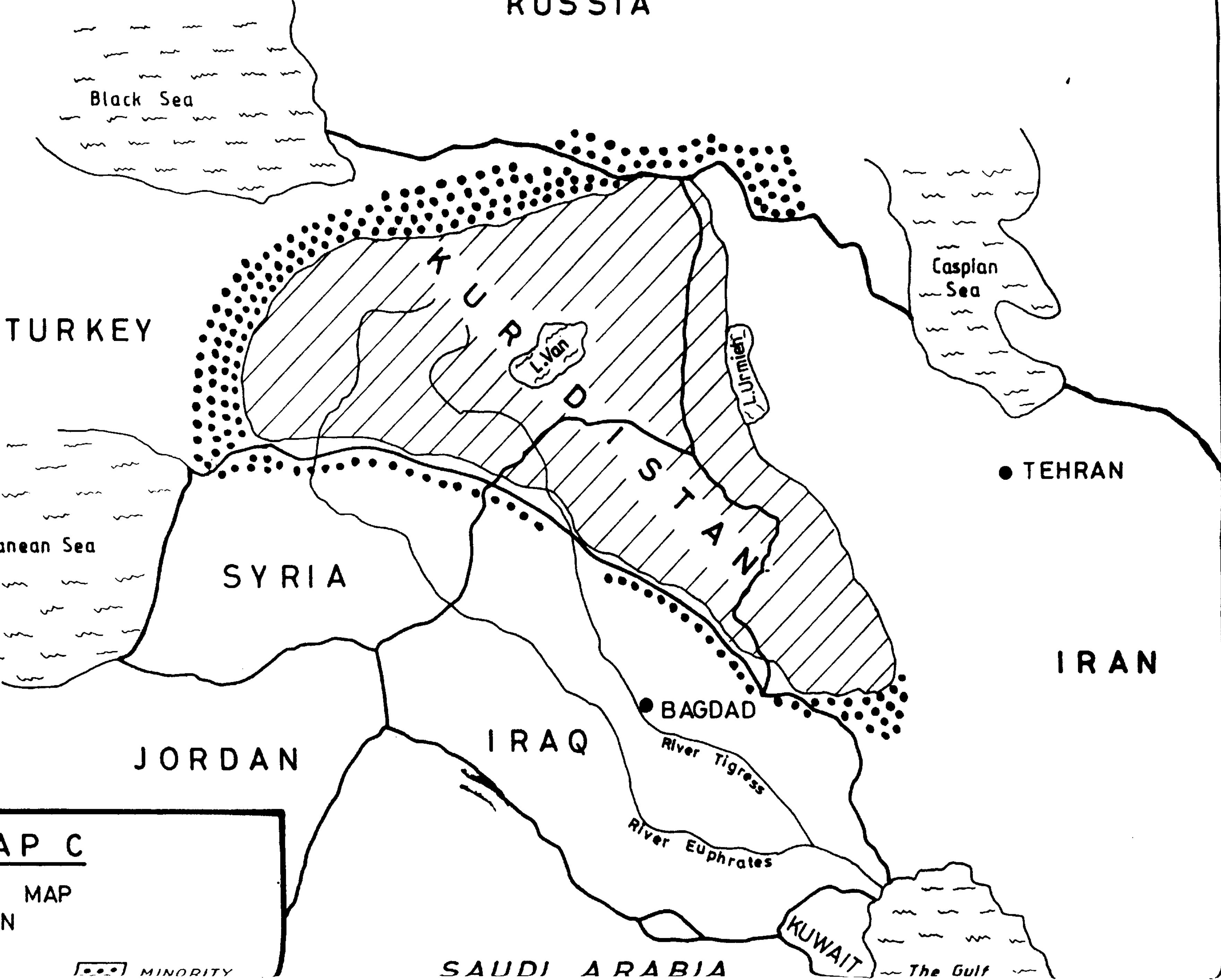
KURDISTAN

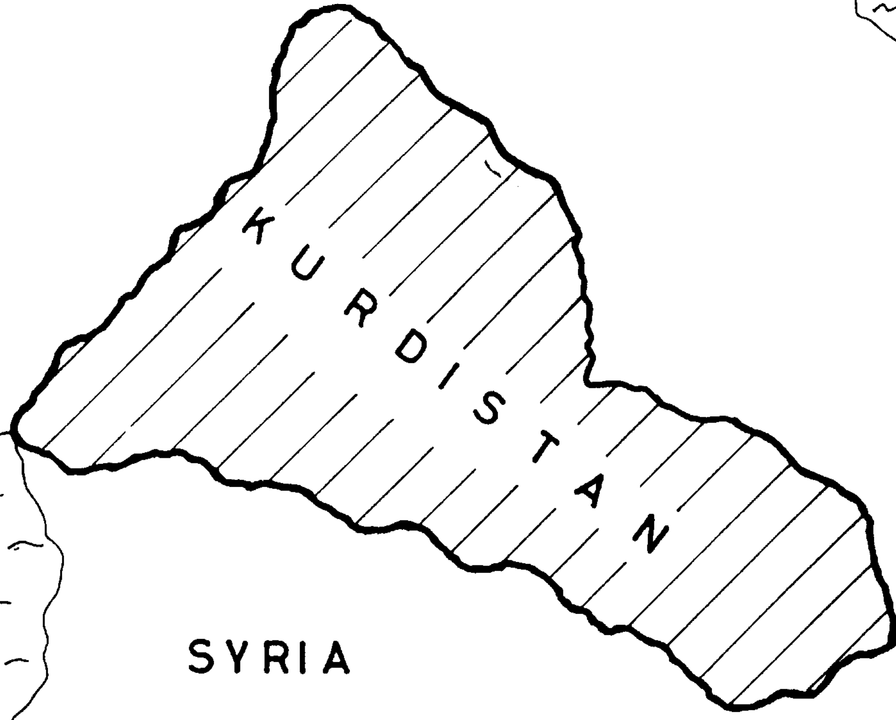
ACCORDING TO KURDISTAN PATRIOTIC SALVATION MOVEMENT : 1995



MAP B

KURDISTAN ACCORDING TO KURDISH NATIONALISTS


RUSSIA
Black Sea
ANKARA
TURKEY
KURDISTAN
L.Van
L.Urmieh
Caspian Sea
TEHRAN
Mediterranean Sea
SYRIA
IRAN
BAGDAD
IRAQ
JORDAN
River Tigress
River Euphrates
KUWAIT
The Gulf
SAUDI ARABIA
MAP C
INDEPENDENT MAP OF KURDISTAN
MAJORITY
MINORITY



MAP D

KURDISTAN : THE LAST COLONY

Channel 4

November 1990

MAP E

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE
186550
Reference : FO371 / 5068
REPRINTED FROM; HAMDI, W.
LONDON, 1992 : MAPS.

THE MOSUL VILAYET

MAP F

This map was composed on the basis of those attached to the 1925 Report on the League of Nations Commission of Inquiry on the Mosul Vilayet.

(From: Dr. P. E. J. Bomli, "L'Affaire de Mossoul", H. J. Paris, Amsterdam 1929)