

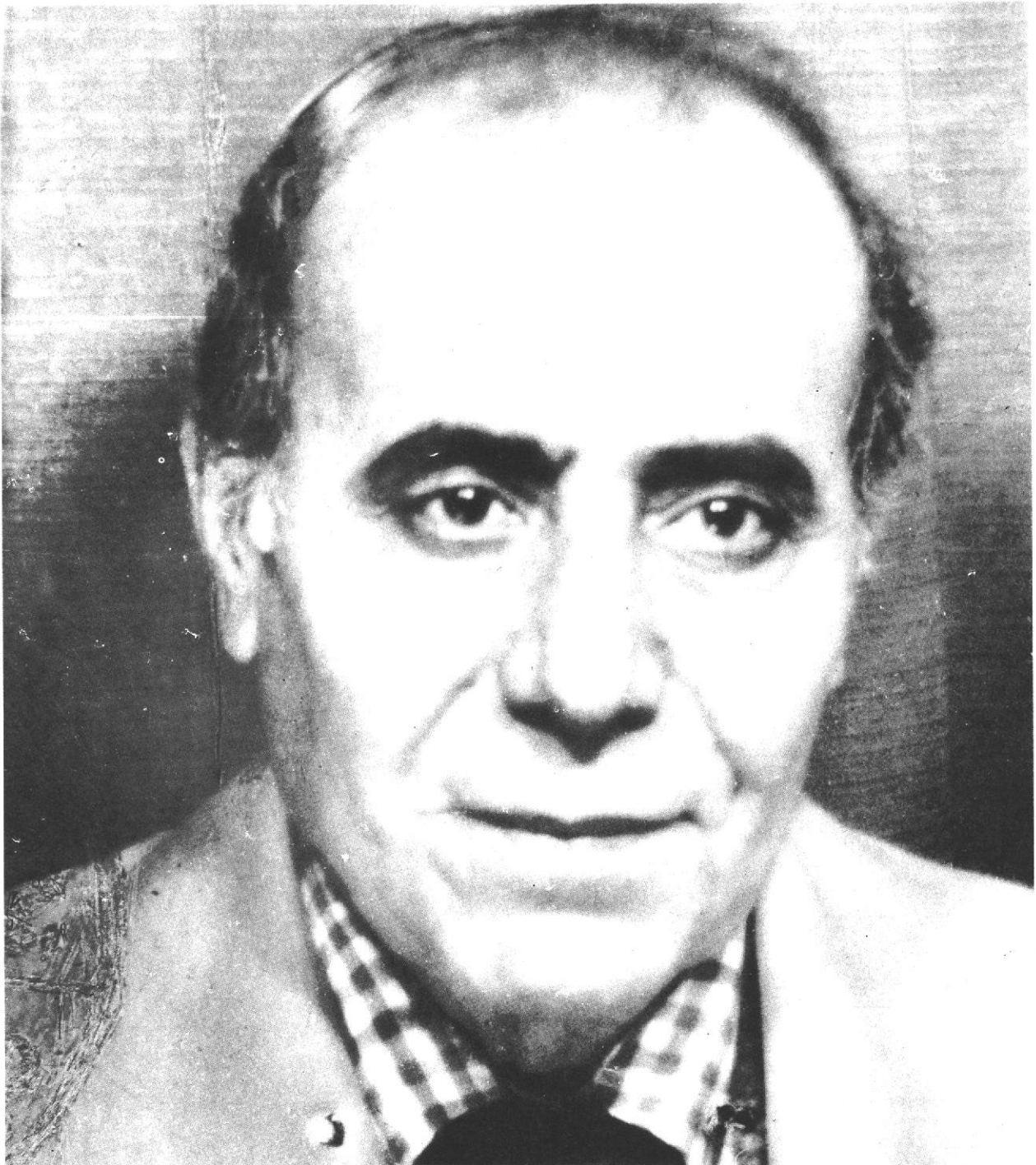
# **NEW PESH-MERGA**

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THE LATE NURI SHAWIS, OUR PARTY'S POLITICAL BUREAU  
MEMBER



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# 1983

## A YEAR OF SETBACKS AND RETREATS BUT WE SHOULD NOT LOSE HOPE

It is essential and vital for every political party and movement, and even individual persons, to review their work periodically in order to identify accomplishments, evaluate performances, and count successes, on the one hand, and setbacks, failures and defeats, on the other. As a political party endeavouring to steer its work on modern scientific lines, the KPDP has reviewed its work, the situation in Kurdistan-Iraq and the general situation in Kurdistan as a whole.

Our party's main policy objectives are:

1- The attainment of the Kurdish people's right to self-determination and, simultaneously, the exercise of mutual international solidarity.

2- A prerequisite for achieving the first objective is the necessity of the existence or establishment of a united movement with roots in all the regions of Kurdistan led by a single political organization and/or a unified leadership. Such a movement, organization and leadership must accept political pluralism and, thus, oppose internecine fighting.

3- The rejection of co-operation with and dependence upon any regime that persecutes the Kurdish nation or a section thereof; the experience of our nation since at least the sixteenth century has shown beyond reasonable doubt that such co-operation and dependence, especially during periods of conflict between these regimes, has always been to the Kurdish nation's detriment and the losing partner has at the end been the Kurdish people, and at very great national, political, economic and human costs.

Since our homeland is landlocked and almost encircled by adversaries and enemies of its aspirations, such a UNITED movement will certainly need room for political and/or military manoeuvres particularly since our homeland is situated in a region characterized by very complex and volatile conditions. However, such manoeuvres must be restrained by and put in the service of the over-all strategy and the fundamental policy objectives and not vice versa. Kurdish,

as well as other, political parties and movements that became entangled by the web of inter-state conflicts and rivalries and lost sight of their over-all strategies and basic aims found themselves at the end completely dependent upon and abandoned by the very states which they co-operated with and depended upon.

4- The combining of national-political agitation and mobilization with socio-economic change, reforms and struggle. In order that, and we are certain it would sooner or later, the national-political struggle bears fruit, i.e. succeeds in achieving its objectives, it must go hand in hand with social reforms and economic development as far as the real circumstances permit during the period of struggle and necessarily after the achievement of victory. The fruits of the national-political victory must be reaped and shared by the whole society, especially the social groups that have a stake in and worked and offered sacrifices for the achievement of such a victory and not by an elite or a particular social segment or group.

Reviewing 1983 with this background in mind, we find that it was, indeed, a year of setbacks, failures and disappointments.

Inter-Kurdish fighting not only continued but also intensified and on a larger scale. A corollary of this reality has been the absence of national unity and a united front. Efforts to establish such a front embarked upon at the beginning of the year were later frustrated by the narrow vested interests and short-sightedness of some parties. Some Kurdish political

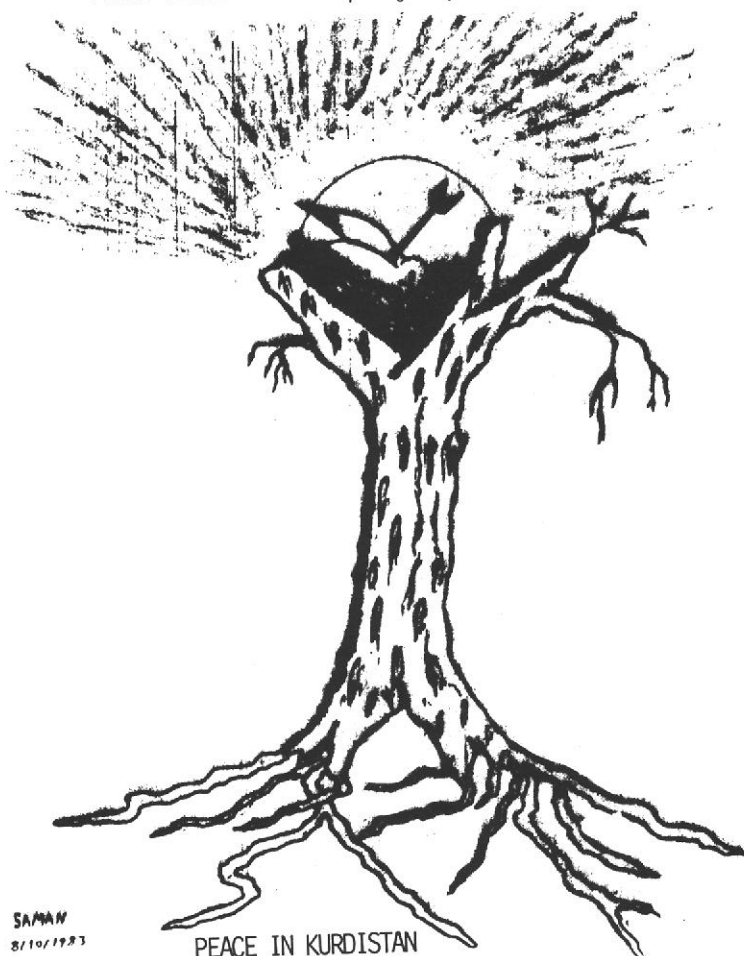
parties have, unfortunately, become more and deeper entangled in the web of the Iran-Iraq war, thus taking very great and serious risks that may at the end be at the expense of their own very existence and which cost the Kurdish nation very dearly. Even more serious and dangerous are the negotiations between an Iraqi Kurdish political party, namely, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) led by Jalal Talabani and the regime of

Saddam Husain, the chauvinist dictator who has done all he possibly could under prevailing conditions to uproot, displace and disperse our Kurdish people in Iraq, physically

eliminate its political elite, attempt to systematically destroy the Kurdish culture in the country and deny our people their basic national, democratic and human rights. These negotiations have reached advanced stages if not actually been concluded. From news reaching our party through various channels, the crux of the agreement is the 1974 so-called "law of autonomy" unilaterally made by the Ba'th regime with some minor changes. It is worth mentioning here that this law was never really implemented by the regime despite the passage of 10 years on the making of that law. This shows how insincere the regime is in implementing the law). Moreover, the regime has promised to supply with arms a force of up to 40.000 Pesh-mergas (Kurdish guerrilla fighters) under the control of the PUK; the main aim of this force will be fighting the Iranian army in the northern theatre of the war between Iran and Iraq. Financial support has also been promised by the regime to maintain and run this force. In the final analysis, the agreement will make the PUK a direct partner of Saddam Husain in the said war, which means that Kurdish lives will be wasted in the defence of a regime that has gone back on all its promises and pledges to the Kurds, a regime that has persecuted and still persecutes our people and is hostile to its aspirations. These negotiations and the agreement it leads to indicate how hypocritical the PUK is in formulating its political objectives and slogans, such as its ever insistence in its party literature on the overthrow of the regime of Saddam Husain and its replacement by a democratic regime and its insistence on calling its armed movement "the Iraqi revolution erupting in the mountains of Kurdistan" and so on and so forth. Furthermore, there is real and serious danger of inter-Kurdish fighting intensifying and assuming large proportions. The various enemies of our people do not help any Kurdish party or group without demanding something in return, and part of that something is the elimination of other Kurdish groups that refuse to be party to this agreement or co-operates with the "other side" of the Iraq-Iran war.

One should not forget that our enemies' hands reach the Kurdish movement or a faction of it. These "hands" muddle in Kurdish affairs and do all they can to create discord, disunity and infighting among the Kurdish groups. Therefore, these negotiations and the agreement they lead to will cause serious dangers, risks and complexities for the Kurdish movement, cost it heavily, especially politically and backfire on the PUK itself.

Our party rejects such a policy. Instead of showing a spirit of compromise and understanding towards one enemy, the PUK should have shown this spirit towards Kurdish national and patriotic forces and Iraqi progressive groups. However, we must not lose hope, must not fall into apathy and should not lose faith in our people and nation, who have overcome greater and more serious setbacks, failures and catastrophe as well as undergoing the hard labours of very difficult times and upheavals. We have complete and absolute faith and confidence in our people and nation. The crucial point in this context is that we fearlessly analyze the real situation, prevailing conditions and main trends of the current facts, identifying points of weakness, failure and setbacks and points of strength in the light of the main four policy objectives and act accordingly, keeping in sight the long term effects, consequences and final outcome of our party's policies.





THE DEATH OF THE PIONEER OF THE GENUINE AND FIRM PATRIOTIC  
AND PROGRESSIVE PATH IN THE KURDISH MOVEMENT

3

N U R I S H A W I S

The Kurdistan Popular Democratic Party has announced in a statement issued on 16th November 1983 the death of the Kurdish patriotic and progressive leader, NURI SHAWIS, the Political Bureau member of the party and the well-known figure within the Kurdish liberation movement, the Iraqi patriotic movement as well as in the Middle East and elsewhere. His death occurred on 15th November in Liverpool, England after a long heart illness. The following are excerpts from the statement.

"The late Nuri Shawis does not need introduction. But the occasion requires reference to some events in the life of struggle of our fallen hero that highlight some of his virtues and noble deeds.

Nuri Shawis was born in 1922 in a well-known patriotic family in the Kurdish city of Sulaimaniya. That was during the British occupation of our homeland and our people's revolution under the leadership of Mhmoud Al-Hafid against this occupation. Nuri Shawis engaged in political activity early in his life. He took part in the establishment and leadership of the League of the Freedom of the Kurds in 1935, the League of Wood-cutter in 1938, the League of Hope in 1939 and the party of Revolution and the Party of Liberation at the end of World War Two.

He and his father, the late Siddiq Shawis, attended the founding congress of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) on 16th August 1946, was elected a member of its Central Committee and later of its Political Bureau.

He worked as a public-works engineer in various towns and districts in Kurdistan and in southern Iraq. He carried out his political and professional activities side by side, often subordinating, and using, his professional work to his political activities.

Nuri Shawis was elected, after the 14th July 1958 revolution, vice-president of the Iraqi Engineers' Association and a member of the Iraqi Peace Council, keeping his membership of the Council until his death. When the September 1961 Kurdish Revolution erupted, he moved to the mountains despite his ill-health and heart attack. He participated in the revolution with all his energies and struggled without hesitation to lay solid its national path and deepen its progressive content. He struggled against internal reactionary and rightist tendencies and forces, against muddling in Kurdish affairs by foreign reactionary forces and imperialism. He suffered very much for his national and progressive views and stands.

He became, after the 11th March 1970 agreement, Minister of Public Works and member of the Peace Committee in charge of following up the fulfillment of the said agreement. He joined the Kurdish revolution again in 1974 despite undergoing a major heart operation.

After the 6th March 1975 agreement between the former Shah of Iran and Saddam Husain, Nuri Shawis declared that, "We must continue the fight and not become the eaters of the Shah's porridge"; this was made during a KDP Central Committee meeting convened to study the effects of the impending catastrophe. He took part, during the same year, without hesitation in the founding of the Provisional Leadership of the KDP which had decided to remove hopelessness and continue the struggle. He played a prominent role in putting the progressive programme of that leadership, laid down in the "The Road of the Kurdish Liberation Movement" booklet, and safeguarding it.

When the moves for founding our party were begun in 1980, Nuri Shawis was among the first patriots advocating the continuation of the struggle and the establishment of a democratic, revolutionary party of a new type, risking everything despite his ill-health. When he was nominated to the party leadership during the founding congress, he stood up and declared, "This is the sixth party in whose establishment I participate. When other parties deviated from their national, progressive path I did not hesitate in playing my part in their destruction. He who warns is excused." When our party joined the National, Democratic and Patriotic Front, patriot Nuri Shawis became a member of its Political Leadership.

The pioneer of the true patriotism and genuine progressive path had found his hopes and aspirations in our party, the Kurdistan Popular Democratic Party (KPDP). He studied the draft of its programme (the final version of which became The Revolutionary Alternative in the Kurdish Liberation Movement book) carefully, amending and correcting that which he deemed necessary. He found the party, its program and path in harmony with his thoughts and ambitions. He got along very well with his comrades in the party leadership and actively took part in the meetings of the Central Committee and Political Bureau. He always steered the discussion and decisions in the correct realistic, progressive direction. With the urging and encouragement of his comrades in the Political Bureau, he recorded, a year ago, his memoirs up until the beginning of 1961 September revolution.

Our party organs "Gal" and "Peshang" have already published these memoirs. It had been decided to record the second part of these important and valuable memoirs but his departure brought these efforts to an end.

The last public major political activities he participated in were the meeting of the Central Committee of our party in August 1983 and the congress of the Union of Kurdistan Students and Youth in Europe. He delivered a speech at the congress denouncing Kurdish internecine clashes, stressing the necessity of the unity of the various factions of the Kurdish liberation movement and of following a patriotic, progressive path opposed to imperialism, reactionary forces and the dictatorial regimes that persecute the Kurdish people.

The departure of patriot Nuri Shawis is an irreplaceable loss for our party, especially in the present circumstances when our people need every good and uniting voice. If our comrade left us physically, his progressive thoughts and path and his patriotic heritage of about half a century will be lasting, enlightening the road for the patriots of our party and all patriots of our people's liberation movement.

While expressing deeply felt pain and sorrow for the departure of the great patriot Nuri Shawis, our party pledges to the masses of our people to continue, with firmness, resolve and determination, the struggle on the path and footsteps of its departing leader for the national, democratic and humanitarian objectives and ideals for which he gave all his life.

We will remember our dear comrade in hardships and difficult situations, we will remember him when we climb the mountains, we will recall him when the battle rages, and we will remember him always."



## COMRADES **Fallen** ON THE ROAD OF LIBERATION



Martyr REZGAR (Hasan Abdulaziz Munir)  
He was born in Zakho in 1961 in a poor family. He worked as blacksmith worker during 1975-76. Rezgar joined the ranks of the Kurdish revolution on 27th November 1979 out of national responsibility and social consciousness and a belief in armed struggle. His progressive outlook brought him to the ranks of our party movement since 1981, graduating from political, organizational and military courses. He was killed on the banks of Tigris in an ambush set up by the Iraqi regime's forces on 19th July 1983 while carrying out a political mission.



Martyr KAWA (Khalil Nuri Dhahir)  
He was born in Mangish, Dahok in 1959 in a peasant family. He joined the Kurdistan Student Union and the Kurdistan Youth Organization in 1973, and the ranks of the Kurdish revolution in 1974 and once again on 24th February 1980. He became a member of our party on April 3rd, 1982 and was a member of the party's First Branch Committee. He was killed in Simail, Dahok, by mercenaries of the Iraqi regime on 12th September 1983 while performing a political task.

## "TORTURED TO DEATH"

Necmettin Büyükkaya has been killed in prison or hospital in Diyarbakir in Kurdistan-Turkey. His relatives and friends do not know with certainty where he died. Last Tuesday the Turkish authorities delivered his badly burnt body together with two other bodies; the authorities claimed they were "victims of an accident." Necmettin's "crime" was that he was a Kurd and politically active. A couple of years ago he sought asylum in Sweden in order to avoid persecution.

Diyarbakir prison became notorious after the numerous witness cases on how prisoners have been tortured recklessly with electric shock, falaka -beating on the sole, beating with sand bags in order to inflict injury in the intestines, forcible marching on glass splinters, raping of both men and women, and so on.

All confessions happen after torture, usually long before a court trial of a case.

Necmettin was kept in the said prison since 1981 when he was arrested during a secret visit to his family, a wife and two daughters. He had been tortured numerous times. He was brought to trial four or five times but always ending with adjournment.

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## GUERRILLA OPERATIONS BY OUR PARTY'S ARMED GROUPS

The KPDP guerrillas melt in the local population after performing their missions in order to avoid detection by the enemy and to avoid being drawn into inter-Kurdish fighting.

<u>Type of operation</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Date</u>
Mine laying	Ashawa village, Amadiya	25/8/1983
Two ambushes	Main road between Swara-Tuka and Tazika, Amadiya	28/10/1983
Two ambushes	Main road between Sarsank and Sekrin, Amadiya	8/11/1983
Ambush	Main road between Swara-Tuka and Tazika, Amadiya	9/11/1983
Attack on an outpost	Ashawa village, Amadiya	9/11/1983
Attack on an enemy ambush	Dahok, near the banks of the Tigris	5/12/1983
Attack on a popular-army camp	Sinjar	5/9/1983

## POLITICAL ACTIVITIES BY OUR PARTY IN KURDISTAN

Although there are many and complex obstacles and barriers faced by our party in its political activities, obstacles created and barriers erected not only by the enemy and its terror and reckless persecution but also by the absence of a Kurdish national front and the prevailing tense atmosphere of deep suspicion and distrust in Kurdistan, our party has succeeded in maintaining and expanding its political base and activities. Our party literature -leaflets, pamphlets, booklets...etc- has been widely circulating and slogans appearing repeatedly on the walls in Dahok, Mosul, Baghdad, Zakho, Amadiya, Sheikhan, Aqra, Simel, Faida and the forcibly-displaced-Kurds camps of Telkabar and Hizawa and scores of other camps and villages. Our party's literature has recently been widely distributed in Sulaimaniya, Halabja, Shahrzor, Salah al-Din summer resort and other localities.

OUR PARTY STRUGGLES TO ACHIEVE THE  
RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION  
FOR OUR KURDISH NATION

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Meanwhile, some of our party's armed groups have carried out a number of military missions; our party hopes that prevailing inter-Kurdish conditions will change and our party's military activities will be able to expand and develop qualitatively.



THE ORDEAL OF THE SWEDISH  
CITIZEN HELD HOSTAGE BY  
THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT



Olof Ekberg, Chief of Transport in Baghdad of the Swedish firm SkÅnska Cementgjuteriet, was arrested by the Iraqi Intelligence Service on 10th August 1983, i. e., a few weeks after the arrest and trial in Uppsala, Sweden, of an Iraqi Intelligence agent and an informer on charges of carrying out illegal espionage activities against Kurdish refugees in the country.

The arrest of Ekberg was, according to himself and to the Swedish Foreign Office, related to the trial of the two Iraqi agents. Ekberg was in fact a hostage held by the Iraqi government in order to apply pressure to bear on the Swedish authorities in the two agents' trial case.

SkÅnska Cementgjuteriet was building the luxurious Al-Rashid hotel in Baghdad. Ekberg was, besides being Chief of Transport, in charge of customs declarations of the firm.

Ekberg thinks that the whole thing was a pretext to be able to arrest him. He says, "They (i.e. the Iraqi government) had decided to keep me there (i.e. under arrest). They went through 300 customs declarations before finding something." In one of them they found a discrepancy in the number of package. In one place the figure was 102 and in another 105 packages. The figure 105 packages was, according to Ekberg, obviously a typing error.

THE SWEDISH DAILY, EXPRESSEN, STATES THAT, "THE GENERAL UNDERSTANDING IS THAT OLOF EKBERG WAS TAKEN AS SOME KIND OF HOSTAGE IN ORDER TO PRESSURE THE SWEDISH AUTHORITIES."

"THE INVESTIGATION OF TWO IRAQI CITIZENS SUSPECTED OF ESPIONAGE WAS UNDER WAY IN UPPSALA DURING THE SAME TIME," CONTINUES THE PAPAER.

Ekberg was interrogated for a week, then left in a cell without knowing anything about what may happen to him.

"First, I took the whole matter quietly. But after two months, I became really worried. I requested paper and a pen to write to the Swedish Embassy (in Baghdad)," says Ekberg.

When denied the request, he asked for permission to talk to the prison authorities. The guard replied, "If the prison chief wanted something he would be heard of."

Olof Ekberg was the only European

detained in a cell where all the others were Arabs, about half of them Iraqis.

"I MYSELF WAS NOT BODILY MISTREATED, BUT IN THE INVESTIGATION ROOM, CONSTANT BEATING AND SMACKING WAS COMMON. THERE WAS ALSO A SPECIAL ROOM WHICH WAS CALLED "THE OPERATIONS HALL". THERE, MODERN TECHNOLOGY WAS COMBINED WITH MEDIAEVAL METHODS OF INTERROGATION. ELECTRIC SHOCKS BELONGED TO THE MOST SOPHISTICATED METHODS," STATES EKBERG.

"I SAW PRISONERS COME BACK (FROM INTERROGATION), TALKED TO THEM AND SAW THE WOUNDS INFLICTED ON THEM. I PERSONALLY HELPED THE WOUNDED AND TRIED TO RELIEVE THEIR PAIN," GOES ON EKBERG.

"I AM ASTONISHED THAT I, A FOREIGNER, WAS ALLOWED TO SIT THERE AND SEE HOW THE OTHER PRISONERS WERE TREATED," SAYS EKBERG. "AN IRAQI CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER DIED IN THE CELL A FEW DAYS BEFORE I ARRIVED THERE,"

"I GOT A VERY SEVERE CAUGH FOR SEX WEEKS. THE PRISON WAS DAMP AND ROUGH. MOREOVER, I HAVE SLEEPING DISTURBANCES. I CAN ONLY SLEEP FOR SHORT PERIODS AND FEEL SAD AND DEPRESSED WHEN I THINK ABOUT THE CELL-MATES WHO ARE STILL IN PRISON," STATES EKBERG.

Another Swede, Ulf Lagerström, was also arrestd in Baghadd during the same time but was released after a while.

The Swedish Foreign Minister, Mr. Lennart Bodström, told the Stockholm daily, Svenska Dagbladet, on November 1st, that, "The matter is sensitive and there can be a connection between the Iraqis who spied on refugees and the arrest of Ekberg."

However, Ekberg was not freed until after the release of the Iraqi "doctor" spy after serving less than half his prison term of six months and his expulsion from Sweden and the release of the "common criminal" informer after serving only half his prison sentence of four months.

The prison sentences passed on the two Iraqi spies were unusually mild.



The following is the "Conclusions" of a research paper written by F. Shakely in 1983 for the University of Uppsala, and some other important points in the paper .

In the 16th and 17th centuries several great changes occurred in Kurdistan that greatly influenced the future and development of the Kurdish people.

At the beginning of the 16th century the Safavid Empire was established. It became an antagonist of the Ottoman Empire. At the battle of Caldiran that took place on 23rd August 1514 the Safavids were defeated and, consequently, Kurdistan became divided between the Ottoman and the Safavid empires. War between the two empires lasted more than one century for various religious and ethnic reasons.

In order to save their borders, the Ottomans built many semi-independent Kurdish principalities. The Kurdish rulers and lords were on bad terms with each other and the Ottomans kindled rivalries among them, lest they unite and form a danger to their empire. Under these principalities the Kurdish culture developed. Several religious schools were opened and several scholars, mullas and poets, appeared.

The principality of Botan was one of the most powerful and important principalities in Kurdistan and its capital Cezire was an important cultural and educational centre. The Kurdish classical poetry began under the principality of Botan. Great Kurdish poets appeared, of whom we have the names of Melaye Bate, Melaye Ceziri, Eli Heriri and Feqe Teyran.

The school of classical Kurdish poetry reached its climax with the works of Ehmed-i Xani (1650-1707), particularly his epic Mem u Zin (M & Z). There are few details about the life of Xani. The epic of M & Z is of great importance in this connection. In addition to the dates of his birth and finishing the epic that Xani himself recorded, the epic contains the philosophical and political view-points and thoughts of Xani. It contains, moreover, details about the political, economic, social and cultural conditions in Kurdistan at the time of Xani.

The epic of M & Z is the most important masterpiece in Kurdish literature and Xani is considered a great and leading poet and thinker in the history of Kurdish literature for two reasons:

A- Xani used an entirely Kurdish tale, namely, Meme Alan, as the basis for his epic M & Z, which he wrote according to the principles of the classical oriental epic. By writing M & Z Xani brought the Kurdish language to the same level of the other languages of the Orient.

B- Xani was the first in the history of the Kurdish people who formed and organised his thoughts about Kurdish nationalism. Xani showed in his M & Z epic the difficult circumstances in Kurdistan as a result of its division between the Ottoman and the Safavid empires. He thought that the Kurds might strive for their independence and to establish their own state. He indicated, moreover, that the means to liberation consisted of: unity, power and goodness.

The idea of nationalism that Xani introduced in M & Z three centuries ago formed, as a whole, the idea that came to be called, at the beginning of this century, the right of nations to self-determination.

Xani wrote M & Z according to the principles of the classical Oriental epics. The only exception he made was that he did not devote a special chapter to the praise of any of the rulers of his time. Nor did he dedicate his work to any ruler.

I did not deal in this paper with the form of the epic M & Z. In studying the contents of the epic, I took two aspects into consideration:

1- M & Z is an example of a classical epic in its structure, issues and aesthetic principles.

2- The view-points of Xani concerning the situation of the Kurdish people and their struggle for freedom and independence formed, historically, the first political programme for the Kurdish national liberation movement.

\* \* \*

We can summarize the steps that Xani took in order to form his views about Kurdish nationalism as follows:

1- He analysed the situation in Kurdistan and indicated that the main reason why the Kurds lived in misery and backwardness was that the Ottoman and Safavid empires occupied the country.

2- He indicated that the alternative to this situation was that the Kurds should have their own state governed by themselves (through Kurdish kings).

3- He thought about the conditions prevailing in his time and in the future. In spite of the fact that he was a religious man, he was not satisfied with the answers provided by

cont. on page 8

## AMSTERDAM CONGRESS ON THE ROLE OF THE CULTURAL ELEMENTS IN THE STRUGGLE OF THE KURDISH PEOPLE

A congress on the role of the cultural elements in the struggle of the Kurdish people was held in Amsterdam from 12th to 14th October 1983. The congress was held at the Free University of Amsterdam being organized by the Research Institute of Oppressed Peoples (RIOP).

A number of prominent Kurdish and European specialists, writers and professors were invited to the congress, among them were Prof. F. Houtart, Prof. J. George Waardenburg, G. Chaliand, Dr. Ismat Cherif Vanly, Dr. Majeed R. Jafar (whose paper is published here in full), Dr. Kamal Fuad, Dr. Abdual Rahman Qasemlou, Yousif Ardalán, Selim, Hajir Taimourian, Dr. F. Atroushi, Vera Beaudin Saeedpour and a large number of Kurds Dutch and others. The congress was presided over and opened by Prof. Peter Idenburg, Head of RIOP, and chaired by Fuad Husain.

The following participants delivered either a speech or a paper on 12th Oct.: Prof. Idenburg, Husain, Vanly, Taimourian, Jafar, a letter of greetings and support from Sami Rahman who was invited but could not attend and a letter of apology from Kamal Burqai for not being able to

attend despite accepting an invitation.

Speeches or papers by the following participants were given on 13th: Chaliand, Prof. Houtart, Fuad, Selim (from the northern region of Kurdistan), and Atroushi.

And on the 14th, Ardalán delivered a speech and Qasemlou's paper was read for him in the morning and in the afternoon's plenary session, a general discussion was held and resolutions adopted.

Moreover, two Kurdish evenings were organised during 13th and 14th Oct. by Kurds and Dutch friends.

On 12th Oct. a meeting was held with Foreign Relations Committee of the Dutch Parliament attended by more than 10 parliamentarians from the Dutch side and Husain, Ardalán, Selim and Jafar from the Kurdish side.

The congress was a successful gathering characterized by serious, objective discussions, a high sense of responsibility and a democratic atmosphere. The subject matter and the work of the congress needs follow up and continuity in order that its and its organizers and participants efforts and aspirations may bear fruit and lead to tangible results.

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Kurdish nationalism in Men u Zin, cont.

his religious sources. He preferred to provide his own answers. 4- He indicated that the backwardness of the Kurdish people was due to the fact that they were subjugated and were left no opportunity. The history of his people had always been full of examples of heroism. The rulers and lords, not the poor, were responsible for the conditions the Kurds lived under for they did not strive sincerely for unity and the establishment of a Kurdish state. They preferred their own interests to those of their people. Some of them were ready, even, to collaborate with one occupying force against another.

5- He finally indicated the way that would lead to liberation and independence: unity, power and goodness.

The above-mentioned five points were the main elements of Xani's view-points on the cause of his people.

It is of great importance here to indicate that Xani formed his views about Kurdish nationalism at an early time (he wrote M & Z in 1694 A.D.).

National consciousness in the political meaning of the term was not known at that time by the peoples of the Islamic Orient. The only loyalty (and, corollarily, consciousness) at that time was, generally, to religion (Islam with its two main sects: Sunni and Shi'a) and its institutions and/or to the tribe (tribalism) with its primitive institutions. The ideas of nationalism and of the nation-state, that Xani introduced in his M & Z at the end of the 17th century A. D. became known by other peoples in the Middle East only at the middle or the end of the 19th century when the sick-man (the Ottoman Empire) of the East was about to die. It was only then that national liberation movements to establish nation-states began among the peoples of the Ottoman empire.

It may be correct to say that the thoughts and view-points introduced by Ehmed-i Xani in his epic M & Z formed, as a whole, the idea that each nation had the right of establishing an independent state and decide upon its own government. This idea came to be called at the beginning of the twentieth century "the principle of self-determination".

(Minor changes and modifications were introduced in the text by the editor of New Pesh-merga in order to render it more suitable for a publication such as this).

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

Dear friends and colleagues.

I would like first to thank the organizers, the Research Institute of Oppressed Peoples in Amsterdam, for their kind invitation to attend and present a paper on the "Importance of the Cultural Elements in the Struggle of the Kurdish People" and wish the Congress every success.

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

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

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

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

- 1- They are shared by a group of people.
- 2- They are acquired by the process of learning.
- 3- They are cumulative and not easy to eradicate.
- 4- They constitute a whole, i.e., a system with many mutually interdependent parts.
- 5- This system is in a sense unique for each society or cultural group and therefore it is diverse for the entire human kind.

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

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

Thus, language is the means by which culture is learned and transmitted. But it is at the same time a goal in itself and its preservation and development being an essential factor in preserving and developing the cultural identity of a people or a group (and indeed developing the society as a whole), since without a language there can be no culture.

Moreover, culture is, in some of its elements, part of the infrastructure of society (language) whereas it is part of the superstructure in other elements (beliefs, superstitions and the like). Therefore, a generic judgment is not permissible here.

### CULTURE AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

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

For the Kurds, their culture is indeed the embodiment and expression of their life and national identity. The Kurds are Kurds because, firstly, they speak the Kurdish language (this



is the general rule, but there are exceptions) which is distinguishable from other languages, such as Turkish, Persian, Arabic or others. And, secondly, because they share certain traits common to themselves, such as their customs, costumes, songs, dances, music etc., i.e., their arts and folklore, personal names and the like. This is because their culture is distinguishable from neighbouring cultures (in addition to their separate territory and some other factors).

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

#### CULTURAL ELEMENTS AS SYMBOLS OF RESISTENCE

This culture, which we have called "Kurdish culture", and its numerous elements and aspects have indeed become symbols in the long struggle of the Kurdish nation against assimilation and oppression. For example, the wearing of the Kurdish costume by the male population in Kurdistan-Turkey is banned by decree. But many men wear it to show their defiance and express their pride of their culture despite risking persecution. Wearing the banned costume is seen as a sign of courage. The same applies to possessing and playing Kurdish songs and music

recorded on tape or discs, locally produced or imported. These are forbidden cultural items but they are found in almost every household in northern Kurdistan. NEWROZ, the Kurdish national day, is another example.

The preservation of the Kurdish identity and the use of cultural elements as symbols of resistance and as means of defiance against oppressors have entailed and still do entail persecution, imprisonment, torture, death or exile when invaders and the so-called "national" regimes

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

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

#### BASIC DEMANDS OF KURDISH PARTIES AND MOVEMENTS

Cultural demands, especially its most important element "language", have figured rather prominent among the demands of all, or almost all, Kurdish political parties, societies and revolutions in all parts of Kurdistan since the turn of the century. One can refer to a few examples to make the point. The demands of the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the programme of the



government of the Mahabad Republic, the March 1970 Agreement (or Declaration) between the Kurdish September revolution and the Iraqi Ba'th regime, and the demands of the Kurdish movements in both Iraq and Iran at present, all contain cultural clauses concerning the cultural rights of the Kurdish people and the preservation of these rights. Moreover, these parties, societies and movements exert great efforts to issue publications in the Kurdish language, form and encourage Kurdish song and dance groups, encourage Kurds to specialize in subjects relating to the cultural life and history of the Kurdish nation...etc.

#### CULTURAL ELEMENTS OF IMMEDIATE IMPORTANCE TO THE RESISTENCE MOVEMENT

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

1- THE LANGUAGE: The Kurdish language is by far the most important cultural element in and for the struggle of the Kurdish people. It is, indeed, the single, most effective means of mobilization and one of its basic ends. It is the one issue that is most forceful in the agitation and propaganda process and, thus, the national mobilization of the Kurds against national cum cultural oppression, discrimination and degradation. (A distinction is made here between national mobilization and socio-economic mobilization. Although the two overlap and go hand in hand in the case of the Kurdish people in reality now, a theoretical distinction can be made, however. The former sets Kurds against their "foreign" oppressors, whereas the latter sets them against their "foreign" oppressors and exploiters as well as segments of their own society. Political mobilization includes both and envisages a futuristic model of Kurdish society, its structure, internal and external relations.) Language is often cited by Kurdish parties and movement as the most striking example of the oppression of the Kurdish nation. It is also the most powerful factor that makes the Kurds feel "togetherness".

2- CELEBRATIONS, MUSIC, SONGS AND

DANCING: These cultural elements are -and are being- used as means of agitation and mobilization of the Kurdish nation in all parts of Kurdistan. Their powerful symbolism can clearly be seen in, for example, the uniform of the Pesh-mergas, the Kurdish guerrillas, who have become synonymous with resistance, since this uniform is the Kurdish costume. It is no accident that all political parties that have -or have had- guerrilla forces in all parts of Kurdistan have chosen this costume and not some other "modern" uniform. Songs have played and still play an obvious role in the agitation and mobilization of the Kurdish nation. One can refer to the songs of Siwan, for example, which have reached the remotest corners of the north of our homeland, as well as the songs of other singers and groups. NEWROZ, and its celebrations in the various regions of Kurdistan, has been, and still is, an effective means of mobilization, and many a NEWROZ celebration has turned into a rally against oppression and for the rights of the Kurdish people, as happened recently in Kurdistan-Iraq.

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

3- FORMS: These include photographs, films, paintings, caricature and the like. These means are used for purposes of mobilization, albeit on a limited scale.

However, many cultural elements that can be effective means of mobilization are, on the one hand, either ignored or not being given their due importance, whereas other elements, which would be considered harmful to the struggle of the Kurdish nation particularly in the long-run but also in the immediate present, are, on the other hand, being used to mobilize some sections of society behind narrow and dangerous short-sighted objectives. For example, the "positive" aspects of NEWROZ are almost ignored or not

being given their full dues, namely, the use of the spirit of self-assertion, unity and forgiveness, which is an essential element of NEWROZ, to enhance and consolidate national unity, without which all talk, and one can dare say, and action to achieve victory seem rather mere fantasy -the enemies and adversaries of the Kurdish nation realise this fact too and, therefore, they spend much effort and money to divide the Kurds and/or intensify their differences. On the other hand, the "negative" aspects of NEWROZ, namely, the spirit of defiance and resistance are used to a much larger extent. Moreover, some of the cultural elements which shall be referred to below are used in the direction of harmful purposes or otherwise not discouraged or combatted, such as "revenge", "vengeance" or "bloodfeuds" and "tribalism" and tribal, village, local or regional loyalty and allegiance -at the expence of national allegiance. These elements, which are in a sense (and according to the definition of culture given at the start of this paper) cultural, are harmful to national reconciliation, harmony and unity. As stated above, without national reconciliation and national unity the Kurdish nation cannot realistically hope or aspire to achieve its rights, especially its right of self-determination.

#### CULTURAL ELEMENTS AND THE ENEMY

One should not forget that culture has been and is still being used by the oppressors of the Kurdish nation to assimilate the Kurds and destroy their national identity. An example which may cast light on what is meant by this is the so-called "illiteracy campaign" in Iraq. Taken at face value, this measure ought to be welcomed. But reality has shown that the regime's aim was actually to use this campaign as yet another veiled method of assimilating the Kurds by "arabizing" them through teaching them only Arabic but not Kurdish, their mother-tongue. Another example, again from Iraq, is the giving of financial and other incentives to any Iraqi of Arab origin who marries a Kurdish woman. The aim here is again the assimilation of the Kurds, which

has much to do with the cultural element since the regime believes that the children of the mixed parents will most likely learn Arabic and adopt the culture of his/her father, and thus become a non-Kurd. And, thus, in the long-run the population balance or the proportion of Kurds to the total population of Iraq will diminish, if this policy succeeds. (It is worth mentioning that these two measures were part and parcel of an over-all policy aimed at the assimilation of the Kurds in Iraq implemented by the present regime).

#### NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF SOME CULTURAL ELEMENTS

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

Another harmful aspect in the cultural elements is that tribal (and sometimes even family, village, local or regional) allegiance and loyalty take precedence and override national allegiance and loyalty. This fact has been clearly observed in the stance taken by tribal chiefs on the Kurdish movement. With few exceptions, the stand taken by the tribal chief determines the stand taken by the tribe as a whole. These chiefs have had, during recent armed struggle, a pragmatic or even an opportunist stand vis-a-vis the Kurdish movement, switching sides often. Although this stand is determined by vested self-interest to some extent,

cultural elements play an important role in their (the chiefs') attitude towards the movement (and this attitude determines the general attitude of the tribe as a whole); these elements include: norms of allegiance and loyalty, norms of revenge, vengeance and bloodfeuds, norms and rules of prestige and respect and the ways of showing this respect ...etc. Although this situation has been undergoing a process of modification and change, no one can reasonably claim that it is not still powerful or deny that the cultural elements still assume a powerful and rather prominent position in Kurdish society and its values and norms of honour and power. This aspect has often been exploited throughout history by the enemies of the Kurdish nation to divide them and has also been an important factor in inter-Kurdish fighting and dis-unity. The giving of "gifts", for their own value but more as signs of respect, is also a negative aspect since the regimes ruling over the Kurdish people almost always have access to much larger resources than Kurdish parties or movements. The Iraqi Intelligence Service (al-Mukhabarat al-Amma) uses, as part of its over-all annual plan called "The Kurdish Plan", "gift giving" on certain occasions, such as birthdays of the chiefs and members of their families, feast ("Id") and the Ba'th party's national days, to win over or at least neutralize tribal chiefs, prominent social figures, local dignitaries and others, keep them away from the struggle and/or use them against the Kurdish movement or sections thereof in any possible way (such as the gathering of information, the planting of dis-information and rumours, the carrying of arms against it, and such like). Another harmful cultural aspect is the norms of revenge, vengeance and bloodfeuds and their rather wide-spread influence. These norms have played and still play an important role in the life of the Kurds, especially in the country-side and among the tribes, and even in relations among various political parties and factions within the same party. These harmful aspects, and others

that have not been mentioned, have been very briefly mentioned in order that they may be recognized and taken into consideration by those concerned with the aim of reducing their influence on the resistance movement of the Kurdish nation. They were also mentioned for the sake of not falling into the trap of "idealizing" all that is related to the Kurdish cultural elements.

Finally, the Kurdish liberation movement that struggles to change the status quo and strives to bring about changes in the position of the Kurdish nation, is bound to influence prevailing culture and modify and/or change some of its aspects. National liberation and culture influence each other and there is feedback between the two.

Culture for the Kurdish nation has become in a sense almost synonymous with "politics". One can only look around to see that almost all Kurds active in the cultural field are considered politically "dangerous" (unless they "go over" and "join" the dominant nation) and imprisoned, killed or exiled. Moreover, it is not accidental that this Congress is held in Amsterdam, and the Kurdish Institute is located in Paris and institutes of Kurdish studies are found at universities in Western Europe, the Soviet Union and the U.S.A., and not in Diarbakir, Mahabad, Kirkuk or Qamishli.

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

This is why the theme of this Congress assumes such importance and needs further study, exploration, investigation and research.

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

Thank you.

(This is the paper presented by M.R.

Jafar to the Amsterdam Congress on 12th (to 14th) October 1983 referred to in this issue of NEW PESH-MERGA.)



## PROBLEMS IN THE UNIFICATION OF THE KURDISH LANGUAGE

Created by a group of Kurdish exiles living in Europe, the Kurdish Institute of Paris was officially opened on February 24th, 1983. The small white house located in the heart of Paris contains a library, a classroom and lecture and meeting hall. It is always full. "This is the first Kurdish cultural institution in the world" declared Kendal Nezan, a brilliant scientist who abandoned his research work at the French National Centre for Scientific Research in order to run the Institute temporarily. The founders of this project, which enjoys the support and sympathy of many French public figures, have chosen a dual mission: first, to facilitate research on Kurds, in diverse disciplines, carried out by Kurds and non-Kurds alike, and, secondly, to keep their culture alive.

One of the Institute's first actions was to gather intellectuals and linguists exiled in Europe. They come from different regions of Kurdistan, all are interested in literary and linguistic questions. Here, together for the first time, they studied ways and means of unifying their language, Kurdish. It is indeed a huge task.

In fact 15-20 million Kurds, mostly Kurdish speaking, live in a vast mountainous crescent-shaped territory in the northern confines of the Moslem Arab World. This homeland, which is not a state -Kurdistan having no legal or diplomatic status- was divided until World War One between two great, but mutually hostile, empires: the Ottoman in the west and the Persian in the east. While their dangerous neighbours were consolidating their forces and centralizing their power, the Kurdish princes failed to unite. Moreover, incessant war between the two rival empires waged on Kurdish territory, with its terrible toll in life and property, contributed decisively to the downfall of the Kurdish principalities.

The collapse of the 500-year old Ottoman Empire exacerbated the plight of the Kurds who found themselves, as a result of the Peace Treaties, divided among five countries, in all of which they were greatly outnumbered. The countries which divided up the Kurdish land are (in decreasing order of Kurdish population): Turkey, Persia ( now Iran), Iraq, Syria and the USSR. In each of these countries the fate of the Kurds was to be very different and so was their social and cultural development.

We will examine the effect of the five divisions on the development of the language.

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There has always been a Kurdish intellectual elite, as has been noted by historians and biographers of the Moslem Middle Ages. The earliest texts, only partly published, to have survived the torment and turmoil of Kurdish history reveal a maturity of expression indicative of a long past. The authors used Arabic script, as did their Persian neighbours from the eighth century and the Turks from the end of the thirteenth century. They also adopted modifications of Arabic script developed by Persians in order to render the phonemes peculiar to the Iranian family of languages, e.g., diacritical marks for:

voiceless bilabial plosive (p')

voiceless palato-alveolar affricate (tʃ)

voiced palato-alveolar fricative (ʒ)

voiced velar plosive (g)

This script -which was a unifying factor- was not chosen for its technical qualities but as a symbol of the fact that they belonged to the civilization of Islam, whose Holy Book is in Arabic and whose Prophet was an Arab. Christians and Jews living in the Kurdish mountains continued to use Syriac and Hebrew scripts respectively.

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At the end of World War One, the Kurds, like many other peoples of the area, were affected by the wave of de-arabization which broke over the area at that time.

In the new Soviet Socialist Republics, a Committee for the Encouragement of Latinization was set up in Soviet Azerbaijan, then turned toward the West, where modernization was identified with the Latin alphabet. (Wasn't there even talk of Latinizing the Russian script!). In the March 1926 Congress of Turcology in Baku a decision was taken to Latinize Turkish in the USSR following a debate which was to have important reverberations and permanent repercussions. It determined Latinization in the Turkey of Mustafa Kemal who wanted to create a modern, secular, western-style state. Two years later, in Turkey, laws governing this process were passed and the Latin alphabet became compulsory in all publications after June 1930.

The Kurdish community in Soviet Armenia, which benefited from the status of a recognized



nationality, followed suit. In 1929, the works of the Assyrian philologist Q.L. Marogulov resulted in the elaboration of a Latin script which took its final form in 1934. The numerous Kurdish educational and literary publications in the USSR at that period used the new alphabet.

However, it's in Syria, under the French mandate that Kurdish letters blossomed during the period between the two world wars. Kurdish intellectuals who could no longer live in Kemal's Turkey congregated in Damascus around the brothers Celadet (Cheladet) and Kamuran Bedir Khan, indefatigable architect of the Kurdish cultural renaissance. They perfected a Latin alphabet, an adaptation of that used in Turkey, which was launched in its final form in 1932. This alphabet, named HAWAR ("The Call") after the magazine which popularized it, was an outstanding success since it has become the working tool of the majority of literate Kurds in the northern regions of Kurdistan.

In Iraq, there were a few attempts at Latinization in the early 1930's. But these attempts met with considerable socio-political opposition. The Kurds in Iraqi Kurdistan were now citizens of the young Iraqi state, an Arab state, in which the knowledge and use of the Arabic language were imposed as was a whole community of Arab intellectual life. This opposition continued and intensified over the years.

So, around the end of the 1920's, Kurdish linguists developed a system based upon the Arab-Persian script to which further diacritical signs were added to represent vowels, the rolled r and the dental lateral l typical of the central group of Kurdish dialects. With minor modifications this alphabet is used today by literate Kurds in Iraq and also by Kurds who face a similar opposition from their own government to any attempts at Latinization.

On the eve of World War One, a Soviet drive for the unification and cultivation of an all-Soviet patriotism brought in its wake the cyrillisation of a number of alphabets. Use of the Latin alphabet for the transcript of Kurdish was thus replaced by a semi-Cyrillic one in 1939. The Kurdish press, the publishing houses and schools now all use this alphabet.

Today, Kurdish is written in the following three alphabets: Latin, Cyrillic and Arabic.

For a people that can barely boast a literate class, this already heavy handicap of three alphabets is intensified by differences of local dialects, and all of this, in turn, is aggravated by the political division of Kurdistan.

An integral part of the Indo-Aryan family, the numerous dialects called Kurdish form a linguistic group clearly distinguishable from the Western Iranian languages to which they are related. The differences among Kurdish dialects are proportional to their geographical separation in a land of high mountains where communication is non-existent in winter and difficult in summer.

Kurdish can be divided into three groups of dialects:

- 1) The Northern Group, with the greatest number of speakers, includes:
  - a) Kurdish spoken in Turkey,
  - b) Kurdish spoken in the Jezireh plain in north-western Syria, and
  - c) Kurdish spoken in the USSR.

These dialects are called Kurmanji or Kermanji by native speakers.

- d) Kurdish spoken in the Mosul and Duhok provinces in Iraqi Kurdistan, called Badinani by native speakers (after the former principality of Bahdinan), and
  - e) Kurdish spoken in the area extending west of Lake Urmiah, in Iran, along the Iranian-Turkish border, and in Khurasan, south of the Caspian Sea, a language native speakers usually call Kurdi.

This group of dialects has produced two literary forms: Eastern and Western Kurmanji.

a) Eastern Kurmanji is the language of the small Kurdish community of the USSR. While numerically insignificant (89.000 according to the 1970 census), compared to the huge mass of Kurds in the Middle-Eastern countries, this community occupies, nevertheless, a uniquely privileged position. Since it enjoys the status of a recognized nationality, it benefits from the help of the Soviet state. Here, Kurdish studies, drawing on a long tradition of Russian Kurdology, are foremost in the world. This community possesses schools, technical manuals in addition to creative literary works many of which are very lively.

b) Western kurmanji is the written standard of Kurdish speakers in Turkey and Syria. Since 1925, the use of Kurdish has been prohibited in Turkey -where half the total population of the Kurds live- as was the publication of Kurdish books and newspapers. Such publications as do appear, despite a rigorous, use the Hawar Latin alphabet.

- 2) The Central Group, includes:

a) Kurdish spoken in Sulaimaniya, Arbil, Kirkuk, Khanaqin and in other regions in Iraqi Kurdistan and which native speakers call Sorani (after the former and prestigious principality of Soran).

b) Kurdish dialects of the neighbouring districts in Iranian Kurdistan (south of the province of Western Azerbaijan), which native speakers call Kurdi.

c) further south, the sine'i dialect spoken in the province of Kordestan in Iran. The dialect of the Sulaimani region has been adopted as the literary standard by the literates of this groups.

3) Finally, the Southern Group is formed of a number of heterogeneous dialects spoken south of the Iranian province of Kordestan, as well as in various neighbouring regions in Iraqi Kurdistan. None of the dialects belonging to this group has been adopted as a standard written medium.

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Literate Kurds have felt for a long time the need to unify their language and alphabet. As far back as February 1933, the magazine Hawar (No 16) published in Damascus, produced an "Inquiry on the unification of the Kurdish Language" in the form of a questionnaire drawn by a teacher from Iraqi Kurdistan and the replies published in the same magazine showed a real concern.

The intelligentsia which has sprung up in the USSR is hampered by lack of contact with the Kurdish world outside, which is made all the harder because of their use of the Cyrillic alphabet. This alphabet blocks Kurdish scholars outside the USSR from an important part of their culture. Philologists and linguists are particularly aware of this handicap. Thus, I. O. Farizov uses the Hawar Latin alphabet for Kurdish in his Russian-Kurdish dictionary, published in Moscow in 1957. Qanat-e Kurdo was to do the same for his Kurdish-Russian dictionary also published in Moscow three years later. Still more recently, two excellent researchers, the brothers Ordixan and Celil-e Celil, used the Latin alphabet in their monumental collection of Kurdish folklore. Qanat-e Kurdo and Zare Yusif use the Arab-Persian script for their excellent Kurdish (Sorani)-Russian dictionary published a few months ago, as had done, a few years earlier, E. I. Kedajtene, Kurdistan Mukriyani and V. I. Mitroxina in their Russian-Kurdish dictionary for Kurdish students studying the Russian language.

Since the end of the 1970s, a Kurdish Kurmanji renaissance has been taking place in among others, Sweden and West Germany, where Kurdish intellectuals from Turkey and Syria have found asylum. The Roj-a Nu (The New Day) Publishing House in Stockholm has already put out some seven publications in the Hawar Latin script: four collections of poetry by Cegerxwin, the famous Kurmanji poet whose last publication in Syria goes back to 1954. The three other publications are works of Soviet scholars: a collection of poems of the poet Casim-e Celil, Kurdish folklore collected by his daughter Cemila, a musicologist at Radio Erevan in Soviet Armenia; and, a few weeks ago, the first volume of a History of Kurdish Literature by Qanat-e Kurdo. Komkar Publications, in Frankfurt, published in 1981, always in Hawar Latin script, a Kurdish Grammar written by Qanat-e Kurdo.

in Iran, the authorities have always pursued a policy of assimilation of non-Persian speaking peoples and particularly of the five million Kurds, most of whom live in Iranian Kurdistan. Persian is the only language taught and Kurdish publications were strictly forbidden during the long rule of the Shahs. Those few intellectuals who did succeed in publishing in Iran, despite the rigorous repression, a few Kurdish literary texts, grammars and dictionaries, used the modified Arab-Persian script developed by the Iraqi Kurds, on whose works the literate Iranian Kurds draw more today, since the political boundaries between the two countries are now less tightly closed.

An attempt at unifying the Kurdish language and script could have been made in Iraq where the community belongs to the two major subgroups which have standard literary forms; indeed, after the Armistice of November 1918, all the southern part of Ottoman Kurdistan was occupied by British troops on the basis of promises of autonomy made to the Kurdish nationalist leaders. In fact, a semi-autonomous Kurdish province was created, with the Sulaimani district as its center and Kurdish spoken in this province was adopted as the official language in place of Turkish. In 1926, the League of Nations also granted the Kurdish province of Mosul to the young Iraqi state, placing it under British mandate and specifying that Kurdish should be the local official language. A law, called the Law of Local Languages, was decreed. School text books were published for the primary schools set up in Sulaimaniya, Arbil, etc. This educational material, produced in the Sulaimani dialect, i.e., Sorani, proved unusable in the Mosul province, where nothing was attempted to help Badinani (i.e., the Northern Group) speaking inhabitants to learn sorani. Both teachers and parents began very soon to prefer and adopt an entirely Arabic educational syllabus.

It is, therefore, in Iraq, where less than a sixth of the total Kurdish population lives, that there has been the greatest number of Kurdish publications whose importance has grown over the last twenty years. These publications (newspapers, magazines, literary and scientific books...) are mostly in the Sorani dialect: they all use the

## THE FIRST MASTERS

By Jamshid Kurdo

The settlements in the plain of Sindshar have been recently investigated. They clarify the development of the first agrarian settlements, which existed from the time of the "pre-ceramical" Neolithic up to the culture, spread in our region during the 7-4 millennium B.C. The Soviet archeologists Merpert and Munchaev have the main merit for these investigations -they guided an archeological expedition in Kurdistan during the period 1969-1975.

The oldest village, excavated in Sindshar is Magsaliya. It is situated on the border between the plain and the foothills of the Sindshar and has an area of one ha. All horizons of Magsaliya contain remains of rectangular houses and some of them are as large as 100 square meters. The foundations are made of stone, the walls of sandy clay mixed with straw. The floor is covered by small stones, smoothened by clay and sometimes plastered. The walls and roofs are plastered as well. The interior of the houses includes places for preserving the food, for sleep and ovens. Around the houses are containers of victuals and buildings of economical importance. The remains of enclosing wall can be seen around the village. This wall is considered by the scientists as one of the oldest fortifications in the world. The excavations in Magsaliya show the transitional character of the economy during that time. The bones found there belong to wild and domesticated animals. The barley and wheat corns also show signs of cultivation. Some of the implements indicate the increased role of agriculture in this settlement. The grates and knives for treating leathers show that hunting had not lost its importance. Stone was the main material for making vessels and clay for preparing anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines.

The next stages of the agrarian development in Kurdistan can be traced again in the plain of Sindshar. A new culture, existed between the second half of the 7th mill. and the first half of the 6th mill. B.C. It was based on a productive farming and is represented by the remains in Kul-tepe and some other villages. The most interesting feature of this period and its culture is the absence of any hunting weapons. The tools were made out of flint and obsidian. The plant remains belong to fully cultivated wheat and barley, and the bones to domesticated animals only. The pottery of Kul-tepe was hand made, baked, decorated in relief and painted. Among the plastic found in this tepe, there are some anthropomorphic and zoomorphic examples very complex in design.

Therefore, if we are interested in making a general characteristic of the region, including the 6th mill., it will be as follows: the rainfall increased and the territory, suitable for cultivation, grew as well, and as a result, the settlements moved gradually from the foothills to the plains. Barter among different tribes became constant when the communes became fully farming and stock-breeding ones. In comparison with the direct appropriation of the nature-products, farming and stock-breeding provided more and constant sources of existence. Their reflexion can be seen in the very rapid increase of the population as well. So, the number of settlements grew. The generic communities consisted of small families, that lived in separate rooms. The families produced implements, cooked and took care of the victuals. The major part of the work was done by the whole commune and the products were divided equally among the families. The uniformity of dwellings, tools and burials show no economical or possessional differences among the people of this phase of the primitive society. Religious conceptions of the early farmers-stock-breeders did not differ much from those of their ancestors, the hunters and plant-gatherers. The beliefs and cult organization became generally more complex. In Gandsh-Dareh a cultroom with sheep crania can be seen. The clay figurines represent mostly women. Female fertility remained connected with the fertility of the earth, the products and fruits of which were of decisive importance for the people's life. The zoomorphic figurines were used in magic and as zoomorphic divinities and totems.

The constant humidity and high temperature -higher than today in the region- characteristic for the 6th mill. B.C. were an important premise for the further development of the rural economy and a new culture. One of its most telling representatives is Yarim-tepe I, the layers of which mark a different stage in the development of the village. The oldest, i.e. the earliest contains, remains of rectangular houses and circular buildings which had ritual character are found here. The interior of the dwellings did not differ from the interior of the previous epoch. In the upper layers, the houses got larger and the buildings, like granaries, occupied larger places. Pots, jars and cups were the basic ceramic products of the settlers of Yarim-tepe I. The ceramic of the earliest layers can be considered as a continuation of the tradition of Kul-tepe: it is decorated by applications in red and brown. Later, the geometrical compositions were replaced by the images of birds and scorpions. The forty female statuettes found there were connected with the Fertility cult. Most of them



are in standing position, with applied eyes, stressed hips and breasts. Some do not have clearly defined sex. Their heights varies between 3,5 and 10 cm. The tools were made of stones, bones and clay, the last being used mainly for preparing spindles. Two finds are of great interest for tracing the development of the considered territory -the rectangular and the circular stone seals and a lead bracelet. The first find shows the beginning of a tradition, which later was extraordinary good development and diffused in Kurdistan and its neighbouring countries. The bracelet, together with 27 pieces of copper ore, document the wide spectrum of metal application, which gradually replaced the stone not only by producing tools but also by making decorations. The inhabitants of Yarim-tepe I cultivated two types of wheat and barley; bred cattle, sheep and goats. Their villages were built with the dwellings around the fence, while the centre remained usually a free zone.

The 5th mill. B.C. in Kurdistan was characterized by the appearance of a new culture with its most outstanding representative -the village of Arpachya. Recent excavations show that Yarim-tepe II belongs to the said culture. Its dwellings were circular with one room only, of a diameter of 3 to 5 m. and made of clay bricks. The archeologists found the remains of two buildings which were not for everyday use. One of them -rectangular with many rooms- is considered by the scientists to be a cult building. The argument which speaks in favour of this hypothesis is the amount of broken pottery of very high quality found there. The second building apparently served as a barn of the whole settlement. The furnaces of Yarim-tepe II were of different size and form. Their discovery gave the possibility to explain the extraordinary thermo-treatment of the famous drawn ceramics from Kurdistan during the 5th mill. B.C. This pottery is characterized by 400 different compositions in black, red and brown. Geometrical patterns prevail. The development of the ceramics is documented also by the anthropomorphic female figurines. A good many of them are schematic, but others are quite realistically represented. A vessel about 20 cm high attracts attention. It has the form of a young woman -a personification of the Mother Goddess. The head is not shown, but even so it is very realistic and vivid. The ornaments on its hands and the curly hair are drawn in dark red. The excellent artistic performance and the refinement of this figurine put it together with the most exquisite examples of the earliest art. The copper pearls and the copper seal found in Yarim-tepe II are evidence to the further development of the metallurgy in our territory. The palaeobotanical and the palaeozoological remnants of Yarim-tepe II are proof that the highly developed agriculture and stock-breeding were the base of the economy in the whole plain of Sindshar. The handicrafts were represented by the weaving, which appeared in the Zagros during the former epoch, and ceramics. If the first continued to be practised only at home, the second moved during the 5th mill. B.C. to special workshops. The metallurgy and its products led to intensive tribal barter. It was collectively done so that the commune chieftains could not become richer than its other members. Many families were occupied in the copper production, but its casting was done only by masters. The developed farming and stock-breeding allowed the commune to have masters who did not take part in the food production. This epoch was characterized by the forming of bigger families. They became the basic productive unit. This process can be traced in the architecture of the village -the one-room houses were grouped in complexes. The originating of the economically-independent-family communities catalyzed the development of the possessional differentiation. The art consisted of clay plastics, stone sculpture and, above all, drawn ceramics. The ancient artists began to represent more the flora and fauna as well as human-beings. The stylistic device and the symbolism, combined with the rich imagination of the artist, were the main features of this art.

The excavations in Yarim-tepe III reveal the culture of the end of the 5th mill. B.C. The architecture of the dwellings returned to the old, rectangular, massive houses. The vessel's ornamentation decreased and was not so varied as that of the former epoch. The plain of Sindshar and the areas around it were densely populated and village like Yarim-tepe III grew in number. The concentration of settlements led to cultural and ethnical consolidation not only in Sindshar but also in the whole of Kurdistan. During the first half of the 4th mill. B.C. some socio-economic changes took place in our country, the reason for which being the changes in the handicraft. The production of pottery improved by the invention of the potter's wheel and the number of metallurgical products increased. Gradually, copper was replaced by bronze. The development of the crafts was ensured by the supplementary (surplus) product in agriculture. It was this surplus which led to possessional unevenness. This inequality is documented by the seals -at the beginning simpler but later cylindrical. Some of the burials do not differ only in richness but also contain some socially distinguishing features, e.g. sceptre. The possessional differentiation led in its turn to the economic dependence of the population on the elder of the community, the chieftain and the high priest. The new social relations were the reason for the appearance of administrative-economic complexes

separated from the other buildings. Art during that time was not professional. The works of art were not separated from the productive process yet. It is the reason that the most outstanding examples of this art are masterpieces created during everyday work. The dominant element in the art of that time was the rhythm. In the fine arts it was expressed by the organization of the space and the subordination of the elements to the whole. The rhythm can be felt everywhere, in geometrical decoration -at the beginning simple but later more complex and in the stylized images of animals and people. The object was perceived by the artist in its undismembered whole, mainly as a silhouette or a shadow of a figure. The result of direct observation was the generalization of the representation, which was reduced to the selection of the brightest and most laconic features.

Glyptic art dates back to the 5th mill. B.C. Usually the early seals were decorated by geometrical elements or symbols. Sometimes the decoration was zoomorphical. The backside of these seals was covered with drawings. At the very beginning of their existence, the seals were not to be distinguished from the other adornments. The symbolism in the art of our ancient land reached other places and other peoples, though in latter times. For example, the motif of the bucranium was characteristic for the art of the Aegean Sea lands during the 2nd mill. B.C.

Anthropomorphic sculpture can be considered as an art as early as the ceramics. During the prehistoric epoch it had its specific character. Sometimes the figurines look unreal with some features more or less emphatically shown, while others not expressed at all. As a rule the art works of the primitive society were treated according to the collective values. This is the main reason why the figurines often look the same. However, by a more detailed analysis one can differentiate among the figurines of the Palaeolithic, Neolithic and Eneolithic. The basic material used for the Palaeolithic figurines was the bone and later stone and clay. The last mentioned materials gave the possibility for better creation and moulding. The greatest number of the Palaeolithic represent a female while, later, male representations were characteristic. Another difference can be traced in the treatment of the statuettes. The palaeolithic examples usually stand with their hands on the stomach, the breasts and the abdomen grossly exaggerated. The head is reduced to a simple scheme and the face features are not represented. The dressing and the decoration are schematic as well. These figurines bear no specific symbols. During the Neolithic and Eneolithic the examples stand or sit, the pose of the hands varies; the fingers and toes are detailly shown, the head is naturalistically treated. The Eneolithic figurines, especially, have a clearly represented dress and symbols. The symbols are drawn or applied. We shall consider in part three of this expose the finds which belong to the Neolithic and the epoch thereafter. According to these finds, the settlements of Chatal-Huük, Hadjilar, Charmo, Tepe Guran and Tepe Sarab are among the outstanding representation of Neolithic sculpture in Kurdistan.

Problems in the unification of the Kurdish Language, cont.

Arab-Persian script. The very rare publications in Badinani which appear in the Arab-Persian script (some of these publications are of considerable interest, particularly the works of the late Sadiq Baha al-din Amedi who has contributed so much to our knowledge of the classical Kurdish literature), have a very limited circle of readers. The main potential readers, the literate Kurds of Turkey, find the Arabic script a major barrier.

In the early 1970s, the Iraqi Minister for Northern Affairs, who was then a prominent Kurdish nationalist, set up commissions to examine:

1) The problem of unifying Kurdish: should a standard form of Kurdish be created by synthesis? Or, should some means be adopted to draw the Northern and Central dialects closer to one another?

2) The problem of Kurdish script: would not the Latin monophonemic alphabet be more convenient than the Arab-Persian script which is entirely unsuitable for the Kurdish language with a developed vocalic system where vowels are not accessories of the consonantic frame but part of the stem?

But the Baghdad Ba'thist authorities regarded all the proposals, and especially Latinization, as another argument for Kurdish secession and denied all the Commissions' requests.

The greatest barrier to the unification of the Kurdish language is the division of the Kurdish population among five different countries. A central Kurdish authority imposing a single official language could perhaps have provided a solution to this problem of unification. In fact, Kurdish nationalists are well aware -they have shown it on a number of occasions at the cost of very heavy sacrifices- that only institutions which they themselves control are capable of providing an adequate solution to the fundamental problems of their people.

(The above research paper was written by Joyce Blau in August 1983 for an international specialist congress.

# Iraq: Political executions and deaths under torture

AI has appealed for an end to political executions in Iraq and has called on the government to conduct a thorough investigation into reported deaths under torture.

The organization has the names of 520 political prisoners reported to have been executed since 1978 and it has asked the Iraqi authorities to examine 23 cases of people reported to have died under torture since 1976.

In a report published on 19 October, following an AI mission to Iraq in January this year, the

organization says the procedures and findings of any such inquiry should be made public.

The report urges President Saddam Husein to issue a personal statement prohibiting torture under all circumstances and to introduce safeguards to protect prisoners.

It also calls for an immediate halt to executions for non-violent political offences as a first step towards total abolition, and says special courts set up in Iraq to try political cases do not guarantee

fair trials and should be abandoned.

The recommendations were sent to the government after the AI mission had had talks with Iraqi officials between 22 and 28 January. It met government ministers, the Attorney General and the President of the country's Revolutionary Court.

In a 16-page reply included in the report, the Government of Iraq says there have been no political executions and that the torture allegations are false.

## Torture and ill-treatment

AI has frequently sent the Iraqi authorities the names of torture victims over the years and provided details of what happened to them and which official agencies were responsible for torturing them.

The government has seldom replied—and then only to dismiss the allegations as untrue.

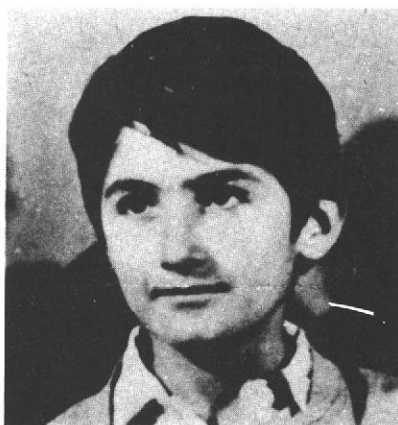
During AI's January 1983 mission, its delegates were told that complaints of torture and ill-treatment had been investigated and guilty officials punished—but AI has received no evidence of this.

In its reply, the Iraqi Government offers to investigate the individual allegations of torture documented in AI's 1981 report *Iraq: Evidence of torture*, if the victims, interviewed in exile by AI, are identified and returned to Iraq.

AI welcomes the government's stated willingness to investigate torture allegations but may not divulge the names of the 14 victims whose cases featured in its 1981 report on Iraq: the victims asked for their names to be withheld for fear of reprisals against their families and AI remains bound to respect their requests.

However, AI's latest report names other victims whose cases it has in the past brought to the Iraqi authorities' notice without any response and the organization again urges the government to investigate them and make the findings public. They include:

- **Reber Mulla Husain**, an Iraqi Kurd of about 19 who reportedly died under torture some four days after his arrest in April 1976. His body was returned to his family in Zakho on 26 April—apparently nine nails were imbedded in it, one of his eyes has been gouged out and his penis cut off. AI asked the government about this case in February 1977.



Ali Hama Salih, aged 12 . . . his body is reported to have been handed to his family badly marked by torture after he had been detained for interrogation by security forces in February 1981.

- **Adnan Abd al-Jabbar**, a young man said to have been a "friend" of the Communist Party, is reported to have died in a Baghdad hospital on 1 October 1978 after being tortured in custody. He is said to have been beaten with truncheons, hung upside down and to have had a wire inserted into his anus. AI asked the government about his case in February 1979.

- **Ali Hama Salih**, a 12-year-old Iraqi Kurd from the village of Ja'aferan in Sulaimaniya Province, was arrested on 25 February and detained for interrogation at Karadagh security headquarters. On 5 March his body is reported to have been returned to his family badly marked by torture. AI asked the government about this case in November 1981.

\* \* \*

The government's reply to AI's new report stresses that suspects are detained in official police stations and are entitled to contact their relatives, appoint a lawyer and be seen by a doctor.

AI has urged the government to inves-

tigate the cases of 114 people who are reported to have been arrested by Iraqi security forces between 1979 and 1982 and whose legal status and whereabouts remain unknown to their families.

Although the Iraqi Government has repeatedly stressed that torture is prohibited by Iraqi law, AI remains concerned because the authorities have taken no definite steps against torture, apart from issuing a general order to the security forces that proper procedures should be followed and a warning that their powers should not be abused.

AI considers that there should be more than a mere legal prohibition of torture. There should be rules about access to prisoners; and regulations about interrogation methods; supervision of interrogators and prison warders; medical treatment and proper documentation; the conditions for admissibility in evidence of statements made by prisoners under interrogation; investigation of complaints of torture; and prosecution of the culprits.

## Special courts

AI is gravely concerned about the use of special courts in Iraq—such as the Revolutionary Court—which function differently from ordinary criminal courts and whose procedures do not provide the legal safeguards required by both Iraqi law and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The President of the Revolutionary Court informed AI's delegates in January this year that the court's judges were always members of the ruling Ba'th Party and that the Revolutionary Court, unlike ordinary courts, interprets the law according to Ba'th Party principles.



From the resolutions of the founding congress of our party of 1981:

- " 34- Our party salutes the Nicaraguan people's victory over the Somoza fascist regime and US imperialism; it supports the struggle of the patriotic, revolutionary movement in El Salvador under the leadership of the Farabundo Marti Front to defeat the ruling military junta. The congress condemns US interference in the internal affairs of El Salvador and supplying the fascist military junta with weapons, advisers and material and political aid.
- 35- The congress denounces the oppressive measures taken by the dictatorial regimes of Chile, Argentina and Brazil against the progressive and revolutionary forces and condemns their flagrant violations of human rights. The congress demands the release of political detainees and prisoners kept in the dungeons of these fascist regimes and who suffer from various forms and methods of torture."
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## Political executions in Iraq

*Continued from previous page*

Trials in the special courts are summary and often held *in camera*. There are stringent restrictions on the right to defence and there is no right of appeal to a higher court.

### Death penalty

In a memorandum to the government of May 1983 *AI* expressed disquiet because "Iraq still provides the death penalty for a wide range of criminal and political offences" and because "hundreds of people are executed every year, mostly for political offences".

In its reply, the government questions *AI*'s allegations and says that there have been no executions in Iraq for political reasons—it says the imposition of the death penalty for political activities by members of the Ba'th Party is not a legitimate cause for *AI*'s concern.

On 12 June 1980 *AI* published a list of the names of 257 Iraqis reported to have been executed over a two-year period between 1978-1979. The names included those of individuals charged with high treason, political activity in the armed forces, political or military involvement in the Kurdish opposition, bribery and economic espionage, membership of, or association with, illegal political parties and other illegal political activities.

These people were reported to have been tried either by the Revolutionary Court in Baghdad, by a military court, by the Special Court of Kirkuk or by other special courts. There are other references to death sentences passed in Iraq before and after 1980 in *AI*'s annual reports□





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