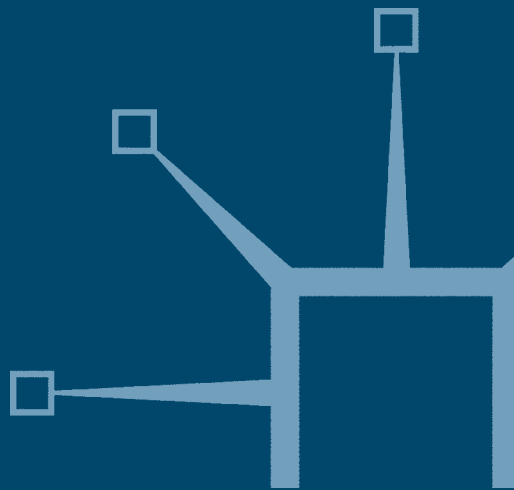# The Political Development of the Kurds in Iran

Pastoral Nationalism

Farideh Koohi-Kamali

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Pastoral Nationalism

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Preface

This book examines the links between the structural changes in the Kurdish economy and its political demands, namely Kurdish nationalism in Iran. I argue that the transition of the nomadic/tribal society of Kurdistan to an agrarian village society was the beginning of a process whereby the Kurds saw themselves as a community of homogeneous ethnic identity. I discuss the political movements of the Kurds in Iran to argue that the different phases of economic development of Kurdish society played a great role in determining the way the Kurds expressed their political demands for independence.

I divide the political history of Kurdistan in Iran, and incidentally its economic development, from the First World War to the present into three periods. The first corresponds to tribal consciousness, during which the typical economic activity is herding, exchange relationships are based on barter, and social and political relationships are based, predominantly, on tribal 'face-to-face' contact within the community. Simko's uprising is discussed to illustrate the political counterpart of this period. The second period corresponds to the reign of Reza Shah and his tribal policies. This is the period of national consciousness among the Kurdish leaders in Iran, illustrated by the establishment of the Kurdish Republic in Mahabad in 1946. The third period begins with the Shah's land reform program. I analyze the Kurdish participation in the 1979 revolution in Iran to illustrate the further development of the Kurdish nationalist movement since the demise of the Republic in 1947, and I examine the differences and similarities of the two main Kurdish nationalist organizations at the eve of the 1979 revolution and later.

In the economic sections, I examine a number of economic and demographic factors which contributed to the disintegration of the nomadic/tribal society of Kurdistan (change), those which contributed to the cohesion and solidarity within Kurdistan (continuity), and those indicators of inequality between Kurdistan and Iran as the final precondition of the development of a unified nationalist consciousness/identity among the Kurds.

MAP 1

KURDISTAN:
Principal Districts
and Locations

Districts: TIYARI
Locations: Malatiya

Miles
0   50   100   150

0   50   100   150   200
Kilometres

BLACK SEA

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

L. SAVAN

Kars

Yerevan

•Ankara

T U R K E Y

•Sivas

•Erzurum

Erzincan

Karasu

Agri

Bayazit

Maku

River Arayes

Arjish

D E R S I M

•Bingöl

Murat

Van

Qutur

Khoi

•Tabriz

Kharput

•Elazig

Lice
(Lijja)

Mush•

Kulp

L. VAN

Salmas
(Dilman)

L. URUMIYA

I
R
A
N

Malatiya•

•Bitlis

Siirt

Bashqala

Hakkari
(Julamark)

SOMAY

Urumiya

•Diyarbakir

Bayt al Shabab

HAKKARI

TARGAVAR

•Marash

•Siverek

Mardin•

Cizre
(Jazira Bin
Umar)

Shirnak

TIYARI

BAHDINAN

Nihri

MARGAVAR

Ushnaviya

•Miandoab

Gaziantep
(Ayntab)

Viranshehir
•

Urfa•

Nusaybin•

Amadiya

BUHTAN

Zakhu

Barzan

BARADUST

Naqada

•Mahabad (Sawj Bulaq)

•Adana

Qamishli

Aqra•

Zibar

•Hajj Umran

•Bukan

Dohuk

SHAYKHAN

Shaqlawa

Rawanduz

•Aleppo

Mosul•

Arbil•

Raniya

Sardasht

•Saqqiz

S Y R I A

Koi-Sanjaq•

Qala
Diza

•Bana

Altun
Kupru

Panjwin

•Mariwan

Sanandaj
(Sinna)

Sulaymaniya

HAWRAMAN

Kirkuk•

Chamchamal

Halabja

•Pava

River Euphrates

River Tigris

Tuz
Khurmatu

•Zuhab

Kifri

•Qasr-i Shirin

Kirmanshah

•Khaniqin

I R A Q

•Beirut

•Damascus

Baghdad

CYPRUS

Source: David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds* (London, 1996).

Source: David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds* (London, 1996).

MAP 3

PRINCIPAL KURDISH TRIBES

Miles
0   50   100   150
0   50 100 150 200
Kilometres

BLACK SEA

L. SAVAN

Kars

JALALI

JALALI

River Araxes

●Ankara

●Sivas

Erzincan

●Erzerum

HASANAN

HAYDARANLI

KUCHGIRI

Karasu

T U R K E Y

DERSIM TRIBES

JIBRAN

KHURMAK

Bingöl

Murat

●Van

L. VAN

ALAN

SHIKAK

●Tabriz

MAMKHURAN

L. URUMIYA

Malatiya●

●Diyarbakir

●Bitlis

ARTUSHI

ASSYRIAN TRIBES

URAMAR

Nihri

HARKI

Urumiya

●Marash

GOYAN

JIRKI

MAZURI

MAMASH

MUKRI

BARZANI

MILLI

●Mardin

BARWARI

BARADUSTI

DIHBUKRI

ZIBARI

BILBAS

Gaziantep●

●Urfa

HAVARKAN

SURCHI

MANGUR

FAYZALLAH BEGI

YAZIDI TRIBES

YAZIDI TRIBES

HARKI AQU

GAWRIK

KHUSHNAW

PIZHDAR

Mosul●

●Arbil

●Aleppo

DIZAI

Sulaymaniya

MARAWI

HAWRAMI

HAMAVAND

S Y R I A

River Euphrates

River Tigris

JAF

JAWANRUD

TALABANI

GURAN TRIBES

●Kirmanshah

CYPRUS

SANJABI

I R A Q

KALHUR

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

●Beirut

●Baghdad

●Damascus

I R A N

Source: David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds* (London, 1996).

MAP 4

KURDISH LANGUAGES

ᐁᐁᐁᐁ Divide between (northern) Kurmanji speakers and (southern) Surani speakers

Area where some communities speak Zaza

Southeastern dialects

Main Gurani speaking areas

Miles
0   50   100   150
0   50 100 150 200
Kilometres

BLACK SEA

L. SAVAN

•Ankara

Kars •

•Sivas   Erzincan   •Erzerum   Agri   •Maku   River Araxes

T U R Karasu K E Y Arjish   I

•Malatiya   Bingöl   •Mush   •Van   Salmas   •Tabriz

Elazig   L.VAN   L. URUMIYA   R

•Siirt   Urumiya

Diyarbakir   Bayt al   Hakkari

•Marash   •Siverek   Shabab   Ushnaviya   A

Gaziantep   Mardin   Cizre (Jazira   •Amadiya   Naqada   Mahabad
(Ayntab)•   Nusaybin   Bin Umar)•   •Zakhu   •(Sawj Bulaq)

•Urfa   •Qamishli   Dohuk   Aqra   •Rawanduz   •Bukan

•Aleppo   Mosul   •Arbil   Qala   •Saqqiz
                                Shaqlawa   Diza Sardasht
                                        •Bana
                                Sulaymaniya Panjwin Sanandaj
CYPRUS   •Kirkuk   Halabja   •(Sinna)

S Y R I A   River Euphrates   River Tigris   Z

                I R A Q   Khaniqin   •Kirmanshah

MEDITERRANEAN SEA   •Beirut

•Damascus   •Baghdad

Source: David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds* (London, 1996).

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Introduction

In the modern age, nationalism can be seen as a universal phenomenon, a component of the development of our modern history, part of a process which originated in Western Europe and the Americas, and one which was copied by other groups in later stages. The models of nationalism, when transferred to a variety of societies, foster different forms of nationalism. Perhaps the most significant realization for the communities pursuing nationalism is that to model oneself on the West means pursuing the idea of the nation-state. Human history is passing through a phase, a key characteristic of which is that individuals feel the need to belong to a nation-state in order to obtain security and to ensure that their communities receive security, legitimacy and recognition. Those who feel the need of such recognition have before them examples of those who have achieved such recognition. Those communities who are currently driven to espouse nationalism against an existing state feel threatened by those states. Hence they demand a state of their own, not only to achieve development, but also to be dealt with on a more equal basis.

Nationalism is, almost certainly, the most durable and powerful, political phenomenon of our era. It mobilizes the masses and stirs high emotions, bringing out the most selfless, devoted, and also the most inhumane, behavior in people. Those who are affected by it understand it well, but those who try to understand it have difficulty providing an objective definition of nationalism. The difficulty in defining nationalism arises less from problems in determining its causes than from defining the specific limiting features of those communities which aspire to nationalism. In order to understand the phenomenon, the most common approach has been to look at individual cases. However, this approach does not lead to a general understanding of

nationalism, precisely because there are far too many exceptional cases. Almost all leading scholars on nationalism realize the problem of defining and analyzing nation, nationalism, and nationality despite the obvious strength and importance of these phenomena. Seton-Watson states that:

> Thus I am driven to the conclusion that no 'scientific definition' of a nation can be devised; yet the phenomenon has existed and exists. All that I can find to say is that a nation exists when a significant number of people in a community consider themselves to form a nation, or behave as if they formed one.[1]

Despite such statement, attempts continue to conceptualize nationalism and to find a formula to fit all kinds of nationalism. Seton-Watson, himself, has tried to narrow down the various nationalisms into two main categories according to the final goals pursued by nationalists.

> The two most general sought aims of such movements have been independence (the creation of a sovereign state in which the nation is dominant), and national unity (the incorporation within the frontiers of this state of all groups which are considered, by themselves, or by those who claim to speak for them, to belong to the nation.)[2]

Nationalism, in many cases, is initially determined by specific features of the world economy. Certain features of the world political economy determine its basic form in the most general sense. This generalization is valid for certain historical periods, especially the period between the French and Industrial Revolutions and the present era.

The spread of capitalism spurred contradictory forces. It aimed at fostering a united and connected world regulated by market forces. But in attempting to develop such a world, it generated divisions of wealth and power, and created periphery regions of the capitalist centers. This very unevenness encouraged the peripheries to desire a more even development. But this was not an easy task for the periphery regions, for they realized that their goals were beyond the material resources available. It is this realization that provides the inward-looking feature to nationalism: the attempts to employ or even invent devices whose roots are not seen as foreign or alien. Such a feature is inward looking, despite the general principle having been borrowed from the more developed, capitalist societies, as, in order to develop its specific features, each nationalism needs to resurrect/establish

factors from within and then relate them to its surroundings, factors such as a specific history or language or cultural peculiarities, or specific economic features.

Although nationalism takes on specific forms in specific societies, most of those who have pursued nationalist aspirations have had a common element of uneven economic/political/social development in their history.

> Most typically it has arisen in societies confronting a dilemma of uneven development – 'backwardness' or colonization – where a conscious, middle-class elite has sought massive popular mobilization to right the balance.[3]

It is important to realize that nationalism is as much a product of internal factors of a society as of external ones. Nationalism does not appear randomly in the history of a nation, but in that period when the community feels unfairly disadvantaged due to unevenness in development. Therefore the timing of the development of capitalism is critical to the development of nationalism.

As much as nationalism has been portrayed as a highly emotional and romantic phenomenon, it is, even more, an economic reality of the modern era. Most nationalism of our time relates to uneven development of one form or another, and has its roots in inequality. The more advanced societies thus gave rise to other nations' consciousness of differentness, and provided them with models to follow.

Research on the modern theory of nationalism has been propelled by the work of Benedict Anderson, who has drawn attention to the origin of nationalism and to some of the causes of community awareness among peoples whose members are so large, or dispersed, as to make it difficult to bring them all together in one time and place. Anderson names these communities whose members might never see and know each other, but who firmly believe in each other's existence and bonds of solidarity and fraternity, 'imagined communities'. Anderson does not present us with a coherent theory of nationalism; rather he focuses our attention on the changes and exchanges, which made thinking of nationalism and of nations, possible. However, he does provide us with a definition of nation: 'it is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.'[4] The term 'imagined' denotes such a community of which nation-states are one major type, the other notable type being communities with a common religious belief. In his research to find the

genesis of nationalism, he attaches great importance to the introduction of 'print capitalism' in Western Europe and the role of bilingual intellectuals in the creation of national consciousness. He describes how some groups of peoples began to think of themselves as a community via shared reading, and how it was the bilingual intellectuals who advocated the sense of commonness and solidarity among the community. He also points out some other historic developments which seem to relate to other forms of national consciousness as they appear as by-products of empires, centralization, and decentralization. In the next few pages, I shall, briefly, review some of Anderson's conclusions, and try to show their relevance to our own study of Kurdish nationalism.

The origins of modern nationalism go back to the end of the eighteenth century when significant historical factors converged to provide the background for the emergence and development of nationalism. What made nationalism possible was the existence of two significant cultural systems, which Anderson refers to as the 'religious community' and the 'dynastic realm'.[5] For these two were the conceptual possibilities and background for thinking and imagining oneself as part of a bigger community. 'Religious communities' were imagined through the medium of sacred languages and written scripts, and 'dynastic realms' were the only political systems which people thought of as belonging to.[6]

The possibility for communities to think of themselves as nations, historically, only occurred when three fundamental cultural understandings of fraternity, power, and time changed. The transformation of older concepts of these three notions caused by economic changes, social and scientific discoveries, and the expansion of communications, first in Western Europe and later elsewhere, provided a new outlook to history and its interpretation. The simultaneous emergence of print technology and capitalism, or, as Anderson calls it, 'print capitalism,' provided the most effective means for communities to see themselves differently and acknowledge the differentness of others. By print capitalism, Anderson means that the print materials were the first mass-produced commodities for profit, prefiguring the transformation that the Industrial Revolution would bring. Print capitalism provided cheap, popular reading material for a vast public. It made it possible for large groups of people to think of themselves as a community via shared, published, language. It also made people aware of boundaries between themselves and others. This change occurred only when three factors simultaneously emerged: the development of vernacular languages beside Latin, the development of capitalism, and the

development of communication technology (that is, print). Related to the development of national print languages and nationalism is the growth of indigenous bilingual intellectuals.

By the late nineteenth century, controlling the vast, geographically spread, colonies became a difficult job for the empires. Colonial capitalism began to educate the natives of the colonies in the colonial core and created a bilingual intelligentsia in the colonies, who, ironically, became the spokesmen for nationalist aspirations. This intelligentsia learned the meaning of the nation-state in the metropole and adapted the ideological comprehension of the nation-state from the historical experience of the West. They introduced print languages to the indigenous groups and presented their ideas to the masses of their specific community. However, for this intellectual elite, there was an ambiguity, which existed in modeling themselves after the West. This ambiguity had its roots in the uneven economic development of the colonial periphery societies. The goal for these elite intellectuals was to reach the level of social and economic development, and to have all the means of progress and modernity as those of the metropole. In order to be effective and appealing, it was necessary to rely on specific conditions of their community, and to copy only certain aspects of the developed countries. Therefore, nationalism started to look for specificities that could mobilize the masses. It is in this mobilization that nationalism uncovers uniqueness or even invents it. Nationalism, in emphasizing similarities among certain groups of people, tends to develop its appeal to the emotions. This is an ambiguous feature of nationalism; though it is meant to appeal on the basis of logical arguments, and aims at progress and modernity, it is most powerful when it is most emotional.

I shall relate my discussion to Miroslav Hroch's argument on the developing phases of national movements.[7] Hroch's argument emphasizes that, in general, in order for the national consciousness of a community to materialize into the formation of a nation-state, that community has to pass through three structural phases: (a) the initial attempts by a limited group of agitated intelligentsia to introduce the ideas of common linguistic, cultural, and historical ties of that group which differentiate from the other dominant or non-dominant groups around them; (b) the emergence of new leaders actively advocating the national rights of that group and attracting as many members as possible to the national movement; (c) the period of fully formed national movement, when, not only is there mass participation in the movement, but also, the movement is so advanced that there are different

factions with different plans and programs within the movement.[8] He, further, emphasizes that examples of national movements indicate the significance of certain features of a national movement. With the omission of all or some of these factors, the movement would not be completed, namely the importance of historical awareness, the role of language as identity criteria, the place of theater, music, and folklore in the national movement, the role of education and the school system, the participation and the role of women in the national movement, the participation of the religious institutions, the importance of demands for civil rights.[9]

However, historically, the awakening of national consciousness, which followed in the wake of the development of print national languages, engendered a reaction from the imperial governments. From the early nineteenth century, the 'national print languages,' vernacularization, had a central importance in the formation of the age of nationalism in Europe. Vernacularization meant that certain languages were thought to belong only to certain communities and that these communities deserved to have their autonomy. The response to this popular, linguistic nationalism was a special kind of nationalism presented by certain of the European dynasties (those which felt threatened), in the middle of the nineteenth century. Seton-Watson calls it 'official nationalist,'[10] and Anderson, referring to the same phenomena, writes:

> Official nationalism, weld of the new national and old dynastic principles – led in turn to what, for convenience, one can call 'Russification' in the extra-European colonies...These forces generated 'Russifying' school systems intended in part to produce the required subordinate cadres for state and corporate bureaucracies... The expansion of the colonial state which, so to speak, invited 'natives' into schools and offices, and of colonial capitalism which, as it were, excluded them from boardrooms, meant that to an unprecedented extent the key early spokesmen for colonial nationalism were lonely, bilingual intelligentsia unattached to sturdy local bourgeoisie.[11]

Official nationalism was the nationalism of the state and the ruling aristocracy who felt threatened by the new waves of vernacular nationalism. It was a mixture of popular and power group nationalism. This nationalism of Empire was based on antiquity and modernity at the same time. Official nationalism began to adapt, as Anderson calls it,

'Russification' policies in the colonies.[12] State-controlled education, state-organized propaganda, the rewriting of history, and militarism were characteristics of official nationalism. State nationalism or 'official nationalism' appeared as a reaction to the emerging nationalism of other communities within the Empires and colonial powers. Official nationalism was the attempt to centralize the power of a smaller ethnic and political group in the center of empires. It was the self-interested emphasis on centralization of a dominant power group threatened by the decentralization of a large entity. The official nationalism of Western countries was adopted and copied by others in other parts of the globe.

Although, using Anderson's words, 'official nationalism' was a response, 'by power-groups . . . threatened with exclusion from, or marginalization in, popular imagined communities,'[13] the implementation and pursuit of the policies of official nationalism in itself, at a later stage, created new waves of nationalism by the communities seeking independence from the authority of that official nationalism and reinforced those movements already in existence. This has been witnessed in more recent examples of nationalist movements. The official nationalism, or the statism, of dying empires, for instance in the Middle East, the examples of the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and the emergence of the official nationalism of Atatürk as a reaction to such disintegration, or the centralization policies and official nationalism of Reza Shah in Iran during his attempts to form the modern Iranian nation-state, and, to some extent, the attempts to achieve a sense of nation in Iraq by Faisal, all initially reactions to the national awareness of the ethnic communities around them, themselves became a factor in the more vigorous pursuit of national consciousness among those ethnic or religious groups who did not share the dominant power of the state.

These examples belong to a later period, the interwar period, of the development of nationalism, one Anderson calls 'the last wave.' This corresponds to the emergence of the age of nation-states in the old colonies (though, since the collapse of the Soviet Empire, we have seen a new wave of nationalism among the peoples of the former Empire, and with the failing of communism as a belief system, the massive reemergence of nationalisms among peoples of the former Yugoslavia). All the large empires of the Habsburgs, Hohenzollerns, Romanovs, and Ottomans had come to an end and many previously colonized communities achieved their independence. The later examples of nationalism and nationalist movements had many similarities with the earlier ones. The similarities were evident in the

importance of the role of the bilingual intellectuals, the significant role of print languages, and that the new nationalisms were constructed on the basis of the geographic boundaries which were already in existence as the administrative units of the old regimes and empires.

In the developing countries, the examples of state nationalism closely followed these forerunners in the developed countries. Its main feature in both areas has been its 'officialness.' Such nationalism, first and foremost, arose to serve the interests of the state. It was a conscious and self-protective policy. At the time of the 'Young Turks,' in the early twentieth century, there was a pursuit of a kind of 'official nationalism,' which developed as a response to the loss of the Empire's territories and the threat felt by the development of the nationalistic claims of the subjected minorities of the empire. The Committee of Union and Progress focused its attention on the centralization policy and was very consciously seeking to promote Turkishness. Arab notables were replaced with the Turkish authorities in key provincial posts, and the Turkish language was imposed in schools, in the court system, and in local administration. Claims of separate nationality by minorities were treated harshly (most horrifically with respect to the Armenians). The Pan-Turkism of the 'Young Turks' represented the nationalism of a declining, once very powerful, ruling ethnic group. This statism continued to exist in the Turkey of Atatürk.

A similar phenomenon took place in Iran during the era of Reza Shah and his son Mohammed Reza Shah. In these cases the creation of a modern nation-state was promised, and militarism was a strong feature of both. The modernization agitated for was based on Western examples. There were attempts to establish a secular state. Civil laws were adapted from the European civil codes.[14] A European style of clothing was, in many cases forcefully, introduced, and it became against the law to wear Islamic traditional clothing. The state was in control of education, propaganda, and political parties. History was rewritten, Turkishness or Arianism was much talked about, and the political rights of minorities were denied. In the case of the Kurds in Turkey, even their Kurdishness was denied, and they were to be called henceforth mountain Turks. It was not only the leaders of Iran and Turkey who preached and practiced 'official nationalism,' but, in the Middle East, so did Faisal, particularly as it applied towards minorities. The nationalist project of Faisal, sponsored by the British, did not, for instance, have a place for the Kurds. Pan-Arab ideas of interest to the Sunni Arab minority of the newly established state of Iraq had no worth for the Kurds in Iraq, either linguistically or culturally.

An example of the development of nationalism opposed to the official nationalism in the Middle East is the case of Egyptian nationalism, posited, as it was, against the Turkish nationalism of the Turks. Here, a separate nationalism (separate from the later developed Arab nationalism) occurred due to specific Egyptian elements, which fostered a sense of Egyptian uniqueness such as a common ancient history. I shall return to some of the other examples later; here it is sufficient to say that statism, or what Seton-Watson and Anderson refer to as 'official nationalism,' itself a reaction to other nationalisms, became a reinforcing factor in the development of the nationalism of other groups.

'Face-to face' versus national community

Having, briefly, discussed some of Anderson's arguments about the origins of nationalism and the emergence of nation-states as one form of 'imagined communities,' let us introduce another community, somewhat the opposite to Anderson's 'imagined community', the 'face-to-face' community. I have used Peter Laslett's phrase here. He defines the term by applying four distinguishing criteria to it.[15] First, in a 'face-to-face' society, everyone knows everyone else. Secondly, all-important problems are resolved by discussion among members getting together. Thirdly, short distances allow easy contact between members of a 'face-to-face' community. Finally, it covers only a small area, both in human and geographical terms. Laslett contrasts such a society with a 'territorial' society, of which nation-states are prominent examples. Furthermore, it should be noted that a 'face-to-face' society is not necessarily a more backward society than a 'territorial' society; for example, the Greek city-state was a 'face-to-face' society. It should also be noted that no 'face-to-face' society lives in isolation and without interaction with other societies around it.

Outside the family there are few pure 'face-to-face' societies, while all 'territorial' communities have to delegate decisions affecting the entire community to a 'face-to-face' institution at some stage in the process of decision-making. Nonetheless, in this work our application of the 'face-to-face' society is to a more underdeveloped tribal society as distinct from other such societies one finds in everyday life. A Kurdish tribe is unlike an Oxford college in that its members have not come from other places, nor when they leave do they go to different places. The justification for treating it as a 'face-to-face' community is that its members were bound to live together. Such is the relationship between

a country with parliamentary politics where people elect representatives and the assembly of the latter is based on a 'face-to-face' model while the relationship between the assembly and the people is not.

Laslett's suggestion, following Aristotle, that such societies should be understood on the model of a religious community, anticipates the main line of argument in Anderson's notes on the origins of nationalism. The main features of such a model are a common sense of community membership and cultural values with other unseen and unknown people and common identification with the same source of authority. This brings Anderson's 'imagined community' close to Laslett's 'territorial community.'

This is also the starting point of Anderson's analysis of the idea of the nation as advocated by intellectuals. Unfortunately, 'face-to-face' societies as the opposite pole of the 'imagined' communities have been omitted in Anderson's notes on the origins of nationalism. This is a great pity since the relationship between the 'face-to-face' and national communities is quite crucial to our own account of the development of Kurdish nationalism from its nomadic social structure. Moreover, nation-states are not the only important 'imagined' communities; religious communities are also very important in this respect. However, religious communal identity can coexist within both a 'face-to-face' society and a 'territorial' society. The development of a national identity must necessarily undermine the 'face-to-face' communal identity, or the fundamental feature of it, in a given territorial area if an effective nationalist movement is to emerge.

When engaged in historical analysis of the modern nationalist movement, one often finds strong forces present that have their origins in the agrarian social structure from which these movements have emerged. An understanding of such structures is crucial to the development of a theory of nationalism. Social relations in the context of isolated, small communities are the very opposite of the 'imagined' community. Indeed the fundamental feature that describes small communities is that they are 'face-to-face' societies, much the same as a family.

An important aspect of a 'face-to-face' society, as far as our study is concerned, is that its main features correspond to the principal characteristic of tribal society, that is most affairs of tribal society are settled by 'face-to-face' interaction. This is especially true of the political/social relationship in this type of society, that is the process of leadership and the process of decision-making relating to an entire tribe.

However, in distinguishing the differences between 'face-to-face' and 'imagined' societies, a relevant question could be whether a tribal

revolt can be called nationalist. The possibility of a national consciousness presupposes some kind of awareness of common cultural, political, and economic bounds among people without 'face-to-face' contacts. That is to say that there is a need to imagine a community, if it is not possible for its members to relate to each other on a 'face-to-face' basis. This in turn presupposes the breaking up of self-sufficient pre-capitalist units, closer ties of economic and political interdependence, a greater dependence on market relationships for agricultural or herding production expressed in such indicators as the production of agricultural surplus, the development of a road network linking different parts of a rural society to each other, the spread of some measure of literacy, and, at a later stage, the use of modern technology of communication. Only after these changes have taken place can the nationalist intelligentsia campaign to bring awareness of the existence of an 'imagined' community have an impact on people and mobilize them for the cause of nationalism.

Traditional tribal society can provide massive political and military mobilization without having explicit nationalist aspiration as their aim. Such mobilization is often aimed at obtaining a greater share of power for the tribal leader. However, this is different from the advocacy of an 'imagined' national community and a call for national independence.

A historical analysis of a movement such as Kurdish nationalism can be carried out as an evolution from a 'face-to-face' society to an 'imagined community,' and perhaps identify the stages of this evolution. With some luck, it may also discover the causes that bring about the transition from one stage to the next, pointing to the persistent presence of 'face-to-face' forces in nationalist movements long after the social and economic conditions that produced it have changed. Indeed, we have much to say about the social and economic forces that have, gradually, weakened and replaced the tribal 'face-to-face' structure of Kurdistan in Iran in favor of forces inferring a communal national identity.

Regarding Kurdish nationalism, the main question to ask is what historical factors came together and made it possible for the Kurds to see themselves as a nation. I shall argue that the emergence of Kurdish nationalism in Iran began with a break in the traditional economic and social existence of the dominantly tribal community, and its transition to a society with a market-based economy and social relationships. In other words, Kurdish nationalism appeared when, using Peter Laslett and Benedict Anderson's phrases, the Kurdish tribal 'face-to-face' society was transformed into a community which was able to

'imagine' itself as a nation. In applying this framework to Iranian Kurdistan, I analyze Simko's uprising during Reza Shah, an inherently 'face-to-face' phenomenon; the Mahabad Republic, representing the transition from 'face-to-face' to 'imagined' community; and the period from the Land Reform and the White Revolution in the 1960s to the present, culminating in a fully conscious nationalist Kurdish movement representing the highest point of the 'imagined' community.

Transition from a 'face-to-face' to an 'imagined' community

From what we have said so far about the origin of nationalism and differences between 'imagined' communities and 'face-to-face' communities, only some aspects have direct relevance to our study of Kurdish nationalism. As was mentioned earlier, Anderson attaches great importance to the role of print language and the role of bilingual intellectuals in creating nationalist emotions in Europe. Both these factors have not been so crucial in the earlier stages of the emergence of Kurdish nationalism in Iran. There were not many intellectuals among the Kurdish tribes of the early nineteenth-century Iran. Education and literacy programs had hardly reached the tribal life of Kurdish communities in Iran. This lack of development is represented in the form and leadership of the Kurdish revolts of the time against the central government. They were based on the strong animosity towards the authorities by the tribal chiefs seeking political and military independence and prestige for the chief and his immediate community. Print technology came to the region much later when national consciousness among the people already existed.

This is not to deny the important role of a print language and bilingual intellectuals in the development of Kurdish nationalism, but to emphasize that the Kurds were a community and felt themselves to be a community even before they developed a sizable bilingual intelligentsia or a Kurdish print language. The Kurds in Iran may not have yet reached the political stage of expressing themselves in the language of nationalism; however, there is awareness among them of being a community. A legitimate question to ask is why should Kurds develop a concept of community. In answering this question, I return to some of Anderson's argument.

Part of the answer relates to the fact that Kurds were, as Anderson calls it, 'administrative units' in the past. Anderson, in explaining the reasons for the early development of nationalism among the South American communities, emphasizes the fact that the new states of

South America were all administrative units from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. They were the states that print capitalism did not reach until much later, which meant that print language, as a vehicle of national consciousness, was not employed in the earlier stages of development of nationalism among these communities. However, being administrative units provided the mental and practical background for these communities later to think of themselves as a nation. Needless to say, this was assisted by the improvement in communication and the spread of the liberalizing ideas of the Enlightenment. The large Kurdish principalities or emirates, operating for many centuries until the last of them was destroyed in the nineteenth century, were even more than mere administrative units. More importantly, they were political and economically self-sufficient units. This is very significant, for recognition of the existence of these principalities was the conceptual foundation for the Kurdish community, in later stages, to 'imagine' their community as a nation. These principalities played the same role as the 'administrative units' Anderson refers to in the case of the Americas. However, along with the presence of the self-sufficient units of the Kurdish principalities, there were other elements to make the Kurds feel a community different from others.

The existence of a common language has played an important role in creating a sense of solidarity among the Kurds, making it possible for them to think of themselves as a community. Kurdish has been spoken among the Kurds long before the notion of nation-state was understood in the Middle East. Many Kurdish folk songs, stories, and poetry were recited rather than written in Kurdish. Anderson refers to the importance of the language as a strong base for unity. He writes that, 'The most important thing about language is its capacity for generating imagined communities, building in effect particular solidarities.'[16] Furthermore, Kurds saw themselves as a community because of the treatment they received from the central governments, particularly in later years during Reza Shah's reign, when Persian official nationalism, in centralizing the country, chose repressive measures towards the practically self-ruled, rebellious regions of the country, such as Kurdistan.

Here, of course, we are talking of the comprehension by a group of people of themselves as a community and not as a nation. For the latter to happen, different social relations needed to emerge, which in the case of the Kurds in Iran occurred through the establishment of market relations. However, the sense of community was further encouraged by the fact that Kurdish tribal life did mean a community

life through their economic exchange system, based on barter, which provided them with an economic self-sufficiency. This leads us to the discussion of how a relatively limited, small barter community with some degree of economic/political self-sufficiency was transformed into a market-oriented economy and a different social and political consciousness.

The key to an understanding of economic factors that gradually undermine the basis of a tribal 'face-to-face' society is, undoubtedly, the spread of the market. It is true that many market exchanges and encounters are arranged on a 'face-to-face' basis in a less developed society consisting of isolated economic communities. However, such 'face-to-face' trading contacts are not necessarily for market exchange, for all exchange relations are capable of being expressed in abstract price and quantity terms without reference to particular individuals engaged in exchange of goods or labor contracts. The major force behind the development of market relationships are: (a) increasing substitution of production for subsistence by production for market; (b) differentiation of direct producers into labor-hiring peasants and absentee landlords and rural landless laborers. These two developments have taken place in Kurdistan as the result of two sets of changes, changes that have occurred as the result of the internal development of a nomadic economy, and changes that are due to the enforcement of the policies by the central government in Tehran on Kurdistan. The two are not independent of each other. Central government policies often accelerated the internal process of market relations in a nomadic economy. Furthermore, more often than not, it was central government policies, particularly the policy of forced settlement of Kurdish tribes, which had the determining influence on the formation of modern Kurdistan. This fact, whose importance I shall discuss later, shows how misleading it would be to see the development of Kurdish society in Iran on its own, rather than as a part of a larger Iranian economy.

A key aspect of Iranian Kurdistan's political transformation was its economic and social transformation. A key characteristic of its economic transformation was the development of a market economy in Kurdistan. Many scholars have examined the development of a market economy and the relationship between market and society. Here, I shall briefly look at two relatively recent studies on the topic, one with an anthropological outlook and the other with an economic outlook. Arjun Appadurai has expressed the anthropological view in his introduction to the book he edited.[17] Here, Appadurai argues there are no

sharp boundaries or distinctions which separate commodities from items which are not commodities. Commodities represent 'phases in the life of things' and become such due to social changes. These social changes often relate to demand for luxuries, but in any case involve sharp asymmetries of knowledge between producer and consumer, asymmetries only bridged by merchant traders. In most societies, there is tension between merchants' desire to expand the role of commodities, and political elite desire to restrict such a role. Interestingly, too, Appadurai sees barter, not as the form of 'primitive' economy, but the form of exchange most freed from social, political, and personal transaction costs.[18] I believe that, applying Appadurai's insight to the case of Iranian Kurdistan, such more or less was the example of Kurdish tribal/nomadic economic exchange activity on their route of migration, where barter appeared to be a form of commodity exchange in which money played little role and there was little social, political, or cultural involvement. The great impact of economic change arose from the slight intensification of pressures to trade and the commoditization of production, which were, in any case, already present in Kurdish society and in its relationship with the outside world through its economic exchange system.

The economist's point of view is described by Luca Anderlini and Hamid Sabourian in their chapter on the economics of money, barter, and credit.[19] They provide a careful argument suggesting that, in certain circumstances (not inevitably), barter economies may transform themselves into money economies, and money economies may be transformed into credit economies. They argue that in transferring from a barter trade to a money trade, trading arrangements could change when a 'major shock' has been inflicted on the community. The 'major shock' could come by, for instance, the establishment of central authority demanding new taxes and new economic and political control.[20] In the case of Iranian Kurdistan, a similar factor was evident in the transformation of the Kurdish economy from barter to a monetary exchange system. The centralization policies of Reza Shah, including policies to tighten control on such communities such as the Kurdish nomads, were not only for political control, but also for the purpose of easier tax collection and conscripts for the newly established army. These policies did act as the 'major shock' for the trend of economic activity in Kurdistan, unbalancing the equilibrium of barter trading and introducing a monetary exchange system.

Barter will give way to money, the single medium of exchange, when transactions costs using the medium of exchange (indirect

exchange) are less than for direct exchange for participants in the economic process. This is relevant to our study, for tribal/nomadic economic activity based on herding and the exchange of its by-products was hampered when tribal migration was prohibited across borders and limited within the borders. The main purpose of tribal seasonal migration was to secure the quantity and quality of the herds. The prohibition and limitation of migration encouraged the settlement of the Kurdish communities and resulted in a decline of herding in the region.

Anderlini and Sabourian's article further argues that credit will arise when it becomes necessary for individuals to purchase things today by agreeing to sell things in the future. Individuals will be required to do this either if they somehow need to do so to obtain the medium of exchange today (for example, for tax payments) or if they have acquired tastes which cannot be satisfied by the internal production of their own society. That credit may be extended in turn is dependent on an enforcement mechanism to ensure credit is repaid. In the case of Iranian Kurdistan, one may also say that credit developed when Kurdish settled agricultural communities had to sell their products to the traders before the harvest to obtain what they needed when they needed it.

It may be concluded that the barter-based tribal economy of Kurdistan, one based on herding and the exchange of its by-products in a migrating mobile tribal/nomadic community, changed into a money economy when these communities were forced to become settled agricultural communities. The economic changes imposed new social relationships among the people. However, what is important to realize is that the barter-based tribal/nomadic economy of Kurdistan was one factor that enforced the sense of community among people, because barter trading was a collective activity benefiting entire communities, though to differing degrees. When Kurdish communities gradually became agrarian settled communities, the demand for goods from outside the productive capabilities of Iranian Kurdistan played a role in expanding the need for credit and the money economy. The need for new economic relations created new social relations too.[21]

The principal issue in the rise of Kurdish national awareness is the erosion in the fabric of the Kurdish 'face-to-face' society; the particular form this assumed in Kurdistan is of secondary importance. Although I have not come across contrary evidence suggesting that the tribal structure in Iranian Kurdistan had been of a nomadic type prior to the twentieth century, the notion of the 'face-to-face' society and the

factors which account for its erosion employed in this study are broad enough to encompass both nomadic and settled types of tribal communities.

The economic life of a settled agricultural community offered greater scope for wage labor on the one hand and capital accumulation on the other, thus weakening the ideological cohesiveness of the nomadic community. It would, however, be an exaggeration to say that sedentarization of the nomadic population of Kurdistan replaced this cohesiveness with a conflict-based version of society by its members. Undoubtedly, the scope for conflict developed with economic polarization of the peasantry, and this polarization received a boost from the Land Reform of the 1960s. Nonetheless, such a conflict did not develop into the focus of political life in Kurdistan and has remained subordinate to the struggle for Kurdish nationalism. Why this should be so is a major concern of this study. The key reason, I would argue, is that Kurdistan is essentially a mountainous region and this geographic fact in the past encouraged herding as the main form of economic life and imposed its own logic on the extent to which inevitable inequality stemming from sedentarization, the growing importance of agriculture, and the importance of the 1960s Land Reform could develop to the detriment of the social cohesiveness of rural Kurdistan. Such a mountain society offers limited scope for large-scale land ownership and wage labor, and is particularly encouraging to the growth of self-subsistence forms of agriculture and herding. The result is that, despite all recent changes, the cohesiveness of rural Kurdistan has continued to keep in check growing divisions within it, producing a social environment particularly favorable to the growth of a form of nationalism which thrives on social cohesiveness and solidarity.

A parallel process, also highly conducive to the growth of nationalist consciousness, is the continuing sharp contrast between Iranian Kurdistan and the rest of the country. The constant denial of central government resources to Kurdish regions and the relative poverty of Iranian Kurdistan in natural resources compared with other regions, such as oil-producing regions, has meant that the prospect for the development of a reasonably successful capitalist economy has never been very bright. A common sense of economic backwardness and deprivation has probably bound together the members of the Kurdish village community, making the division between the village and the outsiders, such as government agents, the main focus of conflict. Are the rich landlords in such a village community to be seen as exploiters or community leaders? In regions where large landlords are present,

they may have a dual role. The limited scope for large-scale agriculture confines their presence to particular localities within Kurdistan. What is certain is that some of the village notables were linked to tribal chiefs on the one hand, and to city notable families on the other, although these links need not have been simultaneous and reflect a temporary linkage between notables from the village tribal chief's family and city notables. It was from this group that advocates of Kurdish nationalism and their leadership was drawn, certainly the leadership of the Kurdish Republic in Mahabad. The role of these community leaders, being village or absentee landlords, priests, teachers, and government employees, would be similar to priests and religious leaders in a 'face-to-face' society, as Laslett has noted, in that they are instrumental in bringing about awareness of membership in a larger community than the 'face-to-face' society within which they operate, but they do so on the basis of a 'face-to-face' relationship.

There is little doubt of the importance of the group of city notables to the emergence of a Kurdish nationalist intelligentsia. Typically, the urban nationalist leadership is not just confined to city notable families, including some of the sons of the tribal leaders, but is also drawn from the rank of central government bureaucracy set up for the administration of the region. In Kurdistan, with the importance of well-known tribal chief families in the community, this group of intellectuals is less important but does exist. It is natural that the hard-core of this intelligentsia should be urban-based as they speak in the name of the whole community, not its isolated village constituents. What is more interesting is the broader network of nationalist leadership and how they are connected to the rural areas.

Shanin has produced an argument in support of the Noradnik/Social Revolutionary thesis against the Russian Marxists, namely that village communes are characterized by a sense of solidarity and cohesiveness, not conflict between capitalist and worker. In Russia, he argues, this was due to the peculiar communal nature of Russian village life.[22] He also says that this village life has a peculiar multi-directional mobility which he calls 'cyclical mobility,' a process during which many of the village households experience, consecutively, periods of enrichment and impoverishment.

The notion of 'cyclic mobility' may be applicable to Kurdish peasants' mobility. As will be discussed later in the sections on social and economic mobility, it was possible for a Kurdish household to experience semi-nomadic, semi-agricultural, seasonal laboring, and even seasonal migrations successively, with some of the roles constantly

interchanging. It is this peculiar mobility and changeability that has created cohesiveness among the Kurdish community and has not allowed a household to be completely isolated from the rest of the community.

My aim in this work is to examine the economic structure of Kurdistan, past and present, and to trace its development from nomadic past to settled agricultural/pastoral present. I examine the links, to the extent that they may be observed or deduced, between the structural changes in the Kurdish economy and its political demands, namely Kurdish nationalism. I shall argue that the transition from a tribal 'face-to-face' society in Kurdistan to an agrarian village society was the beginning of a process of the Kurds seeing themselves as a community of homogeneous ethnic identity. This was, also, the beginning of a process of the economic, political, and administrative centralization of the country, the process of making the Kurds part of the bigger entity called Iran. In retrospect, it was also the process of developing an increasing awareness of Kurdish national identity. To illustrate this I will examine the events since World War II with the 1962–66 Iranian land reform as its highlight. I will analyze quantitative data to illustrate the economic and, consequently, political changes in Kurdish society.

I shall do this by first examining a number of economic and demographic factors that contributed to the disintegration of the 'face-to-face' village society of Kurdistan. Furthermore, by analyzing the factors conducive to the cohesion and solidarity within Kurdistan, I shall highlight the favorable conditions for a community to see itself as a closely knit ethnic/national community. Lastly, I shall examine some economic indicators of inequality between Kurdistan and Iran as the final precondition of the development of a unified nationalist consciousness/identity among the Kurds.

If economic changes in Iran did not create a thriving capitalist class in Kurdish villages it, nonetheless, led to the emergence of a large class of landless laborers. With the weak labor market in the Kurdish agrarian sector unable to absorb this surplus labor, migration to cities became the principal channel through which surplus labor was transferred out of the Kurdish village community. Available evidence suggests that this migration was mainly confined to Kurdistan and, at least during the 1960s and 1970s, it was Kurdish cities, such as Sanandaj, that received this mass of uprooted peasantry. If so, then one could plausibly argue that the peculiarity of the Kurdish migration has helped to reinforce the ideological cement of Kurdish nationalism, awareness of the existence of a separate community of Kurds outside

the village, and knowledge of its boundaries. To this extent, developing circumstances in Kurdistan overtook the conscious effort made by intelligentsia elsewhere to spread nationalist awareness. Indeed, the only major instrument for drawing the Kurdish masses into nationalist movements forged by the Kurdish intelligentsia is the organization and development of a people's militia in the form of the Kurdish Peshmerge volunteers force. Even here, the role of economic features in the growth of the Kurdish volunteer militia force should not be underestimated. As Hobsbawm has noted, rural areas with surplus population reflected in rural migration towards cities produce an ideal breeding ground for the uprooted peasantry to take up arms against the state.[23] Moreover, they are more likely to be unmarried and, while marginalized in their rural communities, are unlikely to have completely severed their links with their villages. As our analysis of migration will show, all these conditions have prevailed in Kurdistan, at least since the early 1960s, which is also the period of growth for the Peshmerge militia movement.

I have divided the political history of Kurdistan, and incidentally its economic development, into three periods. The first relates primarily to tribal consciousness, during which time economic activity is primarily nomadic in character, one of herding with some agriculture, and social and political relationships are based predominantly on tribal 'face-to-face' contact within the community. In comparison to Laslett's one-class society of pre-industrial England,[24] in a nomadic society every household had self worth, and worth to the community, as every household owned at least their means of livelihood. Primitive egalitarianism was characteristic of such economic cohesion and identification with the nomadic community. To be sure, there was clear differentiation of power, but each member had a voice, if one with varying influence. Since conflict of interest in such a society is relatively limited, tribal chiefs are more likely to be considered as natural leaders rather than exploiters to whom lower members of the community turn for leadership at a time of crisis. One such crisis was the implementation of harsh policies towards Kurdish tribes carried out under Reza Shah leading to the revolt of Isma'il Simko. This revolt drew its strength from the cohesiveness and relative homogeneity characteristic of a tribal, face-to-face society. However, the revolt had its basis in a 'face-to-face' nomadic economy and a society stemming from the absence of social division and the egalitarian structure of a nomadic society, where most social and political decisions of the community were conducted in a 'face-to-face' manner. It is for this reason

that the movement and its leadership were not able to perceive the recognition of the Kurdish nation as its foremost, crucial goal. It was a movement against an emerging strong central government by a once powerful tribal leader whose influence was curtailed. Simko's uprising will be discussed to illustrate the political adjunct to this period.

The second period corresponds to the reign of Reza Shah and his tribal policies, which resulted in the suppression of tribal uprisings and the extension of central government control of the tribal regions. The consequences of Reza Shah's harsh treatment of the Kurdish tribes were the Kurdish movement of 1946 in Mahabad region. This is the period of national consciousness among the Kurdish leaders in Iran and the expression of discontent in clear nationalist language. I shall discuss the social, economic, and cultural institutions, the leadership, and the political and ideological organizations of this movement to illustrate the development of Kurdish society compared with Simko's era. I will explain the Kurdish Republic of 1946 and its particular features as a nationalist movement. The movement had the character of 'passive revolution'[25] given the lack of significant mass participation. City intelligentsia within a limited geographic area and, proposing limited fundamental reforms for the Kurdish peasants mainly led it while the Soviet Union provided external support. The Republic had a short life. The social and economic reforms propagated by the Republic failed to deal thoroughly with tribalism, land ownership, and land reform. The ineffectiveness of such reforms was due, not to the unwillingness of the leaders to propagate them, but rather to their inability to do so. This was largely due to the main military force of the Republic having been provided by the tribal leaders who were also landowners.

The third period begins when the Shah's land reform program, though not successful in all its objectives, nevertheless changed Kurdish society irreversibly. I have chosen the Kurdish participation in the 1979 revolution in Iran to demonstrate the development of the Kurdish nationalist movement since the demise of the Kurdish republic in 1947, and examine the differences and similarities between the two main Kurdish nationalist organizations at the eve of the 1979 revolution and later.

What makes Hroch's three-stage characterization particularly relevant to our analysis of Kurdish nationalism is the inclusion of the process of mass mobilization as an integral part of the analysis of the development of nationalism, that is his fully matured stage, and the transition from the second to the third stage. This study is also concerned, not only with the historical process leading to the

emergence and consolidation of a nationalist intelligentsia, but more importantly with the more recent changes that have brought the essentially tribal masses of Kurdistan into the Kurdish nationalist movement. Thus the process of national mobilization of an otherwise non-tribal rural population occupies an important place in this work and hence the importance given to factors that bring about the transition from a 'face-to-face' society to one which is based on national identity.

In this process, the emphasis is on masses coming to see themselves as a separate people, a separate nation, and not on the realization of an independent sovereign nation-state as defining nationalism. The distinction is of some importance for this study on Kurdish nationalism in Iran, which, while it enjoyed an independent state for a short period in 1946, has generally sought 'autonomy' since 1946. Whether a full nation-state is within the reach of a nationalist movement depends on political realities. The point is that there may be visible and vocal nationalist movements which, nevertheless, have to settle for something less than a separate state, and thus the latter cannot be used as a general feature of nationalism.

The book is divided into six chapters. Chapter 1 is a general introduction to the Kurds and Kurdistan. The second chapter deals with the economic situation of the Kurdish communities in Iran in the early years of the 1920s during which government tribal policies began a process that ended the tribal/nomadic economy. In the third and fourth chapters, I examine the two Kurdish movements with different outlooks, one belonging to the period of tribal consciousness and the other to the period of national awareness. As Kurdish society became part of Iran's developing market economy, new changes occurred in its social and political structure. The Shah's land reform in 1966 was significant in this phase. I discuss the impact of the land reform program on the Kurdish economy and society in Chapter 5. The last chapter deals with the political manifestation of the economic changes in Kurdish society in the last three decades and concentrates on the Kurdish nationalist movement, its political demands, and its geographic and ideological diversity during and after the Iranian revolution of 1979. As the focus of economic life in Kurdistan has been primarily rural, most of the economic data analyzed here relates to agriculture, herding, and other rural economic activities.

Most of the statistics in the economic chapters are taken from statistics published by the Plan and Budget Organization of Iran, or research carried out by the Institute of Social Study and Research of Tehran University. Among these, the most important are:

- Mostafa Azkia, *Khushnishinan-i Kurdistan* (Landless Peasants of Kurdistan) (The Institute of Social Study and Research, Tehran University, 1976). During this research, 49 randomly chosen Kurdish villages were studied. This study covered 232 landless or *Khushnishin* households, and 200 landholding or *zara'* households. In my opinion this study provides the most detailed source for the economic and demographic picture of Iranian Kurdistan, and it is probably the best available study of its kind on any region of Kurdistan.
- *Barisi-i Natayj-i Islahat-i Arzi dar Haft Mantaqi* (Study of the Result of the Land Reform in Seven Regions) (The Institute of Social Study and Research, Tehran University, 1969). The study included the result of the Land Reform Program in two Kurdish regions, Sanandaj and Qasrishirin.
- The third work was another Tehran University publication: Shahla Rafi'y and Shadab Vajdi, *Sharkat-i Sahami-i Zera'-yi Farah: Sanandaj* (Farah Farm Corporation: Sanandaj) (The Institute of Social Study and Research, Tehran University, 1969). Ghullam-Hassan Babayi Hamati carried out the second stage of this research in 1971. This research examined the results of the Land Reform in 'Farah' farm corporation, which was established during the years of the Land Reform.
- Finally, the last research work was carried out by the Plan and Budget Organization, *Moqadimeh-i bar Shenakht-i Masail-i Iqtesad-i va Ijtima'-i Jama'i-i 'Ashayer-i Kurdistan* (Introduction to the Economic and Social Problems of Tribal Society of Kurdistan) (The Plan and Budget Organization, 1979).

For my political history sections, I have relied, as primary source material, on some of the reports in the Public Record Office, some interviews, some of the newspapers of the time, and the literature of the Kurdish organizations. Many of the secondary sources on the subject were also consulted. Maps 1, 2, 3, and 4 are adapted from McDowall, D., *A Modern History of the Kurds* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1996).

I have used the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* guidance for note citations and transliteration.

1
The Kurds and Kurdistan

Introduction

In this chapter, I shall try to define which peoples are described as, and describe themselves as, Kurds, and the way in which they relate to the Kurds from other currently recognized nation-states. Kurdish cultural features, economic activities, and political history will, briefly, be discussed. Iranian Kurdistan will be discussed in more detail.

It is probable Kurds were Indo-European tribes who came to the mountain regions of the approximate geographic area of present Kurdistan, and settled among the inhabitants who were Sumerian, Babylonian, and Assyrian. However, most Kurdish sources believe that Kurds were descendants of Medes, who came from the north, probably the Caucasus region, sometime between the second and first millennium BC.[1]

Despite the uncertainty about the origin of the Kurds, there is a general agreement, by the Kurds themselves and by those who refer to others as Kurds, about who Kurds are.[2] There exists no completely precise view but there is a general consensus that Kurds have a distinct culture and language, which differ in detail among different regions of Kurdistan, but which are far more similar to each other than to those of the other ethnic groups in the region, namely Arabs, Turks, and Fars. Kurds also live in a distinct geographic area. Although the fringes of this geographic area expand and shrink depending on who is defining the borders, nevertheless there is a clear core which may be described as Kurdish. However, what may be the clearest definition is the degree of ethnic/national consciousness among people in the region. They call themselves Kurds, despite the differences in their economic activities, political and economic development, and modern

history, because they feel their culture, their economic development, and their political aspirations have, across the currently recognized nation-states boundaries, been suppressed by the nations ruling them. This is a point which Kurds and many attempting to define them agree upon. For example, Maxime Rodinson talks about the Kurds as

> people with a language and culture all their own, living in a geographically coherent area, and refusing *en masse* the cultural assimilation which others seek to impose upon them. For more than a century this people has demonstrated time and time again its consciousness of being a specific ethnic or national group whose vocation is to form its own political institutions and make its own decisions autonomously.[3]

The term 'Kurdistan' is a geographic expression with no legal or international standing. There has never been an independent state of Kurdistan in the history of the modern Middle East. It refers to a region almost entirely populated by Kurds, and stretches from Turkey to Syria, Iraq and Iran. However, in many areas, particularly in areas peripheral to central Kurdistan, other ethnic groups – Arab, Fars, Azeri, and Turks – have coexisted with Kurds. To the west of Kurdish areas, Arab and Turkish villages overlap with Kurdish ones, and they share a 'mountain' culture as well as a common culture of the plain. To the east and northeast of Kurdistan lies Azerbaijan, where in towns and villages, Kurds and Azeris live together and their culture overlaps, taking on characteristics of each ethnic group. In the north, Turkish-speaking inhabitants share the Kurdish/Turkish area with the Kurds. From Kermanshah south, Kurds mix with Lurs and Bakhtiaris who also share many common cultural features with Kurds. Some Kurds insist that Lurs and Bakhtiaris are also Kurds, though most of the latter reject the claim.[4] In addition to the great majority of the Kurdish population concentrated in the above-mentioned areas, there are also small minorities of Kurds living in Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Lebanon.

In the past, there has not been a great degree of ethnic tension between the Kurds and non-Kurds living in the same area, and, whenever there is any reference to non-Kurds living in Kurdish areas in the Kurdish political publications, social harmony and mutual respect are emphasized. For example, on 2 March 1979, at the time of the Iranian Revolution, the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) outlined the party's plan for an autonomous Kurdistan within Iran. The proposed plan offered equal rights to the non-Kurds living in Kurdish areas: 'All

ethnic minorities in Kurdistan would enjoy equal rights and would be allowed to use their own language and traditions.'[5] Furthermore, the plan guaranteed the 'Freedom of speech and press, rights of association, and trade-union activities' in an autonomous Kurdistan, which implicitly would also have applied to the non-Kurds living in Kurdistan.

However, what the reality of the relationship between the Kurds and the non-Kurds of the Kurdish regions will be when a Kurdish state or a Kurdish autonomous region comes into existence remains to be seen. During the events of the 1979 Iranian Revolution, when the Kurdish movement in Iran gained considerable military and political strength and the issue of Kurdish autonomy and its boundaries was discussed, tension and conflicts between the Kurdish population and the Azeri population arose in some parts of Rezaiyeh region where Kurds and Azeris live in close proximity.[6]

There is no clear consensus on the borders of Kurdistan. On some maps of the Middle East, Kurdistan is marked as a mountainous area stretching from southeast Turkey across the most northern parts of Iraq into the central areas between the northern and southern tips of Iran's western border. However, the territory claimed as Kurdistan by most Kurdish sources is much larger. For example, Ghassemlou defines the borders of Kurdistan as follows:

> A straight line starting at Mount Ararat in the north-east leading southward and reaching as far as the southern part of Zagros and Pishtkuh, from this point, we draw a straight line westward as far as Mosul in Iraq; then a straight line westward from Mosul to the area of the Turkish part of Iskandarum, from this point a line in the north-eastern direction as far as Erzerum in Turkey, from Erzerum eastwards as far as Mount Ararat.[7]

Thus, with this definition, the entire area of Kurdistan would cover approximately 409,650 square kilometers of which 194,400 square kilometers fall within Turkey, 124,950 square kilometers in Iran, 72,000 square kilometers in Iraq, and 18,300 square kilometers in Syria.

Existing statistics concerning the number of Kurds living in the four countries of Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and Syria are unreliable. There are different reasons for this unreliability. This confusion, however, is mainly caused by the fact that, on the one hand, governments hostile to Kurdish nationalism have deliberately underestimated the Kurdish

Table 1.1 Population

Country	Minimum	Maximum
Turkey	3,200,000	8,000,000
Iran	1,800,000	5,000,000
Iraq	1,550,000	2,500,000
Lebanon	40,000	70,000
Syria	320,000	600,000
(Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan)	80,000	300,000
Total	6,990,000	16,470,000

Sources: Minimum – 1967 Encyclopedia Britannica, quoted again in the 1974 edition without updating. Maximum – *Bahoz*, No. 2, Kurdish magazine published in Sweden, 1972, quoted in: David McDowall, *The Kurds*, The Minority Rights Group Report No. 23 (May 1981), 5.

population while, on the other hand, the Kurdish nationalists themselves have exaggerated their numbers. Table 1.1 provides the maximum and the minimum numbers given for the population of Kurdistan in 1981.

While Kurds live under the legal authority of various states in the Middle East, one can still speak of a common culture with which one can identify Kurds living as far apart as Georgia and Syria. The most distinct feature of the Kurdish culture is the Kurdish language, which separates the Kurds from their neighbors. The Kurdish language belongs to the Indo-European family. However, while Kurdish is spoken in the entire area, one cannot overlook the existence of many different dialects such as Kurmanji, Sorani, Zaza, and Kermanshahi. These different dialects have, at times, made communications between fellow Kurds from different regions highly problematic. A further problem arises in its written form. The Kurdish language is written in the Arabic, Latin, and, in the case of Kurmanji in Armenia, Georgia, and the Azerbaijan republics, in the Cyrillic alphabets. These differences exacerbate the problem of communication.

The Kurds are predominantly Muslim. Most Kurds are orthodox Sunni who adhere to the Shafi'i 'mathhab' or school. However, in Iran, in the Kermanshah area, there are Shi'i Kurdish tribes. Other religious sects with Kurdish followers include the 'Alavis,' the 'Ahl-i Haqq' (both offshoots of Shi'ism), and the 'Yazidis.' At least until fairly recently, self-contained Jewish and Christian communities lived either in separate villages or within the same ones, among the Kurds. The Christians are Suriani (Syrian Orthodox) Christians, Assyrians, and Armenians.

Perhaps the most distinguishing characteristic of the economic activity in Kurdistan is the fact that it is split among various states, thus making each individual part of Kurdistan dependent, economically, on their respective nation-state and isolated from the other parts of Kurdistan. (This point, incidentally, acquires great significance in connection with the question of a unified nationalist movement.) However, the main economic activities in Kurdistan are agriculture and animal husbandry. Oil is extracted in Kurdish regions: the Kirkuk and Khanaqin areas in Iraq, in Kermanshah in Iran, and in Siirt in Turkey.[8]

A brief background to Kurdish national history

The political fortunes of Kurds have, in the past, often been determined by events outside Kurdish control. The situation of Turkish Kurdistan after the First World War, following the demise of the Ottoman Empire, is an example of how vulnerable the Kurdish aspiration for self-determination has been.

The future of the Kurds came to be perceived as a serious problem during the first quarter of the twentieth century and, in particular, after the 1914–18 war. In 1920, European governments, in the Treaty of Sèvres, tentatively recognized Kurdish claims in articles 62 and 64. This Treaty, which was signed by the Allies and Turkey, specifically stipulated that the Kurds were to be allowed to exercise 'local autonomy.' The two above-mentioned articles read, in part, as follows:

Article 62
A Commission, having its seat in Constantinople and made up of three members appointed by the Governments of Britain, France and Italy, will during the six months following the implementation of the present treaty, prepare for local autonomy in those regions where the Kurdish element is preponderant lying east of the Euphrates, to the south of a still-to-be established Armenian frontier and to the north of the frontier between Turkey, Syria and Mesopotamia, as established in Article 27 . . .

Article 64
If, after one year has elapsed since the implementation of the present treaty, the Kurdish population of the areas designated in Article 62 calls on the Council of the League of Nations and demonstrates that a majority of the population in these areas wishes to become independent of Turkey, and if the Council then estimates that the

population in question is capable of such independence and recommends that it be granted, then Turkey agrees, as of now, to comply with this recommendation and to renounce all rights and titles to the area. The details of this renunciation will be the subject of a special convention between Turkey and the main Allied powers. If and when the said renunciation is made, no objection shall be raised by the main Allied powers should the Kurds living in that part of Kurdistan at present included in the Vilayet of Mosul seek to become citizens of the newly independent Kurdish state.[9]

Although, the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres was signed, it was never implemented, mainly because of the rise of Kemal Atatürk. Mustafa Kemal's goal for the new Turkish state was to establish a strong, centralized, secular, and entirely Turkish nation-state. In the new peace conference which took place in Lausanne in 1923, the principal Turkish delegate at the conference made it clear that, in his view, the Kurds were Turks in customs and religion, differing from the Turks in language only, and declared that Turkey would not consent to their secession. The Allies were no longer prepared to support Kurdish or Armenian autonomy for it meant tension and conflict with the new Turkish leader, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. In 1924, the Turkish government passed a law which forbade the use of the Kurdish language. It thus became an offense to publish any material in Kurdish or to teach Kurdish in schools. The wearing of the Kurdish national costume was forbidden.

Many Kurds reacted by revolting. In the 1920s and 1930s, Turkey witnessed several Kurdish uprisings, mostly led by Kurdish shaikhs. The movement of Shaikh Said of Piran, the influential Naqshbandi leader, occurred in 1925.[10] This revolt was crushed by Turkish troops; Shaikh Said and forty other Kurdish leaders were hanged in Diyarbakir; many villages were burnt down; thousands of people were forcefully moved from their homes and deported to the western part of the country.[11]

In 1930, a revolt led by Ihsan Nuri occurred in the Mount Ararat region in the north of Turkey. The significance of this movement was that it was organized by a political organization, 'The Kurdish National League' or *Khoybun* (Independence), from outside Kurdistan and was led by a local leader. The organization was founded in 1927 and was mainly based in Lebanon and Syria. It consisted of 'intellectuals of aristocratic background.'[12]*Khoybun* involvement was important because it was the first time a non-tribal organization was instrumental in a Kurdish revolt. The movement was, however, defeated by the

Turkish army, and the Kurdish regions effectively became military zones. The suppression of Kurdish political and cultural expressions in Turkey continued until 1950 when a more democratic climate emerged in the country.

The treatment of the Kurds by the Turkish government resulted in many Kurdish chiefs of the Mosul vilayet wanting to be included in the Iraqi administration.[13] The Lausanne Treaty did not determine the fate of the oil-rich Mosul vilayet as to whether it would be granted to Turkey or Iraq. However, the Turkish treatment of the Kurds influenced the final decision of the League of Nations to grant Mosul to Iraq rather than Turkey.

In Iraq, under the British mandate, Kurdish rights were recognized to a greater extent than they were in Iran and Turkey. The British plan for Iraq was to create an Arab state with semi-autonomous Kurdish provinces, while retaining British overall control over the economy, particularly the country's oil production. The League of Nations, which had awarded the mandate for Iraq to Britain, even stated that:

> If the ethnic argument alone had to be taken into account, the necessary conclusion would be that an independent Kurdish state should be created, since the Kurds form five-eighths of the population.[14]

The British were prepared to settle the Kurdish problem if this brought stability to the region and safeguarded British interests, especially in the oil fields of northern Kurdistan. Hostility and disunity among the Kurds, however, worked to the detriment of their nationalist aspirations in Iraq.

In 1918–19, a Kurdish tribal movement led by Shaikh Mahmud Barzinji occurred in the Sulaymania region of Iraq. The British supported Shaikh Mahmud's movement and agreed to offer the governership of Sulaymania to him. He was perceived by the British as a potential ally in case of trouble with Turkish troops or Arab shaikhs.[15] However, this appointment was rejected by other Kurdish leaders from other regions, and resulted in conflicts between Kurdish leaders. Furthermore, Shaikh Mahmud, himself, turned against the British, and serious problems appeared between the two. The Shaikh was ultimately defeated by the British army and exiled to India.

In August 1921, when Faisal of the Hashemite Dynasty became the king of Iraq, there was great disapproval of this appointment in parts of Kurdish areas of Iraq, particularly in the Sulaymania area. The Brit-

ish and the League of Nations realized that Kurds in Sulaymania were strongly opposed to the Iraqi government, but they also realized that other Kurds from other parts of the area, such as Kirkuk, were not prepared to be ruled by Sulaymania. The British agreed to the return of Shaikh Mahmud to Sulaymania in 1922 but agitation continued. Since the Shaikh's intention was to establish a separate state of Kurdistan, more fighting occurred between his forces and British forces. These hostilities continued until 1924, when Sulaymania was occupied by British and Iraqi forces and Shaikh Mahmud was forced to flee to the mountains.

The Anglo-Iraqi treaty of 1930, which granted independence to Iraq, ignored the question of Kurdish autonomy.[16] The new Iraqi government exhibited scant tolerance of Kurdish nationalism. Strikes and demonstrations were organized in protest against the government's treatment of the Kurds. The most prominent Kurdish leader to emerge from the unrest of the early 1930s in Iraq was Mulla Mustafa Barzani who, by the mid-1940s, was exercising his influence over a relatively wide area. In 1945, the Iraqi forces, assisted by British Air Force bombers, finally forced Barzani and a group of his followers to retreat into Iranian Kurdistan. There he joined the nationalist movement which was struggling for a Kurdish republic.[17]

The Kurds in Iran

Population and geography

There are three different sources for the population and the geographic borders of Kurdistan, one provided by the Kurds themselves, one provided by sources which refer to Kurdistan as the place where the majority of the population are Kurds, and one provided by the government. In this study I shall try to specify which sources I am using. However, most of the references relating to the economic data have been derived from government sources. In Iran, administratively, the area where the population is predominantly Kurdish has been divided into three provinces. As far as the Iranian government is concerned, only the central one is officially referred to as the province of Kurdistan. Nevertheless, the other two provinces, namely Western Azerbaijan and Kermanshah (Bakhtaran), also have large Kurdish populations.

The province of Kurdistan is entirely populated by Kurds. In Kermanshah (Bakhtaran), the population is mainly Kurd, with some

Lurs living in the southern part of the province. Kurds in Western Azerbaijan live mostly in the western towns of the province. They share the province with the Azeri population living there. The official documents, which use Kurds and the province of Kurdistan as synonyms, create difficulties in understanding the limits and number of the Kurdish population in Iran. The chief towns of the three provinces are: Western Azerbaijan – Urmiyeh (Rezaiyeh), Piranshahr, Khoy, Sardasht, Mahabad, Maku, Salmas, Mianduab, Naqadeh; in Kurdistan – Baneh, Bijar, Saqqiz, Sanandaj, Qurveh, and Marivan; in Kermanshah (Bakhtaran) – Islamabad, Pave, Sunqur, Qasr-i Shirin, and Kermanshah.[18]

Iranian Kurdistan is limited to the Iraqi–Iranian and Turkish–Iranian borders in the west, and to Lake Urmiyeh in the extreme northeast. The northern and southern boundaries of Iranian Kurdistan are more problematic, for different sources have different views on how far Kurdistan stretches. The main discrepancy appears between the government sources and claims by Kurdish sources. The latter consider a larger geographic area as Kurdish than the former. However, Urmiyeh, Naqadeh, and Mahabad, with their considerable number of Kurds, can be considered the most northern towns of Kurdistan. By the same criterion Kurdistan's southern limits are Qasr-i Shirin and Kermanshah (Bakhtaran).

Based on the 1986 publications of the Plan and Budget Organization,[19] the province of Kurdistan covers an area of 25,611 square kilometers; West Azerbaijan 32,598.9 square kilometers; and Bakhtaran 23,621.9 square kilometers. The boundaries are, in the north, west Azerbaijan; in the northeast, Zanjan; in the east, the province of Hamadan; in the south, the province of Kermanshah (Bakhtaran); and in the west, Iraq.

The population of these provinces, according to the 1976 national census, were: West Azerbaijan 1,407,604; Kurdistan 782,440; and Kermanshah (Bakhtaran) 1,307,014. The figures in 1986 were, respectively: 1,971,677; 1,078,415; and 1,462,965; and for 2000 are 2,496,320, 2,496,320, and 1,778,596.[20]

It is important to realize that economically, and even culturally, Kurdistan is not a homogeneous society. There are geographical differences, differences in status and occupation, and cultural differences (mainly linguistic differences). We can distinguish three major economic and cultural regions: mountain, plain, and urban regions. The most important mountain range is the Zagros, which stretches from the northwest to the southeast of the region and divides the province into mountain areas in the northwest and the southeast plains. A dis-

tinction exists between the mountain culture and economy, and the economy and culture of the plains and foothills. In the mountains, Kurdish life, traditionally, was a tribal-nomadic one. Pastoralism, or the raising of animals to graze on pasture, was the main economic activity. Herding, adapted to some extent to existing conditions, still remains the key to the economy. Furthermore, in spite of the changes in Kurdistan over the last decades, there has been no dissolution of tribal groups. Tribes have continued to exist, and by adapting themselves to the new conditions, they have ensured their survival. However, the nomadic style of life has almost disappeared.

The main change which occurred in the pattern of tribal economic activity was the consequence of compromises with the new environment, imposed upon them, to a great extent, by government policies. When restrictions on the migration of Kurdish tribes began during Reza Shah's rule, and continued during the reign of Mohammed Reza Shah, traditional herding, which relied heavily on the migration of herds, was not able to continue any longer in its old form. However, despite the decrease in numbers of tribes migrating between summer and winter regions, a great many of the Kurdish tribes clung to aspects of traditional life.

Kurds on the plains have always lived in villages. Those communities who used to be nomadic but were no longer, joined the village communities. Their economic activity consisted of a combination of pastoralism and agriculture, with agriculture dominant. Wheat, barley, fodder, tobacco, and rice were and are the main products of the region.

In addition to the population of the mountains and the plains, there is a third category of the Kurdish population, namely urban Kurds. These include teachers, government employees, traders, and town shopkeepers. The Kurdish nationalist leadership in Iran has primarily emerged from among this group. This section of Kurdish society has had, and continues to have, its conflicts with the traditional tribal leadership, and is aware that, on one level, the traditional leadership often hindered the development of Kurdish nationalism. However, the urban section of the population has its own ties with, and obligations to, the tribal section. Not only are many of them of recent tribal origin, but they also know that the tribal leadership has a certain military power and political influence which cannot be ignored.

Generally, one can associate the semi-tribal, semi-nomadic economy with the mountains, and the non-tribal or semi-tribal agricultural economy with the plains and foothills. However, there are large areas of overlap, and even in non-tribal areas of Kurdistan herding and its

by-products provide the considerable portion of the income of the district.

   Not all Kurds are tribal or even of tribal origin. Van Bruinessen points out that 'non-tribal Kurds have no kin organization beyond the household or extended family level.'[21] But these non-tribal groups have always been politically and economically dominated by the tribal Kurds and therefore, though not tribal, their life has always been determined by tribal relationships, and they themselves have to be affiliated to a tribe for protection.

The major Kurdish tribes in Iranian Kurdistan

Speaking about Kurdish tribes in Iran in 1963, Eagleton points out that:

> In Iranian Kurdistan more than sixty Kurdish tribes can be identified, ranging in size from the huge (120,000) but amorphous Kalhor, southwest of Kermanshah, to the small tribes near Sardasht numbering only a few thousand souls each.[22]

To consider each of them in great detail would be an exhaustive task and in any case lies outside the scope of this work. I will, therefore, only outline the names and approximate geographical locations of the more important tribes.[23]

- *The Baneh*. This tribe occupies the area from the Iraqi border to Saqqiz in the north. It adjoins the Govrik tribe.
- *The Begzadah and Herki Sarhati tribes*. The Begzadah live in and among the Herki tribe towards the west of Urumiyeh (Rezaiyeh), near the Turkish border. These two tribes occupy the area between the Turkish frontier, Margavar, Nazlu Chai and Somai. Nuri Beg and his brother Asad Beg were two of the chiefs of the Begzadah. The Herki tribe is a section of the larger Herki tribe, located in Iraq. The most important leaders of this tribe were Rashid Beg and Zero Beg.
- *The Dehboukri tribe*. The area occupied by this tribe was limited roughly by the Govrik tribe in the south, the Mangurs in the west, Solduzs in the north, and Mianduab in the east. The tribe occupied all the Mianduab–Saqqiz road within twelve miles of the latter. Mahmud Agha Ilkanizadeh and his younger brothers, Haji Bayazid Agha Ilkanizadeh and Ali Agha Ilkanizadeh (Amir Asad) were the main leaders of this tribe. Relations between the two elder brothers and Amir Asad were strained. As mentioned in a British Foreign

Office report, the Dehboukri tribe owned 250 villages with a total population of some 40,000, of which 3000 were armed.[24] The main production in the area was sugar beet, wheat, and barley in addition to sheep raising and goats.

- *The Fayzullah Begi tribe*. This tribe is located east of the Dehboukri, extending from Saqqiz in the south to Tilko and Afshar in the east and Shahin Dezh in the north. This tribe was split into numerous small sections with no single influential chief.
- *The Govrik tribe*. This tribe was situated around Saqqiz, Sardasht, and Mahabad, and divided into three parts. Its main chief was Ali Agha Javanmardi.
- *The Herki Sidan and Sayyidlar in Margavar*. These two tribes occupied the area between the Turkish frontier, Ushnu, and the Baranduz Choi. They cultivated tobacco, rice, wheat and raised sheep and goats.
- *The Jalali*. Living in the far northwest, between the borders of the former Soviet Union and Turkey, this tribe was mostly refugees who crossed the border from Turkey.
- *The Mamash*. This tribe lived in the Iraqi frontier region from Khaneh to Ushnu and stretched from Solduz to Mahabad, adjoining the Mangur and Dehboukri tribes. Kareini Agha was the most influential chief of the tribe.
- *The Mangur*. This tribe adjoined the Piran in the west, the Govrik in the south, the Dehboukri in the east, and Mahabad in the north.
- *The Piran*. This tribe was located between the Iraqi frontier, the Mangur, and the Mamash.
- *The Shakak*. This tribe was situated in the Somai and Baradost district, adjoining the Turkish frontier in the west and extending from Targavar in the south to Shahpur in the north. The principal chiefs of the tribe were Omar Khan, Taha, son of Simko, Hassan Agha, and Ibrahim Agha.
- *The Zaza*. This tribe lives in the Ushnu district, adjoining Soldug, the frontiers of Iraq and Turkey.[25]

Economy

In the discourse of Kurdish nationalism, the unity and cohesiveness of the Kurdish nation is emphasized. However, when we examine economic life in Kurdistan, specifically the standard of living, the level of economic development, the degree of urbanization, the degree to which industry and market relationships have developed, the degree to which capitalist agricultural relations have developed, the degree to which agriculture is

a fully sedentary occupation, and the degree of importance attached to animal husbandry, significant differences arise, largely a result of the dispersion of the bulk of Kurdistan among three distinct nation-states, each of which is not only at different stages of economic development itself, but reflects the differing status and relative economic development of its Kurdish sector. Ghassemlou, in his article on Iranian Kurdistan, wrote that:

> . . . Iranian Kurdistan's economy, which has been dependent on the Iranian economy since the beginning of the century, has become an integral part of the Iranian economy. If Iran remains an underdeveloped country despite all the changes that have taken place, Kurdistan in Iran is certainly one of the most underdeveloped areas of the whole periphery.[26]

In studying the Kurdish economic activity, the immediate problem one faces is lack of information. For the period of the 1940s, the information on Iranian Kurdistan is very scarce. The oldest published figures that I have been able to find relate to the period of the mid-1950s.[27] However, I shall attempt to present a brief history of the development of the Kurdish economic activities in Iran.

The beginning of the twentieth century witnessed many changes in the lives of the tribes in Iran. It was during this period that the settlement of the tribes, primarily for political reasons, was continued most relentlessly. Forced settlement of tribes in Iran had commenced in the nineteenth century. Until the Pahlavi dynasty, however, forced settlement of the tribes was not a consistent policy by central governments. It was implemented on occasions whenever it was thought to be the solution to a problem caused by tribal threat. Previously, attempts had been made for the resettlement of the tribes away from the traditional lands. It was the Pahlavi dynasty that began a systematic policy, not only of dislocation by resettling the tribes and exiling the tribal chiefs, but also of weakening the tribal structure and forcing them into a style of life different from their own traditional style. Forced settlement meant changes in lifestyle and economic activities. The Kurdish tribes adapted themselves to this situation. They traveled short distances in search of water and pasture, no farther than the borders of the province or even their neighboring villages. Nevertheless, some seasonal journeys took place. This situation arose from two factors:

- Misuse of the pasture around the villages and the consequent exhaustion and destruction of land created the urgency of finding new land.
- The search for water in summer forced the tribes to take their flocks to the higher mountains where plentiful sources of water existed. The need for extra water arose, however, with settlement, as a reckless use of scarce water ensured subsequent shortages.

Agriculture in Kurdistan consisted mainly of dry farming. The 1972 publication of the Statistics Center of Iran on the landless peasants of Kurdistan quoted a total of 1,226,000 hectares of agricultural land in the province, out of which 1,080,000 hectares were for dry farming and 146,000 hectares were irrigated land. Of the total land area in the province itself, 49 percent was agricultural land. Of the agricultural land, an average of 52 percent was cultivated and the rest, 48 percent, was left fallow. Of the total area of the province, only 26 percent was under cultivation and only 4 percent was cultivated by artificial irrigation.[28]

The main agricultural products were wheat, fodder production, and barley. Distribution of land according to product showed that wheat was the most important product in the agriculture of the region with 46.5 percent of cultivated land given over to wheat cultivation. Of the cultivated land 29.2 percent was used to grow fodder, in most cases for the consumption of the herds kept by the household itself. The third important product was barley, which occupied 12.5 percent of cultivated land.[29] On average, there was 2.26 hectares irrigated land and 17.6 hectares of dry-farmed land for every household.[30]

Due to the variation of climate and land in the Kurdish region, production was not limited to farming. In some areas, arboriculture (fruit-tree growing) based on an irrigation system was the dominant production arrangement. In other areas, herding was dominant. In Baneh and Marivan regions in the southwest of the province, due to the lack of flat agricultural land, the economic activity was predominantly based on herding. However, in Bijar and Qurvah areas in the southeast of the province, where there are gentle hills and land suitable for agriculture, dry farming was dominant. As there were limited natural pastures and as the existing lands had already been used for cultivation, herding remained insignificant.

In the eastern areas of the province, despite the existence of good quality flat land, there has been a shortage of water for agriculture. In the western areas, there was ample water but a shortage of agricultural

land. However, even in regions where water was available, it was not easily accessible and deep wells were needed. In most cases, the constructing of wells was beyond the financial means of the local peasants. Some rivers existed, but these were insufficient to meet the needs of the cultivators. Experts have agreed that the water shortages of the region could be eliminated if adequate assistance and guidance were given to the peasants by the government.

Modern agricultural tools and machinery were scarce in the province of Kurdistan. Some tractors existed in the plains area. However, most of the cultivators lacked sufficient financial resources, and they were not able to make use of modern technology unless they received help from the government.

Arboriculture as an income-producing activity was also quite common in Kurdistan. In the eastern regions of Kurdistan, arboriculture was a complementary activity to agriculture, whereas in the western districts of the province, it complemented herding. The activity relied partially on water supplies of the region which were readily available, and partly on artificial irrigation. The profitability and further development of this activity depended on climate and the ample availability of water. In the Sanandaj area, although about 51 percent of the households grew trees, due to the shortage of water and suitable land the activity did not develop into one of economic significance.[31] Arboriculture was more common in the villages near towns because it was easier to transport the products to the markets in the towns. The more remote villages tended not to be involved with arboriculture.

The annual statistics of 1972, published by the Statistics Center of Iran, showed that, out of a total of 7867 hectares of arboriculture land in 1971, more than half was devoted to viniculture. More disproportionately, 88 percent of total income from arboriculture was from grapes.[32] In most regions of Kurdistan, the most important arboriculture was viniculture.

Handicrafts traditionally provided clothing, carpeting, and basic agricultural and herding tools for the Kurdish village household. The main handicraft activity was in carpet and kilim weaving. Traditionally, handicraft activity was a by-product of herding and was performed by the female members of the household in their spare time.[33] Since the household did not pay for most of the raw material, it could be a 'pure' source of income for the household. Handicraft production, however, like other tribal economic activities, has changed during the last few decades. Changes to the old tribal way of life, increasing con-

tacts with town, and mass production hindered the development of this local industry. The government under the late Mohammed Reza Shah made some attempts to introduce projects to rescue tribal handicrafts, but due to a lack of knowledge and understanding of the needs of the tribal society of the region, the projects failed.

Traditionally, smuggling has had an important role in the Kurdish economy. Although no figures are available, many commentators have emphasized the importance of smuggling, particularly for northern Iranian Kurdistan, for which Mahabad was the commercial center. One Persian report on the city of Mahabad in the late 1940s quoted a total of 2000 shops for a population of 20,000, that is one shop for every ten persons. Assuming each family had five members, about 50 percent of the population of Mahabad consisted of merchants and their families.[34] This unusual condition was mainly due to the city's closeness to the Iraqi Kurdistan border and its close commercial ties with contraband trade.

History

The relationship between the Kurds and Iranian governments has always been a difficult one. In pursuing a policy of consolidating power, the Safavid kings used the Kurds to guard the borders in the Khurasan region against the Uzbeks in 1600.[35] For this the government forced some of the Kurdish tribes to settle in the area where they became part of the community.[36] The Qajar kings, following the same policy as the Safavids in establishing a central government, abolished the Kurdish principalities and replaced them with governorship directly assigned from the capital. The last of the powerful Kurdish princes, that of the Ardelan family, was stripped of his powers in 1865. However, it was the Chaldiran war between the Ottoman Sultan and the Safavid Shah in 1514 that, to a great extent, determined the geographic borders of Iranian Kurdistan, one which remains much the same today.

The most significant Kurdish revolt during the nineteenth century took place in the area along the Ottoman–Persian border, between Lake Van and Lake Urmiyeh, in 1880. The revolt was led by a religious leader, Shaikh Ubaydallah of the Naqshbandi order, who sought Kurdish autonomy for the region. He was defeated by both Ottoman and Persian armies as well as tribes in conflict with him. His movement was a tribal uprising which employed ideas of national consciousness.[37] Shaikh Ubaydallah was the first to openly advocate Kurdish autonomy under his leadership. He expressed his goals to the

British authorities warning them and the other European governments of the consequences of ignoring the oppression of Kurdish people under Ottoman and Persian rule and their wishes for an independent Kurdistan.[38]

Government policies, both political and economic, had a critical impact on the development of the Kurdish economy. Attempts at the modernization of the economy started during the Qajar period in the nineteenth century. Though hampered on many occasions, the reformists of the Qajar period were eager to try to modernize and industrialize the country. Attempts were made to establish modern education, newspaper publication, modern industry, and a modern army. The most significant political and historical outcome of these attempts was the Constitutional Revolution of 1905–09. The Constitutional Revolution was a great victory for the modern intelligentsia who aspired to Western ideas and ideologies such as democracy and freedom, nationalism and self-determination, liberalism and socialism. They put forward a constitutional draft which was predominantly secular, and hoped to reconstruct Iranian society based on the models which existed in Europe. This was a very important aspect of the Constitution movement which, despite its defeat in Tehran, continued in other cities, especially in Tabriz, for a period after 1909.[39]

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Qajar government, due to the lack of an effective military force as well as communications and transport difficulties, was hampered by constant tribal unrest and demands for autonomy. The country was divided into spheres of influence as a result of the British and the Russian advance into the southern and northern parts of Iran. The British, seeking peace and stability in the country, supported Reza Khan, the head of the Cossacks brigade in Qazvin, who was to establish law and order in the country. Reza Khan, later to become Reza Shah in 1925 and the founder of the Pahlavi dynasty, was able, in large measure, to create a functioning nation-state of the type recognizable to Europeans, capable of defending at least its formal sovereignty and its borders.

Reza Shah, even prior to proclaiming himself king, aimed at creating a modern army to control those many regions of the country such as Kurdistan which were practically autonomous. The new army, as described by Abrahamian, was organized by a merger between the 7000 Cossacks and 12,000 gendarmes with five divisions and a total of 40,000 men. At the end of Reza Shah's reign his army consisted of 127,000 men and 18 divisions.[40] He financed the new army by taking control of revenues from state lands and through indirect taxes.

The new army proved to be effective in establishing the government authority in the tribal areas. Many tribal uprisings around the country were defeated. In 1922, the Kurdish movement of Simko in western Azerbaijan, and uprisings by the Shahsavans in northern Azerbaijan and the Kuhgiluyah tribes of Fars, were defeated by Reza Khan's new army. Between 1923 and 1925 Reza Khan achieved further victories. The rebellions of the Sanjabi Kurds in Kermanshah, the Baluchis in the southeast of the country, the Lurs in the southwest, the Turkmen in Mazandaran, the Kurds in north Khurasan, and Shaikh Khaz'al in Muhammarah in Khusistan were all suppressed severely.[41]

Following these military victories over the tribes, Reza Shah implemented his tribal policy in a way that would guarantee the end of tribal unrest in the country. The policy followed in all tribal areas, including the Kurdish regions, was that of confiscation of tribal land, imprisonment or internal exile of the tribal leaders, forced settlement of the entire community on lands other than its traditional land, border closing, and the prevention of the migration of tribal herds through certain regions.[42]

Reza Shah chose repressive measures to enforce his policies. The tribal population bore much of the dictatorial cost but received little of the economic/cultural/political benefit of Reza Shah's modernization. At the time when efforts were made for the establishment of a new army, the expansion of state bureaucracies, the setting up of modern education and communication, and the creation of secular laws, not only did most Iranian tribes not benefit from the development process, but they also lost their previous political and economic self-sufficiency, and so the gap between the social-economic development of tribal regions and the rest of the country further deepened.

Reza Shah prohibited the appointment of numerous local personalities to official positions in their own locality. The minority communities were also adversely affected for, culturally and politically, priority was given to Persians and Persian culture. Economically, the modernization process ignored the fringes of the country. While roads and communication systems were built and factories began to operate in the central and northern provinces, Baluchastan, Kurdistan, and Luristan remained as backward as ever. Aghajanian points out that

> . . . the spread effect of the industrialization was predominantly on the Persian population in the Central Plateau. Other groups in Kurdistan and Azerbaijan who had paid for it, were deprived of its prosperity.[43]

Reza Shah also introduced a new administrative division of the country. The previous divisions based on socio-cultural borders were replaced with new units divided on a more political basis as well as administrative convenience.[44] The old units were culturally homogeneous and economically self-contained. Abrahamian writes that

> . . . the vast majority of historians and travelers have argued that until the rapid growth of commerce in the second half of the nineteenth century most villages and tribes remained virtually self-contained, practically self-sufficient, economically autonomous, and predominantly self-governing.[45]

With the onset of World War I, the government of Iran found itself ineffective and with very little control over events in the country. Among those who took advantage of this weakness were various Kurdish chiefs. Perhaps the most outstanding of them was Ismai'l Agha, known as Simko, chief of the Shakak tribe living to the southwest of Rezaiyeh. His actions were concentrated in the area west of Lake Rezaiyeh and he established an autonomous Kurdish government there from the summer of 1918 to 1922. Simko was defeated by Iranian troops in August 1922 and had to flee to Ankara. Eight years later, in 1930, on his way to negotiations with the Iranian government, Simko was ambushed and murdered. The nature of his uprising will be discussed later.

The period between World Wars I and II was characterized by the forced settlement of tribes. Kurdish tribes suffered greatly from these policies. Some tribes were totally destroyed in the processes of forced settlement. Ghassemlou noted:

> Of the 10,000 members of the Jalali tribe (living on the borders of Iran, Turkey and USSR) deported to the central areas of Iran, only a few hundred returned in 1941, all the rest having died.[46]

The next opportunity for the Kurds to seek autonomy emerged after the end of World War II, when Reza Shah was stripped of power and his son appeared unable to establish his authority over all parts of the country. The country was occupied by the Allied Forces, while the Soviet presence in the north offered moral and material support for Kurdish aspirations. The Kurds took advantage of the situation and established a Kurdish Republic in Mahabad in 1946, which lasted eleven months before it was defeated by the government army.

The Mahabad movement was significantly different from Simko's revolt in that it drew on a nationalist consciousness. In the Kurdish nationalist discourse, the experience of the Kurdish Republic in Mahabad is repeatedly referred to as an example of the Kurdish struggle for recognition of national identity.

Decades after the collapse of the Kurdish Republic, the Kurdish nationalist leaders in Iran found very little opportunity to openly express their demands for autonomy. The movement went underground. It was during the revolution of 1979 in Iran that Kurds voiced their opposition to the Shah's system and asked for political/cultural and, to some degree, economic autonomy. There are great differences in political understanding and experience of the Kurds in these two periods which I shall discuss later. However, from 1947 to 1979, Kurdish society and economy underwent many changes which resulted in the gradual transformation of its economy from a subsistence orientation based on herding to a market orientation. The Land Reform program of the 1960s was a major factor in this transformation. In the following chapter, I shall examine the Kurdish tribal economy during the period between the two world wars.

2
The Political Economy of Kurdish Tribalism

Introduction

Great changes were occurring in the social and economic life of Iranian Kurdistan at the beginning of the century. These were perhaps inevitable due to demographic and other changes arising within Kurdish society. However, government policies destroying the nomadic/tribal lifestyle contributed to the speed of change. The result of these changes was the sedentarization of Kurdish tribes. The forced settlement and sedentarization process meant that eventually all the Kurdish tribes settled and permanently inhabited villages. However, it did not mean the total disappearance of tribal relationships among large segments of Kurdish society. It is the main focus of this chapter to examine the factors which brought fundamental changes to the tribal structure of Kurdish society, factors which weakened tribal 'face-to-face' relationships, and factors which contributed to the continuity of some of those tribal relationships. I will argue that elements of this continuity are evident in the relative equality existing in Kurdish tribal life which, in turn, is due, primarily, to the main economic activity of the tribes, namely herding, which in turn is largely based on the mountainous features of the region. The hypothesis of this chapter is that the very features which forced the settlement of the Kurdish tribes helped to preserve some of the tribal characteristics of Kurdish society too.

In this chapter, I shall explain how government policies determined the socio-economic situation in Kurdistan through forced settlement and the prohibition of migration; furthermore, how these policies brought an end to the specific form of tribal economy which was based on traditional herding, a vital aspect of which was distance

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migration. The exchange system of the tribal community will be discussed in order to see how the growth of the money economy, in fact, helped to weaken the traditional economic and social relationships of the tribal society.

In order to understand the impact of the internal and external factors which brought changes to the Kurdish tribes, it is necessary to examine the importance of herding in nomadic life, and the ways in which nomadic tribes settle. However, first I shall describe what I mean by 'tribe' and provide an introduction to the situation in the Kurdish region of Iran at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Kurdish tribes in the early decades of the twentieth century

In most Iranian official documents, including those from the Centre for Statistics, 'tribal' or 'tribe' refers to groups which migrate from cold, *qishlaq*, to warm, *yiylaq*, regions and vice versa, and live in 'black tents.' The place they live in becomes the main criterion used to identify a tribe. This criterion has not been universally accepted in Iran.[1] Such a definition cannot be wholly accurate, for there are groups which migrate or live in the 'black tents' and yet are not tribes, for example the group known as *Ghurbatis*. There are, as is pointed out in Kishavarz's monograph, the herd grazers of Sangsar-i Samnan who migrate but are not tribes. Furthermore, there are tribes such as Kurdish or Lur or Bakhtiyari tribes who do not migrate, and certainly do not live in black tents anymore but who have kept some of their tribal structure.[2] Therefore migration, while an important feature of tribal life, is not the only criterion. There are a great number of tribes which have a tribal political and cultural structure yet have ceased to migrate. Thus migration as the basis for the definition of 'tribe' would exclude them.

African historians have formulated rather interesting and provocative explanations of 'tribe'. In his path-breaking book, *A Modern History of Tanganyika*, John Iliffe states:

> The notion of tribe lay at the heart of indirect rule in Tanganyika. Refining the racial thinking common in German times, administrators believed that every African belonged to a tribe, just as every European belonged to a nation. The idea doubtless owed much to the Old Testament, to Tacitus and Caesar, to academic distinctions between tribal societies based on status and modern societies based on contract, and to post-war anthropologists who preferred 'tribal' to the more pejorative word 'savage'. Tribes were seen as cultural

units 'possessing a common language, a single social system, and an established customary law'.[3]

However, while 'Europeans believed Africans belonged to tribes, Africans built tribes to belong to'.[4] John Iliffe's point is further reinforced by Andrew Roberts in his *A History of Zambia*:

> The extent to which a particular tribal name acquires a distinct meaning, accepted both by outsiders and by the people themselves, clearly depends on the way in which social and political changes affect people's sense of identity as against everyone else. Tribes, in short, are not actual social organisations: rather, they are states of mind. The awareness of belonging to a 'tribe' simply reflects social and cultural conditions at a certain point in time.[5]

Clearly, in bringing certain skepticism to the whole notion of 'tribe,' some African historians at least creatively question the term's timelessness, compared with the somewhat uncritical acceptance of the term 'tribe' by others.

Tapper, in a book about tribes and states in Iran and Afghanistan, provides us with a general definition for the tribes in these countries:

> Tribe may be used loosely of a localised group in which kinship is the dominant idiom of organisation, and whose members consider themselves culturally distinct (in terms of customs, dialect or language, and origins); tribes are usually politically unified, though not necessarily under a central leader, both features being commonly attributable to interaction with states. Such tribes also form parts of larger, usually regional, political structures of tribes of similar kinds; they do not usually relate directly with the state, but only through these intermediate structures.[6]

This definition, to a large degree, accords with one offered by Van Bruinessen specifically on the Kurdish tribes:

> The Kurdish tribe is a socio-political and generally also territorial (and therefore economical) unit based on descent and kinship, real or putative, with a characteristic internal structure.[7]

The definition given by Van Bruinessen is a comprehensive one for Kurdish tribes. Yet it does not deal with their economic activities,

since, depending on whether a tribe was/is nomadic, semi-nomadic, or entirely sedentary, their economic activity would have been different.

The Kurdish tribe ('Ashirat) is composed of clans (Tayfah, Bar, and Tyrah) which are further divided into smaller groups. The head of the tribe, the chief, is called 'mir' or 'bag' and the head of a clan is an 'agha.'[8] Tribal chiefs and aghas were, traditionally, very powerful. They were also the most privileged members of the tribe. They had the largest herds, while an ordinary member of the tribe held only a few flocks, providing subsistence for the household. Members of the tribe were obliged to pay tolls to the chief in the form of regular gifts, and to the state in the form of tax. Ghassemlou distinguished three main groups within a tribe: the chief and his relatives who enjoyed many privileges, the servants of the chiefs and their relatives (khulmas), and the ordinary common members of the tribe.[9] There was, furthermore, the clergy divided into 'shaiks' (representatives of the sect), 'mullahs' (priests), and the 'sayyid' (the Prophet's descendants). The clergy had certain privileges too, particularly the shaikhs who, in many cases, were also powerful political leaders.

In the past, the major economic activity of most tribes in Kurdistan was herding. Their agriculture was chiefly based on dry farming, and they had limited handicraft production. Herding as the main economic activity was also the basis for social and economic differentiation. Unfortunately there are very few data on the ownership of herds among the Kurdish tribes for the period discussed in this chapter. Nevertheless, in order to familiarise ourselves with the different economic and social status of herd owners in Kurdish society, I shall refer to Kishavarz's monograph on tribal economic activity first published in 1976. Kishavarz differentiates the classes in a tribal society on the basis of flock ownership. These he calls: big herders, middle herders, and small herders.[10]

- *The big herders*. This refers to those members of the tribe who possess the largest number of animals. The chief economic aim of this group is to raise a herd for trade. They mainly raise sheep and lambs (about 90 percent of their flocks) to be able to sell their meat in the market. Their trade is primarily with neighbouring towns, and through this they become increasingly connected to the rest of the country's economy. They also provide the best quality meat to the market. Migration allows this group of herders to obtain the right animal combination to ensure the best, largest sheep for market.

- *The medium herders*. This group of herders has two major objectives in their economic activity: first, to trade and increase their wealth; second, to provide part of the family's diet. Their activities, on the one hand, ally them with the big herders and the neighbouring markets and traders and, on the other, as they have to spend part of their energy on providing food for the household, they also share common interests with the small herders. Therefore, they are not only the traders of flocks but also the producers of dairy products for their own consumption. It is for this reason that the combination of animals in the flocks of this group tends to be halftrading animals, sheep and lambs, and half producing animals, goats and kids.
- *The small herders*. This group can usually afford only one objective, that of providing supplementary food for the family. They only keep a small number of goats to meet their everyday needs. It is this group which is the first to settle when migration is restricted. As they have few or no animals of market value, namely sheep and lambs, any crisis will prevent them from keeping their herds. They will slaughter their herds for food and, when that is consumed, become agricultural laborers.

Exchange of the by-products of herds was/is exercised among the semi-nomadic or nomadic tribes. Exchange of their products for what was not produced by the community occurred on the route from or to the winter or summer stations. The exchange involved either barter for other products or money exchange. However, as Kurdish tribal society gradually became sedentarized and introduced to the market economy, its exchange system too was eventually transformed into one in which money functioned as the medium of exchange.

Sedentarization of the tribes did not occur overnight. However, the process had begun by the turn of the century. This was due, mainly, to the scarcity of pastoral land which itself related to several factors: population growth and an increase in the number of villages, greater demands for tribal products, and extensive use of pastures. I shall return to these issues later. In addition to the internal factors within Kurdish economic life which encouraged sedentarization, there was also pressure on people to settle due to government tribal policies. These included the privatization of communal pastures and the closure of borders to migrating tribes.

Reza Khan/Shah's accession to power hastened the changes towards sedentarization. The governments before Reza Shah usually responded

to the Kurdish problem by dislocating them geographically, forcing them to settle on lands away from their own traditional territories, sometimes in regions with an unfriendly environment, or by exiling the tribal leaders, separating them from the main part of the tribe thereby weakening their political power. The distinctiveness of Reza Shah's regime is that, while pursuing the methods applied by his predecessors, he also concentrated most of his efforts on settling the tribes in their own traditional territory and forced them to change their lifestyle on the lands on which they had always lived. The government was determined to seek a permanent solution to what they perceived was a constant problem. Reza Shah's detribalization policy undoubtedly reduced the influence and power of the tribal leaders but, like other governments before him, it could not destroy the tribes and tribalism. In her research, Lambton refers to the prevention of migration and the forced settlement of tribes as attempts made by the government to destroy the organization of the tribes in Iran that included Kurdistan.[11] In order to understand the impact of the sedentarization on the tribal society, we now examine the significance of migration for continued tribal existence and the reasons which encourage a tribe to settle.

Why tribes settle

Pastoralism usually refers to a system characterized by individual or communal trading of livestock cattle, sheep, and goats, the use of pasture land to feed the animals, and the provision for the individual, or for the community, of the resulting produce such as milk and meat, or the exchange of such produce for other goods, barter.[12]

In this system, three factors of production interact: people, livestock, and land. For equilibrium to exist there must be enough pasture to provide enough food for enough livestock to guarantee the viability of the household. The literature on household viability emphasizes the balance between the size of herds and the number of people in the household who benefit from the herds. Toulmin, in analyzing the literature on the topic, notes that:

> Viability should be seen both in terms of herd size that satisfies the household's consumption requirements and of household size capability of providing the labour needed to care for the herd.[13]

A non-viable household is one that either fails to own enough herd to provide the household's needs, or does not have sufficient labor to

take care of the herds, or does not have access to adequate pastures. It is in these situations that the household seeks alternative economic activity to obtain sufficient income for survival.

To begin with, however, less drastic measures are attempted. The unit first looks to territorial change when neither lands used by them nor herds are sufficient. Normally, there is little virgin land. The household usually moves to areas traditionally used by other households. This option will be less possible, however, with greater population growth and more extensive use of land.[14]

Land scarcity, whether caused by natural causes such as population increase or through the policy of closing the use of pastures to the pastoral communities as a result of government policy, directly affects the livestock. Toulmin argues that the lack of sufficient fodder increases the mortality rates among the herds and also affects the quality of animal production. The poorest within pastoral society leave because non-viability is recognized. Some try to keep an element of their pastoral role along with some other form of economic activity. When the household unit is no longer so singularly dependent on pastoralism, the household's economic survival is not quite so critically tied to land availability.

In most of the anthropological/sociological/economic literature, the major sources of supplementary income for pastoral communities are listed as farming, hunting and food gathering, crafts, wage-labor, and caravan trade.[15] Among these, farming is the most important. Case studies show that the pastoralists become increasingly involved in farming for reasons concerned with the need to safeguard their food supply. High prices and fluctuating supplies of grains on the market, loss of livestock, a decline in the productivity of the livestock sector itself, a change in climate, or a limitation on the use of pastures which in turn limits the fodder supply for the herds, all combine to put pressure on involvement in activities other than herding.[16]

Sedentarization

Settlement generally weakens the ties with the former social institutions. When the community settles, those features and activities in pastoral society which were based on cooperation and sharing fade away. This seems to be a logical reaction to the change from a pastoral to an agrarian way of life, for that degree of cooperation is necessary for the function of pastoral society.

Sedentarization encourages differentiation within the society in terms of access to the means of production. It is argued that usually the settled pastoral societies tend to develop a more diverse social grouping once they lose their mobility. This is attributed to the accessibility and ownership of land and livestock. The argument that pastoral societies are socially less differentiated than those of settled societies is not an argument which could be applied to all cases but it does apply to many examples of pastoral society which have settled.

Studies have shown that the costs of land and necessary equipment increases in an agrarian settlement, and it becomes very difficult for a poor member of a formerly pastoral society to obtain them. It is due to such explanations that Toulmin strongly suggests that:

> Settlement into agriculture is not always open to the poorest pastoral households. Since, where land is scarce and investments are required for it to be made productive, only the richest pastoral households will be able to become owners of productive agricultural land.[17]

This tendency is exacerbated when poor quality land where investments such as irrigation or manuring are required is all that is available.

It is commonly believed that nomadic pastoralism represents an earlier stage in the history of mankind and that sooner or later pastoral nomads will become settled agriculturists.[18] It is also believed that agrarian communities enjoy a more prosperous economic life in comparison with pastoral communities. Governments have attempted to justify transforming pastoral societies into agrarian ones by claiming to be concerned with the economic and social welfare of the inhabitants, whose conditions are said to be improved by moving to an agrarian structure. The attempts may only have ostensibly been to increase community wealth while their true primary goal has been to increase governmental control. However, the view that agricultural communities are more prosperous is debatable. Some argue that, contrary to common belief, pastoralism probably developed from settled agro-pastoral societies and therefore the argument that the agrarian societies are more 'advanced' than pastoral societies is not correct, if by 'advanced' one means 'closer to the present.'[19] They also argue that it is not always true that settled communities have a higher standard of living than the pastoralist ones. Frederick Barth, in his research on the Basseri tribe of south Iran, writes that many of the previously pastoral

and now settled villages have a lower standard of living, in contrast with neighboring tribal-pastoral communities.[20]

The process of agricultural settlement develops in stages.[21]

1. Individual members of the pastoral community leave, specifically the poorest and the richest.
2. Herding and farming are merged.
3. The entire community settles.

Mass settlement is due to natural disasters such as drought or official policies to settle the pastoral tribes. A community may become 'settled' because of one of these three stages or a combination of the three. These three forms are explained briefly below.

Gradual settlement by means of 'sloughing off' the individual:

Barth presents an example of this in his research on the Basseri tribe.[22] There, the wealthiest and the poorest households leave the pastoral economy. The two groups have different reasons. The richest leave because they are faced with loss of profit on their flocks. When expansion of livestock reaches a certain level, the need arises for hiring labor from outside the household to take care of the flocks. However, at this point, the herder tends to sacrifice profit, for hiring labor is not only expensive but also, in most cases, risky. With hired labor the chance of losing the herd is high, for the latter does not look after the herd as well as the herd's owner does. The usual calculus of profit ensures that the herd owner transfers whole or part of his livestock into another kind of asset, particularly land, and becomes a settled landowner. In other pastoral societies, it is the wealthiest section of the community, also the most politically influential, which settles in town in order to keep close connection with the centers of power in the cities. The rich may also transfer their wealth to real property in the cities.

Among the poor, settlement occurs when continued viability of the household is problematic. A crisis may develop due to the loss of a significant number of animals or a decrease in the productivity of the herd. Paradoxically, those households which have previously not been able to hedge their pastoralism with supplementary activity, those previously not dependent on herding such as farmers, or those borrowing herds from other households, find themselves short of food. They try to find work farming for others. Once they become tenants or

wage-laborers, they find themselves unable to return to pastoralism. A new, if temporary, equilibrium may once again be established between man, animal, and nature for the rest of the pastoral community.

Combination of farming and pastoralism

A nomadic pastoral society may also lose its exclusively nomadic character by combining agriculture and pastoralism. In some cases farming has already been present in the community as a marginal activity for supplementing food intake. The transformation could arise as a result of internal features of the pastoral society itself: a scarcity of pastures, an increase in population, or a decrease in the productivity of herding itself.

Mass sedentarization

Mass sedentarization of the pastoral communities emerges when there is a loss of livestock on a large scale, or when there is direct interference by government to settle an entire community. With a major crisis such as drought, with government intervention, or with interests of private companies in particular land, the areas used by the pastoral communities become either unusable or inaccessible and, as a result, either the whole or a large section of the community settles permanently.

Transformation from a pastoral to an agricultural society has profound ecological, economic, socio-political, and demographic effects on the community. The internal features of the group and the external context determine the consequences. Of the above mentioned consequences, we shall deal only with economic and political effects. The remaining consequences are beyond the scope of this work.

The economic impact

The economic effects of sedentarization can be observed in two spheres:

1. the effect on household income stability due to the receipt of incomes from other sources; and
2. a decrease in herding productivity due to the constraints on the availability of labor for herding.

In the case of the tribes of southern Iran, the policy of forced settlement led to a very high rate of mortality among the herds due to the

prohibition of migration.[23] The high mortality rate was the result of the scarcity of grazing land and poor environmental conditions which resulted in many diseases.[24] Huntings, in a research on pastoralist production in the western Sudan published in 1974, demonstrated that the rate of herd growth due to higher birth rates and lower calf deaths was higher among migratory herds than among sedentary herds. Table 2.1 compares the two.

Migration has a direct relationship to tribal herding. Migration is the way the tribe adapts itself to the natural environment through collective and seasonal movement. Migration ensures a varied diet as well as the survival of animals when the climate becomes hostile. During long and cold winters in the cold regions an adequate supply of food for the animals becomes problematic. However, in warm regions, the herders are forced to keep animals which are more tolerant of heat but have less market value such as goats and kids as opposed to sheep and lambs. It is only through the combined habitation of the warm and cold regions, by way of migration, that a tribal herder can obtain the greatest benefit from his economic activity. Migration allows a greater number of animals in a given flock while ensuring reproduction and the subsequent survival of the animals. Furthermore, the quality of the flock is improved by enabling more profitable animals to be nurtured.

In Iran, total or partial limitation of migration resulted in the forced settlement of many nomadic tribes. As was discussed earlier, one major purpose of migration was to ensure the right balance between the number of animals for subsistence and those for market. There were and are, generally, two kinds of flocks kept by tribal communities in Iran: sheep and lambs, and goats and kids.[25] Sheep and lambs were considered to be the profit-making flocks for they were sold at the regional and national level for their meat, but they were not very resistant to environmental difficulties. On the other hand, goats and

Table 2.1   The percentage rate of herd growth for sedentary and migratory herds in western Sudan, 1974

Herd growth	Sedentary herds	Migratory herds
Calving rates	40%	65%
Calf deaths	40%	10%

Source: Camilla Toulmin, *Economic Behaviour among Livestock-Keeping People*, Development Studies Occasional Paper No. 25 (University of East Anglia, 1983), 59.

kids were less vulnerable to difficulties but had little market value.[26] Their value lay in providing subsistence for the household. The dairy products produced from their milk were a significant part of the household's daily diet; other by-products were used for handicrafts. Sheep and lambs could not survive in either too hot or too cold temperatures. It was important for a tribal herder to be able to move from one region to the other in search of fodder and mild climate. Those tribes which traveled from warm, *yiylaq*, to cold, *qishlaq*, regions and vice versa had the opportunity to make the best of the environment. Limitation of migration restricted the possibility of an increase in the quality of profit-making flocks for an average tribal member.

Migration also provided a kind of political protection for the tribe because it gave them mobility. The very fact that the tribal people were not dependent on the land and were able to move their source of wealth, namely their flocks, to a new region, gave them a kind of economic self-sufficiency. It was the mobility of the tribe which offered them the capacity to survive under political pressure, especially from the central government.

However, the experience of Kurdish tribes and other tribal communities shows that forced settlement does not, necessarily, transform a tribal/nomadic society into a non-tribal/agricultural society. It removes some of its tribal functions but the identity of the tribe remains. Nevertheless, the tribal society which remains is somewhat deformed.

Sedentarization in Iranian Kurdistan

There is, unfortunately, very little statistical information about sedentarization in Kurdistan. However, the present situation suggests that it appeared gradually. In some areas where the entire tribe was dislocated, it took the form of mass sedentarization; in others the settling tribes adopted a combination of farming and herding. There were both internal and external reasons for sedentarization.[27]

The *internal* factors were as follows:

- Poverty in the tribe resulted in the loss of its herds. To the extent that poverty led the tribe to remain in the warm region, poverty caused settlement. In such a situation migration became pointless for the tribe and it remained permanently or temporarily in the warm regions, where living conditions were easier.
- When a weaker and smaller tribe lived in proximity to a stronger one, a section of the weaker, smaller tribe stayed in the warm area.

- Rivalry between the leaders of the tribe divided the tribe in two, with differing geographical boundaries. One segment of the tribe remained permanently in the cold region and the other segment inhabited the warm region.
- Exogenous economic forces led to the demand for a labor force and recruitment occurred among the tribe. This example was most prevalent in more recent years in regions where, because of the rich natural resources, vast economic projects were introduced. Examples include the Caspian Sea area in the north, and the oil-producing regions in the south of the country.
- Population growth occurred in the villages. Ghassemlou in his study of the Kurdish society and the development of the Kurdish tribes points to the significant increase in the number of villages as well as an increase in the village population in some of the Kurdish regions between 1851 and 1951. The table he presented did not specifically identify the relative figures for the early decades of the twentieth century but nevertheless it highlights the general trend of population growth for that period (see Table 2.2). This increase seems to be mainly due to the sedentarization of the Kurdish tribal population who settled either in already existing villages or newly formed ones.
- Closely connected to the population increase is a decrease in the number of herds. This meant that a greater demand for animal products pushed out those tribal households which failed to own a sizable herd to remain economically viable as a herder in the system. They gradually left herding and settled in the villages. There are some indications in support of this. In addition to Table 2.2 showing an increase in the village population which seems mainly to be due to the settlement of the tribal population, Ghassemlou cited that 'towards the end of the 19th century 32.5 percent

Table 2.2   Size of village population in Kurdish towns in Iran, 1851–1951

Area	[Number of villages]		[Village population]	
	[*1851*]	[*1951*]	[*1851*]	[*1951*]
Baneh	8	161	1,125	15,000
Marivan	14	111	1,040	17,800
Hauraman	9	121	605	29,500

Source: Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou, *Kurdistan and the Kurds* (London, 1965), 111.

members of the nomadic tribes owned no cattle and 17.5 percent had no animals at all.'[28] This indicated that a considerable number of tribal households were unable to sustain their positions as herders.

- Lack of sufficient pasture was also related to the population increase. Population growth resulted in more extensive use of pastures, which not only exhausted the pastoral lands but simply created pasture shortage. As we discussed at the beginning of this chapter, it was logical that the equilibrium between human, livestock, and pasture be disturbed and the consequence of such disequilibrium was that some of the tribal households had to leave the pastoral activity and become sedentarized.

The key *external* factor was the attitude of the central government towards tribes and tribal areas in the country. For around 400 years until the Pahlavi dynasty, the ruling powers were either of tribal origin themselves or came to power dependent upon tribal support. However, once in power, they felt threatened by the potential might of the tribes and tried to destroy them. One method chosen was forced settlement.

Sedentarization was further encouraged by policies such as the closing of pastures, the privatization of the traditionally commonly owned (by tribes) pastures, and the prohibition of long-distance migration (not only border-crossing migrations but also, in some cases, migrations from one region to another within the country). At the beginning of the twentieth century, due to these factors from within and outside the Kurdish tribal society, Kurdish tribes were almost entirely settled.

The Iranian government had many interests in pursuing a policy of tribal settlement. Politically, it was aimed at providing a tighter control over the country, especially in areas of political disturbance. Economically, it was supposed to guarantee higher revenue, for it was more effective to collect taxes and customs dues from a settled population than from a mobile group. The prohibition of border trade and the closing of the frontiers, particularly between Iran and Turkey, greatly constrained the traditional summer and winter migration, foreign goods smuggling, and the contraband trade in the Kurdish region. This, in return, increased the state revenue from custom dues. Furthermore, it was easier to draft the young male population of the community from the villages for the newly formed Iranian army than from the nomads. In addition to taxes on the tribal leaders, the individual members of the tribe had to pay taxes to the state too. These were in

the form of taxes levied on cattle and taxes levied on land paid in cash, and soldiers to be provided for the army. As Ghassemlou explained, providing soldiers was 'often including the full equipment, for example, hussars with horses and clothing, in many cases the soldier's expenses during the service had also to be covered by the tribe.'[29]

Most of the sedentary or semi-sedentary tribes of Kurdistan settled near pastures, which were mainly located in the mountainous northwestern section of the province: Saqqiz, Baneh, Marivan, and north of Sanandaj. In the past, the tribal leaders often owned arable land in the winter quarter, *qishlaq*, and in some cases in the summer quarter, *yiylaq*, too. Where the migration route was a long one, it usually passed through non-tribal lands. By custom the tribes followed a certain well-defined migration route. Sedentarization of the Kurdish tribal communities is the cause of the changes which transformed the social, economic, and political outlook of this community, cutting it from its traditional ties and loyalties based on tribal 'face-to-face' understanding and taking it closer to the understanding of an 'imagined community' based on ethnic and national identity. In spite of fundamental changes, such as the change from production for subsistence to production for market, the expansion of villages and towns, and the development of trade, and further social and economic differentiation in villages, some aspects of tribal relationships remained. Below, I discuses the factors present for change in tribal relations and those which assisted continuity.

Change

Land ownership

Discussing the traditional land ownership of the Kurdish tribes, Ghassemlou states that:

> In the case of tribes, land (in the case of nomadic tribes pasture) is collective property belonging to the whole tribe; it had either been assigned to the tribe by the sovereign, in which case the tribe was under his protection, or it is the land on which the tribe had settled during colonisation. It sometimes happened that the land had been forcibly appropriated at the expense of other tribes.[30]

In the process of sedentarization of the tribes, communal ownership of tribal land was ended. These developments changed the relationship

of the chiefs towards the tribe. Land, which was traditionally a common property of the tribe, gradually became the private property of the chiefs. As tribal ownership of arable land was abolished, chiefs took into their possession pastoral lands as well as the arable lands. Lambton, discussing land ownership in Kurdistan, wrote:

> Kurdistan is almost entirely in the hands of large landed proprietors. In the neighbourhood of Sanandaj there are two main land-owning families, various members of which hold considerable numbers of villages or parts of villages. In northern Kurdistan round Mahabad the Kurdish tribal khans are the main landowners.[31]

Furthermore, the chiefs/landlords also acquired the role of the money-lender in the village.

Differentiation and new groups

At an earlier stage of settlement, many of the tribes adopted a semi-nomadic semi-tribal life. Only part of the tribe traveled to the winter station and the rest of the tribe remained in the summer station, where the tribe had a more permanent residence. Most of the tribe's population lived there permanently, and only a small number of people moved with the flocks from one station to the other. Gradually, almost the entire population became stationary and only a few shepherds took care of the flocks. The settlement created new social and economic groupings in Kurdistan. There now existed chiefs as landlords as well as animal/livestock owners. Working the chief's/landlord's land were the peasants who owned no land. In addition, a third group became more distinct, the shepherds.

Sedentarization developed a new relationship between the tribal leadership and people. In a functioning nomadic structure, there was a great need for the chiefs (Aghas) to retain the loyalty of their tribal people. It was a common occurrence for a tribal member to join an agha of a rival tribe. However, when the tribe became settled or semi-settled, there were few possibilities for the tribesmen to leave their tribal chief and ally with the chief of another tribe. Once they settled they lost their freedom of movement. Therefore it was not so crucial for the chief to keep his people content by looking after their welfare and their security. The tribal chiefs became landlords, in most cases absentee landlords. However, the new relationship between agha/landlord and the settled or semi-settled peasants was not merely one of

landlord and peasant. It still had some of the cultural and social aspects of the chief-tribesmen relationship. Furthermore, the settled members of tribes also lost their strong ties with the tribal chief, who had previously been someone who acted as their ultimate protector. This change in the relationship between tribal leaders and tribesmen greatly weakened the 'face-to-face' characteristics of Kurdish tribal communities.

The tribal exchange system

The exchange system was relatively developed among the nomads and semi-nomads. On the route to the summer and winter stations, tribes sold or exchanged their herding by-products and their locally made handicrafts and obtained the goods they needed. Sedentarization, however, greatly hindered the existing barter system among the tribes. Ghassemlou summarized the exchange system among the Kurdish tribes:

> Exchange enabled every tribe to possess its own summer station, a *havar* or *kostan*, and a winter station, called *garmian*. On the route to the station and in its neighbourhood the tribe was entitled to sell products and obtain the goods needed in exchange. The money-form of exchange was widespread among the Kurds, and not merely the number of flocks often reckoned the property of the wealthiest chief, but according to the amount of gold and silver money he owned.[32]

The tribes needed to keep their wealth in movable form due to the character of their life. It is still customary among the Kurdish tribes to keep some of their assets in the form of female jewellery.

By the gradual weakening of the traditional exchange system and entrance of Kurdish society into a new type of market economy, new groups of traders and dealers were emerging in Kurdish rural life. There is very little information about the exchange system in tribal Kurdistan at the beginning of the twentieth century. However, I refer here to a report published in 1976 by the Plan and Budget Organization in Iran about the exchange system in Kurdistan in the 1970s.[33] It emphasizes the strains that the weakening of the traditional form of exchange put on the whole network of exchange and trade among the community.

The report noted that the relationship between herders and traders was one of mutual benefit, whereby the by-products of herding suitably transformed by domestic crafts within the tribe were exchanged

with the commodities which could not be obtained inside the community. The by-products of herding appeared, at first, to be ancillary to the main economic activity of the tribe. However, since they were the chief points of intersection with the exchange/cash economy, these products were critical.

The middleman called the *pilivar* was and still is the bridge between the tribal person and the non-tribal individuals of the commercial centers of the villages and cities. He received commission for his services. As described in the report by the Plan and Budget Organization, apparently the *pilivar* earned 50–200 percent commission. The reason for such high commissions was the substantial holding costs involved in bringing produce to market, with the resultant risks for the merchant. The asymmetric relationship to time of the tribesperson and trader favored the traders or the *pilivar*. The tribes person was in need of certain goods such as sugar, tea, cloth, and kitchen and basic agricultural equipment all year long. However, the tribesperson could only provide skins and hides at certain times of year. The difference in availability to trade and the inverse relationship, which led to greatest need for trade when trade was least advantageous, gave the *pilivar* opportunity to charge high prices. The herder could not control the payment. He could only repay his debts when his lambs and kids were taken to the market and sold.

The relationship between trader and tribesperson depended on several factors: the strength of the tribal economy, heavily dependent as it is on the weather, the availability of good grazing land, the contingencies of animal behaviour including their health and ability to reproduce, the proportion of goats to sheep, the amount of savings the community had generated, and their future expectations, and for the trader, his own finances, the availability of goods, the quality and price ranges he was able to offer, his expectations of profit, and the effective 'rate of exchange.'

The *pilivar* obtained a commission for his role. A contract was agreed between the two parties. In some cases, the *pilivar* supplied the goods for the tribe, whereas, rather than obtaining goods or cash in return, a loan was given to the tribal person to be paid, with interest, over a set period. In other cases, the *pilivar* bought the product of the herder in advance. The tribesmen/herders could only sell part of their herds after the animals have reproduced. It was the *pilivar* who controlled prices for the herds and its by-products. The tribesperson, dependent as they were, to some extent, on receiving a loan to purchase needed commodities and having nothing else to sell for a long time, were quite

dependent on the *pilivar* and his 'rate of exchange.' The prices of the goods they produced rose or fell, whereas the prices of the manu-factured goods the *pilivar* had to sell were likely to be somewhat fixed, or at least had a fixed minimum below which the *pilivar* would not go.

The limitation on the previously existing free exchange destroyed another significant feature of nomadic/tribal life of the Kurdish tribal communities, that of economic self-sufficiency.

End of self-sufficiency

Through the nineteenth century, the Kurdish areas were self-sufficient with herding as the main pillar of their economy. Furthermore, their limited agriculture and handicrafts covered the internal demands of the population. The herding by-products were partly used for the tribe's own consumption and the surplus was either sold or traded with the neighbouring villages and towns. These products not only provided food for the tribe but also were manufactured to make cloth, shoes, and rugs.

The settlement of the tribes and the detribalization policies of the government demolished the economic self-sufficiency which existed among tribes. In the present century, the policy of transforming the tribal regions into agricultural areas, closing the routes of tribal migra-tion, and, more importantly, the weak and unplanned foundation of agriculture there, have pushed the Kurdish society into a decline in its traditional economic activity, herding, and consequently have des-troyed the self-sufficient feature of it. There was a very important attachment to economic self-sufficiency. In return, the self-sufficiency offered a degree of political protection to the community for they themselves to a great extent controlled their economic life. The pro-hibition of migration and the hindering of the barter-based economic activities stripped away the physical mobility that the tribes enjoyed when they were not tied to land.

Continuity

Despite the changes in the life of tribal Kurdistan, tribal relationships still exist. I would like to argue that the key to this continuity is the continuation of herding as an important form of economic activity in the region, and the key to the continuation of herding is the fact that the region is mainly mountainous where there is little agricultural land but what there is is more suitable for grazing.

Continuation of herding

Herding is still the main economic activity of the semi-sedentary, semi-tribal communities among Kurdish inhabitants of west Azerbaijan and Kurdistan. In any case, even among the entirely sedentarized communities, herding combined with agriculture plays a very significant role in the economic activity of Kurdish households. Nomadic tribes gradually transformed themselves. As it was no longer possible to migrate fully, one part of the tribe, eventually, settled in the winter station while the remaining part continued to migrate between summer and winter stations. In some cases, both parts of the tribe became sedentarized, one at the winter station, the other at the summer one. Eventually, the migration of tribes stopped entirely and the herds were looked after by a few shepherds and moved within a very circumscribed geographical area. The tribe itself became entirely settled over time, often in two separate regions, while herding continued to a limited extent.

As in the past, the main aim of herding was to provide the household's food and to offer the animal by-products for sale or exchange. A report published in 1976 by the Plan and Budget Organization showed that 80–85 percent of the grazing flocks were still kept for herding by-products and for the reproduction of herds.[34] The main by-products were milk, cheese, butter, animal fat, and wool. The remaining 15–20 percent of the flocks were raised for their meat.

Herding and its by-products provided the households with a relative degree of self-sufficiency. The herding by-products not only provided the household with food but also the animal's skin, wool, and hair, by the application of handicrafts, provided households with basic goods. A monograph by Tehran University on the family and development among the tribes in Iran notes that those peasants who gave up herding completely had a lower standard of living than those who managed to combine herding and cultivation activity.[35]

Favorable geographic conditions

If we look at the map of Kurdish regions in Iran, we see that the largest part of the region is mountainous, with Mount Ararat in the northeast and Zagros and Pishrkuh in the south. In these mountain regions there is plenty of rainfall and pastoral land, but little flat agricultural land. That is one of the reasons why, even today, the combination of herding and dry-farming agriculture is the main form of economic activity. Towards the eastern and southern parts (Kermanshah-Bakhtaran

region) of inland Kurdistan where it is less mountainous, there is more agricultural land and therefore more systematic agriculture exists there.

Ghassemlou, discussing the situation of agricultural land in regions where Kurds live, including west Azerbaijan, Kurdistan and Kermanshah-Bakhtaran, notes that:

> Of the entire 124 000-km^2 of Iranian Kurdistan about 5 million ha., that is, 40 percent are suitable for cultivation. Approximately 4 million ha. are covered with forests (32 percent), the remaining part comprising mostly pastures and mountains. Nevertheless, only 24 percent of the suitable land, that is, 1 200 000 ha., are being tilled, which means a mere 9.6 percent of the whole territory.[36]

Lack of mechanized agriculture

In Ghassemlou's study of agriculture in Kurdistan, he notes that 'the technical level of agriculture is unusually low, the main implements having remained unchanged for several centuries.'[37] Although the report concerned the agriculture in Kurdistan in the late 1960s, the situation was presumably even worse at the turn of the century for the Kurdish peasantry.

The statistics on agriculture in Kurdistan show that the cultivation of all main crops was and is predominantly through dry farming. According to the annual statistics report for 1972 published by Iran's Center for Statistics, of the entire land in the province of Kurdistan, only 25.7 percent was under cultivation, and of this amount 4.1 percent was under irrigated cultivation. Only 16.17 percent of the total land under cultivation was cultivated through some sort of irrigation system and the rest, or 84 percent, was cultivated through dry farming.[38] Although these statistics refer to the situation in agriculture in the 1970s, it reflects a reality that in 1972, and long before that, in most parts of Kurdistan the irrigation system either did not exist or was little developed. The fact that the situation has not changed for the better in the last several decades is confirmed by the statistics of even later years. According to the agricultural statistics report for Kurdistan for 1985, of the total land under wheat cultivation (wheat is the most important product in Kurdistan), only 9 percent was cultivated by irrigation systems and the remaining 91 percent by dry farming.[39] Dry-farming agriculture is generally not a profitable method of agriculture but rather represents subsistence agriculture.

Conclusion

Sedentarization of the Kurdish tribes brought fundamental changes to those tribes but was not able to eliminate them entirely. Migration ceased to be an important element in tribal identity, but other factors such as kinship continued to be important. However, it was the continuation of herding, due to favorable geographic conditions for it, even after the communities became settled and agrarian, that made it possible for some, though limited, aspects of tribal relationships to continue to exist. Tribal membership or affiliations were no longer the only source of identity as was the case in the purely tribal setting. Rather, the tribal relationship was the point of reference with the past for the community, a shared, common feature which had continued to exist in a new form alongside other identities. Continuation of herding connected the communities to their past, while the settlement and sedentarization introduced them to a new period and new understanding of different social and economic relationships.

Since the economic life of the region was very much dependent on the economic development of the country as a whole, the introduction of Kurdistan to the market economy did not take place as an independent development and, indeed, should be seen as connected with events inside Iran, Iraq, and Turkey. In many ways, the changes which occurred with the settlement of the majority of the tribes in Iranian Kurdistan were representative of the social, economic, and political development in the country as a whole.

It is during the process of involvement with other communities that the 'face-to-face' character of Kurdish society weakened and a new understanding of Kurdish national identity appeared among the Kurds. This change in the political and social understanding of their identity among the Kurds can be witnessed in the studies of two Kurdish movements, one belonging to the 'face-to-face' phase of Kurdish history, the period of tribal/nomadic life in the 1920s, and the other belonging to the later period in the 1940s, the phase of national consciousness, when Kurdish society was almost entirely sedentarized.

3
Nationalism or Tribalism?
Simko's Revolt

Introduction

In Iran, Kurdish aspirations for independence, economic progress, and cultural expression began to develop as a consequence of the political and economic processes of changing the lifestyle of tribes and nomads implemented by the central government of Reza Shah. This process, which started in the 1920s, included the forced settlement of the nomadic tribes of Kurdistan, and their eventual sedentarization, which, in turn, weakened the traditional social and economic ties of the community. This is not to say that any nomadic community which becomes sedentary also pursues ideas of national identity. In the case of the Kurds in Iran, largely due to the government's repressive policies, Kurdish national aspirations for self-government, cultural expression, and economic progress have been nourished.

Historically the core of political/nationalist movements of Iranian Kurds have always been in the northern regions, namely the Mahabad (Savouj Bulagh) region. There are different reasons why some other regions of Iranian Kurdistan have developed somewhat different expressions of Kurdish nationalism (based more on class antagonism in Kurdish society as opposed to emphasizing the struggle against the central government as the major conflict) and have not been part of the main Kurdish political organization (KDPI). In the south, particularly in the Kermanshah region, the Kurdish Shi'i population identifies with the central government in Tehran. In the Saqqiz region, where the community is traditionally more agricultural as we will discuss in the economic chapter, the Kurdish nationalist movement has been a movement with emphasis on issues related to class conflict within Kurdish society, rather than the conflicts between the central

government and the Kurds. This is unlike the mainstream of the Kurdish movement as represented by the KDPI, which has much greater influence in the traditionally tribal regions of the west and north of Iranian Kurdistan.

It is for this reason that I will focus on the development of tribal society as it existed, which was predominantly, though not exclusively, in the mountain regions. It should be noted that by mountain regions I mean the general areas of western north and western central Kurdistan, where towns as well as villages do exist.

Earlier, I explained the socio-economic situation of the Kurds at the beginning of the twentieth century and examined the impact of Reza Shah's tribal policies on the socio-economic life of the Kurds. In this chapter, I shall examine the nature of Kurdish political life during the first quarter of the twentieth century. In this context, I shall discuss the limitations of tribalism vis-à-vis nationalism. My argument will be that these limitations mainly stemmed from the nature of tribal society as a 'face-to-face' society and were, by definition, obstacles on the path to the development of Kurdish nationalism. I shall highlight the revolt led by Ismail Agha Simko to illustrate the limitations of Kurdish tribal society of the 1920s in relation to nationalism. However, before analyzing Simko's revolt I shall discuss the social and political situation of the tribes in Iran during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, explaining the relationship between the tribes and the nation-states around them, and the development of the tribes themselves.

Tribes and the state in Iran

The relationship between the tribes and the Iranian state has always been a sensitive one, particularly during periods of weak central government. After the sedentarization of the nomadic tribes and the formation of a relatively cohesive and strong central government by Reza Khan (later Reza Shah), the political/military power of the tribes was greatly reduced. They no longer were able, seriously and continuously, to threaten the state, for now it was the state which controlled them. Before this, for centuries, tribes were instrumental in assisting groups to achieve power, and once in power those groups tended to depend on the continued support of tribal forces. Obviously, such political influence caused great apprehension for the state which wished to control the tribes and reduce their power. Kurdish tribes were no exception to this general role.

For centuries, Kurdistan was formally divided between the two empires, the Ottoman and the Persian. However, partly due to its geography and partly due to the lack of strong centralized government, it has been difficult for either state to have full control of the region and its political life. The Kurdish chiefs pitted the two states against each other and repeatedly switched loyalty from one state to the other. By the end of the nineteenth century, as the presence of outside powers, the British and the Russians, increased in the region, the Kurdish chiefs who considered the European powers more powerful than the Ottomans and the Persians, sought their support and, at times, switched loyalties from one European power to the other as well.

The social and political organization in Kurdistan up to the nineteenth century was based on principalities or *emirates*, state-like units ruled by a prince or *mir*. These emirates or principalities were mainly located at the border areas. When the central government granted them the title, it also implicitly granted them the right to guard national borders too. In order for an emirate or its leader to gain legitimacy, two approvals were needed, one from the central government and the other from the lower-ranking chiefs in the region. Ottoman and Persian attempts to establish a stronger central power and a new administration resulted in the abolition of the Kurdish emirates. The abolition of the Kurdish emirates had a profound impact on the social and political order of Kurdish society in two ways: it split the centralized political power of the emirates into much smaller units, and it replaced the mainly secular power of the chieftains in running the community with that of the authority of religious leaders, the shaikhs.

The abolition of the emirates destabilized the relative peace which existed in Kurdish society. The more noticeable impact was the increase in general insecurity in Kurdish areas, which also affected the neighboring areas. This was mainly caused by smaller chieftains' attempts to take over the position of the mirs or the more influential chiefs. Primarily, these were violent efforts. The governments, despite attempts to appear in command, were still unable to control the region and guarantee physical security there.

The power vacuum caused by the eclipse of powerful chiefs gave way to another significant development in Kurdish society in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the emergence of the political authority of the Kurdish shaikhs. Serif Mardin argues that, in Turkey, this important social and political development – the emergence of shaikhs, not only as significant religious, but also political and social

leaders – was the result of the 'tanzimat' which put an end to the tribal and principalities.[1]

The disappearance of the leadership due to the abolition of the larger Kurdish principalities and the continuing conflicts among lesser chieftains ensured that power shifted to the only authority which, due to its special status, had not been under attack, that of the shaikhs who had always had special status and were already accepted as religious authorities. They now were the only ones who had the respect of their people without necessarily having any tribal affiliation.[2] They were also respected by the chieftains and to some extent by the governments in the present Kurdish regions too. This unique position gave the shaikhs an enormous advantage over other leaders, for they were able to settle disputes between tribes, between individuals within a tribe and its various chieftains, or between a tribe and the government, without the fear of being accused of favoritism. As the shaikhs played such mediating roles more often, they gained more influence and prestige.[3] From almost the mid-nineteenth century (1860) to the mid-twentieth century, shaikhs were the most influential political leaders all over Kurdistan. Almost all Kurdish uprisings for autonomy or independence or anti-government revolts were led by the shaikhs who, at times, were also pursuing their own personal ambitions.

Kurdish tribal development up to the twentieth century

As far as the political situation of the tribes themselves was concerned, the implementation of the administrative reforms of the governments in the region resulted in important structural changes to the tribal leadership and the disintegration of larger chieftainships into smaller units. These chiefs had stronger blood ties with the rest of the tribe and were physically closer to the ordinary members of the tribe. This new arrangement meant that the unity which existed between tribes through the organization of an emirate or a confederation of tribes was broken and led to many small tribes in conflict with each other. Nevertheless, the government's tribal policies, the destruction of the larger social and political organizations of the Kurds, and the attempt at sedentarization of the tribes to enable easier central government control changed Kurdish society greatly.

This situation continued until the years of World War I when Kurdish tribal leaders, once again, had the opportunity to organize relatively large confederations of Kurdish tribes. The collapse of the

Ottoman Empire and the weakness of the Persian state provided the Kurds with favorable circumstances to extend their power. Several confederations were formed, some of which were the 'Heverkan' (east of Mardin, Turkey), the 'Halali' (around Mt Ararat), the 'Pizhdar' (east of Qaleh Dizeh, Iraq), the 'Kalhur' (west of Kermanshah, Iran), and the 'Shakak' (northwest Iran). Isma'il Agha Simko (the focus of this chapter) became the head of the Shakak confederation. These confederations were political associations which different independent tribes joined while preserving their freedom of action. They were less cohesive and less integrated and their geographic boundaries were more flexible than those of a tribe. Tribes forming the confederation did not have equal importance and influence. There existed the core tribe or tribes and the political/military leadership came from this core. There were other tribes who were not at the center of the organization but, rather, at the periphery. They generally joined the confederacy at the peak of its success (mainly success against the central government) and were the first to leave the confederation when difficulties occurred. Simko's revolt illustrates such fluctuations in size well.

Tribes and the non-tribal population

Kurdish areas have never been entirely tribal. A significant number of 'non-tribal' cultivator Kurds have always lived in Kurdistan. They had different names in different regions: Kurmanj, Guran, Rayat, and Misken.[4] They generally had no specific social organization of their own. The tribe and the tribal leader who dominated the 'non-tribal' population of a given district imposed its social organizational structure on the latter. Thus a 'non-tribal' population living on lands of a certain tribe or sub-tribe would identify with that tribe or the sub-tribe and feel hostility towards the tribal and 'non-tribal' population of the rival tribe. However, with respect to tribal relationships, the non-tribal population was never considered to be proper tribespeople and was regarded as subjects to be controlled. By the beginning of the twentieth century, however, many nomadic tribes had become sedentarized or at least involved with agriculture, and therefore the difference between the two groups became less noticeable. Nevertheless, the difference, mainly with respect to landownership, still remained. Whereas settled tribespeople generally owned some land, the 'non-tribal' people consisted of the sharecroppers and the landless peasants in the region. Van Bruinessen, discussing the situation of the 'non-tribal' population of Kurdistan in Iran, writes:

Tribesmen generally *own* some land; informants from several Kurdish tribes in Iran claimed not to know of any fellow-tribesman who is not at least a *khurdeh-malik* (small landowner). 'Non-tribal' Kurds, on the other hand, were usually tenants, sharecroppers or landless agricultural laborers. Rayats who received title to land under the Iranian Land Reform have not, as yet, been accepted as equal to the tribesmen, in spite of the fact that they differ very little from the sedentary tribesmen.[5]

On the whole the relationship between the tribesmen and the non-tribal Kurds can be summarized as one of domination and exploitation of the latter by the former, economically by looting from them and collecting dues from them to provide the tribesmen (particularly the military men of the chief) with goods and money, socially and politically by imposing the social/political structure of the tribe on the non-tribal population.

Emergence of Pan-Islamisim and nationalism in the region

By the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the European powers were increasingly gaining influence in the region, and among the peoples of the Empire, new ideas and loyalties were replacing the old ones. New ideas included nationalism which, ultimately demanded recognition of a separate state for different ethnic groups, and Pan-Islamism, which advocated the unity of all the Muslim peoples of the Empire against the non-Muslims and the outside powers.

During this period, although the Ottoman Empire was still an important power in Middle East politics, the increasing influence of European powers, specifically the British and the French, gradually exceeded it. Part of such influence was transferred to these regions through the political, economic, and administrative reforms the Great Powers introduced and encouraged the Ottoman Empire to implement. The effect of these reforms were several, including the awakening of nationalistic sentiments among the different ethnic and religious peoples in the Empire such as the Armenians in Anatolia and the Maronite Christians on Mount Lebanon.[6]

Meanwhile, the Muslim population of the Empire who felt threatened by the increasing influence of the Europeans before the declining power of the Ottomans and the Persians also enthusiastically embraced the Pan-Islamic sentiment promoted by the Ottoman Court

(especially by Sultan Abdül Hamid). Support for Pan-Islamism was a convincing argument for the Muslims who thought of the European powers as protectors of Christian populations (or the non-Muslims generally) against the Muslims. However, the thrust of Pan-Islamism was directed not so much at the European states but towards the Armenian communities.

With the end of World War I and the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, there were a great many changes in the Middle East. Through negotiation and the signing of treaties, the Ottoman Empire was divided into several new states, each under the control of one of the victorious powers, either the British or the French. The local people often challenged the new boundaries, but ultimately the British and the French became the decisive powers in the region.[7]

Both of the two movements, nationalism and Pan-Islamism, affected the Kurdish communities. There was a general understanding of and sympathy for self-determination among the ethnic and religious minorities of the disintegrating Ottoman Empire. The right to self-determination was one of the principles put forward by President Woodrow Wilson in his Fourteen Point Program for World Peace. Point Twelve of the program declared that the non-Turkish minorities of the Ottoman Empire should be 'assured of an absolute unmolested opportunity of autonomous development.'[8] Many communities within the Empire, the Turks, the Arabs, the Jews, the Armenians, the Kurds and also the Balkan people of the Empire, realizing the mood of the time – the emergence and the recognition of new nation-states – put their efforts into achieving the goal of independence. The tenacity of political organizations, nationalist awareness, and the degree of support and favor each received from the great powers differed, and so did the outcome of their efforts. Many communities within the Ottoman Empire achieved independence. However, despite the promises, the Kurds, the Armenians and the Palestinians (each for different reasons) did not obtain recognition as separate nation-states.[9]

Kurdish nationalism, which in most cases meant demands for an independent state, and Kurdish Pan-Islamism, though to some extent contradictory, were also closely connected. For many Kurds, separating Pan-Islamism from nationalism was a difficult concept to comprehend. However, it appeared that the Pan-Islamic idea was a more familiar and better understood concept among them, since most of the Kurdish 'nationalist' uprisings at that time bore enormous resemblance to the revolts by the traditional tribal chieftains/shaikhs in which personal independence from the central government and personal achievement

of greater influence were the major motives. The case of Simko's uprising in Iran illustrates this. Simko belonged to a phase in the development of the Kurdish political history in Iran which I refer to as the 'face-to-face' phase based, primarily, on tribal relationships. Most of the Kurds at the time were not capable of comprehending more abstract notions such as a Kurdish nation-state including all Kurds, tribal, non-tribal, and even rival tribes. In the following pages I shall examine the limitations of tribal relationship with respect to nationalism in the case of Isma'il Agha Simko's revolt. However, let us briefly look at the background to the development of Kurdish political aspirations before Simko's uprising.

The first significant Kurdish uprising, which had some impact on Iranian Kurdistan, took place in 1880 in Kurdish areas of present-day Turkey. Shaikh Ubaydullah, who announced himself as the King of Kurdistan in the southeast region of Lake Van, led the movement.[10] Shaikh Ubaydullah expanded his movement to Iran. In his attack on Iranian Azerbaijan many Kurdish tribes joined him. One of the tribal chiefs who joined him was Hamzeh Mangur from the Savouj Bulaqh (Mahabad) area. He also wrote a letter to Prince Abbas Mirza, inviting him to be the king of the country after their victory.[11] The Shaikh had his reasons to count on the Prince's cooperation. Prince Abbas Mirza's mother was a Kurd and a follower of Shaikh Taha, Shaikh Ubaydullah's father. However, contrary to what the Shaikh had hoped for, Prince Abbas Mirza informed the king, Naser al-Din Shah, of the Shaikh's intentions. The Prince was rewarded for his loyalty and was given the governership of Qazvin. Sultan Abdulhamid who saw it as a force against Armenian independence to some degree, approved the Shaikh's movement. Shaikh Ubaydullah failed to attain his goals, but the idea of a Kurdish independent state or region remained in the memory of the Kurds.

As World War I progressed, the government of Iran found itself ineffective and with very little control over events in the country. Once again, the tribal chiefs gained power and even established large tribal confederations. The increase in tribal influence encouraged banditry, a feature of tribal life. The non-tribal, non-Kurdish inhabitants of the region suffered most from the tribal raids. The settled sections of the population were systematically subjected to plunder by the nomadic population.

After the Ottoman defeat, many Kurdish leaders posed as nationalist leaders, seeking independence for the Kurds. The external reasons for this sudden emergence of nationalist leaders in Kurdistan were several.

One reason was the defeat of the Ottoman Empire which undermined the sentiment and the unity which existed among the Muslim communities of the Empire and which was strongly promoted by the Kurdish shaikhs themselves, for it gave them personal power and prestige. The Kurdish leaders were also aware of the favorable international atmosphere due to President Wilson's 'Fourteen Points' regarding the right of self-determination of minorities, and British support for a Kurdish state in the Mesopotamia region. The 'nationalistic' tone of many of these leaders was meant to impress the European powers and the newly established League of Nations. However, those who took advantage of the situation were various Kurdish chiefs. Some of them had some nationalist aspirations (in the sense that they demanded an independent state or some kind of autonomous arrangement, though these aspirations were partly a disguise for personal grievances) but such sentiment was generally combined with the more traditional phenomenon of rebellion against the central government. The most important Kurdish uprising after World War I was the revolt led by Isma'il Agha Simko, the paramount chief of the Shakak confederation

Simko's revolt

Shakak development and Simko's leadership

By 1920, Shakak tribes, which still lived a completely nomadic life, were rare. Most of them were semi-nomadic tribes who spent most of the year in the mountain villages. In summer, the flocks migrated, along with a few members of the tribe, to the summer regions, while the rest of the tribe remained in the villages. Those staying in the village lived among the non-tribal in a community also consisting of non-Kurds. Nevertheless, the nomadic tribe's people dominated the non-nomadic villagers.

The Shakak confederation was the second largest among the Kurdish organizations in Iran.[12] There were many tribes in the Shakak confederation, but only three held central political control, the Avdovi, the Mamedi (or Mamodi), and the Kardar. The others were less significant in decision-making. At the turn of the century, there were three men who were in competition for the paramount leadership of the Shakak confederation. The strongest, Ali Agha from the Avdovi tribe, was the father (or the grandfather) of Jafar Agha and Isma'il Agha (Simko). The second was Umar Agha Mamedi, and the third was Mostafa Agha from the Kardar tribe. However, the two latter were killed, Umar Agha by

the Persian army, and Mostafa Agha by one of his rivals. Later, Jafar Agha (Isma'il Agha's brother) was also killed unexpectedly by the Persian authorities. Therefore the vacuum left by the disappearance of all the other potential leaders paved the road for young Isma'il Agha, known as Simko, to become the chief leader of the Shakak confederation.

However, the right circumstances were only partly responsible for Simko's rise to power. His personality was also critical. He continuously sought powerful friends by allying himself with different tribes, personalities, and nation-states. Those who supported him or joined him assisted him in increasing his influence. He had learnt from his brother how, successfully, to raid towns and villages, and with each successful raid, he gained more followers and military force and achieved a greater prestige. There are many examples of his Machiavellian behavior in pursuit of power. I shall deal with some of these examples in the following pages.

Simko was active in the area west and south of Lake Urmiyeh and established an autonomous Kurdish government there from the summer of 1918 until 1922. He managed to organize a strong army of his own which, for a time, was superior to the government forces which he defeated on several occasions. He continued to expand the territory under his control around Lake Urmiyeh and raided the surrounding villages to maintain his army. The government found it difficult to control him, and the Shakak confederation and its leadership on numerous occasions proved to be more powerful than the government army. The actual numbers in his military forces are not easy to establish, but Arfa estimates the number of Shakak households under Simko's leadership as 2,000 in 1920.[13]

Simko's activities between 1918 and 1929

Simko did not participate in World War I but concentrated his efforts into expanding his influence in the region. He was successful in achieving this goal. By the end of the war, Simko was a powerful Kurdish leader due to his relatively superior military strength. He gained possession of a great deal of ammunition, including heavy artillery, left behind by Russian soldiers. He also received arms from other parts of Kurdistan. His political influence increased. In addition to the Kurds, others also considered him important enough a leader to accommodate rather than confront. These included the Soviets and the new Turkish and Iranian governments.

Simko, in order to consolidate his power, did not hesitate to collaborate with the Iranian government representatives at times,

particularly to help them get rid of former friends of his the Iranian government considered troublemakers. The fate of Mar Shimun, the political and religious leader of the Nestorians of the region, is one example.

By the end of the war, besides the Kurds, the other ethnic group who managed to arm themselves was the Nestorian Assyrians. They armed themselves with ammunition left behind by the Russians and also received considerable arms from the Armenians of Anatolia. Like the Kurds, the Assyrians, who had the support of the new government of the Soviets, were also striving for some kind of independence in the region of northwest Iran. In the autumn of 1915, the Assyrian tribes of the Hakkari region of southeastern Turkey took sanctuary in Iran on the plains of Urmiyeh and Salmas. Their leader was Mar Shimun. The presence of this force, which hoped to establish an Assyrian homeland in that region, was favored by the Allies, for they were looked upon as a potential force against the Turks, should they be needed. In 1917, the military power of the Christian community was considerable. Mar Shimun had about 5000 armed men under his command.[14] However, the presence of such a military force and the idea of Christian autonomy in the region were not welcomed by the majority of the population of the area who were Azeris and Kurds and who were already suffering from famine in the area.

Nevertheless, during the crisis of February 1918, the Christian population managed to control Urmiyeh. The Iranian government found itself unable to exercise any power in the region. The governor of Tabriz, Mukhti Shams, in his contacts with Simko, asked for Simko's assistance in destroying the Christian militia. Simko was eager to have that region under his control and leadership, but he knew he had to remove Assyrian power first. Furthermore, he could not consider collaboration with them for he was aware that any unity with Mar Shimun would be perceived by the other Kurdish leaders as unacceptable, given that it was finding common cause with non-Muslims.

At this time, the Assyrians themselves, particularly their leader Mar Shimun, realized that they could not achieve the goal of establishing Assyrian autonomy in the Urmiyeh and probably Salmas regions without Kurdish assistance, no matter how temporary and expedient such friendship would turn out to be. Both leaders, understanding that they could not ignore each other, planned to meet for negotiations about future joint operations against the Iranians and Turks. They met in Kohneh-Shahr (Salmas) in March 1918. The meeting appeared satisfactory until the end, when the two leaders shook hands and Mar Shimun

left. Then Simko signaled to his men, who were hiding on the roof-tops, to open fire on Mar Shimun and 150 of his armed men. It is believed that the first bullet was fired by Simko himself and aimed at Mar Shimun.[15] Almost all the Christians were killed.[16]

Simko's action had devastating results on the inhabitants of Salmas and Urmiyeh districts, whose homes were looted and who were murdered by the relatives and followers of Mar Shimun seeking revenge. Simko and his men were not harmed since they returned to his head-quarters in the mountains. By the time the Christian forces arrived at his headquarters in Chahriq, Simko had already fled to Turkey. The acts of revenge did not, however, strengthen the Assyrian position. The Assyrians and Armenians withdrew from Urmiyeh in panic towards British protection in Hamadan several months later, in June and July 1918. In escaping, many were killed by Turkish soldiers and scattered Kurdish forces who were believed to be organized by Simko and Sayyid Taha who had joined Simko and cooperated with him on many occasions.[17] These events managed to seriously damage the progress of Assyrian national aspirations. After a great number of the Christian population left Urmiyeh, the city was plundered by Simko's and Turkish forces.

This was not the first time Simko had collaborated with Persian state authorities. Such collaboration dated back to the time of the Constitutional Revolution in Iran. Then, he voluntarily dispatched 300 horsemen to assist Iqbal al-Saltaneh, the governor of Maku, who was fighting the constitutionalist forces at Khoy. Simko was rewarded and given the local governorship of Qotur area, which continued to be ratified by the central government, despite Simko's plunderings.[18]

On several occasions Simko made attempts to receive assistance from the Turkish government. One such attempt was over the question of whether Mosul would become part of Turkey or part of the newly established state of Iraq. Simko, who received no sympathy from the British, came out strongly in support of the Turkish government over the issue of Mosul. In an interview published in the Turkish paper *Tanin*, he stated that:

> I know better than anyone does the situation at Mosul and the state of mind of the tribes of that district. The population there is under an oppressive regime. Its eyes are turned towards us and it waits for us to come to its help. All the inhabitants of Mosul without exception wait for the day of their return to their motherland, Turkey.[19]

However, Simko did make several attempts to establish friendly relations with the British. Most of his efforts were through other influential Kurdish leaders who had a better reputation with the British than Simko himself, such as Babaker Agha of the Pizhdar and Shaikh Taha, the grandson and the successor of Shaikh Ubaydullah. In one of these attempts, in a letter to Babaker Agha, he asked the latter to arrange a meeting with the British for him. In the letter, he stressed the important of having the support of the British government for any movement. He wrote that his people (the Kurds) had struggled and suffered: 'if a nation does not protect its nationhood now, its religion too will go under,' but resistance to aggression 'can only be done by the Kurds if they are willing to enlist the assistance and help of the British government. He who does not realize this is a fool.'[20] Further, in the letter he promised that he would deal with 'not only the Kurds of Savouj Bulagh, but any other Kurds who should oppose the English.' Nevertheless, the British remained on the whole suspicious of Simko and it was generally recommended not to have any dealings with him.[21] However, they considered him important enough to hope that after he received a pardon from the Persian government he would take part in '. . . a conference with Shaikh Mahmud, Sayyid Taha, Abdul Karim and others for the purpose of formulating some scheme as a basis of discussion for the proposed Kurdish Government.'[22]

There is also an example of Simko's efforts to gain support from the Russians. In addition to his attempts to contact the Russians in 1913, in order to demonstrate his loyalty he handed in an Azerbaijani who took refuge from the Russians with him.[23]

To consolidate his power among the Kurds, Simko established close relationships with the other Kurdish leaders of the region, such as Shaikh Sayyid Taha who also sought Kurdish independence. Simko had a marriage of convenience with the sister of Shaikh Taha, the grandson of Shaikh Ubaydullah and an influential Kurdish nationalist figure. He also established close contacts with Abdul-Razzaq Bedirkhan, another powerful nationalist who had obtained recognition from the Russians. Bedirkhan published a Kurdish periodical in Urmiyeh. Later, when the Russians objected to Bedirkhan's stay in Urmiyeh, Simko continued publishing the periodical.[24]

Simko was in contact with Kurdish nationalist personalities in Turkey and Iraq and had learnt from their ideas. There are reports, as early as May 1919, of his men advocating autonomy in speeches to people in cities such as Urmiyeh. Tamadun, in *Tarikh-i Rezaiyeh*, states that Simko's followers explained to the townspeople that the govern-

ment representatives from Tehran were illegitimate, and that the offices in the city should be filled by the people of the city who knew better how to run their affairs.[25] Nevertheless, a key element in the struggle between Simko and the central government for control of the region was personal and tribal, not autonomist or nationalist.

In February 1919, the main Iranian Kurdish leaders gathered to discuss the future of Kurdish independence. They agreed on a massive rebellion against the Iranian authorities. It was also agreed that they should await the Great Powers' reaction to a declaration of Kurdish independence. Seeking support from the British and the Turks, Sayyid Taha, who had joined Simko, contacted the British in Baghdad. Simko himself sent a letter to A. T. Wilson, the British Civil Commissioner, seeking British support. Neither approach was responded to. Taha and Simko also made some contacts with Turkish nationalists who, hoping to receive Kurdish assistance in preventing the return of the Armenians to eastern Anatolia, promised to support the Kurdish cause.

Although the end of the war put an end to the Turkish presence in Azerbaijan,[26] it did not bring law and stability to the region. The central government found itself more than ever unable to exert its power there. Various governors were dispatched to Tabriz and Urmiyeh, but no one managed to establish order. True power belonged only to Simko. Attempts by the central government to negotiate an agreement with him were taken as evidence of weakness of the government and encouraged him further in his plundering and 'tax collection', means by which he paid off his army who possessed heavy artillery and machine guns and who were far superior to the government's army which had little training and poor equipment.

Simko, who by then had already established himself as a very powerful leader, began his offensive and captured Dilman, regardless of the agreement of the other Kurdish leaders. In Lakistan, near Dilman, he massacred those who refused to pay taxes to him. He looted Khoy and besieged Urmiyeh. By the end of autumn 1919, he had full control over the northern district of Lake Urmiyeh. At this time, the new military commander and the governor-general of Azerbaijan, Intissar, mobilized the entire forces in his control including gendarmerie, Cossacks, and irregular Azeri cavalry. These forces, led by Cossack officer Filipove, managed to force Simko's men to retreat with many casualties. Simko himself had to retreat to Chahriq, his stronghold in the mountains. As a result of this defeat, many of his followers left him. It seemed that the government had finally managed to weaken his power considerably. However, instead of pursuing their advance against

Simko, Filipove and Intissar entered into negotiations with Simko. Tamadun claims that the reason behind the negotiations were that Simko, finding himself on the verge of defeat, sent to the prime minister 'Ayn al-Dulleh a telegram in which he pleaded guilty, offered his sincere services, and asked to be pardoned. After receiving Simko's telegram, 'Ayn al-Dulleh ordered Filipove to request a ceasefire.[27] Simko agreed to hand in all arms in his forces' possession, to return all property taken during the looting of Lakistan, and to release all his Turkish soldiers.

Simko took the opportunity offered by 'defeat' to strengthen his position. He did not fulfill the promises he made to the government. He managed to demonstrate, once again, that the central government did not exert enough authority to control him. He regathered his followers and expanded his area of control. In 1920, Simko established his authority over southern parts of Khoy, Urmiyeh, and Salmas districts, and appointed his men as commanders of these areas. Simko's men attacked towns and cities to obtain arms, ammunition, and food. It became evident that Simko was the strongest authority in these regions, as his followers continually defeated government forces. This brought him further recruits.

His forces continually expanded in size. In the summer of 1921, his army was estimated at 4000, and in the autumn of that year at 7000. In his last big battle, in the summer of 1922, he managed to mobilize 10,000.[28] These estimates probably understate the force Simko was able to mobilize. At the height of his power, many of the influential Kurdish tribal leaders joined Simko and accepted his authority.[29] He chose Savouj Bulagh (later Mahabad) as the capital of his independent Kurdistan, though he himself did not reside there. He appointed one of his close trustees, Hamzeh Agha Mamash, as governor of the town. Later, even some of the Azeri towns such as Mianduab, Maragheh, and Binab sent him letters of loyalty. Simko's influence expanded as far south as the tribes in southern Luristan. He also established cordial relationships with the Kurdish tribes of Turkey and Iraq, but this relationship did not extend to active involvement in joint operations.

In 1922, the independent area under Simko's control was from the west of Lake Urmiyeh to the south as far as Baneh and Sardasht. He appointed governors from among his men for the regions under his control. Tamadun mentions a publication sympathetic to Simko. He claims that his printing house in Urmiyeh was taken over by Simko's men, where a weekly newspaper in Kurdish and Farsi was published in

1921. The paper, which changed its name several times, was finally called *Kurd*. Mohammed Tarjani edited it.[30] According to British Foreign Office reports, he also published a journal called *The Independent Kurdistan*.[31] However, it is likely that the reports are referring to the same newspaper published in Urmiyeh in 1921. To what degree Simko contributed to the content of the paper and how much his thinking and ideas were reflected in it is unknown. However, since Simko lacked any organized political or ideological framework, it is likely that the paper reflected such shortcomings. Tamadun also states that, in addition to the paper, custom duty receipts were printed there. Simko ordered a custom duty charge for goods (basically tobacco) being 'exported' out of Urmiyeh to other towns (Maragheh, Khoy, Tabriz, etc.).[32]

Nevertheless, the dream of a Kurdish independent state or of Kurdish autonomy did not last long. As soon as Reza Khan came to power by a *coup d'état* in 1921 (later he became Reza Shah in 1925) his efforts were devoted to the establishment of a strong, modern army. The undisciplined and poorly equipped central government army was the main reason for the success of many tribal leaders like Simko. In August 1922, the new army of Reza Khan, the war minister, managed to inflict a serious defeat on Simko's forces. Arfa states that Simko's forces declined from 10,000 to 1000 overnight.[33] Simko himself had to escape to Turkey and then to Iraq. Simko subsequently felt betrayed by the Turks and the British.

Simko was forced to stay outside Iran until 1924 when Reza Khan pardoned him. During his exile in 1922–24, he tried to gather allies and establish new relationships. In spite of the respect he enjoyed, no one was prepared to, or had any incentive to, unite with him. His old friend Sayyid Taha showed no enthusiasm for Simko's aspirations. Other Kurdish leaders had similar attitudes. He tried to befriend the Assyrians who were staying in Iraq and hoped to return to Urmiyeh and Salmas. In 1923, hoping to gain Turkish support, he went to Turkey, but there too he achieved nothing. Two years after his return to Iran in 1926, for the last time, he initiated armed conflict in an attempt to regain power. Some of the tribes joined forces with him, but he was defeated and forced to return to Iraq. Simko's struggle for Kurdish independence ended in 1929 when he accepted the Iranian government's offer of the governorship of Ushnaviyeh and returned there. The offer proved to be a trap, for only a few days after his arrival he was murdered in an ambush ordered by the Iranian government.

What were Simko's motives and goals?

In analyzing Simko's behavior in pursuit of his goals one can, with a good deal of certainty, conclude that the most important incentive for Simko in his revolt against the central government was the traditional, almost habitual antagonism many of the Kurdish tribes felt against more or less any central government. This is not to suggest that the central governments were not guilty as charged, but fighting against established central governments, for a Kurdish tribal leader, was a way of gaining recognition and legitimacy from other leaders and tribes. However, for Simko there was another very personal reason to be vengeful towards the Persian government. As a young man, Simko was witness to the murder of his older brother Jafar Agha, the head of the Avdovi Kurds, who inhabited the area between Salmas, Urmiyeh, Ushnu, and Sardasht. Jafar Agha, who had title from the Persian government but had caused troubles in the region for the central authorities for many years, was killed in an ambush by the Persian authorities. His body was cut into pieces and hung from the gates of the army garrisons. Simko swore to take revenge. When he became powerful enough, he waged a war against the government and continued his brother's methods of looting and plundering the towns and villages of the district. According to a Public Record Office report, in his raids on the cities of Salmas, Urmiyeh, and Khoy, he demanded the funds of the budget offices of those cities and 'claimed those towns as the blood-price of his murdered brother.'[34]

In order to achieve his goal, Simko sought the support of powerful states. It was the understanding and the reality of the time that for a paramount tribal leader or confederation of tribes to achieve such position or retain his position it was essential to have the support of a strong state in the region and outside the region. Meanwhile the regional states, and those with influence in the region, were offering such support to different tribes in order to obtain information about hostile tribes or states. For example, when the British in Iraq recognized a Kurdish leader as the paramount leader in the region, the latter received enormous power and prestige, becoming the governor of the district with a significant degree of administrative and even military authority. Therefore it was vital for Simko to obtain the support of some strong state as well as the support of other tribes before he was able to rise to the level of the paramount chief of the Shakak confederation. In his search for support he contacted the states in the region, the states outside the region and also the other Kurdish leaders, and on several occasions collaborated with one against the other.

Simko's limitations as a nationalist leader

Political organization

The main characteristic of Simko's movement was a lack of political ideology and organization. There was not any political party or organization which could have mobilized Simko's supporters for a political cause such as nationalism. His communication network was one that exists in a 'face-to-face' society. It was based on personal contacts between him and his immediate relations, friends, and other supporters. Such a shortcoming was inevitable. The social organization of Simko and his movement was of a kind which could not have offered a well-defined nationalist program. Examples of nationalist movements in modern history show that nationalism is a way of thinking in which there is an almost irrational belief in the rightness and sacredness of the nationalist cause. It is a way of thinking which demands dedicated followers devoted to pursuing the cause above all else, the cause of nation, members of which might not even know each other. It is the absence of such devotion that separates Simko's rebellion from a national movement. The character of the social, political, and military organization of Simko's uprising can elucidate this further.

Miroslav Hroch, in his study of the development of national movements, underlines several criteria for the existence of a national movement. In addition to 'a memory of some common past' and 'a density of linguistic or cultural ties,' he emphasizes that there needs to be 'a conception of the equality of all members of the group organized as a civil society.'[35] From what we have learned about Simko and his uprising, it would be difficult to imagine Simko and his followers comprehending such a concept as the equality of all Kurds in a civil society, let alone implementation of such a concept.

The finance of Simko's movement depended on predatory behavior – 'looting' or 'tax collecting.' The community of Simko's followers was made up not of producers but of predators. This is an important feature to understand because, for ideas such as nationalism, a different economic structure and a different set of social relationships, political demands, and leadership are needed.

Followers and military forces

Simko's raids, in addition to material gains, also had political purposes. They were means through which Simko remained in power, increased his power, and offered his followers incentives to stay with him. Since the core of his followers were tribesmen, their understanding of a great

leader lay in the leader's ability to win military victories, and the amount of arms and material goods received by his followers. To be free and independent was only understood in terms of the power and prestige of their leader and his achievements.

The core of his followers were a group who were totally dedicated to him and were ready to sacrifice themselves and their families on his behalf. Their loyalty was paramount to him. There were no other motives for this core group of followers. He provided everything for them. They were Simko's military elite who raided towns and villages of neighboring tribes or districts. When there was no raiding, this special force would collect dues from the 'non-tribal' people in their district of influence. These activities were not something unique to Simko. There were always such ties between a chieftain and a relatively small group of his followers. The Public Record Office documents refer to the immediate followers of Simko as 'well trained capable soldiers, numbering about 2,000, who will certainly give a good account of themselves before finally defeated.'[36]

Apart from this group, the majority of his men were mercenaries who received considerable material benefits. Simko's supporters were mainly Kurds. However, among them, there were several hundred Ottoman soldiers who were army deserters. Van Bruinessen mentions that, in 1918, 'several hundred soldiers of the Ottoman army, well-armed and trained by German instructors' were among Simko's men.[37] Many of these soldiers surrendered in 1919, hoping for amnesty.

The following example illuminates Simko's, and his followers', understanding of Kurdish identity. In October 1921, enjoying the support of many major tribes, Simko attacked Savouj Bulagh (Mahabad) and massacred the gendarmerie garrison there. But the government forces and non-Kurds were not the only ones who suffered from this attack. The Kurdish population of the town was also robbed. There was no sense of unity with their fellow Kurds among Simko's men.[38] Such was tribal politics.

Furthermore, there was another feature to Simko's movement, which itself was a characteristic of a tribal/'face-to-face' movement: tribal rivalry. The lack of a strong nationalist sentiment was evident amid the presence of tribal rivalries. It was not only the behavior of ordinary members of a tribe to change loyalty, it was a characteristic behavior of tribal leaders too, when confronted with adversity, to change sides. This change of heart was seen in the case of Simko clearly.

There were never a fixed number of armed men in his army. The absence of a nationalist consciousness led many of Simko's followers

to desert him when they felt he might not be able to support them. Given the same reasoning, when there was a chance of financial reward, many joined him. The reason for this was that his army was a tribal army, and it is characteristic of a tribal army to fluctuate continuously. The men gathered around him were mainly from different tribes and sub-tribes, who owed him allegiance as the paramount leader. However, Simko's supporters were not conscious of Kurdish nationalism as a cause to fight and die for. For that matter, Simko himself was not concerned with Kurdish nationalism, but rather was concerned with an independent area in which he could exercise ultimate power.

Nationalist rhetoric

No matter to what degree Simko was nationalist or to what degree he had the interests of the Kurds as a nation in mind, his behavior indicates that he was more concerned with the promotion of his own power and prestige. However, Simko was in contact with other leaders in the region who used strong nationalist rhetoric, and he was also aware of the wave of nationalist demands in the entire region. Therefore it is not surprising to find some of that rhetoric in Simko's communications, either in letters he sent around or in the few interviews he gave. Although he used words such as 'our nation' referring to the Kurds or talked about 'independent Kurdistan,' nevertheless one often notes a strong sense of religious sentiment in his language. There is no doubt that for Simko Kurdish independence or autonomy and Pan-Islamism were closely connected. This is an important reason as to why he was more than ready to participate in any attempts to kill the Christian population of the region. In his perception, any gain accruing to the Christian population of the area was a loss to his tribe and the rest of the Muslim population there. In a letter to Bader Agha asking him to be the mediator between Simko and the British, when referring to the conflict between the Kurds and the Armenians, he wrote:

> Therefore in this world until there is universal peace and the boundaries of all nationalists are settled by the Great Powers the Kurds cannot live in the country with the Armenians and the Assyrians. When there is again peace in the world and the frontiers of nations have been defined then and then only will it be possible for us to settle this matter.[39]

In another letter to Zaffr ed-Douleh (the head of one of the Azerbaijan regiments) asking him to surrender, he again refers to the Kurdish

nation and their right to autonomy (generally meant autonomy for him and his followers):

> See how the small nations of the world, who are not one quarter of the size of the Kurdish tribes, have received autonomy from great governments such as the Germans. If this great Kurdish nation does not get its rights from Persia, it will consider death far better than life and whether the Persian government grants it or not we will make Kurdistan autonomous, and therefore not a good thing to be the cause of further loss of life.[40]

State of mind

Simko's uprising occurred at the same time as other highly political and nationalistic movements were taking place. A brief comparison of Simko's uprising and some of the reformist movements around the same period illustrates the weakness of Simko's political and ideological organization. Furthermore, it highlights the lack of his understanding of notions such as democracy, equality, freedom, and self-determination which were currently employed by many of the political/nationalist leaders in the entire region.

The success of the Russian Revolution of March 1917 had an encouraging effect on the revolutionary/nationalist movements in Iran. Of these, two which were geographically contiguous to Simko's were Shaikh Khiabani's nationalist movement in Tabriz, in Azerbaijan, in 1920, and the second was the *Jangali* movement in the Caspian Sea region led by Khuchak Khan. Both these were part of a general trend of democratic movements by different ethnic and provincial people in many places in the country. By the end of 1917, the movement known as *Jangali*, led by Mirza Kuchak Khan Jangali, a preacher from Rasht (Gilan by the Caspian Sea), had already become a significant force. It had attracted members from different social and political spectra, and its main focus was on national independence and internal reforms. The *Jangali* movement, for its activities of helping the poor by taking from the rich, had gained the reputation of the 'Robin Hood of the Caspian Marches.'[41] They published a paper called *Jangal* (The Woods), in which 'economic assistance to small farmers, administrative autonomy for Gilan, protection of Islam, cancellation of all unequal treaties, and the evacuation of British troops from Iran' were articulated. With the rise of Reza Khan, this movement was eventually defeated and its leader assassinated.

A Democrat called Shaikh Muhammed Khiabani in Tabriz led the second movement, which focused on the democratic/parliamentary rights of the Azerbaijani people. The leaders of this movement were organized around the Democratic Party of Azerbaijan, which had representatives from almost all Azerbaijan towns. They published a bilingual Azeri-Persian paper called *Tajadod* (Renewal). The main demands put forward to the central government by the movement were

the initiation of such democratic reforms as land distribution; the appointment of a governor-general who would be trusted by the people of Azerbaijan; the immediate reconvening of the National Assembly in Tehran; and the assembling of the provincial councils, as had been provided for in the constitution but which had not met since the last days of the civil war.[42]

Later, as the conflict with the central government sharpened, the leaders of the movement insisted on their previous demands, followed a secession plan, and renamed the province of Azerbaijan as the *Mamlekat-i Azadistan* (Country of Freedom). However, the movement came under attack from several directions (mainly by conservative tribal forces). The Shahsavans of Azerbaijan and the Shakak Kurds headed by Ismail Agha Simko attacked the Democrat forces and brought about their isolation by blocking roads and disturbing the security of the region. At the same time, the Cossacks in Tabriz who were unhappy about the Democrats arming themselves rebelled and in September 1920 killed Khiabani, the main leader of the movement.

The rise of Reza Khan between 1921 and 1925 ushered in a period of tight control over the social and political aspirations of intellectuals and aspirations for autonomy among tribal leaders. Although he treated all his opponents with equal harshness, there were fundamental differences between the city-based intellectual-led democratic reformist movements and the tribal uprisings motivated by the personal grievances of tribal chiefs. Politically, ideologically, organizationally, and in leadership terms, there was little similarity between the two. We have already discussed the characteristics of Simko's uprising. There was none of Shaikh Khiabani's or Mirza Khuchak Khan's self-devotion and passion for nationalism and democratic reforms with Simko, and that was due to Simko and his rebellion being dominated by tribal/'face-to-face' relationships.

Conclusion

Simko's uprising was typical of late nineteenth/early twentieth century maneuverings by tribal chiefs, many of whom used their official recognition for personal gain when the central authority granting that recognition was weak. His movement combined the personal with some degree of nationalist rhetoric (demanding an independent Kurdistan or calling on people to be able to run their own affairs). Simko relished power, authority, control, and glory. However, he expressed his demands in the language of nationalism for that was the language which many ethnic groups were using at the time, and the Great Powers and the newly established international bodies understood the language. However, his uprising, based on tribal support and power, was also limited by tribal aspirations. Simko's basis of support was simply his military prowess. The more often government troops were defeated by him, the greater the degree of support he obtained. Despite his influence, his raids and exploitation of the non-tribal settled population of the regions including the districts under his own authority, led to his being greatly disliked and feared. It was such relationships which hindered the extension of support beyond the tribal ties for Simko and prevented him from obtaining the more permanent support of the settled community of the region.

Did Simko's men 'loot' or 'collect taxes'? As far as the nature of the movement is concerned, whatever the name given to their activities, their relationship to the population of Kurdistan was predatory, and not, as revolutionary Maoist theory would suggest, like 'fish in the water' that is, easily supported by, and melting into, the surrounding population. The tribal relationships and organization dominant in Simko's uprising prevented nationalist mobilization. In a tribal structure, unity is based on more immediate and materially rewarding goals. For a nationalist mobilization, a more defined and disciplined political organization is needed. What Simko did was to employ a modern means (demand for a Kurdish nation-state as was happening with other ethnic groups at the time) to try to obtain an older, traditional goal. It was only a few decades later that the Kurdish urban intellectuals, many of whom were from wealthy tribal backgrounds, managed to mobilize the Kurds on the basis of nationalism and establish an organization. The first to some extent successful movement of this kind in Iranian Kurdistan occurred in 1946 in the Kurdish republic in Mahabad. An analysis of this Kurdish movement is the topic of the following chapter.

4
The Kurdish Republic in Mahabad

Introduction

In August 1941, the Allied armies entered Iran. The British occupied
the south of the country and the Soviet forces the north. Reza Shah,
suspected of having German sympathies, was forced by the British to
abdicate. The Iranian army collapsed in the occupied areas. Taking
advantage of the national and international situation, the Kurds strove
for autonomy. The imprisoned or internally exiled chiefs returned to
their tribes, reestablished local independence, and rearmed themselves
not only with their own hidden arms but also with arms acquired after
Persian troops fled the area. In the cities, the urban intellectuals organ-
ized political groups and began to advocate Kurdish political and cul-
tural autonomy. The result of these efforts was the establishment of
the Kurdish Republic in Mahabad in 1946.

In this chapter I shall discuss the specific characteristics of the
Kurdish movement in Iran in the period after World War II. I have
chosen this period, because it is during the years immediately after the
war that one of the most significant events in the development of
Kurdish nationalism, namely the establishment of the Kurdish Repub-
lic in Mahabad in 1946, occurred. I discuss the features of this move-
ment to illustrate the stage Kurdish nationalism had reached since
Simko's uprising. The movement was both tied to the traditional tribal
relationships and mainly led by a group of non-tribal city notables and
intellectuals. The social forces leading it, both the conservative tribal
leaders and the modern intellectuals, formed the characteristics of the
movement. This chapter will be a comparison of Simko's movement
with the Mahabad movement. Such comparison is furthermore
important because it is illustrative of changes in Kurdish society.

By the time of the Mahabad events, Reza Shah's tribal policy had left a great impact on Kurdish communities. Great tribal confederations had ceased to exist and the Kurdish communities were almost entirely sedentarized. Kurdistan had become more and more connected with the market economy of the country, a connection that, in turn, had weakened the tribal 'face-to-face' relationship of Kurdish society. A Kurdish intelligentsia had emerged among the educated sons of tribal leaders and city notables who, when the time came, emerged as the leadership of a consciously nationalist movement. The movement towards a Kurdish Republic, though influenced by the military power of Kurdish tribes, nevertheless was led by Kurdish intellectuals and city notables, a phenomenon totally absent in Simko's uprising. However, the degree of mass participation that the intelligentsia achieved was limited. It was limited geographically and ideologically, representing the nature of the movement at that time.

The impact of these limitations was felt during the existence of and in the downfall of the short-lived Kurdish Republic. Mass participation is a significant factor in any national movement. This is of particular relevance to a historical analysis of Kurdish nationalism in Iran, as without a distinction in terms of the presence or absence of mass participation much of importance is neglected.

At a general level, Gramsci has made a distinction between revolutions with mass participation and those without, applying the term 'passive revolution' to the latter. One way he employed the concept of 'passive revolution' which is more important for our purpose is of a revolution carried out by an enlightened intelligentsia but without or, as in this case, only limited mass participation. This is close to the interpretation of Cuoco who originally formulated the concept.[1]

'Passive revolution,' in this sense, has several important features. The first is that they have an external cause and are due in large part to outside forces, for example the backing of the French armies for the 1799 republic. Second, they are often of temporary duration. Third, the intelligentsia who carry out the experiment are either unable or unwilling to carry out a radical transformation of what might loosely be described as 'pre-capitalist conditions' in the countryside.

'Passive revolution' is particularly illuminating when applied to an analysis of nationalist movements in their early stages when the principal active element is the native intelligentsia pushed onto the political stage by some external set of conditions but when mass support for the movement is not yet available or is limited. The

experience of the Kurdish Republic in Mahabad in 1946–7 bears all the features of a passive revolution.

First, the main force was external, that is the, Soviet Union's support for the Republic, the encouragement coming from the Soviet-backed government in Azerbaijan and the favorable international atmosphere. The unusual national and international circumstances – the weakness of the Iranian government in controlling the country, the presence of Allied forces in Iran, and the existence of anti-fascist feelings in the international community – created an atmosphere which encouraged democratic demands and activities. The establishment of the autonomy of Azerbaijan, and promises of support from the Soviet Union, provoked the Kurdish leaders, who were gathered mainly in the Democratic Party of Kurdistan, to announce the formation of a Kurdish Republic.

Second, the Republic had a short life since the presence of the external forces and the Allied occupation of Iran were a temporary result of World War II. The Kurdish Republic lasted for eleven months and controlled about one-third of the whole Kurdish area. Its sovereignty extended northwest from Saqqiz over the northern sections of Iranian Kurdistan with a population of about one million. The rest of Kurdistan, including many rich areas, remained out of its control and deprived it of economic strength and manpower. Third, the republic's program of social and economic reforms, in as much as there was one, was silent on tribalism, on land ownership, and land reform. This shortcoming was connected with the composition of the leadership of the movement, which politically and culturally was led by the urban intellectuals, but which, for most of its military and some of its political power, relied on tribal leaders who were not in favor of social reforms such as land reform.

The situation in Iranian Kurdistan during the early 1940s

The situation in the 1940s in Iranian Kurdistan, to a great extent, was the result of the social, political, and economic changes which were introduced by the new ruler of the country in the 1920s and 1930s. A coup with British approval led to the modernizing but anti-democratic government of Reza Shah. It was during his reign that effective efforts were made for the centralization and modernization of Iran, including the formation of a modern army and the state bureaucracy. With their help Reza Shah was able to weaken the power of his two main opponents, namely the ulama and the tribes.[2] Not only through his army

and administration, but also by the newly constructed Trans-Iranian railway and the new roads, Reza Shah's authority reached the distant corners of the country, including the tribal areas. His plans included the establishment of a state-controlled industry and concentration of the economic and political life of the country in the capital, Tehran, with less authority given to the peripheral regions. As was discussed in the previous chapter, Reza Shah's policies greatly affected the tribal peoples in Iran, weakening the tribal relationship and changing the social/economic characteristics of tribal communities, including the Kurdish tribal community, whose leaders were forced to obey the central government. This state of affairs continued until August 1941 when the Allied armies entered Iran and Reza Shah was forced to leave the country.

The presence of foreign powers in Iran changed the political atmosphere in the country. Seizing the opportunity, the Kurds made several attempts to undermine the central government's authority in Kurdistan. One such attempt occurred in the city of Urmiyeh on 13 January 1942 at a time when the region was suffering economically and the feeling of discontent was high among the population. There was a high rate of unemployment. Shortages of food and many other commodities were causing constant price increases. People blamed the Finance and Economics Departments for not paying attention to their needs. A report by a British diplomat, stated that 'water was cut.' People watched the town's water run straight through the town to feed certain market gardens in the plains whose owners were widely known to be paying the municipal officials accordingly. 'Even mosques are kept short.' The report stated how 'very unsatisfactory' and positively 'dangerous' the food situation was.[3] The British Consul General in Tabriz, Urquhart, on June 1942 explained in a report the origin of the disturbances at Urmiyeh:

> Things started by Sarhang (Colonel) Hashemi's visit to Rezaiyeh. He issued an order that Kurds must not carry arms into the town and asked his gendarmes to enforce the order. Colonel Hashemi had started to recruit gendarmes from among the local Shi'i population and to arm them and the others, in order to build up a sizable force, and the undisciplined men began by killing the first Kurd they tried to disarm. There was a series of incidents that made the Kurds think that the Persian officers had made attempts to restore tyrannical control over the region. A son of Shaikh Taha, riding in a carriage at Rezaiyeh with his rifle in his hand, was dragged down and beaten

> . . . A Kurd wearing a turban had his face slapped. Two sons and three servants of Haji Agha, carrying rifles in or near the town were attacked by gendarmes and wiped out.[4]

About 400 Kurds entered Urmiyeh and seized the town. Persian officers fled the town and the Governor General of Urmiyeh resigned. The goal, to drive the Tehran administration out of the town and return control to local people, was achieved.[5] The situation became progressively less favorable to the central government. Towards the end of May 1942, a meeting held at Urmiyeh was attended by the Chief of Police, twelve Kurdish leaders, the Soviet Consul-General in Tabriz, and several Red Army Officers. The Kurdish representatives put forward the following demands as preconditions for a peace agreement. As can be seen, the language used by the representatives, although illustrating the tribal nature of Kurdistan, also crystallized the national awareness of the population with demands such as schooling in Kurdish and the demand for freedom in running their national affairs:

1. No gendarmerie posts to exist in the Kurdish region between Khoy and Mahabad.
2. Kurds should be allowed to carry arms.
3. The confiscation of 1,200 rifles alleged to have been given to Persian villagers in the Urmiyeh district.
4. Kurds should have one representative in each of the government departments at Urmiyeh.
5. Kurds should enjoy freedom in their own national affairs.
6. The Persian government should provide schools in Kurdistan in which the Kurdish language would be used.
7. The return of certain specified lands to their original Kurdish owners.
8. The release of twenty Kurdish prisoners.[6]

The Governor General did not take these demands seriously. Nevertheless, negotiations continued and he made some attempts to persuade the two prominent Kurdish leaders from Mahabad, Shaikh Abdullah and Qazi Mohammed, to intervene and calm the situation in Urmiyeh. This intervention resulted in a peaceful return of the main body of Persian troops to Urmiyeh on 1 June 1942.

The reason that the Kurdish leaders from Mahabad were contacted for negotiation was that Mahabad and its leaders were always regarded as the core of the Kurdish movement for independence.[7] Between World

Wars I and II the Mahabad region was affected by Reza Shah's policy in Kurdistan, which was an element of an overall policy to regenerate Iran to forge 'a new national unity,' in Eagleton's words.[8] He subdued tribes, sometimes by force, and removed the tribal leaders. His policy went so far as to include efforts to introduce the Persian language and westernized dress. However, when the Allied forces occupied Iran in order to back the Soviets on the Soviet–German front, the Soviet army entered Mahabad and the Iranian forces, the military police, the gendarmerie, and the police forces surrendered without resistance. With no effective power in control, the city could easily have been looted. It was in such conditions that Qazi Mohammed[9] and his brother, Sadr-i Qazi took control and established peace and security in the town.[10]

The Kurdish issue and the Great Powers

Since the presence of the foreign powers in Iran was an encouraging factor in the emergence of ethnic uprisings in different corners of the country including Kurdistan, I shall briefly outline their attitude and policies towards the Kurds. Most documents available for the study of Soviet activities during the period with which this chapter is concerned are from either Allied or Persian sources. The inaccessibility (at least for this writing) of the Soviet archives for the period makes it difficult to get a clear picture of the Soviet connection with the Kurdish national movement. However, one of the more realistic reports by the British Foreign Office, titled 'Russian Relations and Activities in Persia since September 1941', gives a picture of the anti-Soviet atmosphere that existed among the majority of the foreign officials in Iran.

> It is extremely difficult to report on this question objectively as there are so many crosscurrents which tend to confuse matters, and so many people when speaking on any subject concerning the Russians are hopelessly biased. This fault applies not only to Persians and many of our Allies represented in Persia but also to numbers of the British colony both private and official. In extreme cases one is left wondering whether it is the Germans we are fighting or not. There are too many among the Allied Communities in Tehran who still think that there may be a Bolshevik with a bomb hiding under their beds at night. This attitude does not pass unnoticed by the Russians.[11]

Official Soviet policy, as reflected in some of the reports by the British Foreign Office, was chiefly one of non-interference in Persian

affairs. This non-interference policy was pursued as far as possible but was curtailed when Soviet war interests were perceived to be threatened. However, it seemed that it was generally accepted that the Soviets considered Iran a key supply route:

> Russia's short-term policy must be to regard Persia as a corridor by which supplies arrive for their Front with Germany and therefore they are vitally interested in seeing that nothing will happen in the country, which will interrupt their supplies.[12]

As far as Kurdistan was concerned, the Soviets' declared policy was not to encourage the Kurds but to do everything to bring about a peaceful coexistence between the Kurds and the Persian government. However, the Soviets mistrusted the Persians, fearing that substantial government forces would upset the order of the region; therefore they refused to allow the Persian troops to disturb the peace of the area while they were engaged with the Germans on the Eastern front. The Soviets believed that it was vital to have some sort of stability for the passage of supplies to the Soviet Union, and that it was essential to secure the next good harvest in the most favorable conditions.

The Soviets did not have a definite policy towards the Kurds. For the most part, they followed a day-to-day policy and dealt with problems as they arose. It seemed that they had little interest in Kurdistan. What they did support, and what mattered to them, was Azerbaijan. They did not trust the Kurdish chiefs, for they conceived them as undisciplined. However, they did consider the Kurdish tribes as a potential military force in a possible confrontation with the Turks who were suspected by the Allies to be sympathetic to the German cause. It was only during the Kurdish Republic in Mahabad that the Soviets directly supported the Kurdish national movement, when the movement and its leaders seemed to present a new and substantial political force.

By 1944, Soviet policy actually tended to support the Persian authorities against the Kurds. This tendency stemmed partly from the fact that the Soviet Union wanted an oil concession. This interest was expressed, in September 1944, to the Persian Prime Minister. It also stemmed from the fact that the Soviets found themselves unprepared to face the inevitable troubles that would arise from the disarmament of the Kurdish tribes. This was in accordance with general Soviet policy in the Middle East: that is to say, they did not intend to support a minority against the majority wherever there was the possibility of

winning over the majority, except when they could use it as a means of temporarily applying pressure against the majority.

British policy in Kurdistan was a policy of non-involvement and exclusion of military intervention. The British argued that:

1. It was possible that the British might subsequently be unable to control the tribes.
2. The British might get involved in endless and costly conflicts between tribes. There was also no guarantee that these tribes would serve as a viable force able to resist a German advance.
3. British support for the tribes might still not prove adequate if the central government decided to suppress them.

John Cook, the British Consul in Kermanshah, in a report describes his opinion on the matter:

> Among all the tribes, there is indescribable bitterness against the Persian officials, particularly the military and police and a firm determination at whatever the cost, death or banishment, not to have them back in the tribal areas under the same conditions as before. Ten years of cruelty, extortion, imprisonment of their womenfolk, ruination of their flocks, their cultivation and their villages followed by two years of virtual independence during which they have had ample opportunity of seeing the cowardice and utter incapacity for proper government of their former oppressors are enough to account for all this. They ask for the same treatment as the Kurds nearby over the border in Iraq, with elementary education, fair treatment and some Kurdish officials. To state these things is not to be excessively Kurdophile . . . Either they will have to be exterminated from the map (the Turkish solution) or given a fair deal under British auspices (the Iraqi solution). To allow the Persians to go back there as before, or to help or sympathize with the present Iranian Government in its shifty and highly suspect attitude and policy or rather lack of policy in this area is unthinkable and at variance with all we and our Allies stand for in this war.[13]

The British were cautious not to arouse the suspicions of the Persian, Turkish, or Soviet governments by intervening in Kurdish affairs. The military authorities had instructions not to take any action, which could be interpreted as support to the 'rebellious Kurds.' They believed that the Persian authorities were doubtful of the sincerity of the British

about their support for the central government. The British stated that they would not support the Kurds vis-à-vis the Persian government because they knew the 'fickleness' of the Kurdish character too well to have any dealings with or to trust them.[14]

Their suggestion for a possible basis for an agreement in Kurdistan was to appoint a Kurdish governor of Kurdistan, with a British political officer to advise him.[15] Later, by 1942, when the British saw that the Persian government and army were incapable of bringing order to the area, they thought of taking matters into their own hands. They suggested that two divisions of Poles evacuated from the Soviet Union should be used in order to safeguard the lines of communication and that they should be armed and trained as soon as possible. They thought that these divisions would serve to stiffen the Persian forces if the tribes proved troublesome and force had to be used. They also felt that a show of strength would serve as a deterrent to the tribes and make them more amenable to compromise.[16]

The Kurdish Republic: the factors which made it a national movement

One way to identify a movement as a national movement is to compare the case in question with other examples and determine the general and basic features which many social scientists and historians define as fundamental to most national movements. To assess the degree to which the Mahabad movement was nationalist in character, I have referred to Miroslav Hroch's article on national movements.[17] I have used his argument as a yardstick to measure the degree of nationalism of the Kurdish movement in Mahabad in 1946. Hroch examines the development and the formation of nation-states in Europe, arguing that the beginning of national movements is, in his words, 'when selected groups within the non-dominant ethnic community started to discuss their own ethnicity and to conceive of it as a potential nation-to-be.'[18] He further argues that, in general, the development of a national movement, from its beginning to its successful ending resulting in the formation of a nation-state, undergoes three structural phases. Phase A comprises the initial attempts of the selected group of activists to emphasize the linguistic, cultural, social, and sometimes historical features of a non-dominant community. Phase B is the emergence of another kind of activist whose attempts are mainly to win over as many members of the ethnic group as possible for the cause of building a nation-state and increasing their awareness of such

cause (national agitation). Phase C is the period during which the majority of an ethnic group has been absorbed into a movement of nation building and has formed different platforms with different social and political programs.[19]

Hroch argues that in order for a national movement to materialize, the existence of certain circumstances is essential: (1) 'a social or political crisis of the old order, accompanied by new tensions and horizons; (2) the emergence of discontent among significant elements of the population; (3) loss of faith in traditional moral systems'. He further emphasizes that, in the case of the latter, a decline in religious legitimacy has been important. (However, in examining the Kurdish case, we realize that instead of the weakening of religious legitimacy, there was a decline in traditional tribal relationships, which I discussed earlier.) However, in order for these circumstances to be employed and for the national movement to be formed, he reemphasizes the significance of the legitimacy crisis facing the dominant group in dealing with the social, moral, and cultural strains felt by the non-dominant group, the presence of a group of educated people (the intellectuals) of the non-dominant ethnic group, the presence of social communications including literacy, schooling, and market relations, and the existence of 'nationally relevant conflicts of interests,' the social tension based on linguistic and religious divisions.[20]

Hroch points to the above factors as decisive for the formation of a national movement transforming itself from an ethnic awareness among a group of intellectuals to a mass movement. In the case of the Kurdish Republic, almost all of these factors are applicable. In 1946, the Iranian government was faced with a social/political crisis and was unable to solve it. Furthermore, Allied forces were present in the country, adding to the central government's problems while offering encouragement to the ethnic communities in their national struggle. There was great discontent towards the central government and the behavior of its local, corrupt officials among the population of the Kurdish regions. Due to the economic and social changes resulting from sedentarization, there was an expansion of some of the social groups such as the educated middle class and people of the service sector, who had increasingly more contact with the city centers and educational institutions, and were thus armed with new ideas such as nationalism and self-determination as taught by the intellectuals. This in turn further weakened tribal ties and relationships (these were already weakened following the abolition of the great Kurdish principalities) which, previously, were the most important means of identifi-

cation for many Kurds. The general transformation of Kurdish society following the settlement of the tribes and the urbanization, to some degree, of a section of the population are the leading factors responsible for the development of the Kurdish national movement.

In his article, Hroch also discusses the social and political features which seem common in most cases of national movements:

- the social profile and territorial distribution of leading patriots and activists;
- the role of language as symbol and vehicle of identification;
- the place of theater (also music and folklore) in national movements;
- the salience or otherwise of civil rights as a demand;
- the importance of historical awareness;
- the position of the school system and the spread of literacy;
- the participation of churches and the influence of religion;
- the contribution of women as activists and as symbols.

Other important features shared by most national movements, he argues, are: the political, social, and economic demands of these movements; the demands for the development of a national culture based, primarily, on local language and its use in education, administration, and economic life; the demands for self-determination, first in the earlier stages in the form of autonomy, and later in the development of the national movement in the form of independence; and the demands for the creation of a political, social, and economic structure formed by the educated elites, an administrative group, an entrepreneurial class, and 'free-peasants and organized workers' of the ethnic group.[21] With this framework in mind, I shall look at the Republic itself and examine the factors which identify this movement as a national movement.

Political preparations

Establishment of the 'Komala J. K.'

By 1942, the Kurds in the area around Mahabad were experiencing political organizations for the first time. It was experience such as this that separated the Kurdish movement after World War II from the earlier uprising of Simko, for these organizations, though immature and limited in their outlook, were clearly nationalistic in

their language, their platform, their objectives, and their behavior. The very first of this kind in Iranian Kurdistan was 'Komala J. K.'

The 'Komala J. K.' was founded in 1942 by 18 people, all urban middle-class intellectuals and city notables, who, with the exception of two Iraqi Kurds, were all from Mahabad. It was called the 'Komalai Zhiani Kurdistan,' or the 'Committee of the Resurrection – or life – of Kurdistan.' There are few documents about the history of this underground organization. Some of the following information was revealed much later by one of its founders, Mullah Qader Modarresi.[22]

In the summer of 1942, a group of Iraqi Kurds went to Mahabad to discuss the possibility of establishing a branch of the Iraqi 'Hawa' (Hopes) Party in Mahabad. The representatives of the 'Hawa' Party met some of the prominent personalities of Mahabad, but the Mahabad representatives, seeking an independent identity, refused to become a branch of the Iraqi Kurdish party. Instead, they argued that they should establish their own independent organization in Iranian Kurdistan.

The outcome of these discussions and the urgent need for a political organization led to the establishment of the 'Committee of the Resurrection of Kurdistan' or 'Komalai Zhiani Kurdistan.' The Committee, from the start, was a nationalist organization. It had a logo with a sun and the letters J. K. at its center. It had a flag with three colors, red at the top, symbolizing the bloody past and struggle of the Kurdish people, white in the middle indicating the good-hearted and well-intentioned people of Kurdistan, and green at the bottom, symbolizing the greenness and fertility of Kurdistan.[23] The members of the Committee had to take an oath of loyalty on the Quran before the map and flag of Kurdistan to remain faithful to its principles. The required conditions for entry to the Committee were: to be born of Kurdish parents, not to have previously acted against the interests of the nation, and not to be a member of any other party or organization. These conditions could very well have existed for a non-Muslim Kurd, but in this case, he would be requested to take an oath of loyalty on the holy book of his religion. As can be seen from the text of the oath, the clear references to the Kurdish nation and its independence reflected the nationalist views of the Committee's founders. The oath of loyalty consisted of the following commitments:

1. Not to betray the Kurdish nation.
2. To struggle to achieve the independence of Kurdistan.
3. Not to reveal any of the Committee's secrets either orally, in writing, or by insinuations.

4. To remain a member for life.
5. To consider all Kurds, men and women, as brothers and sisters.
6. Not to join any other party or organization without the Party's permission.[24]

In addition to the two Iraqis Mir Haj and Mostafa Khoshnuw, the 16 Iranian Kurds present at the founding meeting of the Committee with their positions in the organization were as follows:

1. Hussein Fruhar, chairman of the Committee
2. Qader Modarresi, chairman of the Consulting Committee
3. Abdul-Rahman Zabihi, a writer himself, responsible for publications and the press
4. Saddeq Heydari, promotion and distribution officer
5. Najmeddin Tuhidi, accountant
6. Mohammed Yahoo, secretary
7. Mohammed Shahpasandi, secretary
8. Abdul-Rahman Amami, inspector
9. Qasim Qaderi, consulting member
10. Mohammed Ashabi, consulting member
11. Abdul-Rahman Kiyani, consulting member
12. Hamed Mazoji, disciplinary member
13. Mohammed Salimi, office worker
14. Ali Mahmudi, Committee member
15. Mohammed Nanvazadeh, chief commander
16. Mulla Abdullah Davodi, Committee member.[25]

Samadi, in his edited work of the history of the 'Komala J. K.' which is based on the information gathered from the notes and interviews with Mullah Qader Modarresi, one of the founders of the organization, emphasizes that the founding members from Iran came from among the teachers and civil servants of Mahabad. Two were religious dignitaries, but almost all the other founders and members of the Committee were from middle-class families.[26]

'Komala J. K.' succeeded in organizing many cells in urban centers such as Mahabad. The members of the Committee, like its founders, were mostly middle-class urban intellectuals, teachers and other government employees who had read about and had personal knowledge of the Kurdish movement in Iraq, and in general about the nationalist movements of other ethnic groups in the region. Although the organization was primarily an urban organization, its members were aware

of the importance of tribal influence and power. In this respect, the Komala managed to expand its branches in other parts of Kurdistan by inducing influential tribal leaders to cooperate. It had branches in Bukan, Naqadeh, Saqqiz, and Kermanshah and in the northern part of Kurdistan. Qazi Mohammed neither became a member of the Committee nor took an oath of loyalty but was in close contact with it and always supported its ideas and programs. The Committee in return respected him and was receptive to his suggestions and advice.

In order to extend its activities Komala dispatched a representative to Kirkuk to prepare for unity of the 'Komala J. K.' and the 'Hawa' Party of Iraq. The two organizations managed to establish cooperation and, furthermore, they agreed on a meeting of the Kurdish representatives of the four countries with the largest Kurdish populations. This gathering took place on the Dalan-Par Mountain on the borders between Iran, Iraq, and Turkey. The participants were from: Iraq – Hamzah Abdullah Vardi, Sayyid Abdul Aziz Gilanizadeh, Mir Haj, and Mostafa Khoshnuw; Turkey – Qazi Mullah Wahab; Syria – Qader Bey and the grandson of Jamil Pasha Diyarbkri; and Iran (Mahabad) – Abdul-Rahman Zabihi, Qasim Qaderi Qazi, Mohammed Delshad, and Haji Rahman Ilkhanizadeh. They signed a treaty known as the treaty of 'Peyamiani sei Sanowar,' or 'The Treaty of Three Boundaries,' which emphasized the unity of parties and the restoration of the Kurdish language and culture.[27]

The 'Komala J. K.' managed to produce some publications and cultural activities in which Kurdish history and culture, with a strong nationalist flavor, were promoted. Abdul-Rahman Zabihi had an agreement with an Armenian printing house to print the publications of the Committee. In the summer of 1942, the first publication in Kurdish entitled *The Souvenir of the Komala J. K. for Kurdish Youth* was produced. It was a collection of the poems of three Kurdish poets. *The Souvenir* was received enthusiastically by the people, and soon its copies became difficult to find. The proceeds of the first publication of the Komala produced substantial capital for its further publications. The second publication was a local Kurdish calendar called 'The Komala's Calendar,' released in November 1942 within Iranian Kurdistan.

The third publication was the first issue of *Nishteman* or *The Motherland*, the official newspaper of the Committee. The first issue contained poems, prose, the Constitution of the Committee, and articles on Kurdish history. Twelve issues of *Nishteman* were published under difficult circumstances. It was received with great enthusiasm by

the people and managed to reach different parts of Kurdistan. In the attempts to find another printing house,[28] in 1945 the Committee managed to buy a small printing machine and transfer it to Mahabad where the eleventh and twelfth issues were published. These publications contributed to the Committee's budget. Heman, the Kurdish poet, in the introduction of his book, *Tarik va Roushan*, wrote that Komala was financed merely through its membership fees, the selling of its publications, and other activities such as a theater. Membership fees were paid regularly and its publications were bought at multiples of their actual prices. He wrote that he himself witnessed how a copy of *Nishteman* was bought at more than two hundred times its original price.

One other instrument used by the leaders of national movements in promoting national sentiments among the people has been, as Hroch points out, the role of theater. It appears that the 'Komala J. K.' was also aware of this. Following its activities in March 1945, the Committee staged a dramatic opera called *Daiki Nishteman* or *Motherland*. It was a simple story with a strong nationalistic message. The opera featured a woman called 'Daiki Nishteman,' a personalized image of the Kurdish nation, being abused by three villains representing Iraq, Iran, and Turkey, but finally rescued by her brave Kurdish sons. The opera with its strong nationalist, anti-government message made a deep impact; performances were given for several months in Mahabad and other towns of the Mukri region. It achieved its goal as a political demonstration and consciousness-raising tool for Kurdish nationalism. Eagleton describes the opera:

> Early 1945 produced a succession of events, which step by step carried the Kurdish movement to a point of no return. In March of that year a group of young party members staged a dramatic performance that was unprecedented in form and influence. This was an opera called 'Daiki Nishteman' (Motherland), and the message was Kurdish nationalism. The motherland was in danger, and tears filled the eyes of the audience; the motherland was in chains, and the onlookers groaned; and finally the motherland was rescued by her sons to the applause of all...The atmosphere became heavy with nationalism for 'Daiki Nishteman' caused a profound impression among Kurds who for the first time witnessed their anguish in dramatic form. Performances took on the character of religious revivalist meetings. Conversions were many. After several months

of playing to full houses in Mahabad, the opera went on the road. In July 1945 it penetrated the Soviet zone at Ushnaviyeh. The Russian officer in charge objected to the play's anti-Iranian message and ordered that in place of Iran the Nazis should become the villains.[29]

Establishment of the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran

As the Kurdish movement for independence developed, the need for an all-encompassing organization which could continue its activities openly became urgent. The 'Komala J. K.,' owing to its underground nature, was not fit for this task. In August 1945, the 'Komala J. K.' was disbanded,[30] and the Democratic Party of Kurdistan was formed in its place. It is not certain what conflicts, if any, took place within the leadership of the Committee. Considering the composition of its leaders, individuals with different tendencies and different points of view about independence, it seems likely that some disagreement would have occurred regarding the future of the movement and the organization. Eagleton refers to the establishment of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan as follows:

> In September 1945, the Soviet Consul from Rezaiyeh, Hashimov, had opened a Cultural Relations Center in Mahabad.[31] Since the Komala, as a secret organization, still had no public meeting place, a group of some sixty tribal and town leaders who were called together by Qazi Mohammed on that day in November 1945 assembled at the Cultural Center… Qazi's speech, delivered slowly with logic and force, reviewed the Baku trip and then led on to Baqirov's advice that the Komala should change its name, come into the open and function under the banner of democracy… Qazi Mohammed had not been a member of the old Central Committee nor did he become one in the new Democratic Party. He merely continued to dominate the Kurdish movement, with Russian advice from behind the scenes, as he had since he joined the Komala.[32]

The establishment of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan indicated the development of the Kurdish nationalist movement, for it became its political and ideological body through its objectives, activities, and publications. On 8 November 1945, the Democratic Party of Kurdistan, led by Qazi Mohammed, published a declaration, announcing its program as a broadsheet in Kurdish and Persian:

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Declaration of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan.

Countrymen, Brethren:

The valiant soldiers of our great Allies have extinguished the fire of the World War, lit by the enemies of freedom and anti-democrats. The democratic world was victorious over the fascist aggressors who tried to subdue all nations, whether great or small, wish to take advantage of the way open to them and of the promises set forth in the historic Atlantic Charter to administer their affairs in the manner they choose.

We, the Kurds who live in Persia and who have fought for years and even for centuries in order to preserve our national and local rights, have sacrificed many lives to this end. Unfortunately, the despotic Persian authorities have never been ready to listen to our arguments, reasonable though they are. They have even prevented us from taking advantage of the rights set forth in the constitutional laws in connection with the provinces and cities. Our answers have always been bullets, bombs, imprisonment, banishment, execution and captivity especially during the twenty years reign of Reza Khan, when we were not even free to put on our own tribal clothes. Our property was wrested from us by the dishonest and treacherous officers at the point of the bayonet and our women disgracefully attacked. They did not even refrain from taking savage steps for our extermination. After all we are also human beings. We have a history and a language, we too have customs and traditions in the upkeep of which we are greatly interested. Why are we not allowed to bring up our children to speak Kurdish? Why are we not permitted to manage our own house as we desire? Why do they not let Kurdistan become an independent province administered by a Provincial Council for which provision was made in the Constitutional law.

Dear Countrymen, it should be pointed out that rights are not given but taken. We must fight for our rights. For this unity, organization and leaders are required. It is for this sacred aim that the Kurdish Democratic Party has been established in Mahabad.

Our dear Countrymen, you should be on the alert and gather round the Party making sacrifices for its legal rights. The Kurdistan

Democratic Party will lead you to success. It is only through the leadership of this Party that the Kurdish Nation will be saved from annihilation and its wealth, women and national reputations protected. It is this Party which will be able to secure its national independence within the borders of Persia.

The Party's Polices:
1. The Kurds to be free and independent in the management of their local affairs and to receive Kurdish independence within the borders of Persia.
2. Be allowed to study Kurdish and to administer their affairs in the Kurdish language.
3. Government officials definitely to be appointed from among the local population.
4. Members of the Kurdistan Provincial Council to be elected immediately in accordance with the Constitutional laws, to supervise all public and Government works.
5. By the passing of a general law, the grievances existing between the farmer and the landowner to be amended and their future positions defined.
6. The Democratic Party of Kurdistan will make special efforts to create complete unity and brotherhood between the Azerbaijan nation and the people who live in Azerbaijan (Assyrian, Armenians, and so on).
7. The Democratic Party of Kurdistan will fight to take advantage of the boundless natural wealth of Kurdistan and to improve the agriculture, commerce, education and health of Kurdistan, in order to secure economic and moral welfare for the Kurds.
8. We wish the nations who live in Persia to be able to work for their freedom and for the welfare and progress of their country.[33]

With these objectives on its agenda, the Democratic Party of Kurdistan, led by Qazi Mohammed, became the leading political organization of the Kurdish nationalist movement, and has continued to be so to this day. Its leadership, its goals, and its demands were typical of nationalist movements.

The Commander General of the Persian Army at that time, General Hassan Arfa, wrote about a meeting he had with Kurdish leaders, the three Qazis, Mohammed, his brother Sadr and his cousin Saif, about their demands. The Kurdish leaders stated that they hoped the Persian government would understand the situation of the Kurds and accept

their nation's rights and give them the opportunity to cooperate with the government in achieving progress for the entire Iranian nation. But Qazi Mohammed, who was more explicit and direct in his talking, first complained about the past problems, about the corruption and ineffectiveness of the governmental bodies in the Kurdish areas, and asked why Kurds had not been employed as officers. General Arfa described his impression of Qazi Mohammed as 'a persistent person who will definitely be the cause of problems for us in the future.'[34]

On 15 February 1945, the people of Mahabad, already disappointed by the government and its officials, took over the Finance Department and the Police Station of Mahabad. The crowd occupied the station, destroyed files and engaged in looting.[35] With this demonstration the last instrument of the central government's control ended in Mahabad.

The leadership

On 22 January 1946, a vast number of people from Mahabad and some tribal chiefs had gathered at Chawar-Chara square where Qazi Mohammed, the leader of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan, wearing a white turban and a long army coat, announced the establishment of the Republic. In his speech, he reviewed Kurdish history and its national heritage. He thanked the people and the Central Committee of the Party. He also thanked the Soviet Union for its support and he congratulated 'his Azerbaijan brothers who had achieved their own independence and would help the Kurds and be helped by them.'[36]

Some days later a list of the ministers of the Republic was published. Qazi Mohammed was chosen as President of the Republic. He was born into a prominent Sunni family which owned lands around Bukan. He was the son of Qazi Ali, highly respected judge of Mahabad. Qazi Mohammed's mother was from the Fayzullah Begi tribe, though Qazi himself had no tribal affiliation. He had one brother, Abdul Qasim Sadr-i Qazi, and three sisters. He married late in life and had a son and seven daughters. His primary education was acquired at a religious school (Kutubkhaneh), but he received further education from his father. In addition to Kurdish, he was able to converse in Farsi, Turkish, and Arabic. He also spoke a few Western languages. Before taking his father's position as the Judge of Mahabad, he served as the head of the Religious Endowment Department (Awqaf) of Mahabad. As the Judge of Mahabad, Qazi was highly respected in the whole region, but was also accepted as the nationalist leader due to his views and the leadership he demonstrated on several occasions.

Qazi Mohammed's influence stemmed not only from his traditional family background but also from his charismatic personality. He has been described by many who knew him as a man of deep convictions backed with a rare sense of courage and self-sacrifice, was well known for his broad-mindedness and moderation, and was an excellent speaker, with a gentle, firm, and effective voice. Qazi Mohammed was a religious man, but at the same time had a reputation of being an uncompromising Kurdish nationalist. The rest of the cabinet consisted of the following:

- Prime Minister, Haj Baba Shaikh from Bukan, was an old politician from a religious background, aged sixty-five.
- Minister of War, Mohammed Hussein Seif-i Qazi, Qazi Mohammed's cousin from Mianduab, was a wealthy man in his forties. He was also designated Assistant Vice President of the Republic.
- Minister of Education and Special Assistant to the President, Mannaf Karimi, was from a well-known family of Mahabad, and was twenty-five years old.
- Minister of the Interior, Mohammed Amin Moini from Mahabad, owned a grocery shop in Mahabad.
- Minister of Health, Sayyid Mohammed Ayubian, from an upper-class family and the owner of the biggest pharmacy in the town, was thirty years old.
- Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abdul-Rahman Ilkhanizadeh.
- Minister of Roads, Isma'il Agha Ilkhanizadeh. Both of the two Ilkhanizadehs were about thirty years old, both were from large landlord families of the Dehboukri tribe. Their families were rivals to Qazi's family, therefore it is highly likely that their appointments were political appointments, that is, compromises.
- Minister of Economics, Ahmed Ilahi, from a middle-ranging Bazaar-i background with his own business, was forty years old.
- Minister of Labor, Khalil Khosravi, came from a lower middle-class Mahabad family.
- Minister of Post, Telephone and Telegraph, Karim Ahmadian, was from an upper-class background, was a relative of Mohammed Qazi's wife, and was about forty years old.
- Minister of Commerce, Haji Mustafa Davudi, a merchant himself, came from one of the most respected families of Mahabad (aged fifty-five). It was in his garden that, in 1942, the 'Komala J. K.' was founded.
- Minister of Justice, Mulla Hussein Majdi, a religious personality, was a well-respected authority on religious and legal matters.

- Minister of Agriculture, Mahmud Valizadeh, graduate of the agricultural school of Karaj, at the age of twenty-three was the youngest of the cabinet members and ran a business of his own.[37]

The members of the cabinet were almost all members of the 'Komala J. K.' with middle-class or upper-class backgrounds. They represented the Kurds of Mahabad and its surroundings.

The newly formed cabinet considered the question of calling a National Assembly in the near future. In the interim period, however, the government in Mahabad made no important political or military decisions without consulting prominent tribal leaders such as Amir Khan Shakak, Rashid Beg Herki, or Mulla Mostafa Barzani.[38]

> Thus the executive power of the Republic was in fact, if not in theory, diffused and decentralized along tribal and personal lines . . . The fact that this makeshift creation functioned with such efficiency and equity was primarily owing to its able and enthusiastic leadership, particularly that of Qazi who had the good sense to relinquish regional authority to the tribes.[39]

Relationship with tribes

During the life of the Republic, some of the tribes supported it and offered their military forces, though the main reason behind their support was the fact that the Republic was the only powerful alternative to the central government and rival tribes. However, there were many tribes who were not happy with the Republic's leadership and the growing power it gained, and remained hostile to it. The key reason for the hostility of these tribal leaders was their perception that the Republic and the Democratic Party of Kurdistan posed far more of a threat to their power than the central government. The conflicts and rivalries between different tribes' leaders were obstacles in the path of national unity.

A common occurrence in Kurdish history has been the appeal of tribes to an outside power. Central governments often bribed tribal chiefs and gained their loyalty by offering them the state's support against their traditional rivals. Therefore it was fundamentally the chief's attitude towards the movement which decided whether a tribe would lend its support, remain neutral, or become an active opponent. To quote the conclusion of a leading authority on Kurdistan and its tribal culture:

Every Kurdish nationalist movement was opposed not only by Central governments (that were Turkish, Persian or British/Arabic) but by quite large numbers of Kurds as well. Even in the last war in Iraq (1974/75), when active participation was on an unprecedented scale (over 50 000 active fighters plus a large number who contributed in other ways), the movement was fought not only by the regular Iraqi army but also by Kurdish irregulars who apparently numbered in the tens of thousands. There were various reasons for this opposition, of course, but the most important single reason was that success of the movement would bestow additional power and prestige upon its leaders and those traditional authorities close to the leadership, to the inevitable detriment of their traditional rivals whose interest lay therefore with the powers inimical to the movement: its defeat would add to their own power – as long as nationalism had not become a stronger motivating force than tribal loyalty.[40]

By the end of 1945, as the national movement in Mahabad grew stronger, the chiefs from the Urmiyeh district promised to support it. Zero Beg Herki visited Qazi Mohammed in Mahabad. Other northern chiefs such as Taha, son of Simko of Shakak, Rashid Beg of the Herki and his brother Sayyid Khan Beg had expressed their sympathy. Many people from the Dehboukri, Mangur, and Mamash tribes also expressed their support.

The dependency of the Republic on tribal military force became evident once the Kurdish leaders, aware of the vulnerability of the newly established Republic, began to organize a military force to defend the Republic. The tribes had the military muscle, and the Republic had to rely on that muscle, not only in the fighting against government forces, but also against the rival tribes hostile to the Republic. The Barzanis had already offered their military support to the Republic. Mulla Mostafa brought the majority (1200–2000) of his military force and their families to Mahabad where he set up headquarters. Hama Rashid Khan was another powerful tribal chief who supported the Republic with his forces.[41] However, there was a sense of hostility between the urban Kurds and the tribal chiefs. The majority of the cabinet members, the Central Committee of the Party, and the government officials were urban middle class from the Mahabad district who would welcome any change to undermine the influence of the tribal chiefs, but such moves would have had serious consequences since, except for the regular army, the Kurdish forces and Barzanis' forces were tribal. The leaders of the Republic made some attempts to reduce

the influence of tribal leaders by sending tribal sons to schools in Tabriz or Baku, or by distributing better arms among the Republic's army and the Barzanis, not among the tribes.

Despite the social nature of the Kurdish cabinet and its social and political demands, and the fact that the core of Kurdish leadership was from urban middle-class intellectuals and city notables, the Kurdish movement in 1946, though a modern nationalist movement in its appearance, remained influenced by the traditional forces of tribal relationships. How much of such influence was due to moral or material constraint may be debatable, though I would suggest that it was due, mainly, to material constraints that the Republic felt obliged to acknowledge tribal power.

The achievements of the Republic

Its political achievements

Although the tribal chiefs provided the bulk of the military force of the Republic, nevertheless Qazi Mohammed sought to form an independent military force, an army for the Republic whose loyalty would only be to the Republic.[42] The effort resulted in the establishment of the 'Kurdish National Army.' Seif-i Qazi, as Minister of War, designated the officers of the Kurdish army, with tribal chiefs having honorary ranks in it. The Kurdish National Army had 'some 70 officers on active duty, assisted by 40 N.C.O.s, and 1200 ''Sarbaz'' or privates.'[43] The army also had four generals, Mohammed Hussein Seif-i Qazi, 'Omer Khan Sharifi, the chief of Shakak who later betrayed the Republic, Hama Rashid Khan Baneh, and Mulla Mostafa Barzani.

In March 1946, the Soviets sent Captain Salaheddin Kazimov to Mahabad to train the Kurdish Army. Contrary to Bagherov's promise at Baku, the Soviets' military assistance remained very limited.[44] Apart from the 10,000 Persian Brno rifles, the Republic received about 20 trucks and jeeps, but the promised tanks and heavy artillery never reached Mahabad. The establishment of this army, despite its limitations, was symbolically significant, for it set a precedent for what later became the 'Peshmerge,' the Kurdish military force, which has since acted as the 'people's army' of the Kurdish movement.

During mid-spring and the relatively peaceful summer of 1946, Mahabad, as capital, became the focal point of the first Kurdish Republic. Contrary to its Azerbaijani neighbor, the Kurdish Republic never became a police state, killing or imprisoning people as 'anti-Democrat

elements.' People were free to listen to radio broadcasts from all parts of the world. Mahabad had its own radio transmitter, on the air from 4 to 10 p.m., which broadcast nationalist songs and programs about Kurdish history, literature, and language. The newly established autonomous government in Azerbaijan proved to be a less conciliatory regime towards its opponents than the Kurdish Republic. Like most revolutionary governments, the government of the 'Democrats' in Azerbaijan followed a policy of persecution of its opponents. The task was carried out by the newly formed secret police. Under the pretext of 'anti-democrat,' many were arrested and imprisoned, their properties were confiscated, and some were executed. However, in Mahabad the situation was different. There, as Eagleton points out, '...was no social revolution, no serious move towards land distribution, no Marxist indoctrination, no secret police, and no Russian-trained "cadres".'[45]

The way the two revolutionary governments treated their opponents is, to some extent, indicative of the development of the social relationships within the two societies. The Azerbaijan regime had more developed social and political organizations. Its army, its police force, its political leadership, and its political organizations were better developed and had more experience than the new government in Mahabad where, not only did the government have less experience, was less organized, and had a less sophisticated control system, but also the society still respected the tribal affiliations, family ties and Kurdish brotherhood. Kurdistan of 1946 was a society which, while functioning on an agrarian-urban basis, was still deeply influenced by tribal relationships, and its main conflict still appeared to be the one between Kurdish nationalism and the central government. This, however, does not deny the differences between urban and traditional tribal leaders and people. In comparison, Azerbaijan was an agrarian/urban society where the social relationships were based on class conflicts with sharp and well-defined differences between social groups.

During the Republic, the activities of the Democratic party of Kurdistan were broadened. New organizations affiliated to the Party were created. Among these new organizations were the Women Section of the Party headed by Qazi Mohammed's wife, and the Youth Section, headed by Ali Khosravi. In May 1946, in order to deal with people's complaints, a twelve-man Supreme Council was formed. The Council dealt with individual petitions.

The Party did not have or follow any particular political doctrine. Eagleton writes:

Although 'progressive' slogans and glorification of the Soviet Union found their way into party speeches and propaganda, there was no mention of socialism, land distribution, or equality of peasant and landlord of the type that filled the press and the broadcasts from Tabriz.[46]

Cultural achievements

All Persian primary school textbooks were translated into Kurdish and were printed by the printing press, which was given to the Republic by the Soviet Union. Certain Iraqi Kurdish educational materials were also brought to the Republic although the opportunity to use them never arose since, by the time they were printed, the Republic had collapsed.

Kurdistan, the official newspaper of the Republic, was printed almost daily. There were also several other weekly and monthly magazines and newspapers published in Mahabad including *Nishteman* which was edited by Abdul-Rahman Zabihi, a women's magazine called *Halala* (Tulip), and *Hawar*, a literary magazine in which the works of the well-known Kurdish poets, Heman (Mohammed-Amin Shaikh al-Islami) and Hajar (Abdul-Rahman Sharfkandi), were published.

By the end of April 1946, as part of the agreement between the Kurdish and Soviet representatives, a group of 60 Kurdish students went to Tabriz and from there they were taken to Baku to a military college. 'The Kurdish boys were given uniforms and divided into classes according to their abilities. All their expenses were paid and they were given extra rations.'[47] However, the development of events in the forthcoming months curtailed the opportunity for the Kurdish Republic to send a second group of Kurdish students to the Soviet Union. Most of the Kurdish youth that went to Baku returned to Iran several months later.[48]

Economic achievements

The Republic's economic situation was not as bad as might have been expected. Its treasury was not empty and though it did not have excessive funds, they were adequate to meet its daily expenses. The Kurdish government, which had borrowed 20,000 tomans (approx. $4400) from the Tabriz government a few months earlier, was able to repay its debt in Kurdish sugar from the Mianduab refinery.[49] Eagleton mentions that:

Taxes and party dues were being collected, notably from tribal chiefs who were anxious to prove their loyalty to the regime. Levies

were also made on a few rich families, such as the Shafai of Mahabad, who had opposed the Republic from its inception. The bazaar was thriving on the lucrative exchange of goods smuggled freely from Iraq and sold in Mahabad or Tabriz or even Tehran.[50]

The predominant commercial activity during the Republic was the sale of tobacco to the Soviet Union. This tobacco was the crop of 1945, which was stored in the warehouses of the Tobacco Monopoly at Mahabad, which the Iranian monopoly had promised to purchase but never did. It was therefore decided that the tobacco would be sold to the Soviet Union.

> . . . in late April Qazi sent Mohammed Amin Sharafi to Tabriz where he informed the Russians through Dr. Samadov that Kurdish tobacco was available for sale. Dr. Samadov listened with sympathy but advised a cautious and correct approach to the problem. The Kurdish officials should first send a telegram to Tehran requesting payment for the balance of the crop. A copy of the telegram should be sent to Mahabad's representative in the Iranian Majlis, Sadr-i Qazi. If no reply were received within five days, a Soviet Commercial Officer from Tehran named Agabegov would be sent to Kurdistan to discuss tobacco purchases.[51]

Receiving no answer from Tehran, the Mahabad government sold the entire supply of its tobacco, and received cash in Iranian currency in addition to goods such as sugar, cotton cloth, glassware, and china.

Another act of independence was the signing of a twenty-year agreement of friendship and mutual cooperation with the newly established government in Tabriz in April 1946. Translation of the agreement was published in the *Azerbaijan* newspaper on 5 May 1946. This agreement reads as follows:

1. Representatives will be exchanged between the two National Governments in such places as may be considered necessary.
2. In specified parts of Azerbaijan which are inhabited by Kurds, Kurds will take part in the administrative work of government and in specified parts of Kurdistan which are inhabited by Azerbaijanis, Azerbaijanis will take part in the administrative work of government.
3. In order to solve the common economic problems of the two nations a mixed Economic Commission will be formed and the

heads of the two National Governments will endeavor to put into practice the decisions of this Commission.

4. Cooperation between the military forces of the Azerbaijan National Government and the Kurdistan National Government will be organized and in time of need the military forces of each Government will mutually render each other all necessary assistance.

5. If any negotiating with the Tehran Government becomes necessary it shall be undertaken after agreement between the views of both the Azerbaijan and Kurdistan National Governments.

6. The Azerbaijan National Government will as far as possible create the necessary conditions for the development of the national language and culture of the Kurds living in Azerbaijan and the National Government of Kurdistan will likewise as far as possible create the necessary conditions for the development of the national language and culture of Azerbaijanis living in Kurdistan.

7. The two contracting parties will take joint steps to punish any person who attempts to destroy or smirch the historic friendship and national, democratic brotherhood of the Azerbaijan and Kurdish peoples. Pishevari; Padegan: Dr. Javid; Biriya. Qazi Mohammed; Mohammed Hussein Seif-i Qazi; Sayyid Abdullah Gilani; 'Omar Khan Sharifi; Rashid Beg Jehangiri; Zero Beg Bahaduri.[52]

The publication of the treaty shocked Tehran for 'its clauses and indeed its very existence showed that the twin Democrat regimes considered themselves independent nations with the right to exchange representatives and make treaties.'[53]

However, the agreement did not bring any fundamental changes in relations between the two governments. The Azerbaijan leaders, from the beginning, expected the Kurdish movement to be subordinate to the Azerbaijan National government, an idea that Qazi Mohammed had always rejected. He insisted on defining the political as well as territorial borders of the two states. The two governments were constantly involved in disputes over the ethnically mixed regions of Urmiyeh, Khoi, and Mianduab, but this was not the only difference. As Abrahamian points out:

From outside, the Kurdish Republic and the Azerbaijan government both appeared to be artificial creations of the Soviet Union. From

inside, it was quite apparent that deep-seated ethnic differences separated the two administrations.[54]

However, before any of the articles in the Agreement could be applied, other forces intervened. Azerbaijani leaders, ignoring Article 5 of the agreement, began negotiations with Tehran in order to legalize their own position. By an agreement signed on 13 June 1946 between Pishevari and Mozaffar Firuz, all of Azerbaijan, including the Kurdish areas, became officially attached to Iran, while the Tabriz democrats held the same posts as they had in the Democrat government. The agreement was a great disappointment to the Kurds who felt their wishes had been entirely ignored. The Tehran government agreed to appoint the governor of Azerbaijan from among the leaders of the Democratic Party of Azerbaijan. Dr Salamullah Javid, the former minister in the Democrat's regime, became the Governor of Azerbaijan. Ignoring even the existence of the Kurdish Republic, he appointed Seif-i Qazi as the governor of Kurdistan. This gesture implicitly failed to recognize Qazi Mohammed as the head of the National government.

> Whereas the Azerbaijani Democrats had legalized the positions they had seized, Qazi Mohammed's Government now had no legal basis at all. The Kurds had progressed from the condition of a minority in the Iranian state to that of a minority in an Azerbaijani Turkish state.[55]

The downfall of the Republic

Qazi Mohammed, who had lost trust in the Azerbaijan leaders, began separate negotiations with the government in Tehran in early August. In Tehran he met Ahmed Qavam, the Prime Minister, and General Razmara, with whom he discussed the autonomy, or semi-autonomy, of Kurdistan within the framework of the Iranian state. His demands included the redefining of the borders of the new province of Kurdistan to embrace all the Kurdish-populated areas of Azerbaijan, and to have Kurdish provincial officials and army garrison recruited from the local population. The Prime Minister agreed to Qazi Mohammed's suggestions on the condition that Qazi would obtain the consent of Dr Javid, the Democrat Governor of Azerbaijan, probably knowing that Dr Javid would never obtain the approval of either the Azeri Democrats or the Soviets. The negotiation continued for some time, but no positive outcome for the Kurds emerged from it.[56]

During this period a vast operation to bring 'law and order' to the entire country began. In late November, the Iranian army occupied Zanjan, an Azeri-speaking town midway between Tabriz and Tehran. On December 10 Ahmed Qavam signed an order permitting the army to enter Azerbaijan and Kurdistan to 'maintain law and security during the parliamentary elections.'[57]

The Iranian government had strong reason to be confident of its ability to establish its authority in the country and specifically destroy the two autonomous regional governments. One factor was the withdrawal of the Soviet forces from northern Iran.[58] The crisis in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan in 1946 prompted the Iranian government, in the spring of 1946, to complain to the Security Council of the United Nations. The Iranian government wanted to ensure that Allied military forces would leave Iranian soil by March 2, 1946. But as the agreed date arrived and there was no sign of a Soviet withdrawal, letters of protest were sent officially to the Soviet Union by Great Britain and the United States government.

On March 26, 1946, an announcement by Gromyko stated that all Soviet troops would be completely withdrawn from Iranian soil within five or six weeks. The two parties agreed on May 6, as the exact date of the Soviet withdrawal. It was also declared that 'the terms of the agreement to form a joint Irano-Soviet oil company would be submitted to the fifteenth Majlis for its approval within seven months after March 24.'[59] The agreement also regarded the Azerbaijan question as an internal Iranian affair that should peacefully be settled between the government and the people of Azerbaijan. According to Radio Moscow, all Soviet troops left Iran on May 9; according to some other observers it was a few days later.

Meanwhile, some of the Kurdish chiefs, sensing the changes in the political climate, sent a message to Qavam through the American Consulate in Tabriz. The message emphasized their loyalty to the central government and their expectation of good treatment. The message was sent by Amir Khan of the Shakak on behalf of a coalition of some other Kurdish chiefs. On November 12, Amir Khan's men returned to Shakak tribal territory with the knowledge that the Iranian army would soon enter the area. The relatively peaceful summer of 1946 was followed by an unexpectedly eventful autumn. The decision to attack Azerbaijan and Kurdistan was taken in Tehran at a meeting between the Shah, the Prime Minister, Ahmed Qavam, the War Minister, Amir Ahmedi, and the Chief of Staff, Hassan Arfa. Qavam was not in full agreement with the idea, fearing the intervention of Soviet forces in

support of the Azerbaijan Democrats. The Soviet Ambassador in Tehran had warned the Tehran government on several occasions that disturbances near the Soviet border of Azerbaijan could not be tolerated. But 'the Shah supported by the Chief of Staff, decided for the advance of the Army, and the necessary orders were given directly by him to the Staff.'[60]

The Tehran government announced that the Iranian army units would be dispatched to Azerbaijan and Kurdistan to safeguard security and supervise the elections of the Majlis. At the same time the United States stated its approval of the operation. On November 27, the American Ambassador in Tehran, George V. Allen, openly expressed the opinion that the announced intention of the Iranian government to send security forces into all parts of Iran was 'an entirely normal and proper decision.'[61]

The orders were given to the 3rd Division of the army in Azerbaijan under General Mir Hussein Hashemi to advance towards Tabriz, and to the 4th Kurdistan Division under General Homayoni to advance towards Mahabad. The march towards Tabriz did not meet much resistance, and the army occupied one town after another. When news of the Iranian army's victorious forward march reached Tabriz, mobs rushed into the streets, seized government offices, and began looting, burning, and killing the 'democrats.' At this time most of the leaders of the Azerbaijan government had fled to the Soviet Union. But, during the next few days, hundreds of the less fortunate Democrats and those officers who deserted the Iranian army were arrested or killed, either by the authorities or by the mobs.[62] A large quantity of stored arms and ammunition were captured. The army very soon gained control.

In Kurdistan, while the Iranian army was preparing to advance to the North, the Kurdish leaders appealed to the Soviets for any possible support. A Kurdish delegation from Mahabad met Hashemov, the Soviet Consul, at Urmiyeh in early December.

> There they were assured that the Iranian Government intended to send to Kurdistan only the minimum force needed to maintain order during the elections, after which it would be withdrawn. For some reason the Russians appeared to have confidence in Qavam's intention.[63]

In the next few days, the Soviet trading agent in Mahabad closed his office. His reply to the question of why the Soviet Union left the

Kurdish Republic on its own was that World War II had exhausted the Soviet Union and that the question of the Kurdish Republic had become an international issue.[64]

News of the collapse of Azerbaijan came as a shock to the Kurdish Republic. Qazi Mohammed and his colleagues were not yet sure what measures to take against the army. In the meantime, some of the tribal forces, including the Herki, Shakak, and Beyzadeh, left the front and returned to their tribal areas. Their chiefs rushed to Tabriz and Urmiyeh to prove their loyalty to the Iranian authorities. The British local representatives reported that as the army was advancing in Kurdistan a number of Sanjabis sent a 'message of loyalty' to the General Staff of Kermanshah Division stating that:

> At this stage the Government authorities are determined to consolidate national unity . . . we beg to inform you that the Sanjabis and [indistinct] clans who have always been prepared to give their lives for the country would now still be proud to take part in this national struggle shoulder to shoulder with the valiant soldiers. If our offer is accepted, will you kindly take steps to provide equipment and traveling facilities for our horsemen.[65]

In Mahabad, people were waiting for Qazi Mohammed to offer final instructions. Ghassemlou describes the situation under which Qazi had to decide what to do. He explains that Qazi had to take the internal circumstances of Kurdistan, the general situation of Iran, as well as international circumstances into consideration. Qazi Mohammed knew that he could not expect any military support from the Soviet Union.

He saw the submissive attitude of the Democrats in Azerbaijan and their subsequent defeat. He also observed that the Tehran regime had begun massive attacks on democratic forces all over the country. The Kurdish chiefs had eventually withdrawn the tribal military forces from the Republic. Many of the wealthy and religious families of the town had submitted to General Homayoni. The Kurdish Republic did not have the military and organizational power to stand up to the central government's army.

On December 14, some of the leaders of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan went to Qazi's house to decide whether to seek asylum in Iraq or the Soviet Union. Qazi Mohammed approved their decision not to submit to the government forces, but he himself remained in Mahabad. On December 16, Mulla Mustafa Barzani also went to see

Qazi and begged him to leave Mahabad with him. Qazi Mohammed replied that he knew his life was in danger, but he could not leave his people to their fate.[66]

On December 17, exactly a year after the occupation of the Police Station in Mahabad, the Iranian army entered the capital of the Kurdish Republic and put an end to a significant period of Kurdish history. Contrary to what happened in Tabriz as the defeat of the Democrats became obvious, in Mahabad no outbreak of hooliganism occurred. No one was hurt for being a 'Democrat.' In Mahabad, all documents and photographs were destroyed and any records indicating involvement in the Kurdish movement were burned. Small arms were hidden and heavy arms were surrendered to the army.

On December 21, General Homayoni, with the intention of disarming the tribes, summoned all the members of the Central Committee of the Party and other prominent Kurdish leaders to the municipal building and asked them to present lists of the distributed arms and receipts for them. But the Central Committee did not have any records, since the records had been burnt before the arrival of the army. The general ordered the arrest of all of the other 28 Kurdish leaders as well as Qazi Mohammed and Seif-i Qazi.

Qazi Mohammed and Seif-i Qazi were kept apart from the other 28 Kurdish leaders. On December 30, the third special prisoner, Sadr-i Qazi, who was in Tehran was handed over to Mahabad. In early January a special court-martial was held to decide the fate of the Qazis. Colonel Parsitabar was the president of the court and Colonel Fiuzi was the Prosecutor General. The trials took place in complete secrecy. Even today very little is known about the actual events in the court. Eagleton writes:

> On 9 January, Qazi spoke long in his own defense, objecting to the proceedings on the grounds that the special court-martial in Mahabad was not competent to deal with his case since as a civilian he should appear before a civil court, or before a military court in Tehran. Further, he complained, the court had not given him sufficient time to choose a lawyer.[67]

The proceedings of the court lasted 72 hours, at the end of which the three Qazis were sentenced to death. The verdict was sent to Tehran where its approval seems to have been deliberately delayed. General Homayoni dispatched Colonel Fiuzi to Tehran to investigate the delay. There he was told that the verdict had received Qavam's

approval but 'political considerations' required further postponement.[68] At the time, Qavam was busy negotiating with the Soviet authorities about relations between the two countries and the oil concession, and thus needed a calm atmosphere. Approval of the verdict finally reached General Homayoni on March 30 while he was in Urmiyeh dealing with the Barzanis. He immediately sent a radio message to Mahabad to execute the order.

On 31 March 1947, Qazi Mohammed, his brother, Sadr-i Qazi, and his cousin, Seif-i Qazi, were hanged in the Chawar Chira where 14 months previously, Qazi Mohammed had announced the establishment of the Kurdish Republic. The hangings took place in the middle of the night in complete secrecy. The next morning the people of Mahabad were shocked to find the bodies of the three Qazis hanging in the square. The military authorities kept the bodies there the whole day on public display.

In early April 1947, five other Kurds were hanged, four in Mahabad, the fifth in Bukan. They were Major Ali Khan Shirzad (in Bukan), Captain Hamid Mazuji, Lt Mohammed Nazimi, Lt Rasul Nazadei and Lt Abdullah Roshanfikr.

Once again the Tehran government had established its authority in Mahabad, and with that a long period of political repression began. Kurdish books were gathered in a square by soldiers and burned, and the teaching of the Kurdish language became forbidden.

The story of the Barzanis

When Iranian troops occupied Mahabad, the Barzanis and their military forces withdrew to Naqadeh. Eagleton claims that Mulla Mustafa managed to retrieve 'thousands of the best rifles, as well as 120 machine guns, 2 artillery pieces and quantities of hand grenades' to Naqadeh.[69] The Iranian government offered him and his allies a settlement deal. Mulla Mustafa failed to persuade Shaikh Ahmed of Barzan and other Iraqi army deserters to accept the settlement plan. He himself, was not enthusiastic about remaining weaponless and powerless, at the mercy of the Iranian authorities near Tehran and away from Kurdistan. He decided to return to Iraq. On their return they were bombarded by the Iranian air force trying to locate the position of the Barzanis in the mountains while the army columns began to move westwards to ensure his surrender. In the south too, Iraqi troops carefully guarded their frontiers.[70] By 19 April 1947, there were reports that 1550 Barzani men including Shaikh Ahmed and four Iraqi

army officer deserters, 1686 women and 1329 children had crossed the border to Iraq and surrendered.[71] Mulla Mustafa with 200 armed followers also entered Iraq and asked for amnesty, but the Iraqi authorities, which demanded his unconditional surrender, refused this. In June the Iraqi government executed the four army officers, Mustafa Khoshnuw, Khairullah, Mohammed Mahmud, and Izzat Abdul Aziz, who were involved with the Kurdish Republic.[72] Prior to these executions Mulla Mustafa understood that the Iraqi government was not going to show him any mercy. When he found himself cornered, Mulla Mustafa, along with his forces (about 500–800 men) retreated through Turkey into Iran where his request for asylum was refused. He was asked to surrender immediately by the Iranian authorities.

Mulla Mustafa realized that there was no hope of sympathy from the hostile countries of Iraq, Iran, and Turkey. The only hope he had were the Soviets. Between May 31 and June 2, taking advantage of the darkness of night, he managed to briefly cross into Turkey and then back to Iran, passing by Iranian battalions without attracting their attention. An Iranian army column followed the Barzanis north and two columns marched from the East and the West to join the Northern forces around Maku. The Barzanis marched north to Mt Ararat where they overlooked the Aras River, the borderline between Iran and the Soviet Union. By the river they found some small Soviet boats awaiting their arrival. On June 16, they left most of their baggage behind and swam across the river to the Soviet Union.[73] The Barzanis' march lasted 14 days and covered 220 miles. The Iranian army reached the river two days later, finding nothing but some rifles, grenades, ammunition, and the bodies of two Barzanis who drowned while attempting to cross the river.

Conclusion

I have explored the nature of the Kurdish Republic of 1946 by relating it to the notion of 'passive revolution' as explained by Gramsci. The movement had the features of a 'passive revolution' given its lack of significant mass participation. An external force had encouraged its formation. It received most of its support from Mahabad and its surrounding towns such as Bukan, Ushnaviah and Naqadeh. It had a short life, was led mainly by the city intelligentsia, and was confined to a limited geographic area. The social and economic reforms propagated by the Republic failed to deal thoroughly with issues such as tribalism, land ownership, and land reform. The ineffectiveness of

such reforms was attributed not to the unwillingness of the leaders for effective reforms but, rather, to their inability to carry them out. This was largely a result of the fact that the main military forces of the Republic were provided by the tribal leaders, who were also land-owners. The formation of the Kurdish Republic in 1946 was the result of cooperation between an educated elite represented by urban middle-class intellectuals who were promoting Kurdish cultural/polit-ical nationalism, and a military/political elite represented by powerful tribal chiefs who tried to take advantage of the wartime confusion to gain independence.

The disappearance of international conditions favorable to its forma-tion was one factor in the failure of the Republic. The West decided to back the Shah's regime and consolidate its power throughout the country. The Soviet Union, too, took the side of the Iranian govern-ment with the hope of obtaining an oil concession. This, it seems, sealed the defeat of the Kurdish Republic, which was too weak to resist the Western-equipped, supervised, strongly supported political and military forces of the Iranian regime.

However, the nature of the Kurdish society in that period was, per-haps, the most significant factor in determining the form it took. The movement represented a transitional era between tribalism and a national consciousness. The Kurdish Republic represented the emer-gence of a nationalist movement in a society in which remnants of tribal culture and mentality remained strong, while the new leadership of Kurdish urban intellectuals presented a new alternative, that of nationalism. It is these two – tribal chiefs, and the urban intelligentsia – who demonstrated the main, and on many occasions contradictory, forces of Kurdish society. It is the conflict between the two which more than anything determined the nature of the Kurdish movement of 1946. Under such circumstances, each of the two major forces of soci-ety could not sustain power without the cooperation of the other. The tribal chiefs were not able to exclusively hold on to power, as was the case in Simko's time, for there was a political organization advocating Kurdish nationalism and competing with tribal loyalties, but neither could the urban intellectuals ignore or antagonize the tribal chiefs for they needed their political and military influence. However, as the fate of the Republic demonstrated, during the 1946 movement, tribal atti-tudes could still overcome feelings of nationalism and determine the direction of events.

Nevertheless, the principal advocates and leaders of the Republic were city notables, high officials, absentee landlords and professional

people. It is particularly important to remember this when considering the criticism directed at the Republic for not gaining influence among the peasants and not proceeding on any program of land redistribution. As mentioned earlier, most of the tribal chiefs were landlords and a majority of the tribesmen were peasants. It was an extremely difficult task to progress on any land reform program given the strength of tribal ties in Kurdish society, particularly when there were influential tribal leaders at the head of the Republic. This is especially so since the economic conditions prevailing in rural Kurdistan at the time meant that the intelligentsia could reach rural masses through calls by tribal leaders in tribal areas. The absence of an extensive market network meant that the urban centers were cut off from isolated Kurdish villages, making a direct appeal to the Kurdish peasants *outside* the tribal structure and without the help of tribal leadership a very difficult task.

Furthermore the tribes provided the main bulk of the military force of the Republic. Therefore the non-tribal leadership was reluctant to embark on any genuine land redistribution. However, equally importantly, even if there had been the will to do so, they would surely have met with the opposition of other tribal leaders and alienated them from the national movement. The same factor limited the ability of the Kurdish movement to gain the support of the peasantry and mobilize them on a larger scale. The peasants' lives did not change or improve much during the Republic. But even had a definite program for land redistribution and improvement of the peasants' lives been proposed, the real problem would have been its implementation.

Here, with the best will on behalf of the urban intelligentsia to involve the masses in the national struggle, the movement would still have to be classified as one of 'passive revolution'. Clearly the absence of a more radical program of reform and transformation should be attributed to the inability of the intelligentsia rather than to their unwillingness. In this case 'passive revolution' describes a process characterizing the origins and early stages of the movement.

Related to the inability of the Kurdish intelligentsia to mobilize the Kurdish masses is the lack of conscious, well-organized and strong leadership. The Kurdish leaders had almost no political experience. Needless to say, in comparison with Simko's movement, the Republic had far better political organization and leadership. Nevertheless, it set a far more serious nationalist task before itself, the task of establishing a Kurdish nation-state. It is in this regard that its political organization and leadership did not match its political task. The only political organization in Kurdistan, Komala J. K., had been active for only three

years and could offer little in the way of political and organizational support. The Kurdish Democratic Party was not a mature organization at the time. It lacked discipline, as well as trained cadres to lead the movement forward. The boundaries of its ideology were not clear, and it was unable to offer a comprehensive program for the Republic. It was still an organization with many tribal ties. The Party was neither homogeneous nor unified; disagreement and division made it difficult for the Party to make decisions at crucial moments.

However, in spite of all its shortcomings, the Kurdish Republic was the first modern Kurdish nationalist movement by way of its language, its political/nationalist demands, its leadership, its plans, and its outlook. It represented a great achievement towards the development of a Kurdish national independence movement. It put forward a historical image of the Kurds as a nation.

5
The Political Economy of Kurdish Nationalism

Introduction

We have discussed at some length the changes that led to the disintegration of the tribal type 'face-to-face' society in Chapter 2. Much of the Kurdish population was absorbed into the settled population of villages whose economic life was no longer dependent merely on herding, but also significantly on agriculture. The latter type of communities were also 'face-to-face' societies but of a village type. It may appear that all that happened was that one type of 'face-to-face' society was replaced by another without bringing about the sort of change in the mentality of the rural population required of them before they can see themselves as a homogenous national community.

There is substance in this argument but it should also be noted that village communities brought about as the result of sedentarization of tribal societies are quite different from village communities whose existence in the minds of their members extend infinitely back in time. There is continuity in the latter but not the former and the experience of this discontinuity and the transition it involves, from one type of 'face-to-face' society into quite a different type, is in itself a very important contribution towards increasing awareness that people are not just members of their immediate communities but of a much larger society with many common bonds. Nonetheless, a rural community is in fact the most common type of 'face-to-face' society in a pre-industrial agrarian environment. There are still obstacles to people thinking of themselves as members of a national community.

This chapter is devoted to an assessment of some economic and demographic changes that have created conditions favorable to the growth of nationalism and weakened the enclosed outlook of a 'face-

to-face' society for the Kurdish population of Iran. Unlike other chapters in this study, this chapter is highly quantitative. The focus is primarily but not exclusively on rural Kurdistan since, until recently, we could consider the Kurdish population of Iran as essentially rural. Although in the last 15 years this has changed with an astonishing speed, Iranian Kurdistan is still predominantly rural, though it may not remain so for much longer given its rapidly growing urban population.

The main time reference is the Land Reform of 1962–66, undoubtedly the single most important event in the economic and social life of rural Kurdistan. We consider the events since World War II in terms of the changes it brought about, but more recent data for the 1980s are also discussed at some length.

The argument is presented in three sections. In the first, I look at a number of factors that contributed to the dissolution of the 'face-to-face' village societies of Kurdistan. This section should thus be taken as an assessment of the factors additional to those discussed in Chapter 2 that led the transition from a 'face-to-face' tribal/rural society to a national community. However the mere awareness of membership in a larger non-'face-to-face' community does not necessarily lead to people viewing themselves as members of a separate national community.

To this end, the second section of this chapter deals with the assessment of conditions favoring relative cohesion and solidarity within Kurdistan. We discuss a whole number of issues in this regard to establish that this cohesiveness is closely related to the relative *absence* of inequalities in rural Kurdistan. Members of even a closely-knit society do not necessarily campaign for a national community unless they feel they have been unfairly treated by the society within which they live. Hence a shorter final section deals with some indicators of inequalities *between* Kurdistan and Iran.

A few points about the geographical coverage of the data used in this chapter should be borne in mind. First, all the material used refers to the province of Kurdistan or regions within this province only. A very substantial part of the neighboring provinces are also Kurdish, most notably in western Azerbaijan, but only in Kurdistan is the population entirely Kurd. Not having any means of separating the Kurdish population and regions from non-Kurds in these provinces, we had no choice but to confine the sources used to the province of Kurdistan. Secondly, the pattern of landownership in Kurdistan shows a considerable variation resulting in important differences in the rural life of the region

within the province. The Zagros Mountains running through the province divide it into two broad regions. To the east towards inland Iran, the land is relatively flat and large landownership is the common norm. The western area is mountainous and a smallholding (subsistence farming combined with herding and cattle raising) is the dominant form. The center of large landownership is the Sanandaj and, to a much smaller extent, the Saqqiz regions. Before the Land Reform the entire privately held land of Sanandaj region was owned by two families.[1] After the Land Reform this region was the most suitable location for a large-scale peasant cooperative. The agriculture in this region is the most commercialized, the size of the holdings tends to be large, and, most importantly for our analysis, the scope for wage labor is substantial.

By contrast, much of the rest of the province appears to be characterized by small to medium-sized holdings, and the closer to the mountain range the smaller the size of the holdings become and the more limited the scope of the wage labor. A look at the map of the province makes it clear that it is the latter regions which cover most of the area. Before the Reform of 1965, the tribal chiefs owned much of the land in the mountainous northern regions of Kurdistan.

There are three publications among the sources used in this chapter which are likely to tell us something about this geographical division in Kurdistan. The first is a study by Rafi′y and Vajdi, *Sharkat-i Sahami-i Zera′-yi* Farah: Sanandaj (Farah Peasant/Farm Cooperative: Sanandaj) (Tehran University, The Institute of Social Study and Research, 1969); the second stage of this study, carried out by Babayi Hamatti in 1971, was conducted on the basis of a sample of 108 shareholding peasants out of a total of 654 household members of the co-op, and 71 landless households out of a total of 451 such households living in villages covered by the cooperative. We use the report of the second stage of this study, which is more detailed than the first stage report and was conducted in 1970. The second source employed, *Barisi-i Natayj-i Islahat-i Arzi dar Haft Mantaqe* (Study of the Results of the Land Reform in Seven Regions) (Tehran University, The Institute of Social Study and Research, 1969), is a report on the results of the Land Reform in seven provinces of Iran with regions selected in each province, including a study on the rural areas of Sanandaj region. The third source, Mostafa Azkia, *Khushnishinan-i Kurdistan* (Landless Peasants of Kurdistan) (Tehran University, 1976), by far the single most detailed study undertaken on rural Kurdistan and the principal source on which this chapter relies, is a random sample of Kurdish villages covering the entire

province. As it was a representative sample of the province, 77.6 percent of the selected villages were in the mountainous regions and only 22.4 percent outside these regions. The survey contains 232 landless and 200 landholding households. Clearly the latter survey is likely to be more influenced by peasants of poor and average standing and indicate a smaller role for wage labor in rural Kurdistan than is likely to be the case with the other two sources. It is also likely to be closer to the reality of Kurdish rural life. Whenever it is possible to give alternative figures for the same issue, the conclusion based on data from this last source is checked using the first two sources which reflect a region with a different rural structure of landownership and wage labor. To this extent geographical differences are reflected in the conclusion reached below. However, differences of another type relating to the economic divisions within the rural communities of Kurdistan are also considered. These are introduced in the tables below and are not discussed separately here.

Transition to a national community

In this section, I mainly consider the demographic but also some economic/social factors which one may reasonably consider to be particularly important for the growing awareness of a national community outside the village societies of Kurdistan among the Kurdish population of Iran. The choice of the issues taken up in this section reflects our concern with this question rather than a desire to assess the economic and demographic structure of rural Kurdistan. Under this heading, I shall discuss in turn: long-distance trade, migration, geographical mobility, occupational mobility, urbanization, and access to the mass media, in particular radio and the uses made of it.

Long-distance trade

Participation in long-distance exchange entails a knowledge of communities and social relations outside one's own. There are whole numbers of indicators one can provide for this propose. Here we shall only mention one particular indicator, namely the role of the market for agricultural produce by landholding peasants.

The principal buyers of peasant produce in rural Kurdistan before the Land Reform were the urban shopkeepers who also provided some commodities that peasants bought from the market such as tea and sugar. The urban shopkeepers appear to be a very large group even before the Land Reform. Ghassemlou gives the example of the city of

Table 5.1   Percentage of agents' purchase of peasants' produce by occupation

	Before Land Reform	**After Land Reform**
Rural middlemen	35.02	26.43
Urban shopkeepers	53.92	29.43
Government grain agency	0.92	23.39
Others	10.14	20.75

Source: *An Assessment of the Results of the Land Reform in Seven Regions* (1969), 339–40.

Mahabad around 1950 when there was one shop for every ten inhabitants.[2] Even after the Land Reform the urban shopkeeper as the agent of exchange for the rural communities of Kurdistan was still the largest group as shown in Table 5.1 on the rural areas of Sanandaj region.

As can be seen, before the Reform, the principal agents through whom exchange with the economy outside of Kurdistan was conducted were the urban shopkeepers, with rural middlemen playing an important supplementary role. After the Reform, in the late 1960s, the government grain agency purchased slightly less than a quarter of the total, a staggering increase in its share of purchase which was basically non-existent before the Reform, at the expense of the shares of rural middlemen and, especially, the urban shopkeepers. An alternative assessment on this issue is provided by Azkia which, while confirming the importance of the category of urban shopkeepers, emphasizes the larger role of peasants carrying their own produce to the urban market. This is shown in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2   Sale of peasants' products by method of sale

Method of sale	0–4	4.1–8	8.1–15 hectares	15.1 and over	Total
Urban shopkeepers coming to village	28.6	44.4	23.0	60.0	42.5
Peasants going to towns	27.1	35.2	28.3	30.0	30.0
Rural shopkeepers	14.3	3.7	6.5	–	7.5
Others	11.4	14.8	13.0	10.0	12.5
No product for sale	18.6	1.9	2.2	–	7.5

Source: Mostafa Azkia, *Khushnishinan-i Kurdistan* (Landless Peasants of Kurdistan) (Tehran University, 1976), 251.

Table 5.2 shows that while the urban shopkeepers coming to village are the principal agents of long-distance trade, about 30 percent of all landowning peasants transport their own produce to urban markets, suggesting another channel of contact for a larger part of the Kurdish peasantry with urban life. By contrast with Table 5.1, Table 5.2 seems to suggest that government agencies make negligible purchases of peasant products in the villages surveyed. The differences between the two sources may well be due to the fact that the former deals only with the Sanandaj region and the city is the most important center for the sale of agricultural goods where state agencies are presumably very active as buyers. The latter data come from some 50 villages spread across Kurdistan where non-government agents are the only purchasers of peasants' products.

For this reason Table 5.2 may well be closer to the more typical case and suggests a more extreme contact for the Kurdish peasantry with the outside world brought about by trade. Inevitably it should be noted that this table also suggests that the role of subsistence agriculture in Kurdish rural life is very minor. Only among the poorest peasants with less than 4 hectares of land has subsistence agriculture a place, and 18.6 percent of this group of peasant households do not participate in trade. This percentage declines sharply for the two middle groups and disappears altogether among the better-off peasants with more than 15 hectares land.

Migration

The argument about inequalities must be put within the general context of a transition from a 'face-to-face' society to a national community. To this end this section deals with some demographic and, to a limited extent, some social and cultural factors that have made important contributions to this transition by undermining the limits imposed on political understanding of the Kurdish people by 'face-to-face' rural communities and reinforcing greater awareness of a common national identity.[3]

Perhaps the most important aspect of changes in the economic demography of Kurdistan with the most direct impact on the awareness of a national community is migration, and more generally the rapidly rising trend of urbanization. There are a number of data sources for migration in Iranian Kurdistan but only two sources contain actual analysis of the migration trend in the aftermath of the 1962–66 Land Reform (the study of landless peasants of Kurdistan and the study on 'Farah' peasant cooperatives). For our purpose, namely an explanation

Table 5.3   Percentage distribution of migration of landless and landholding peasants by place of migration

| Destination | Landless laborer* | Landowning peasants** | |
		Under 8 ha	Over 8 ha
Tehran	4.9	3.23	15.79
Cities of the Kurdish province	88.3	77.42	57.89
Other Iranian cities	5.2	19.35	26.32
Iraq	1.6	–	–

Source: Mostafa Azkia, *Khushnishinan-i Kurdistan* (Landless Peasants of Kurdistan) (Tehran University, 1976), ***** 52, ****** 201. Figures for the peasants refer to their preferences for place of migration rather than actual numbers of migrants.

of the greater appeal of nationalism to a predominantly rural/nomadic people, perhaps the most important question is where do the migrating Kurdish rural population migrate to? Clearly migration outside Kurdistan, especially to Tehran, may be thought to have a good probability of being followed by a gradual process of assimilation into a dominant Iranian identity. Migration within Kurdistan, on the other hand, is likely to reinforce a greater sense of belonging to a Kurdish national community. Table 5.3 is intended to answer this question.

It should be noted that only the percentages for landless laborers refer to actual numbers of migrants; those for landowning peasants refer to their preferences for places of migration. With regard to how these numbers relate to the awareness of a national community among the Kurdish rural population, the most interesting result is that, in spite of differences between the three principal economic classes of rural Kurdistan, migration among all of them is predominantly to cities of Kurdistan.[4]

Since the figures for landowning peasants and farmers refer to their preferences for places of migration rather than actual number of migrants, it would be appropriate to offer alternative sources of support for this conclusion. This is given in Table 5.4.

Again, these figures refer to landless laborers and landowning peasants separately, and yet 84.4 percent of landless laborers and 78.4 percent of landowning peasants actually migrated to other places within Kurdistan. Such a pattern of migration within a geographical entity inhabited by people with the same language and religion clearly enhances awareness of a national community. Even migration to nearby

Table 5.4 Percentage distribution of landless and shareholding peasants by place of migration

Destination	Landless laborers	Shareholding co-op peasants
Sanandaj	25.0	32.1
Saqqiz	–	7.1
Sanandaj villages	59.4	39.2
Other cities of Iran	6.2	18.0
Unknown	9.4	3.6

Source: Babayi, *Sharkat-i Sahami-i Zera-yi Farah: Sanandaj* (Farah Farm Corporation: Sanandaj), 2nd report (Tehran University, Institute of Social Study and Research, 1971), 190.

villages, which constitutes a substantial percentage of intra-region movement, is still a significant experience of cultural similarities of communities outside one's relatively closed environment.

To be sure, the scope for this type of geographic mobility varies among different Kurdish social classes, as do the reasons for migration. For example, according to the latter source, migration of 68.7 percent of landless laborers was due to employment with only 25 percent of the shareholding peasants in this category, while education contributed about 18 percent for the latter group and none in the former.[5]

It is perhaps worth noting that 68.7 percent of landless laborers were from the 15–24 years of age group at the time of migration.[6] For the landowning peasants, roughly the same percentage (69.5 percent) is from the broader age group of 15 to 34 years of age. Thus landless laborers tend to be younger at the time of migration. However, again for both landowning and landless migrants, the similarity is more important. Most migration is from the age group that are likely to be politically important, providing potential recruits into the Kurdish national movement and even agents for the promotion of this movement. To sum up, we can say that despite the variation across social classes, migration is a factor which contributes rather than hinders the development of a Kurdish national identity since migration in the usual sense of search for work and education is predominantly to Kurdish towns and cities.

Mobility

In a nomadic society there is a great deal of geographic mobility and yet, paradoxically enough, individuals living within these communities have a minimal experience of life outside their own 'face-to-face'

community. The entire social structure within which individuals live also moves simultaneously with the cycle of tribal migration, leaving the same people dealing with each other without change. Geographical mobility among people of settled communities, on the other hand, causes awareness of a larger society with common linguistic and religious ties.

Occupational mobility has a somewhat similar effect, at least in so far as it breaks the continuity in the economic life of rural people, especially if it involves detachment from land. As a general rule such movements are rare even in a rural community since the attachment to land is strong. However, wealth and poverty are the two important forces which can detach peasants from land.

In what follows we assess the two types of mobility both within the same generation and inter-geographically, comparing the changes experienced by individuals over two generations to their fathers' position.

Geographic mobility

The study of landless peasants of Kurdistan published in 1976 reports that a considerable number of heads of household were not residing in the same village where their fathers lived. This discontinuity increased as the household income increased. Among the landless peasants under study, the heads of 23.5 percent of the low-income households, and 54.7 percent of the higher income households, were living in places different from their fathers' birthplace.[7] Furthermore, 16.5 percent of heads of household of low-income families, and over 40 percent of higher income households, were not born in the places they lived. As for the landholding households, 18.5 percent of heads of household resided in places different from their fathers' birthplace, while 11.4 percent of the heads of low-income and 30.0 percent of high-income households were not natives of the place of residence.[8]

According to the same study of landless peasants in Kurdistan, 28.5 percent of the total number of landless peasants were residing in places other than their own place of birth and 39.2 percent of heads of household were living in places different from their fathers' birthplace. That is to say out of every ten heads of landless peasant households four had left their father's place of birth and settled somewhere else.[9] However, only 13 percent of the total number of landholding peasant heads of household lived at places different from their birthplace and 18.5 percent of heads of landholding households were living at places different from the birthplace of their fathers. This suggests that, for the

last two decades, some geographic mobility among the landholding peasants of Kurdistan, although not massive, nevertheless did take place.[10]

The study showed that geographic mobility increased among the higher income groups of peasants (both for landless and landholding peasants). Tables 5.5 and 5.6 compare the degree of geographic mobility among the landless and landholding peasants in Kurdistan.

Among landless peasants, 16.5 percent heads of the low-income households, and 40.2 percent of the high-income households, lived in places different from their birthplace.[11] For the landholding peasants, the situation was similar: 7.1 percent of the heads of low-income landholding households and 26.7 percent of the heads of high-income households lived in places different from their own birthplace.[12]

The study also showed that education was a factor in the geographic mobility of peasant households. Households, or the heads of household, with a higher rate of literacy tended to have a higher rate of migration than those with a lower literacy rate. As high-income households were more likely to be correlated with high literacy/education, they too were more geographically mobile: 21.5 percent of those

Table 5.5 Percentage birthplaces of heads of households and their fathers

	Landless	**Landholding**
Same as father's	55.2	79.5
Different from father's	39.2	18.5
Unknown	5.6	2.0
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Mostafa Azkia, *Khushnishinan-i Kurdistan* (Landless Peasants of Kurdistan) (Tehran University, 1976), 113.

Table 5.6 Percentage geographic mobility of heads of households, comparing their birthplaces with their domicile

	Landless	**Landholding**
Same as birthplace	71.1	86.0
Different from birthplace	28.5	13.0
Birthplace unknown	0.4	1.0
Total households	100.0	100.0

Source: Mostafa Azkia, *Khushnishinan-i Kurdistan* (Landless Peasants of Kurdistan) (Tehran University, 1976), 113.

who lived in places other than their village of birth had some educa-
tion, while 16.8 percent of those who were living in the villages of
their birth had some education. Mobility was also greater in regions
with greater exposure to non-village life and greater proximity to
towns and cities.

Occupational mobility

According to the Tehran University research on the landless peasants
of Kurdistan, changes of occupation happened rarely among the land-
holding peasants. However, there were very significant shifts of occu-
pation from father to son among the landless peasants. Since among
the landholding households, sons alongside the parents of the house-
hold worked the land, there was more continuity with generations of
sons doing the same work as their fathers. Out of the 200 landholding
heads of household under study, 196 (that is 98 percent) followed their
fathers and continued farming. Social mobility was minimal. Among
the highest income group of landholding peasants, there was no
change of occupation at all while among the lowest income group of
landholding peasants only 4.1 percent did not follow their father's
occupation.

Of the total landless households under study, 74.1 percent of the
heads of household had a different occupation from that of their
fathers. Only 23.7 percent of them continued with their father's job.
The reason for this was simply lack of land, which meant lack of a
steady and secure source of income. Table 5.7 compares the differences
between the heads of landholding and landless households in
following their fathers' occupation.

On examining the occupational changes from generation to gener-
ation among the landless peasants, it is interesting to note that more

Table 5.7   Percentage occupation mobility among the landless and landholding
peasant households in Kurdish regions

	Landless*	Landholding**
Same as father	23.7	98.0
Different from father	74.1	02.0
Unknown	2.2	–
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Mostafa Azkia, *Khushnishinan-i Kurdistan* (Landless Peasants of Kurdistan) (Tehran
University, 1976),* 118 and ** 213.

than half of the existing heads of landless peasant households were the children of landholding farmers. Out of 172 heads of household who changed their occupation, 126 or 73.3 percent of their fathers were farmers.[13] Fathers of 46 of those heads of household (26.7 percent) who had different occupations from their fathers were non-farmers.

Occupational mobility did not necessarily mean upward mobility. In the majority of the cases, there was only horizontal mobility. Often the change was to a lower economic level and social status compared with their fathers. Table 5.8 details the different occupations of the heads of the landless households whose fathers were farmers.

As can be seen from Table 5.8, 57.1 percent of those heads of the households whose fathers were farmers had to leave farming and became rural laborers. The rate was higher for low-income households (61.2 percent). The heads of households who were farmers' sons but then became landless peasants worked mostly as unskilled workers such as agricultural laborers, shepherds, construction workers, gardeners, or drivers, 18.3 percent became small traders or ran small shops, a small number became involved in herding (4.8 percent), 7.8 percent took service employment as a barber, mullah, servant, or village mosque keeper, and some became artisans.

These changes of economic status were accompanied by changes in the social status of these households. In comparison to the richer peasants more heads of low-income households had lower social status than their fathers did.

Table 5.8 Percentage occupations of heads of landless households whose fathers were farmers

Occupation	Total	Low income**	Higher income*
Rural laborer	57.1	61.2	52.5
Trader/shopkeeper	18.3	13.3	23.7
Services	7.8	9.0	6.8
Herder	4.8	1.5	8.5
Artisan	3.2	4.5	1.7
Others	4.0	3.0	5.1
Unemployed	2.4	3.0	1.7
Disabled	2.4	4.5	–
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Mostafa Azkia, *Khushnishinan-i Kurdistan* (Landless Peasants of Kurdistan) (Tehran University, 1976), 120 * and **: the low-income group, in this study, has been defined as those with an income of 40,000 rails or less, and the higher-income group those who have an annual income of more than 40,000 rails.

The situation of the landless peasants whose fathers were landholders related to the discussion we had earlier regarding the marginalization of some of the peasant populations of villages, which occurred when the village system, for a variety of reasons, could no longer absorb its entire population into the mainstream of its economic life. Among those whose fathers were not farmers, there were also changes of occupation in the last two generations but the rate of change was not significant. In most cases, these heads of household remained in the same occupation as their fathers. Thus, it can be said that the imbalance of occupations during the course of two generations was more significant for those landless peasants who were originally from landholding households.

Urbanization

So far we have concentrated mainly on rural Kurdistan, but as the section on migration shows, urban areas absorb a substantial number of rural migrants, mainly as workers but also as students, in addition to the endogenous urban growth in population. In the long run, this factor would tend to increase the urban share of the population relative to the rural population. The increase in the share of urban population of Kurdistan relative to its rural component is perhaps the culmination of the contribution of the many factors discussed above to the dissolution of 'face-to-face' communities within Kurdistan. Whether or not awareness of a national community of Kurds would actually translate itself into an effective, that is cohesive, nationalist movement would depend on the relative absence of sharp division within such a society, and is a question which will be addressed further on. At this stage we wish to stress the increase in the urban population of Kurdistan during the past 15 to 20 years. This is presented in Table 5.9 which shows that although,

Table 5.9   Percentage of urban and rural population, 1955–93

Year	Urban	Rural
1955–56	11.2	88.8
1965–66	16.53	83.47
1975–76	24.33	75.67
1985–86	43.0	57.0
1992–93*	46.64	53.36

* Estimate from a 1993 report to the President on a proposed reconstruction program in five western provinces of Iran.
Source: Population Census of 1956, 1966, 1976, and 1986.

even today, Kurdistan remains predominantly rural, this situation is changing very fast.

At the time of the last census, the urban population constituted 43 percent of the total population of the province. The change has been particularly sharp between the 1975–76 and 1985–86 censuses rising from 24.3 percent to 43 percent. Probably only a very small part of this increase can be attributed to war refugees. The area was hardly affected by the movement of the refugees from the Iran–Iraq war.[14] Much of the fierce conflict between the Kurdish political groups and the forces of the Islamic Republic took place during 1980–81, as much in the urban as in the rural areas, perhaps more so since most of the political parties had offices only in Sanandaj where the fiercest battles took place. Thus the figure of 43 percent is unlikely to be far from the true percentage of the Kurdish urban population in 1985–86.[15] This is further confirmed by the latest estimate given in the last row of the table for 1992–93 contained in a confidential report on Kurdistan to President Rafsanjani, putting the urban population at 46.64 percent of the total. We do not wish to argue that the mere increase of city population would result in the growth of Kurdish nationalism but this is indeed what happens when the increasing urban population is placed in the context of the relative lack of division within Kurdish society, and the relatively great division between this society and that of Iran.

Mass media – radio

Although 'print capitalism' and the category of nationalist writers has been particularly important for the 'origins' of nationalism, the role of print as the medium for the spread of nationalism has, in the developing countries of the twentieth century, been assumed by modern mass media, especially radio and television. Indeed one can make a case for arguing that in bringing about the awareness of that elusive, 'imagined' community we call a nation, radio and television can play a far more effective role than print. Print capitalism had a major handicap as a tool for the advocacy of common ties. It was constrained by the extent of mass literacy. In reaching the potential citizens of an 'imagined' nation, radio and television can simply by-pass this major hurdle, a very valuable advantage to the spread of nationalism among the agrarian communities of the developing world such as rural Kurdistan, subject to high rates of illiteracy. It is of course true enough that broadcasting through radio and television in Iran, both before and since 1980, do not consciously promote Kurdish national identity. However, their impact on the growing awareness among the rural population of a larger society

outside a tribal or a village 'face-to-face' set-up is of greater importance to the growth of nationalism in an environment consisting predominantly of relatively isolated communities than the more specific task of promoting a common national identity.

A common phenomenon in villages of Iran today is the gathering of the village population after work in the local teahouse to watch television programs. We have no information on the extent of the access to television among the rural population of Kurdistan. However, generally the extent of transistor radio ownership sharply increased in the 1960s. The Tehran University monograph on the results of the Land Reform in seven regions including Sanandaj conducted in 1969 suggests that the number of radios increased by nearly four times after the Land Reform in the rural areas of Sanandaj, from 230 sets before to 874 sets after the reform.

More specifically, Azkia contains some rather interesting and more detailed figures relating to the significance of radio in Kurdish villages. Some 60 percent of landless households listen to radio programs regularly. If we divide this group into five different income categories, the percentage of households listening to radio programs increases with income, with only 28 percent in the first income category, but about 86 percent in the fifth income category.[16] By comparison, the landowning peasant ownership of transistor radios is about 60 percent. The extent of radio ownership increases with the size of landholding, being 50 percent for the poorest peasants, 58 percent for the second and third group and 86 percent for those with over 115 hectares of land. Tables 5.10 and 5.11 separately give the percentage distribution of landless laborers and landholding peasants by their preference of type of radio programs.

From the political point of view, the most important feature of both Tables 5.10 and 5.11 is that among the principal social classes of rural Kurdistan, the most popular program is news broadcasts, the type of program most closely related to social and political awareness. The extent of interest expressed for the news seems to be fairly uniform across the different income groups of agricultural laborers and landholding peasants, the poorer section of the population being roughly as interested as the better-off population.

The second most popular program among both social groups is music, 25 percent for the landless and 33 for the landholding peasants. This is perhaps an indirect indicator of the relatively minor position of religion in the cultural life of Kurdistan. Religious programs are less popular among both social groups, with only 18.7 percent of landowners and

Table 5.10 Percentage distribution of landless laborers by the preferred type of radio program

	1st income group	2nd income group	3rd income group	4th income group	5th income group	Total*
Religious programs	18.7	21.0	17.6	16.4	13.6	25.8
Literary programs	12.5	5.0	4.6	7.4	6.8	8.6
Farmers programs	12.5	15.0	17.6	29.9	18.2	27.5
News	31.3	31.0	32.4	19.4	36.4	43.1
Music	25.0	24.0	25.0	25.4	22.7	35.3
Kurdish programs	–	2.0	2.8	1.5	2.2	3.0
Other	–	2.0	–	–	–	0.8

* Figures for total refer to the percentage of the landless households who prefer a particular program, for example 43.1 percent refers to 100 households out of the total of 232 who preferred new programs. Thus the column headed by 'Total' does not add up to 100 percent.
Source: Mostafa Azkia, *Khushnishinan-i Kurdistan* (Landless Peasants of Kurdistan) (Tehran University, 1976), 304.

Table 5.11 Percentage distribution of landholding peasants by the preferred type of radio program

	1–4	4.1–8	8.1–15 hectares	15.1 and over	Total
Religious programs	21.3	23.2	17.4	24.2	21.5
Peasant programs	10.6	15.8	18.8	11.2	14.0
News	27.7	29.3	33.3	32.3	30.3
Music	33.0	28.0	26.1	27.4	29.0
Other	7.4	3.7	4.4	4.8	5.2

Source: Mostafa Azkia, *Khushnishinan-i Kurdistan* (Landless Peasants of Kurdistan) (Tehran University, 1976), 390.

21.3 percent of peasants listening to such programs.[17] Finally, we should point out the category of radio programs in the Kurdish language given only in Table 5.10 for landless laborers. Although there appears to be a lack of interest in such programs, the very existence of the programs broadcast in the Kurdish language indicates an important feature of the official attitude of the Iranian state towards the Kurdish question as early as 1960. It implies at least the recognition of the Kurds as a cultural minority and points to one of the features of

the official nationalism of the Iranian state which distinguishes it from the old pervasive pan-Turkism defining the official nationalism of the Turkish state and its policy towards the Kurds of Turkey.[18]

Inequality within Kurdistan

A unified nationalist/political movement is unlikely to develop in a society characterized by internal division. Growth of nationalism requires the existence of a relatively cohesive society as one of its principal preconditions. For example, many historical analyses of communist China explain the failure of the nationalist forces of Chiang Kai-shek to take root outside the Chinese cities by emphasizing that the conflict between exploiters and exploited was too sharp to allow popular support for an ideology which stresses common membership in a single family. By contrast the ideology of class conflict made more sense and the idea of common interests of direct producers was far more enthusiastically received.

Barrington Moore, in his book *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, includes a chapter entitled 'The Decay of Imperial China and the Origins of the Communist Variant.'[19] There, he emphasizes the long established hostility of the Chinese peasantry to the landlords. The landlords had never been an active part of the productive process. Their access to land had been achieved through the examination process and as a direct consequence of their ties with the dynasty. While they did periodically ensure the establishment of, or the reconstruction of, the irrigation control system, with the decline of the central government in the nineteenth century, this task became increasingly less prominent. As central government control deteriorated, gangsterism and the growth of warlords became the central feature of the Chinese experience. Due to the increasing neglect of the irrigation system, the Chinese peasantry was subject to a greater and greater economic burden. Furthermore, competition from the new Western textile industry tended to undermine a small but significant source of income for the peasants.

Traditionally, Chinese agriculture was dependent, almost entirely, on a huge supply of laborers working small pieces of land without animals or machinery, or help from a fellow peasant. There were no reasons for communal or collective agricultural efforts extending beyond the bounds of the family unit. Village society did exist but its role was largely confined to temples and festivals. In the 1920s and 1930s, a large number of peasants could no longer survive on their lands. Threatened

with starvation, many joined the warlords and rebel armies. However, it is significant to note that without the Japanese occupation of China, revolution would not have occurred. The Japanese invasion managed to do two things: it led to the removal of the landlords and the Kuomintang officials to the large cities, and it helped to form a unity among the peasantry.

For nationalism to develop in a predominantly agrarian society such as Kurdistan, the relative absence of sharp class antagonism in rural Kurdistan was a crucial prerequisite. Although there does not appear to be any detailed work relating cohesiveness of rural society to the growth of nationalism, the idea of relative equality and solidarity of traditional agrarian communities is not new at all. It goes back to the nineteenth-century Narodnik thesis that rural Russia consisted essentially of primitive communistic peasant societies. Teodor Shanin has produced a defense of this view in a well-known study of the Russian peasantry pointing to economic and demographic conditions that favored a sense of solidarity and cohesiveness rather than conflict between capitalists and workers among members of village communities.[20]

The crucial issue of relevance in this argument to the growth of Kurdish nationalism is whether rural Kurdistan is characterized by the relative absence of agrarian class divisions. This section is devoted to an answer to this question, more especially with reference to the single most important event that has shaped the economic and social life of rural Kurdistan, namely the Land Reform of 1962–66.

Land distribution

The first factor we examine in this regard is the impact of the Land Reform of 1962–1966 on the distribution of land in Kurdistan. Although the picture is far from clear in all details, there is little doubt that the broad impact of Land Reform on the social structure of rural Kurdistan was to reduce inequality among the main social classes and to this extent should be regarded as a cohesive force and thus a factor contributing towards the growth of Kurdish nationalism.

Landed property contributed 78 percent, while peasant property stood at only 8 percent of the total cultivated land in 1950.[21] Ann Lambton in her study of Iranian Land Reform also reports the dominance of large land ownership in much of Kurdistan, especially in the Sanandaj and Saqqiz areas.[22] In the selected sample of villages in Azkia's study, large land ownership (6 dangs)[23] constituted 46.9 percent of land ownership while small peasant land ownership was

Table 5.12 Percentage of land owned by peasant families after the Land Reform

Size of land	Households	Total cultivated land owned
Less than 4 ha	35	8.2
4.1–8 ha	27	19.6
8–15 ha	23	31.3
15.1 ha and over	15	40.9

Source: Mostafa Azkia, *Khushnishinan-i Kurdistan* (Landless Peasants of Kurdistan) (Tehran University, 1976), table 149, 291.

42.9 percent in the villages covered by this study.[24] Already by the end of the first stage of the Reform in Kurdistan 73 percent of large land properties (6 dangs) and 52 percent of small ones (less than 6 dangs) were distributed to peasants.[25] The scope of land transfer became considerable with the waning influence of landowners in the second stage of the Reform.

Table 5.12 supports the general conclusion that the influence of landlords, at least their economic influence, had to a very large extent been diminished with the implementation of the Reform resulting in a greater equality of land ownership among Kurdish peasants, perhaps substantially so. It should particularly be noted that more than half of the total land is owned by those with 4 to 15 hectares. While we do not wish to attach a great deal of significance to the precise values given above as they conceal substantial variation across Kurdistan, they nevertheless suggest a relatively large class of middle peasantry, normally considered as a major social force in radical peasant and nationalist movements. The main point, however, as far as our argument is concerned, is that the impact of Land Reform was to reduce the influence of socially divisive traditional exploiting classes and bring about a more cohesive society, an outcome which must have contributed towards the consolidation of a national identity within Kurdistan.

Furthermore, it would appear that the scope for wage labor among landless peasants is rather limited. According to the study by Azkia 78.4 percent of all those working on land were peasants with, at least, some land and only 21.7 percent constituted the landless laborer. The scope for wage labor, of course, is wider than it may appear from these figures as many landowning peasants supplement their income by wage employment for others, especially seasonally. Nonetheless, not only does the exploitation of labor have limited scope in rural

Kurdistan, but also landlessness seems to be caused primarily by population pressure on land rather than exploitation of the peasants and a process of growing differentiation within the peasantry. This is further supported by the percentage of wage labor in the employment position of those above 10 years of age with agriculture as their main sector of work.

In 1960, two years prior to the start of the Reform, wage employment contributed only 14 percent of employment among the male population over 10 years of age with agriculture as their main sector of work.[26] Although the levels of 14 percent in 1960 and 21.7 percent in 1973 are not strictly comparable because the area covered is probably somewhat different, if we take them as very rough orders of magnitude it must be said that an increase of 7 percent for wage labor in Kurdish agriculture does appear to be rather small when put in the context of the major Land Reform in 1962–66, which aimed, above all, at expanding the market economy and commercial agriculture in rural Iran, and therefore at expanding the role of wage labor in the rural economy of Kurdistan. We shall return to this point below but here it should only be noted that the picture these numbers suggest is of a rural economic structure which some ten years after the Land Reform has a limited role both for traditional as well as modern exploitation of poorer social groups by richer ones. Such conditions of relative equality can only work to the benefit of greater social cohesion in Kurdistan and help to reinforce a sense of national community among its members. This conclusion is not just based on the pattern of land distribution and the extent of wage labor but is also supported by other indicators which reveal a relatively less unequal society in Kurdistan compared to Iran as a whole.

Land and population

The issue of the relationship between poverty and occupational change highlights many points which are of direct reference to our earlier discussion of relative equality within rural Kurdistan, namely the causes of landlessness. Clearly, if this were mainly due to economic differentiation within the peasantry, then it would be hard to maintain the argument of limited scope for class divisions. However, there appears to be little evidence in support of the view that changing land ownership from the poorer to richer peasants is the chief cause of landlessness. On the contrary, available figures on this issue strongly suggest that it is the pressure of population growth on land which is the principal cause of landlessness in rural Kurdistan.

Table 5.13   Percentage distribution of types of peasant families by size of land ownership

Types of families	0–4	4.1–8	8.1–15	15.1 and over	Total for all landowning
			hectares		
Childless couples	4.3	3.7	6.5	–	4.0
Couples with children	58.6	55.6	32.6	36.7	48.0
Total of nuclear families	62.9	59.3	39.1	36.7	52.0
Couples with married children but without grandchildren	4.3	7.4	4.3	6.7	5.5
Couples with married children and grandchildren	4.3	1.9	8.8	16.7	6.5
Other types of extended families	20.0	22.1	41.3	36.7	28.0
Total of extended families	28.6	31.4	54.4	60.1	40.0
Incomplete families	8.5	9.3	6.5	3.2	7.5

Source: Mostafa Azkia, *Khushnishinan-i Kurdistan* (Landless Peasants of Kurdistan) (Tehran University, 1976), 384.

Table 5.13 sums up the evidence on this from the monograph on the landless peasants of Kurdistan relating the size of the land owned by a peasant household to the structure of the peasant family, that is nuclear/extended.

The first two groups are nuclear families, without and with parents' own (unmarried) children. The next three groups are extended families, parents with married children (two generations), with children and grandchildren (three generations), and other kinds of extended families. The final group is incomplete families, for example unmarried son and mother, and so on. We can add two separate rows to the table to show the total within the total nuclear and total extended groups. Looking at the two rows in aggregate we can see that nuclear families dominate the Kurdish peasantry, that is 52 percent of all peasant households. Moreover, the percentage of nuclear families falls with the size of landholding from 62.9 percent to 59.3 percent to 39.1 percent to 36.7 percent over the four groups of landholding peasants.

There is a clear negative relationship between the size of landholding and the percentage of nuclear families. By contrast the percentage of extended families increases with the increase in the size of land

Table 5.14 Household size in relation to household income

Size of shareholding in co-op	Average size of family
Less than 15 shares	3.7
15–29 shares	5.9
30–39 shares	6.4
40 shares and over	6.4
Landless	4.6

Source: Babayi, *Sharkat-i Sahami-i Zera-yi Farah: Sanandaj* (Farah Farm Corporation: Sanandaj), 2nd report, (Tehran University, Institute of Social Study and Research, 1971), 10.

owned and the relationship between the two is clearly positive. Taken together these suggest that ownership of sizable pieces of land provide the economic means of sustaining large extended families, the type of families favored in traditional tribal/rural societies. The very fact that nuclear families were more dominant, points to the fact that the pattern of land ownership after the Land Reform cannot sustain the traditional family structure, forcing people to set up nuclear households. Support for this view also comes from the study of the 'Farah' peasant cooperative conducted in Kurdistan around the same time, given in Table 5.14.

Again, it can clearly be seen that average family size increases with the amount of shares owned in the cooperative and the average household size for the landless is smaller than all the landholding peasants except the poorest group with less than 15 shares. It is thus clear that the high rate of fertility typical of rural societies such as Kurdistan has exerted pressure on family land resources forcing components of extended families to detach themselves into separate nuclear families. The great majority of such families would have to earn their living without access to any land of their own.

To see this more clearly the argument of this section should be put in the context of the preceding section on occupational mobility. As a second look at Table 5.7 shows, the largest group experiencing occupational change were landless agricultural laborers whose fathers were landowning peasants. This obviously provides an extremely important part of our tentative hypothesis that the structure of rural Kurdistan after the Land Reform is such that class conflict has a subordinate position because conditions favoring relative equality within rural Kurdistan and enforcing cohesiveness in it are quite strong.

With regard to the particular issue of causes of landlessness, the assessment of this section shows that on the basis of sources available

for this research loss of land due to a process of differentiation of peasantry played a negligible role and on this we can do no better than quote the conclusion of the best available study of rural Kurdistan, that 'the phenomenon of a landless laboring class in the rural society of Kurdistan is *to a large extent* the result of population growth.'[27] In such a rural society the politics of resentment among social classes is likely to be muted. Coupled with the pattern of land ownership since the Reform as giving rise to a substantial number of small to medium size peasants, this feature of rural Kurdistan explains why wage laborers constitute a relatively small part of the rural population (about 20 percent according to the Azkia survey compared to twice this amount for the whole country).[28]

The dispossession of small peasants appears to be relatively unimportant and, in the absence of a significant large landholding class, the scope for wage labor is limited, especially in the northern, mountainous parts of Kurdistan where smallholding dominates. Much excess labor in these conditions would have to be absorbed into the urban economy and would leave the rural communities either temporarily or permanently.

Conflicts of interests – landless and landholding peasant households

So far, we have ignored the divisions within the category of landless households or the Khushnishinan of Kurdish villages. In a study of Iranian Land Reform of 1962–66 by Hooglund, an analysis of this category of village households suggested two important sources of conflict within Iranian villages resulting from the implementation of the Land Reform program during 1962–66. The first is the conflict between the rural middlemen/moneylenders and the poor, smallholding subsistence farmers, the second, that between the latter group and landless agricultural laborers. The only factor that links various groups of the Khushnishin households within the category of Khushnishin is the absence of landownership among them and in general this category is very heterogeneous.

The better-off group of village creditors, tradesmen, usually identified with village shopkeepers, comprised about only 6 percent of Khushnishin households in Iranian villages before the Land Reform and yet they were among the wealthiest group. They owed their privileged position to the fact that absentee landowners were not interested in trade or moneylending to villagers.[29]

After the Land Reform and chiefly due to the dependence of a large class of landowning peasants with holdings too small to be viable, this

small group of Khushnishin accumulated considerable wealth. This was achieved both by extension of credit at high interest rates to poorer households and by engaging in *salaf-khari*, the practice of advance purchase of peasant produce at discount rates. However, the growth of this group providing a source of credit to the village poor was checked by the development of the government credit institutions after the Reform.

This disparity between the group of moneylenders/middlemen and others constituted a major source of resentment after the Land Reform. Turning to the second cause, we must look at the remaining Khushnishin households. The non-agricultural workers, for example carpenters, barbers, etc. constituted some 10 percent of Khushnishin while agricultural laborers made up at least 80 percent of the Khushnishin households of the Iranian villages.[30] This is the reason that we identify the landless households with agricultural laborers. The exclusion of this group from the provisions of the Land Reform laws of 1962–66 meant that their position vis-à-vis the peasant proprietors deteriorated substantially.

More specifically, this decline has to be understood with reference to the position of smallholding peasants. The land transfer to the latter remained as much as 25 percent of the land on which landless laborers obtained seasonal work. In addition, the small size of their holdings does not generate sufficient income for small peasants, and they usually supplement their income with wage labor for larger farmers putting them in direct competition with landless laborers for a limited amount of employment, thus depressing the level of agricultural wages. The consequence is that the 'relations between the two groups have been based on economic competition characterized by tension and even hostility.'[31]

As far as they impact the politics of Kurdish nationalism, the first of these two sources of conflict is of greater significance and potentially more destructive to the cohesive fabric of a (relatively) less unequal society than the second. The first signifies a conflict between the rich and the poor, the second between two different groups of poor rural households. Are these sources of conflict which characterize Iranian villages as important in the rural society of Kurdistan, or at least sufficiently strong to reverse the factors favorable to communal solidarity in the Kurdish villages of Iran?

Let us take up the issue of the growth of middlemen/moneylenders first. According to the study on the landless peasants of Kurdistan by Azkia, the group of tradesmen/moneylenders constituted 13.8 percent

of landless households, and if we divide the latter into two income groups, this percentage becomes 7.7 percent among poor landless households but increases to 19 percent among rich landless households. Comparable figures for agricultural laborers among all landless households are 70.11 percent in total, 79.6 percent for poor households and 62.1 percent for rich ones.[32]

More useful is to determine the growth of this group within Kurdish villages. We have no information on the growing wealth of this group, and have to use the increase in their numbers as an indirect indicator of their changing importance in the village life of Kurdistan. Nor do we have information on this issue relating to before and after the Land Reform. However, a way of dealing with this issue is to compare inter-generational changes in the occupational composition of this group. To the extent that the growth of this group may have been slow, such inter-generational comparison can capture more of the changes than one based on a snapshot of before and after the Reform. Table (5.15) is intended to shed some light on this question.

Table 5.15 contains all the three social groups within the landless households referred to by Hooglund. The middlemen group has more than doubled its size in this two-generational context. The increase has been an even larger threefold one if we confine ourselves to the poorer shopkeepers (less than 40,000 R). Agricultural laborers constitute the largest number of households but their growth, though substantial, has been less pronounced than the first group. By contrast Hooglund's

Table 5.15 Percentage distribution of heads of landless households and their fathers by occupational category in two income groups

Occupational categories	Father of the household head			Household		
	Less than 40,000 R.	More than 40,000 R.	Total of both groups	Less than 40,000 R.	More than 40,000 R.	Total of both groups
Agricultural laborer	43.3	26.1	34.8	65.2	39.1	52.3
Moneylender/ shopkeeper	8.7	13.0	10.8	21.7	26	23.8
Laborer/service	4.4	30.4	17.4	8.7	–	4.4
Artisan	13.0	17.4	15.2	–	21.7	10.8
Other	30.5	13.1	21.8	4.4	13.2	8.8

Source: Mustafa Azkia, *Khushnishinan-i Kurdistan* (Landless Peasants of Kurdistan) (Tehran University, 1976), 122.

non-agricultural laboring group (artisans and personnel servicing combined) has experienced a sharp drop. The number of such households has been reduced by half primarily because people providing personal services seem to have disappeared as an occupational category, (bearing in mind the relatively small size of the survey from which this table is drawn). On the whole, this appears to support the view that the growth of this group of middlemen must have exerted powerful pressure on the cohesiveness of rural communities of Kurdistan. However, such a conclusion would not be consistent with our other findings and the result of this section would have to be put in the context of our discussion on long-distance trade.

All the evidence suggest that in Kurdistan, trade and moneylending were primarily the functions of the urban shopkeepers even before the Land Reform. This is also supported by both Tables 5.1 and 5.2, which show the principal purchasers of peasants' output to be the urban shopkeepers. Table 5.1 covering the Sanandaj region demonstrates a much larger role for rural shopkeepers, though even here they experienced a sharp fall in their share after the Land Reform due to the government's substantially increased share of grain purchase.

The category of the rural middlemen is a very minor source of purchasers for peasant output in Table 5.2 covering all of Kurdistan. Only 14 percent of the output of the poorest peasants, those with less than 4 hectares of land, are bought by the rural middlemen. The share of this group in the purchase of produce from the remaining three groups of peasant proprietors is negligible. Hence this group does not have a strong hold on Kurdish peasant life. That is not to say that the extent of control of this group over landless household laborers is not great. Indeed, compared to peasant proprietors whose source of credit and trade are the urban shopkeepers, the landless laborers are forced to turn to rural middlemen for the consumption goods and credit they require. However, such potential conflict as may exist between rural middlemen and rural laborers plays a minor role in the social context of rural Kurdistan in view of the relative size of this class of landless laborers compared with the rest of the country.

Turning now to the second issue, the degree of conflict between subsistence peasants and landless laborers, this depends on the extent to which the former group participates in the labor market to supplement their income. Table 5.16 gives the percentage distribution of the number of heads of peasant proprietors by occupational categories.

The category of 'others' in this table refers to various combined occupations such as herding-farming-arboriculture or farming-shopkeeping

Table 5.16   Percentage distribution of heads of peasant households by occupation

Occupation	0–4	4.1–8	8.1–15	15.1 and over	Total
			hectares		
Farmers	10.0	16.7	21.8	13.3	15.0
Farmers and herders	17.1	33.3	34.8	56.8	31.5
Farmers and laborer	17.1	01.9	02.2	–	7.0
Others	55.8	48.1	41.2	29.9	46.5

Source: Mostafa Azkia, *Khushnishinan-i Kurdistan* (Landless Peasants of Kurdistan) (Tehran University, 1976), 370.

and so on, but *excludes* any occupational grouping with wage labor as a component. These have all been combined into a single category because they are not of interest to the issue here, which is the extent of wage labor as a supplementary occupation.

As we can see only 7 percent of the peasant households relied on wage labor as the supplementary source of income. By contrast, a much greater source of supplementary income comes from herding. For those who owned 4 hectares of land or less, wages were a relatively modest source of income, on a par with herding, at 17.1 percent. It might be thought that, despite the small percentage, the income generated from wage labor can be very substantial, but this is not so. In total, only 16.5 percent of the income of Kurdish peasant proprietors in the Khushnishin survey came from wage labor, and the percentage for subsistence is no more than 12.5 percent.[33]

This pattern, especially the importance of herding as a very important source of peasant supplementary income and the limited role of wage labor even for the subsistence peasants, makes a great deal of sense. Much of the smallholding in Kurdistan is concentrated in mountainous regions to the north where precisely due to the relative absence of medium to large sized landholdings, scope for wage labor on other people's land is very limited. In such a geographical environment herding is a much more natural source of supplementary employment for subsistence peasants. Where there are large landowning peasants, for example in Sanandaj region, or medium sized peasants as in the Marivan region, smallholding peasants are less common and, therefore, there is also no scope for the conflict of interests between wage labor and subsistence peasants. To sum up the result of this section we can say the first source of conflict that Hooglund draws attention to, the growing control of *rural* middlemen/money-

lenders, does not extend to the Kurdish peasantry. This group of land-less laborers are a very small part of the rural population of Kurdistan, and thus the threat to the solidarity of the rural Kurdish communities from this source of inequality, though present, can be regarded as minor. The second source of conflict between the two poorest groups at the bottom of the social scale of the Kurdish peasantry and the landless population, namely subsistence peasants and agricultural laborers, is relatively absent in Kurdistan due to the particular geographic pattern of small and large landholdings, since where there is a dominance of subsistence farming, there is also little scope for wage labor, and where there is scope for the latter, smallholding peasants tend not to be very common. Therefore the two sides to this conflict, which according to Hooglund were common in Iranian villages after the Land Reform, are not brought together frequently enough to pose a threat to the cohesiveness of the Kurdish rural life. We can, therefore, just disregard inequality from this source.

Rural and urban inequality within Kurdistan

The second criterion we employ in this regard is made up of a number of indicators of inequality *within* Kurdistan. However, in order to have a point of comparison by reference to which we can assess how relatively more or less unequal Kurdistan is, we report similar figures for Iran as a whole. In all such comparisons our aim is to find out whether we can reasonably describe them as factors which tend to favor cohesiveness rather than division within the Iranian Kurdish society. If so, that would obviously constitute an important explanation for the growth of Kurdish nationalism and the consolidation of the social basis of Kurdish nationalist parties.

We start by comparing the share of income for the bottom 40 percent, the middle 40 percent and the top 20 percent of all households in Kurdistan and Iran as a whole. The study carried out by the Plan and Budget Organization of Iran in 1987 on the current conditions in the province of Kurdistan puts these in 1982–83 at 17.8 percent as compared to 13.3 percent, 40.8 percent as compared to 37.3 percent, and 41.4 percent as compared to 49.4 percent for the bottom, middle and top income groups in Kurdistan and Iran respectively.[34]

Let us look at this in more detail. Table 5.17 shows the distribution of the number of families by deciles of total expenditure for rural areas, comparing the province of Kurdistan to Iran as a whole.

Table 5.17 confirms a greater equality in rural Kurdistan compared to rural Iran. Generally speaking, within each expenditure decile class,

Table 5.17   Percentage distribution of sampled rural households by annual expenditure in rials in the province of Kurdistan and all Iran

	Kurdistan	**Iran**
Less than 12,000	2.35	6.45
120,001–240,000	4.71	11.18
240,001–360,000	11.18	13.79
360,001–480,000	14.12	13.12
480,001–600,000	12.35	11.70
600,001–900,000	24.12	20.03
900,001–1,200,000	12.65	10.36
1,200,001–1,800,000	12.35	8.28
1,800,001–2,400,000	3.24	2.52
2,400,001 and over	2.94	1.93

Source: The Plan and Budget Organization of Iran, *Majmu'i-i Barisi va Shinakht-i Vaz'e Moujoud dar Ostan-i Kurdistan* (Collection of the Studies on the Current Conditions in the Province of Kurdistan), Vol. I (Tehran, 1987), 459.

the number of families as percentages of the total for Kurdistan are smaller for the bottom three deciles of poor households compared with Iran and higher for the remaining seven deciles, compared to the corresponding number of families as percentages of the total for Iran as a whole. That is to say there are fewer poor households and many more rich households as a percentage of all rural households in Kurdistan than is the case for Iran.

Since the size of the urban population of Kurdistan in the mid-1980s was not far below half of the total population of the province, it would be appropriate to have some indication of whether this growing urban population has undermined the relative equality that characterizes Kurdistan in comparison with Iran. Table 5.18 gives figures for the urban households similar to those given in Table 5.17 for the rural households. Here again we see that the number of poor households (as a percentage of the total) in the bottom three classes is less in urban Kurdistan than in urban Iran, while there are more middle expenditure households – the middle 4th, 5th, and 6th deciles – in urban Kurdistan and fewer in urban Iran. At the top of the distribution – the last four deciles of urban Kurdistan compared to urban Iran – there is relatively less in Kurdistan than in Iran. Thus there are fewer poor households, more middle ones and fewer richer households in urban Kurdistan than in urban Iran. On this basis. It is likely that if we were to compare inequality in urban Kurdistan with urban Iran, the latter would be smaller.

Table 5.18 Percentage distribution of sampled *urban* households by annual expenditure in rials in the province of Kurdistan and all Iran

	Kurdistan	**Iran**
Less than 120,001	2.00	3.07
120,001–240,000	4.40	4.99
240,001–360,000	4.40	6.84
360,001–480,000	8.40	7.74
480,001–600,000	14.00	8.09
600,001–900,000	23.20	19.03
900,001–1,200,000	13.20	14.51
1,200,001–1,800,000	15.60	17.75
1,800,001–2,400,000	7.60	8.11
2,400,001 and over	7.20	9.85

Source: *Current Conditions of the Province of Kurdistan*, vol. I, 458.

The more immediate question is whether this growing urbanization has taken Kurdistan further from the relative egalitarianism that the province had inherited from rural Kurdistan up to the late 1970s, when it was far more rural in its overall make-up. Since the gap in the standard of living between urban and rural Kurdistan is likely to be less than between urban and rural Iran, one would expect the inclusion of urban Kurdistan and a comparison between the whole province with the whole of Iran on the basis of some aggregate indicator of inequality to show Kurdistan as still a more equal society and still dominated by its more equal rural areas and, by implication, still a relatively cohesive society.

We can employ as an aggregate measure of inequality at the level of the whole province (the urban sector included), the Gini index of inequality. The calculation of this coefficient need not concern us here and it is enough to be able to interpret different Gini estimates of inequality. This is a very commonly used measure that varies between 0 and 1. The closer the value of the coefficient is to zero, the more equal is the distribution of a factor among households such as land or income to which it is applied. A Gini estimate for 1982–83 given by the Plan and Budget Organization is 0.347 as compared to 0.424 for Iran as a whole.[35] Thus on this overall score too Kurdistan appears as a more equal society.

The argument we have presented in this section regarding the relative equity of Iranian Kurdistan taken as a single entity, especially rural Kurdistan, is a weaker version of the thesis advanced by Shanin. His is

a more extensive model of how and under what condition this relative absence of inequality and the consequent social solidarity can persist over time. He suggests a mechanism to sustain continuity, namely 'cyclical mobility,' and a process during which many of the village households experience consecutively periods of enrichment and impoverishment. Some aspects of the rural life of Kurdistan presented in this chapter bear a superficial resemblance to this cyclical pattern of seasonal laboring and seasonal migration allowing people to drop in and out of the economic system of village society. Nonetheless, we make no claim for the persistence of conditions favoring communal solidarity in rural Kurdistan beyond the period for which we supply data in this chapter. For our purpose, that is a prerequisite for the growth of Kurdish nationalism, this limited, weaker version is quite sufficient.

Inequality between Kurdistan and Iran

The indicators show that there are some important aspects of the economic structure of Kurdistan which serve to contain class antagonism between social classes and reinforce the relative homogeneity of Kurdistan, at least in its rural areas. This is not to say that the mere presence of such cohesiveness would be sufficient for the growth of nationalism. The flip side of this relative equality within Kurdistan is the extent of inequality *between* Kurdistan and Iran. Without the latter no amount of cohesiveness can produce sufficient popular dissatisfaction on which to base a distinct minority nationalism.

The literature on nationalism acknowledges the kind of inequality we saw in Chapter 1, the 'uneven development' between communities, as a principal cause of nationalism. Tom Nairn in chapter 9 of his book stresses that nationalist movements become particularly vocal in communities that are behind in terms of industry, standard of living and so on, that is in backward societies after World War II, or in communities that felt a threat to their position of being front-runners, such as tsarist Russia or modern Britain.[36] In either case, the 'uneven development' becomes the driving force of nationalism.

No development, of course, has ever been even, and thus to speak of 'uneven' development as a major cause of nationalism is not very helpful. However, the substance of this idea is contained in the notion of inequality, more specifically *relative* inequality. The mere fact of backwardness is not so relevant here as the gap with the group or the community used as a standard of comparison. It is the relative

inequality between Kurdistan and the better-off parts of Iran rather than the poverty of the region in any absolute sense which is important for Kurdish nationalism. Indeed the perception of this relative inequality among the members of a national minority is politically more important in generating a sense of resentment on which nationalism feeds even if inequalities are in fact relatively moderate. Runciman has pointed to the fact that when substantial inequalities are perceived by people, it always involves a comparison of their position with a 'reference group' belonging to the same category. The perception of relative deprivation is related to the gap from such a comparison.[37] In this section, we shall follow this approach in general. Since we have no access to information on people's opinions on the scope of such inequalities we shall simply base our comparison on actual averages for the province of Kurdistan and for Iran as a whole.

A principal component of this inequality between Iran and the minority society of Kurds within it is the non-existence of Kurds among the Iranian elite. To be sure some important Kurdish individuals with their origin in Kermanshahan, the Shi'i region of Kurdistan, have been part of the Iran ruling elite, but one would be hard pressed to think of any Sunni Kurds among the Iranian elites, either in politics or among the military or even in business, both prior to 1980 and since the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The position of Kurds in this regard is in strong contrast to the minority Azerbaijani elites, who have always constituted an important part of the Iranian elites.

However, turning to the other indicators of inequality affecting the entire society, a good overall measure of the standard of living of a community is the proportion of its expenditure on food. The percentage of total expenditure on food declines as income increases because the share of non-food items becomes substantial in a richer society, for example greater expenditure on education, health, housing, etc. Thus the smaller the percentage of food expenditure in a society, the higher is the average standard of living enjoyed by that society. According to the household budget survey of 1984–85, average share of food to total expenditure was about 50 percent for urban Kurdistan compared to 39 percent for urban Iran, while food share is about the same for rural areas, perhaps because the differences among most of the rural communities of Iran with respect to non-food consumption are relatively small.[38] Thus Kurdish urban areas have a lower standard of living.

Given the largely growing importance of the urban population of Kurdistan discussed below, the inequality in the standard of living between Iran and Kurdistan as measured by food share is concentrated

where it politically matters most for the development of a nationalist movement, namely in the Kurdish cities.

Nevertheless food share is only one limited indicator of standard of living. We shall also look at another component, namely illiteracy. Literacy correlated to many other material and cultural aspects of life, for example better employment, higher income, better housing, and so on. The extent of relative illiteracy can thus be regarded as a summary indicator of these aspects. As an example in 1984–85, the percentage of families with an illiterate household head was 80 percent for rural Kurdistan compared with 74 percent for all rural areas of Iran. The urban difference is greater, 59 percent for Kurdistan compared to 42 percent for Iran.[39]

In all these comparisons between Kurdistan and Iran, it should be borne in mind that there are poorer, perhaps much poorer, regions than Kurdistan, for example Sistan and Baluchistan, whose inclusion in the whole country brings down the Iran averages closer to the Kurdistan averages. It is more realistic to assume that a sense of relative deprivation, at least for the urban population of Kurdistan, is more likely to be the result of comparison with better-off parts of Iran rather than the most deprived regions, suggesting a comparison with Tehran as more appropriate. Such comparison would undoubtedly reveal a much bigger gap between the Kurds and their 'reference' group.

One way to interpret the relativity implied in such a comparison is to arrange these two indicators of standard of living and illiteracy for each of the 24 provinces by their relative position to each other and look at the place of Kurdistan relative to the others, especially to Tehran. To this end Table 5.19 has ordered the provinces of Iran in terms of decreasing average share of food in the total household budget in 1983–84 for rural and urban areas separately. Thus the province with the lowest standard of living will have the rank of 1 corresponding to the highest food share, the next the rank of 2, and so on, until we assign the highest number to the province with the highest standard of living. When two or more provinces have the same average value of food share, they receive the same rank. We can thus see the position of Kurdistan relative to any 'reference' province such as Tehran once they are arranged in this way.

The reference group is decided on the basis of subjective group percentage and attitudes. Nonetheless, it is safe to assume that such perceptions of relative deprivation are principally, but not exclusively, influenced by actual relative inequalities, so we can use the latter as a rough indicator of individual or group perceptions. This is what we

Table 5.19 Ranking of provinces by average food share, 1983–84

Province	Rural*		Urban**	
	Food share	Rank	Food share	Rank
Tehran	42.3	23	33.0	22
Central	57.5	2	41.0	15
Gilan	59.0	1	43.3	11
Mazandaran	49.5	13	41.1	14
E. Azerbaijan	55.7	3	40.6	16
W. Azerbaijan	50.4	10	42.6	13
Bakhtaran	53.4	8	46.1	5
Khuzistan	55.2	5	46.0	6
Fars	47.3	17	38.1	20
Kerman	46.9	18	40.0	18
Khorasan	53.9	6	39.8	19
Esfahan	49.9	12	43.1	12
Sistan & Baluchistan	45.8	20	45.9	7
Kurdistan	49.1	15	50.9	4
Hamadan	49.4	14	45.2	9
Bakhtiari	55.3	4	52.7	2
Lurestan	53.6	7	51.5	3
Ilam	45.0	21	43.7	10
Boyer Ahmadi	53.2	9	55.9	1
Boshehr	44.8	22	40.4	17
Zanjan	55.2	5	46.0	6
Semnan	48.4	16	37.7	21
Yazd	46.3	19	45.4	8
Hormozgan	50.1	11	46.1	5
Average	51.7	–	38.7	–

Source: ***** Ranking obtained on the basis of rural food/non-food expenditure from *Expenditure and Income Rural Households, 1983–84*, Ministry of Plan and Budget, table 6, 15. ******Ranking obtained on the basis of urban food/non-food expenditure from *Expenditure and Income of Urban Households, 1983–84*, Ministry of Plan and Budget, table 7, 17.

have done in Table 5.19 by basing relative inequality on ranking of food share. Tehran, for both the rural and urban population, is the province with the highest standard of living in the country, that is, lowest food share and thus highest rank.

Suppose we chose Tehran as the 'reference group' for Kurdistan, since it may be argued it is the province to which the rest of the country is most exposed to in the mass media etc. Let us first look at the rural areas. Although the gap in ranking between rural Kurdistan (15) and Tehran (23) is wide, seen in the context of other provinces

this gap is not really substantial. Indeed, the standard of living in rural Kurdistan is above the average for rural Iran, with a food share of 49.1 percent for rural Kurdistan as opposed to 51.7 percent for rural Iran. This reflects the many aspects of relative equality of rural Kurdistan, more equal distribution of land, the relatively small class of wage laborers, and so on.

By contrast when we turn to the comparison of food share between urban Kurdistan and urban Tehran, the gap is in fact very substantial. Urban Kurdistan has the fourth lowest standard of living, while urban Tehran has the highest among all provinces of the country. Urban Kurdistan also has a much lower standard of living compared with the country average, with a 50.9 percent food share for urban Kurdistan but 38.7 percent for the average of urban Iran.

Here again relative inequality is shown to a greater extent in urban Kurdistan where the leadership and perhaps the bulk of active cadres of nationalist political organizations are drawn from. Note again that the gap between rural and urban standard of living in Kurdistan is slight. At 49.1 percent food share, rural Kurdistan enjoys a slightly higher standard of living (at 50.9 percent) than urban Kurdistan. The corresponding gaps for Tehran (42.3 percent rural and 33.0 percent urban) or for Iran (51.7 percent rural and 38.7 percent urban) are not only very large, but also the rural standard of living is much worse than the urban. This is another indication, if more were needed, that Kurdistan, urban sector included, is characterized by a greater degree of equality primarily because the rural standard of living is relatively high bringing it closer to the urban Kurdistan standard.

Finally, we present a similar ranking for illiteracy. The much larger gap for the urban areas given above combined with greater inequality in standard of living in urban areas of Kurdistan compared to Tehran (or average Iran) suggests that the urban sector is a crucial component of this relative inequality between Kurdistan and Iran. Accordingly, Table 5.20, giving relative ranking for illiteracy, is confined to the urban population of Iran only. Figures given in this table relate to the percentage of illiterate persons six or more years old in the total urban population in each province in 1981–82.

The relative inequality as regards illiteracy between urban Kurdistan and that of the 'reference group,' that is urban Tehran, is the largest gap existing between any province and Tehran. Indeed, Kurdistan has the highest rate of urban illiteracy (73.5 percent) in the country, over twice that of Tehran and very substantially above the country average. Although one may have some reservations about the precise ranking of

Table 5.20 Ranking and percentage distribution of illiterate urban population 6 years of age and over by province, 1981–82

Province	No. of illiterates as percentage of total urban population	Rank
Tehran	35.2	23
Central	51.7	15
Gilan	43.8	20
Mazandaran	48.3	18
E. Azerbaijan	59.1	6
W. Azerbaijan	61.7	5
Bakhtaran	62.0	4
Khuzistan	56.1	9
Fars	43.7	21
Kerman	53.3	12
Khorasan	50.9	16
Esfahan	46.4	19
Sistan & Baluchistan	67.1	3
Kurdistan	73.5	1
Hamadan	54.2	11
Bakhtiari	58.6	7
Lurestan	61.7	5
Ilam	68.1	2
Boyer Ahmadi	51.8	14
Hormozgan	54.6	10
Semnan	39.0	22
Yazd	49.2	17
Zanjan	52.9	13
Boshehr	56.7	8
Total	47.9	–

Source: Ranking obtained on the basis of urban population registered by purchase of coupons for rationed goods, from *Assessment of General Problems of Human Resources and Employment – Urban Areas 1981–82, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, 20.*

urban Kurdistan in the provinces of the country,[40] the same general gap is evident from another source on illiteracy given above for 1983–84 and, what is more, is in line with a very different indicator of inequality based on food share. Both indicators show inequality between Kurdistan and Iran (or Tehran) to be substantial mainly because of the relative inequalities of the urban sector of Kurdistan. To the extent that nationalism might be said to have closer ties to urban centers than to rural areas, this type of relative inequality appears to be mostly concentrated where the resentment it generates may be of greater value to the growth of nationalism, namely, urban Kurdistan.

The question of the greater deprivation of the Kurdish regions of Iran is a less controversial issue than the question of the relative equality of Kurdistan and will not be labored any further. It is sufficient to say that the combination of limited inequality among the Kurdish population combined with perceived relative inequality between Iranian and Kurd provide a powerful force for the growth of Kurdish nationalism in Iran. Therefore the former provides the economic cohesion and reduces the inevitable social division, while the latter supplies the sense of relative deprivation emphasized by other writers of modern nationalism.

Conclusion

I have discussed a number of economic and demographic issues. These have been included in this chapter for their implications for the political sociology of Kurdish nationalism. I have shown how very rapidly changing demographic and economic conditions have transformed rural Kurdistan from isolated communities into societies well integrated with the rest of the province and its urban centers. Along with these processes came the awareness of the outside world, brought about by the integration of village communities into a closely connected entity, demonstrating the relative cohesiveness of rural Kurdistan. This suggested that the absence of a deeply divided society lacking a relatively high degree of internal solidarity among its members is unlikely to produce a successful nationalist movement which requires such solidarity as one of its principal preconditions.

The conclusion was that Kurdistan as a single entity, but particularly rural Kurdistan, is characterized by a relative absence of class antagonism particularly favorable to the growth of nationalist awareness based on common historical and cultural bounds. Finally, I discussed inequality between Kurdistan and Iran as the catalyst which activates such solidarity and awareness of nationhood into a political movement, and here too the findings were in support of the view that such inequalities are real and substantial. It is important to emphasize that I did not reach these conclusions on the basis of averages, and did not treat Kurdistan as a homogenous entity. The main part of this chapter was, indeed, developed to identify in detail groups and components of principal social classes of rural Kurdistan and pin down the sources of conflict which may threaten the solidarity of its village communities. There was much support for the conclusion reached in this chapter. The identification of geographic differences and variations in rural

Kurdistan has been harder to achieve due to a lack of more detailed regionally based data for Kurdistan. However, even here, the use of two principal sources, one for the Sanandaj region, an area of large land-ownership, along with a separate study covering a sample of all rural regions of Kurdistan has brought out some of these differences, and there have been other differences in the numbers, for example the dominance of smallholding peasants and limited scope for wage labor in northern parts of Kurdistan.

If the present chapter and the conclusion of Chapter 2 are taken as a single argument, we can now state the main theme of the continuity and change that emerges. The principal theme of continuity in Kurdish life, nomadic or rural, would have to be the natural conditions of the region. It was the mountainous features of Kurdistan which encouraged and developed nomadism as a form of economic and social organization with strong influences of egalitarianism such as widespread ownership of the herd. The transition from nomadism to settled agriculture in this predominantly mountainous province brought about many changes in Kurdish society and politics. However, these changes conceal an important element of continuity imposed on Kurdish agriculture and rural life by the same forces that encouraged egalitarianism and nomadism in the first place, namely the peculiarities of a society principally located on hills and mountains. In such an environment only small-scale farming is viable. Large landownership and a huge labor market cannot be a feature of such a society. It is this society of subsistence farming and herding from which the relative equality within Kurdistan and the solidarity of the Kurdish ethnic minority are derived.

The fact that these conclusions are particularly favorable to the growth of nationalism does not necessarily mean that nationalist activists can take advantage of them to build up mass parties. To do so requires a reasonable degree of political freedom that in the Iran of the 1960s and 1970s was denied to them. Nonetheless, what nationalist intelligentsia had to achieve by much hard groundwork in other historical eras and other countries was achieved for the Kurdish nationalists by the sheer force of the rapid economic and social changes chiefly resulting from the Land Reform of the 1960s. All the nationalists had to do was to wait for a suitable time to reap the benefits of these changes and transform a movement of the Kurdish intelligentsia into a mass party of Kurdish nationalism by drawing the population into their movement. This opportunity was offered to them by the complete collapse of the central authority in the regions of Iran such as

Kurdistan in 1979, and at least one year of enjoying a great deal of political freedom sufficient to build a mass party, given that the conditions for an enthusiastic reception of nationalism by the population had already been met.

6
Kurdistan from the 1946 Republic to the 1979 Revolution and the Islamic Republic

Introduction

In this chapter, I shall examine the political and organizational features of the Kurdish movement in the 1970s and 1980s, a decade or two after the implementation of the Land Reform program in Kurdistan. The state of the movement and its political expressions will be discussed for the period before, during and after the Revolution of 1979 in Iran to illustrate the further transformation of the Kurdish movement from its previous stages: the first stage, Simko's uprising, a totally tribal-dominated movement, the second stage, the movement in Mahabad in 1946, which, despite its urban intellectual leadership, was strongly influenced by tribal elements. Through this illustration, I shall argue that the present Kurdish movement is a mature nationalist movement led by Kurdish intellectuals with its own popular militia force, whose loyalty, foremost, lies with the Kurdish nation.

Furthermore, a main concern of this chapter is to relate the internal composition of Kurdish nationalist politics to the diversity of Kurdistan's internal economic and social structure as described in Chapters 2 and 5, and the remarkable extent to which the logic of a cohesive mountain society has imposed itself on the particular type of political movements which have emerged in Kurdistan. To this end, I shall highlight the differences in ideology, political views, and social/economic policies of the main Kurdish organizations, particularly the Democratic Party of Kurdistan of Iran (KDPI) and the Revolutionary Organization of the Toilers of Kurdistan of Iran (Komala). These two organizations are divided not only along ideological lines, but also by

geographical lines. They represent the development of the Kurdish movement in different parts of Kurdistan under quite different conditions. Komala has mainly been active in the south where agriculture has always been the major economic activity, while the KDPI, with greater influence throughout Kurdistan, nevertheless has had a dominant presence in north and central Kurdistan, where herding has always determined the economic life of its inhabitants. The relationship between the economic structure of Kurdistan and its political development is thus explored.

An important question to address at this point is the role of the generation gap in the political outlook of the two groups as an alternative to the regional explanation here. An extensive record on age and background of the membership for the two groups is not available for those not killed in combat, and even then the record is not exhaustive or equally available for both groups or for different years. For Komala, however, some details are available for the end of the Iran–Iraq war period, 1985–86.[1] In all, 17 cases are reported which include at least the age of the member at the time of death. These reveal the following.

The average age of members at the time of joining Komala was over 27, and the average age at the time of death over 29. The main cause of death, in eight cases, is reported as clashes with the government forces, two cases as executed in captivity, one death from natural causes, and the remaining six cases with no reported cause of death. Just over half of the cases for which the place of birth is reported, eight out of 17, were born in Kurdistan, three coming from poor rural peasant family backgrounds, five from urban families of whom one held a doctorate and thus was presumably from a middle-class background, and the rest from poor families. The reported cases born outside Kurdistan were even: Tehran one, Hamadan one, Tabriz two, Banab (Azerbaijan) one, Babol (Mazandaran) one, Langerood (Gilan) one, Kermanshah one. The birthplace in two cases is not reported. With regard to previous memberships of other groups, for those born in Kurdistan in the former category, only two were previously a member of a different political organization, one of which, interestingly, moved from the KDP to Komala. By contrast, five out of seven of those born outside Kurdistan had been a previous member of a non-Kurdish/Iranian organization. Of these, two came from Feda'i-i Khalq, two from Razmandagan, and one from Paykar.

One must be cautious in drawing conclusions from such a small list, as it may be unrepresentative of the membership profile of Komala

over a longer time and different conditions. Nonetheless, for what they are worth, the following should be noted.

First, there is no evidence, as might be expected, that the dramatic growth in the number of educated Kurds in the 1970s provided a recruiting pool for the Iranian radical groups. On the contrary, it is the ex-members of the Iranian groups of broadly similar outlook to Komala that were absorbed by the latter. This makes sense, given that the date of the above list is roughly the end of the Iran–Iraq war, reflecting the relative absence of government control in Kurdistan compared to the rest of the country. Moreover, this group of ex-members were all born outside Kurdistan and all but one was from a poor urban background, though there was one case from a middle-class family.

Second, those born in Kurdistan were mainly without a previous organizational affiliation and tended to come more from urban and less from rural backgrounds.[2] This suggests an overall membership profile of a predominantly urban nature with something close to half being drawn from previous members of non-Kurdish groups. Indeed, based on these cases, one can argue that Komala/CPI is at least as much an organization of Iranian radicals as of Kurdish militants.

Third, the average age on joining Komala/CPI of over 27 suggests a young but relatively mature membership. In fact the list contains only two cases below the age of 27. This is somewhat high to provide a convincing generation gap explanation of the difference between the KDPI and Komala. Presumably, such an explanation draws its strength from the sharp changes in the conditions of political life which come with the passage of time, at the very least a decade, even though similar differences had an active presence in Iranian politics well before the 1979 revolution and the decade preceding 1986. As a rule of thumb, this explanation required an average age at commencement of membership of the KDPI of around 34–35. Though possible, this appears to be implausibly high and unlikely for a party which relies heavily on its 'Peshmerge' forces for defensive combat.

Perhaps one could maintain that generational explanations should refer to the leadership age gap of the two parties as the leadership exerts the main influence on policy and outlook. One of course expects the leadership to be composed of an older age group compared to the rank and file. But this is true of both parties with regard to their respective members. Causal observations suggest, however, that the leadership age gap between the two parties is probably less than the average of that between their respective memberships.[3] Nor can

one convincingly argue that older political parties, such as the KDPI, are less capable than new ones, of attracting younger members.

The above data, admittedly limited, and its related considerations thus appear to suggest that the generation gap provides, at the very best, an additional factor for the regional explanation of the differences between the politics of the KDPI and Komala.

The situation in Iranian Kurdistan between 1946 and 1979

The collapse of the Kurdish Republic ushered in a period of silence and terror. The Kurdish movement went underground and any challenge to the Shah's regime was dealt with harshly. In 1948, Haman writes that the KDPI started some underground activities including the publication of a paper called *Riga* (Path). Meanwhile, in Soviet Azerbaijan a newspaper called *Kurdistan* was published. It was one page of a four-page periodical with the remaining three pages in Azeri called *Azerbaijan*. The Kurdish section of the paper was put together by some of the young Kurds who were sent to Baku for study during the Republic. Among those involved in the production of this paper were Ghani Bulorian and Aziz Yosefi. However, the one-page paper did not reach the Kurds in Iran.[4] There was also a Kurdish radio station broadcast from Soviet Azerbaijan.

In 1952, the KDPI led a Kurdish peasant revolt against the landlords in Bukan, which was swiftly suppressed by the Iranian army. However, the bigger blow to the movement came when the Shah of Iran and Mostafa Barzani of Iraqi Kurdistan reached an agreement according to which, in return for receiving aid from the Tehran government, Barzani agreed to assist the Iranian government in their conflict with the Iraqi government and with the Kurds in Iran.

The Shah had several objectives in entering into a deal with Barzani. This way, he believed, he would increase problems for the Iraqi government, make Barzani's movement dependent on Iranian aid, destroy the solidarity between the Iranian and Iraqi Kurds, and weaken and perhaps liquidate the movement in Iran. In addition to money, arms, and ammunition, Mostafa Barzani received secret information about the situation and movements of Iraqi army units. Meanwhile, he actively hindered the movement of Iranian Kurds, arresting and killing KDPI members. The Shah, while supporting Barzani's movement against Baghdad, suppressed Kurdish opposition in Iran. The only Iraqi Kurdish leaders who strongly criticized the collaboration between the Shah and Barzani came from the Political Bureau of the Kurdish

Democratic Party of Iraq, from people such as Jalal Talbani and Ebra-him Ahmed.[5] However, in March 1975, at the OPEC Summit, the Algiers agreement was signed between Iran and Iraq, leading the Shah to end his support for Barzani who by then was heavily dependent on it.

Throughout this period, the Kurdish movement in Iran was strongly influenced by Barzani's movement in Iraq. At the same time, Kurdish leaders in Iran tried to keep their distance from Barzani's traditional form of leadership and, instead, organized themselves into a party with a nationalist/socialist point of view led by urban intellectuals. On the whole, the political and military activities of the KDPI against the central government remained limited.

In 1964, a group of Kurdish intellectuals from the KDPI, who were also members of the Tudeh Party, left the Tudeh criticizing the party for not paying enough attention to the ethnic minority issue and for not launching an armed struggle against the regime in Tehran. At the second congress of the KDPI, the group raised the slogan 'Democracy for Iran, Autonomy for Kurdistan,' and called for an armed struggle against the regime and ultimately the establishment of a federal government in Iran modeled after Yugoslavia arguing that Iran, like Yugoslavia, was a multi-ethnic society. They also criticized the KDPI for ignoring a land-distribution program in Kurdistan. These efforts resulted in a peasant uprising in Urmiyeh region organized by the KDPI which lasted three years, during which 53 members of the KDPI were killed. It may be of some interest to note that among them were four intellectuals from Tehran, three shopkeepers, five workers, seven local mullahs and 18 peasants, shepherds, and tribesmen.[6] However, due to the difficulties, the main body of the KDPI gradually changed the focus of its activities from guerrilla action to recruiting members from among the Kurdish students in Western countries. The Kurdish leaders in Iran soon realized that, because of the collaboration of Barzani with the Shah, they could not afford to launch any direct attacks on the Iranian government. The example of the 1967–68 Kurdish guerrilla movement in Iran taught them that lesson.

In 1967–68, there was a split in the KDPI which, at that time, was based in Iraq. The split occurred over the issue of whether the KDPI and its leadership should move into Iran and begin guerrilla activities against the government of the Shah. The majority of the party led by Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou rejected the idea, arguing that, considering the collaboration of Barzani and the Shah, the movement would stand no chance and would be destroyed in no time. Despite such warnings, a group of KDPI members including Mullah Avareh (mullah),

Abdullah Mueini (student), and Sharifzadeh (electrical engineer) left the party and went to Iran. The group, which called itself the 'Revolutionary KDPI,' managed to survive in Iran for one year, but failed to gain support from the populace. Remaining vulnerable and exposed, the guerrilla movement was eventually destroyed by the Iranian army, and all three of its leaders were killed.[7]

Meanwhile, Barzani refused to assist those operating in Iran, and furthermore hindered the activities of those active in Iraq. The negative influence that Barzani exercised on the Kurdish movement in Iran during this period can be illustrated by incidents such as that in which he ordered the execution of one of the KDPI leaders, Sulayman Mueini (Abdullah Mueini's brother), who attempted to cross the border to Iran. His corpse was handed to the Iranian authorities who left it for public viewing for several days in Kurdish towns in Iran.[8] Barzani's forces were responsible for the arrest and killing of many of the KDPI members. On one occasion his men arrested 40 members of the KDPI and handed them over to the Iranian authorities.[9] Many more were arrested, killed, or went into hiding.

At this time, the main effort of the Kurdish leaders was directed towards propagating the Kurdish cause among the Kurdish masses in the towns and the mountains, and establishing bases in Kurdish areas in Iran. Such attempts demonstrated the willingness of the Kurdish leaders in Iran to distance themselves from Iraq and enhance their own independent movement. In adopting such an attitude, the important factor was the political climate in Iran. In reality, the Kurds in Iran had more in common with other ethnic minorities inside Iran than with Kurds in Iraq. Kurds in Iran shared the same degree and form of political suppression and economic negligence with, for instance, Baluchis in Baluchistan in Iran. This also partially explains why the national movement in Iranian Kurdistan has had different specific objectives and tactics of struggle from those of the Kurds in Iraq. For example, one major difference between the two is the social status of the Kurdish national leaders in Iran and Iraq. Since the establishment of a Kurdish Republic in 1946, the core of the Kurdish nationalist leadership in Iran has always been city intellectuals. In Iraq, however, the strength and leadership of the Kurdish movement, to a great degree, has been provided by traditional tribal personalities.

Furthermore, there have always been strong ties between the Kurds and the Persians. The Kurdish language is closely related to Farsi and the Kurds have had many common historical experiences with the rest of the country. This partly explains why, in their political demands,

the Kurdish leaders in Iran have always asked for Kurdish autonomy rather than Kurdish independence. Moreover, there have been attempts to assimilate the Kurds into the ruling apparatus of the country. Some Kurdish chiefs held important positions in the government and received many favors; for instance, they were allowed to keep their lands after the Land Reform of 1962. During the reign of the Shah, there were Kurds among members of the Parliament, high army officers, and even as Minister of Court. However, one must not exaggerate the extent to which Kurds became part of the ruling elite. The number of Kurdish high-ranking government officials was limited and the Kurds remained isolated. By way of contrast, it is interesting to note that despite the strong presence of a distinct linguistic identity in Azerbaijan, Azeri nationalism has been relatively absent in Iran, the reasons for which are many, and their discussion is beyond the scope of this book. But the fact that the Azeris have always constituted an important component of the elites in politics, the military, business, and landownership in modern Iranian society is a major part of the explanation. The Kurdish elites, on the other hand, have effectively been barred from high positions and circles of power and wealth in Iran. Studies for other countries suggest this factor to be the major cause of the emergence and spread of nationalism.[10]

Kurdish nationalism on the eve of the 1979 Revolution

After 33 years of underground activities, in March 1979, the KDPI's headquarters were set up legally. At a press conference in Mahabad, the Kurdish leaders presented the party's program for Kurdish autonomy in Iran. The 1979 Revolution provided a golden opportunity for Kurdish nationalists who, by 1979, had become far more politically organized and articulate than they were in 1946. During the days of the 1979 Revolution, there were no police or gendarmerie forces in the Kurdish region. The army, due to desertions, had to withdraw to the main garrisons. Political forces within Kurdistan took control of the area and effectively governed the region. Revolutionary Councils, Workers Unions, and Peasants Unions were established and replaced the government bodies. Kurdistan became a major base in the opposition to the Shah's regime.

In January 1979, the Kurds captured the military garrisons and gendarmerie outposts and seized a considerable quantity of weapons. The revolutionary government in Tehran gave promises of support to, and

respect for, the rights of ethnic groups throughout the country. This, surely, was encouraging to the Kurds. In April, the KDPI, with support from other Kurdish political organizations, presented the autonomy program to Ayatollah Khomeini in Qum. This program was well received by most political groups and personalities. The eight points of the plan were:

1. The boundaries of Kurdistan would be determined by the Kurdish people and would take into consideration historical, economic, and geographic conditions.
2. On matters of defense, foreign affairs, and long-term economic planning, Kurdistan would abide by the central government's decisions. The Central Bank of Iran would control the currency.
3. There would be a Kurdish parliament, whose members would be popularly elected. It would be the highest legislative power in the province.
4. All government departments in the province would be run locally rather than from the capital.
5. There would be a people's army, and the police and gendarmerie would be abolished and replaced by a national guard.
6. The Kurdish language would be the official language of the provincial government and would be taught in all schools. Persian would also continue to be an official language.
7. All ethnic minorities in Kurdistan would enjoy equal rights and would be allowed to use their own language and have their own traditions respected.
8. Freedom of speech and of the press, rights of association, and trade-union activities would be guaranteed. The Kurdish people would have the right to travel freely and choose their own occupation.[11]

From the start the Kurdish issue made the government uneasy. Ayatollah Khomeini rejected the plan saying its demands were unacceptable. Kurdish leaders repeatedly denied the accusation that the Kurds were seeking independence. Autonomy for Kurdistan and democracy for Iran was stressed, and Kurdish nationalists advocated that the central government would keep control over foreign policy, finance, defense, and the army but control over domestic policies and regional administration would be left to the Kurds. However, the situation was not developing in the way many Kurdish leaders had hoped for. The political atmosphere was changing rapidly, and the government was

curtailing democratic activities daily. It soon became clear that the government had no intention of granting autonomy to any ethnic groups, especially the Kurds. Fighting began between the revolutionary guards, the Pasdaran, and the Kurdish fighters, the Peshmerge.

Pastoral nationalism vis-à-vis Kurdish communism: the KDPI and Komala

The general picture

At the beginning of the 1979 Revolution in Iran, the Kurdish movement appeared as a mature nationalist movement by any criteria, in its goals, demands, and language, in the form of its leadership, and particularly in its relationship with the Kurdish populace. The movement attained a phase described by Miroslav Hroch as the final stage of the three stages of the maturing process of a nationalist movement. He describes the process whereby a nationalist movement emerges first in the form of an initial national consciousness among certain individuals of the ethnic group, then it develops into a movement of 'awakening' the national consciousness of the ethnic group as advocated by the committed nationalists and incorporates as many people as possible into the movement, and finally it reaches a stage that the majority of the ethnic population come to active understanding of their national identity and participate in the national movement, thus forming a mass movement. As Hroch explains, it is 'only during this final phase that a full social structure could come into being, and that the movement differentiated out into conservative-clerical, liberal and democratic wings, each with their programs.'[12]

In the following pages, I shall show the development of the Kurdish movement and the events affecting it by analyzing the diversity of the political/nationalist organizations. I shall examine their ideology and language, their programs, including their agrarian programs, goals, and political demands. Furthermore, in order to show the consistency of my argument regarding the relationship between economic and social/political development in Kurdistan, I shall highlight the connections between the political expression/ideology of a given group and its geographic area of influence. This is significant, since different regions in Kurdistan have undergone differing economic development, and we shall see how Kurdish nationalism has adopted different outlooks in different regions of Kurdistan. The degree of expansion and development of agriculture/industry, and market relationships within a com-

munity encourages certain social and political relationships within that community. An analysis of Kurdish political organizations in different regions indicates how economy and ideology correspond.

The main political organizations and personalities fighting for the Kurdish cause on the eve of the revolution were the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI), the Revolutionary Organization of the Toilers of Kurdistan (Komala), and the Sunni cleric Shaikh Izziddin Husseini. Other political organizations also had some representation. Since the KDPI and Komala represent different factions of the Kurdish movement with different geographic areas of influence, I shall discuss these two more fully. It should also be remembered that all the political organizations in Kurdistan agreed on the slogan, which was originally put forward by the KDPI, namely: 'Democracy for Iran, Autonomy for Kurdistan.'[13] However, on the issues such as political ideology, representation of the Kurdish people and negotiations with the government, and land distribution, they differed. The last issue is particularly important in showing the logical influence of the economic and social structure of different regions of Kurdistan on the politics of the parties active in these regions. For this reason, I have included whatever evidence I could gather on the differences in land distribution programs and attitudes towards the landowning classes by the two main Kurdish political parties. Before examining these issues, I shall look at the background of these groups and the regions where they had most support and influence.

Geographic divisions of the Kurdish political organizations

Most of the references indicate that the KDPI had its strongholds in the north and northwestern regions of Kurdistan in Iran. This is an area with Mahabad at its center and extends as far south as Bukan and Saqqiz. By the south and southeast, we refer to regions with major towns and cities such as Marivan, Paveh, and Sanandaj. The south and southeast are the regions where the other main Kurdish organization, Komala, has its strongholds.[14] As was discussed in Chapter 5, the Zagros mountains roughly divide the Kurdish regions in Iran into two separate parts. To the east, there is more flat land and agriculture and large landownership has been predominant. To the west and towards the north, the region is more mountainous with small pieces of flat land which resulted in the logical development of subsistence farming and herding as the main economic activity.

The north and northwestern regions of Kurdistan are the territory of the KDPI, where the Kurdish party has the dominant political and military power.[15] These are generally, though not completely, the areas

where agriculture has been less developed, and historically tribal political and cultural influences have been powerful. The Kurdish nationalism which originally began in these regions has been more moderate, or by some definitions more conservative. Its policies have been mainly oriented to conflicts between the Kurdish people and the central government. The KDPI leadership has paid relatively less attention to issues such as land distribution, which involves class conflict within Kurdish society

However, in the south and southeastern parts of Iranian Kurdistan, for example Sanandaj region, the political themes have involved notions of class conflict, and Marxist ideology, represented mainly by Komala (the Revolutionary Organization of the Toilers of Kurdistan), has been more prominent. What I would like to argue is that, in the regions of Kurdistan where agricultural and market relationships have expanded further, the struggle for national recognition has developed parallel to class conflict within Kurdistan. What is important to note is that Kurdish nationalism has developed differently in areas with different economic and social structures. The regions where Kurdish nationalism has its organized core and has had the longest history of nationalist struggle are also the regions where there are traditionally weaker market relations, relatively few wage laborers, and even fewer large landlords.

I would like to argue that the reasons Kurdish nationalism has roots in these regions, as well as its particular past and present forms, is greatly related to the mountainous nature of the region. Economically, due to the lack of large agricultural lands, the region remained dependent on subsistence farming and herding as its main economic activity and therefore the social relationship between the members of the community, as was discussed in Chapter 5, developed in a relatively non-antagonistic direction, primarily as herding and subsistence agriculture provide a more egalitarian relationship between the members of the community. In the herding communities of Kurdistan, except for a handful of very rich families, the rest of the community shares similar economic circumstances.[16] Moreover, politically, mountainous regions mean the inaccessibility of the region to outsiders such as government troops and allow for the free movement of anti-government forces. This situation led to solidarity within the community against the central government, which was seen as the main reason for the problems in Kurdistan. In what follows I shall examine the manifestations of such moderation/conservatism of the KDPI and the radicalism or otherwise of Komala.

Political background and leadership of the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran

The Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI), which was founded in 1945 and was the leading party during the events of the 1946 Republic, still remains the major force in Kurdistan of Iran. Its leader from 1973 until 1989 had been the former university lecturer Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou.[17] It is interesting to note Ghassemlou's past for insight into the political orientation of the non-tribal urban component of Kurdish nationalism. He was born in 1930 into a land-owning family. After the collapse of the Kurdish Republic in 1947, he left Iran for France, and soon after went to Prague, where he came into contact with socialist ideas. Upon his return to Iran in the 1950s, and after the CIA coup against the nationalist government of Mossadeq, he was arrested and imprisoned for two years. He returned to Prague for the second time in 1957, obtained his doctorate in economics and later taught the same subject at the university there. He was in contact with the 'Prague Spring' movement, but once again left the city after the Soviet occupation. In 1973, he was elected the leader of the Kurdish Democratic Party. At the age of 48, shortly before the revolution of 1978–79, he returned to Iran to lead the KDPI, which was rapidly being transformed from a relatively small underground organization into a mass party with a sizable membership and a reasonably clear program for Kurdish autonomy. In 1981 he joined the 'Mujahedin-i Khalq-i Iran' in the National Resistance Council in Paris, but left it in 1984 after a disagreement with the organization.

The principal slogan of the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran since its establishment has been 'Democracy for Iran, Autonomy for Kurdistan.' Ghassemlou's political outlook had an undeniable influence on the party. The KDPI receives its main support from the urban middle-class intellectuals (teachers, university students, merchants, and government employees) and tribal elites.

The KDPI is seen as more liberal/conservative rather than radical for it does not have an aggressive land reform program, nor has it based its movement on the unity of workers and peasants against the landlords or industrial bosses. As far as the land reform program is concerned, the party's publications indicate that it is aware of the importance of a new land reform, but it has a different approach from that of the Marxist organizations in Kurdistan, who believe in radical methods of implementation of a land reform program and total confiscation of lands from the landlords. In the autonomy program for Kurdistan, the

party emphasizes its relatively mild stance that 'land belongs to the one who works on it.' It further emphasizes the necessity of a new land reform program to include the poor and the landless peasants.[18] However, although on some occasions when landlords resisted cooperation the party was involved in confiscation of lands by the peasants, it generally did not advocate such radical measures. It is not that the KDPI leaders are in any sense against land redistribution. It is just that their position on this is constructively ambiguous, allowing the party to deal with the issue in a flexible and pragmatic manner according to circumstances of the different regions of Kurdistan.

The KDPI's leadership, despite many conflicts and clashes with the traditional tribal leadership, has not stood against the tribal chiefs as the 'enemy of the Kurdish people.' Its general policy has always been based on the unity of all Kurds who believed in Kurdish nationalism. It has always tried to sustain a non-hostile relationship with tribal leaders. This was due to an understanding that tribal leadership enjoyed political and financial influence, a power that could not be ignored. Historically, this power had assisted the nationalist forces or had opposed it. Such understanding also reflected the pragmatic attitude of the KDPI leadership. Unlike some of the more radical organizations in Kurdistan, the KDPI has tried not to alienate the tribal forces, but rather to reduce their influence.

During the events of the revolution, Kurdish tribal leaders reacted in various ways. Those who were favored under the Shah opposed it actively. Some took advantage of the situation to gain personal influence and participated in attacking the government posts along with the KDPI and others but soon deserted the nationalist forces. This group also, on occasion, acted against the nationalist movement. However, despite the KDPI's general policy of avoiding conflicts with tribal leaders, during the summer of 1979 in Mahabad region, when tribal leaders were attempting to force the peasants to pay old agricultural dues, the party opposed them.[19] The tribal chiefs/landlords fought against the KDPI and Komala (the more radical Kurdish organization) with the military assistance they received from the central government. This was offered by the government as a response to a request by the chieftains. On other occasions, some of the tribal chiefs tried to regain the lands they lost during the Land Reform program and attempted to collect old dues by using force against the peasants. The newly established 'Peasants' Unions,' composed of non-tribal peasants, village teachers and students, young clerics, and other intellectuals, many organized by the Komala, confronted

the forces of the tribal chiefs and defeated them.[20] However, some tribal elements joined with the non-traditional leadership and demonstrated their support for the demands of Kurdish autonomy.

Van Bruinessen refers to an interesting incident regarding the change of loyalty among the tribal forces and individuals during the clashes with the new Islamic government. The Shakak confederation, he describes, changed the least in its political and social attitude in comparison to the others during the years before 1979. Enjoying the new political opportunities, Tahar Khan, Simko's son and the leader of the Shakak confederation, controlled his area. But soon his forces, which had occupied some gendarmerie garrisons, were confronted by government forces. During many clashes with the government forces, the tribal leaders were forced to appeal to the KDPI for military support. The KDPI, by then, was a powerful political party in whose control was an army of well-organized guerrilla forces. The KDPI and the tribal forces managed to ensure several defeats of the government forces.

These achievements boosted the popularity and reputation of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan of Iran, and highlighted the party as a superior organization to the traditional tribal organization. Even though soon after collaboration with KDPI Tahar Khan and some other tribal leaders withdrew their friendship with the party, and indeed became its active enemy, many others, among them younger tribal members, preferred the party to the tribal leadership. One of the main leaders of the Mamadi tribe became a member of the central committee of the party.[21] This provides an interesting example of how the KDPI absorbs at least some elements of the Kurdish tribal elite into the nationalist movement.

One very important development for the Kurdish movement has been the formation of the organization of the Peshmerge, the Kurdish fighters, which gradually has become an independent military force and an alternative to the traditional tribal force. This itself is an indication of the consolidation of non-traditional, non-tribal leadership. The Peshmerge force was formed during the events of 1946 and was further developed during the events of 1979. The strengthening of such a force, with increasing loyalty to the party, has helped to free the non-tribal leadership of the Kurdish movement from the ever persistent influence of tribal elements and the movement's reliance on the military strength of the tribal chiefs.[22]

However, the development of the 'Peshmerge' forces is related to the development of economic relationships in Kurdistan. The main point

to emphasize is that modern Kurdistan, especially since the Land Reform of the 1960s, is characterized by a surplus of labor, and such a society provides an ideal ground for the recruitment of the economically redundant youth into an armed popular force against an unpopular state. This question will be taken up more fully in the conclusion to this study. However, for the moment, the principal features of my analysis of migration in Chapter 5 should be borne in mind: rural–urban migration takes place mainly among single men aged 15–34. It is confined mainly to within Kurdistan and appears to have a seasonal, cyclical pattern in that the migrants, while marginal to the economy of rural Kurdistan, have retained their links with it. As shown by other studies, these factors define the type of economic environment in which popular armed forces, such as the 'Peshmerge' forces, become active against the state in poor rural communities.

It was during the 1946 Kurdish Republic that the word 'Peshmerge' was first applied to the Kurdish fighters. In 1946, after the last instrument of the central government in Mahabad, the Mahabad police station, was captured, the 'National Army of Kurdistan' was established. A few months later, this army was renamed as 'Peshmerge Forces of Kurdistan.' It was mainly the military force of the Peshmerges which provided the fighting force behind the political demands for Kurdish autonomy, and it was they who fought in the clashes with the military forces of the government. During and after the events of the 1979 revolution, the Peshmerge became a better trained, more experienced, and better equipped (mostly by the arms and ammunition obtained from the Shah's army) force. Presently, it is a very youthful force with many educated members. By the end of 1979, Ghassemlou estimated them to consist of about 100,000 trained and armed men who were involved in fighting with the central government.[23] It is difficult to know the exact class mixture of the Peshmerge forces, but it appears that whenever the nationalist movement has the advantage over the government forces, more young men from the countryside join the force, but, when Kurdish forces are in a weaker position, the active rural members of the force decrease while the urban members remain active. This, presumably, is a result of urban members being better trained, given that there are less military activities on the side of the nationalist forces, and it is harder to maintain all the members of the force through difficult times.

Nevertheless, the organization of the Peshmerge forces has developed considerably. At the Sixth Congress of the party in January 1984, it was reported that a 'Peshmerge Commission' had, over a period of one to

two years, achieved some of its goals such as the reestablishment of the military/political training school for the Peshmerge forces and the establishment of a Peshmerge communication system for all of Kurdistan. The report encourages the force to achieve better standards of leadership and discipline.[24]

The Islamic Republic's war against the Kurds caused many military defeats for the KDPI, but the Kurdish nationalist movement had gained greater legitimacy in the eyes of the Kurdish people and among other government opponents. The struggle with the Islamic government placed the Kurdish national movement in the forefront of opposition to the regime. This gave the movement a political legitimacy and recognition which it had not experienced before. Many political organizations supported the Kurdish cause and opposed the central government for its treatment of the Kurds. The notable exception was the Tudeh Party, the pro-Soviet Party, which at the time appeared to be collaborating with the government and did not support the Kurdish movement. Among the Kurdish population, the popularity and support for the KDPI increased considerably. An example of such popularity was shown when the party asked the Kurds to abstain from voting for the national referendum of December 1979. As was reported by many Kurdish sources, and also by foreign reporters, 85 percent of the population responded positively to the KDPI boycott call.

Another example of the popularity of the KDPI was demonstrated in March 1980, when the first post-revolution election was held in Iran. Despite the fact that the elections took place in limited areas, the representatives of the KDPI won an overwhelming majority in Kurdistan. The KDPI and Ghassemlou as its leader received indisputable approval from the Kurdish population.

In the winter of 1981, the KDPI joined the National Resistance Council based in Paris. The Council, which was to be a united front against the Islamic government, soon appeared to be predominantly controlled by the 'Mujahedin-i Khalq-i Iran.' Komala criticized the KDPI for joining the Council and refused to join it both on ideological grounds and because of the membership of certain individuals such as Banisadr in the Council. Nevertheless, the KDPI continued to be a member of the Council and even, in late 1983, reached an agreement with the Council on a plan for autonomy in Kurdistan to the effect that, while the central government would handle all matters related to national planning and finance, national security, defense, foreign trade, and foreign affairs, the Kurds would have a legislative council to legislate on regional issues and also establish security forces to

guarantee the security of the region. However, the friendship between the KDPI and the Council did not last long. In the summer of 1984, the KDPI showed interest in opening negotiations with the Islamic government, but the negotiations did not progress and the government refused to talk in terms of a separate national identity to the Kurds. The move to open negotiations with the central government by the KDPI raised objections in the Council which resulted in the KDPI withdrawing from it, arguing that the Council had become an organization dominated by the Mujahedin, while, the Mujahedin's leadership rejected the KDPI's efforts for establishing contacts with the government in Tehran.

Politics and ideology of the Revolutionary Organization of the Toilers of Kurdistan

The other main Kurdish organization is the Revolutionary Organization of the Toilers of Kurdistan (Komala), which became active during the events of the revolution. Its leaders allege that it was first founded as an underground organization in 1969. Komala, which has been far more radical than the KDPI, is a Marxist organization. In 1981, it went through a period of self-criticism of its extremist past and emphasized that it should unite with the proletariat. Komala is the Kurdish branch of the Communist Party of Iran established in 1983 by the Union of Communist Fighters.[25] Komala, being part of the political category known in Iranian politics as the 'third line,' had been a great opponent of the Tudeh Party and the ex-Soviet Union.

Komala's main strongholds have been, as was mentioned earlier, in southern and southeastern regions of Kurdistan, the Marivan and Sanandaj regions, where there are more flat lands and agriculture has naturally developed into the main economic activity. It is in these regions that ideologies based on class conflicts could win support. In the publication of the fourth Congress of the party, Komala states that before Komala, the Kurdish movement for self-determination was led by the feudal and reactionary forces of the tribal chiefs and bourgeoisie, but since then the party has aimed at achieving the goal of Kurdish self-determination by the elimination of the 'oppressors of the Kurdish people' and by creating Kurdish autonomy where 'the oppressed workers and peasants of Kurdistan' would rule.[26]

Komala's program for Kurdish autonomy is very similar to that of the KDPI. The difference is that on the subjects of workers' rights and agrarian policies, Komala has a more detailed program and more radical language. On the issue of workers' rights, like the KDPI, it supports

a maximum 40 hours of weekly work and 30 days of annual holidays, maternity leave for women, the establishment of advisory committees by the workers, and the establishment of workers' committees to supervise the implementation of the workers' rights at the workplace. Regarding the land issue, it stresses that in order to advance the class struggle and guarantee the workers and peasants rights, the party encourages and supports the 'confiscation' of the landlords' lands by the peasants and the establishment of 'local committees and other democratic organizations' in rural areas. The party pursues a policy of elimination of all peasants' debts to the landlords and it believes, like the KDPI, in the nationalization of all rural and urban lands, woods, pastures, water, and minerals by the autonomous government.[27]

Komala has confronted the landowners and tribal chieftains far more than the KDPI and has also been involved in some peasant uprisings. It established 'Peasants Unions' in places such as Uramanat, Marivan, and Sanandaj regions, and distributed some lands, particularly those lands whose owners had left the village, among the peasants. The villages which were members of the 'Peasant Unions' had some military force comprised of Peshmerges from the member villages of the Union and their task was to protect peasants' rights and make sure that the landlords did not enforce the old rules.

Despite the differences and rivalries, since the most powerful language in Kurdistan and the one which can mobilize the greatest number of Kurdish people has been the language of Kurdish nationalism, Komala has had to rely on the same language of nationalism rather than its Marxist rhetoric. Komala has supported the idea of democracy for Iran and autonomy for Kurdistan, and for the first few years after the Revolution, participated in a united front with the KDPI against the central government, but in 1984 confrontations occurred between the two main Kurdish organizations in Iran. The tension between the two organizations had been mounting, but in November 1985 serious fighting took place between the two in the Uramanat area, where some were killed and many were wounded.[28] Both leaderships wanted to halt the fighting, but soon both began blaming each other for the incident. The ceasefire was broken and fighting was resumed.

In the spring of 1988, various political organizations and personalities issued a joint declaration asking for a ceasefire between Komala and the KDPI. The declaration demanded the solving of problems through political means, freedom of expression, and freedom of organization for all political/military activities. The declaration was signed by Shaikh Izziddin Husseini, the popular revolutionary clergy, the

'Feda¢i-i Khalq-i Iran,' 'Rah-i Kargar,' and 'Komala for the Unity of Kurdistan.' The declaration was rejected by the KDPI on the basis that those who signed the declaration were not all related to the Kurdish movement and that, generally, the declaration was nothing but the work of a front manipulated by Komala. The conflict was exacerbated between the KDPI and Shaikh Izziddin Husseini. The tension continued, and since then military confrontation has repeatedly occurred between Komala and KDPI members. Hundreds have died in these confrontations.

The fighting between the KDPI and Komala was a confrontation over territory and political power in the region, and in this battle Komala was the greater loser. By the end of the 1980s, the KDPI managed to established its influence and popularity in many areas previously under Komala's control. Meanwhile Komala lost some of its strongholds, became weaker and also suffered an internal split in its organization. This situation caused further isolation and led to greater radicalism by Komala.[29]

Shaikh Izziddin Husseini

Among individual personalities, perhaps the most important within the Kurdish movement in Iran after the revolution was the unconventional Sunni cleric, Shaikh Izziddin Husseini, who played the traditional role of the shaikhs in Kurdistan as mediator and unifying force. He was respected and accepted by almost all political factions in the Kurdish movement. Husseini joined the KDPI and other leftist organizations in a struggle against the Islamic government and enjoyed a great degree of support, not only from the political organizations and tribal elements, but also from the Kurdish people. Some claim that his popularity exceeded that of Ghassemlou.

Izziddin Husseini criticized Ayatollah Khomeini for interfering with government affairs while his duty as a clergyman ought to have been confined to religious affairs. Soon after the revolution, in spite of different points of view among these political personalities and organizations in Kurdistan, they managed to establish 'The Council of Kurdish People' with Husseini at its head and Ghassemlou as its spokesman. For some time, the Council acted as the representative of the Kurds in negotiations with the Islamic government. Shaikh Izziddin, although a shaikh himself, was by no means representative of the traditional class of shaikhs.[30] Shaikh Izziddin Husseini's popularity did not stem from his religious authority but from his views on issues such as democracy and Kurdish autonomy.

> We fought in the revolution not out of religious convictions but for political goals. We want autonomy – our own parliament, our own language, and our own culture. The revolution has destroyed despotism, but it has not ended the discrimination against minority.[31]

The popularity of Shaikh Izziddin Husseini highlighted, paradoxically, the non-religious feature of the Kurdish movement in Iran. Indeed, the further he distanced himself from religious concerns, the greater the popularity and respect he received. He had his own military force, but it was small and merely for his personal protection. The Kurdish movement in Iran has never been a religious movement. There have been religious leaders in the top ranks of the Kurdish movement, but they acted as nationalist leaders.

Due to the relative inaccessibility of the region to the government forces, almost every organization had a foothold in Kurdistan. Many of the political groups and organizations had a Kurdish branch. One of the more active was Feda¢i-i Khalq.[32]

Having completed the differences in political outlooks of the two principal Kurdish parties and shown how these differences have their roots in the diversity of the economic and geographical realities of Kurdistan, we may, quite reasonably, characterize the KDPI as the advocate of 'rural or peasant nationalism,' if by peasant we also include herding activities. Their view of Kurdistan is of a one-class nation of Kurdish rural society. In competition with the KDPI's peasant nationalism for the hearts and minds of the Kurdish masses is the notion of Kurdish nationalism of 'oppressed classes,' crystallized in the politics of Komala as representative of Kurdish communism. Beyond its fairly limited sphere of influence, where this notion may have some relevance in the context of Kurdistan as a whole, it is hard to see how a party based on this notion can ever become more than a local influence in Kurdish politics. Indeed, continuing setbacks experienced by Komala since 1979 would confirm this. It is an unenviable task to have to build a national party on the basis of ideas reflecting regional, not to say local, circumstances. However, this appears to be the principal distinguishing feature of Kurdish communism.

The demands for Kurdish autonomy and the Islamic Republic of Iran

Throughout the spring and summer of 1979, frequent clashes between the government forces and the Kurds continued. In August 1979, the

Kurds seized Paveh, a town near the Iraqi border, after severe fighting with the revolutionary guards. This marked the beginning of a cycle of fighting, conflict, and negotiation between the Kurds and the government forces which continued for several years. The city was retaken by the government forces in further bloody clashes between the revolutionary guards, the army, and the Kurds. Following the fighting in Paveh, Ayatollah Khomeini declared a holy war against the Kurds, banned all Kurdish political organizations, canceled the membership of Ghassemlou in the Assembly of Experts and denounced Ghassemlou and Shaikh Izziddin Husseini as enemies of the Islamic Republic.[33] The KDPI was denounced as 'the party of Satan.'

An order of mobilization by Ayatollah Khomeini, which was broadcast on the radio, increased agitation in Kurdistan. Thousands of people began a sit-in outside the Sanandaj barracks.[34] The Ayatollah called upon the revolutionary guards everywhere to move to Sanandaj without delay. He said: 'I give absolute orders to all law and order forces to proceed to their military bases and then move towards Sanandaj with sufficient strength to pound the rebels severely.'[35] Furthermore, in his statement, he denounced the leaders of the KDPI as corrupt, called for their arrest and asked people to respond to their 'holy duty' and expose the hiding places of the KDPI and Kurdish leaders.[36] In addition to the army, a great number of Pasdars, the revolutionary guards, and armed Hizbullah (the party of God) were dispatched to the area. Helicopter gunships, Phantom jets, tanks, and artillery were used to attack the towns and villages in Kurdistan. The Kurds entered the war with the weapons they had confiscated at the beginning of the revolution. The offenses against the Kurdish rebels caused bloody scenes in the Kurdish towns and villages of Mahabad, Sanandaj, Naqadeh, Paveh, and Marivan and Saqqiz regions. The revolutionary courts were held by Khalkhali and scores of people were executed at a time.[37] It has become a common belief that most of the trials did not last more than a few minutes and that the majority of those who were executed were ordinary Kurds and not the Peshmerge.

Meanwhile, in a conciliatory attempt, Ayatollah Khomeini offered the Kurdish areas one day's oil revenues, which was approximately $75 million. In spite of the offer, executions of the Kurds continued and photographs of tens of executed Kurds were published daily in public newspapers.

In the capital city, Tehran, the ruling clergies tightened their political control on the country. It was reported that at least 26 newspapers and magazines were shut down by the authorities. In Tehran, the gov-

ernment recruited Hizbullahis, many of them poor uneducated youths, to attack leftist and nationalist bookstores and offices, burn books, tear down posters, and start street fights with opposition groups.

In late August, a delegation from Tehran began negotiations with Kurdish representatives. But at the same time, Prime Minister Banisadr characterized the Kurdish leaders as leaders of subversive minorities who wanted to impose violence on the Iranian people, and insisted that brotherly Islamic cooperation could only begin when these elements stopped their actions. He told the Kurdish leaders: 'We accept autonomy, but what you want is separation, otherwise you would not be fighting.'[38] By September, most Kurdish towns had fallen into the hands of the government forces, but Kurdish fighters managed to keep control of the countryside. The Kurdish Peshmerges fought back with all sorts of weapons – Soviet-made Kalashnikov assault rifles, American M-16s, and Czechoslovak-made automatic weapons.[39] The army, however, did not pursue the Peshmerge forces into the mountains.

At the time, the Carter Administration called on

> . . . the Iranian government and the Kurdish rebels to exercise restraint in the fighting, but a State Department spokesman left the impression that the Administration was more concerned with the survival of a strong Central Government in Iran than the Kurdish goal of political autonomy.[40]

Bitter fighting continued until November when Kurdish forces managed to recapture the cities. However, the recapture was short-lived. In September, Mahabad, the city of the KDPI headquarters, experienced heavy military attack by F-4 jets. After several hours of attack, the Kurdish commanders ordered a general evacuation of the town and withdrew to the mountains. Soon after, the city of Baneh was also evacuated. Once again, the army and the revolutionary guards took control of all Kurdish cities.

On November 2, 1979, the government in Tehran called for a ceasefire and a group of delegates was sent to Kurdistan for negotiations. The call for talks was welcomed by Kurdish leaders. Izziddin Husseini represented the program for Kurdish autonomy. But the Islamic government was not prepared to go beyond allowing a limited cultural autonomy and refused, in principle, to consider the Kurds as more than a religious minority.[41] Furthermore, it demanded the full disarmament of the Kurdish regions as the first condition of any solution. This condition alone was enough for the Kurds to refuse any agree-

ment on those bases, for it would have meant surrendering their ability to defend themselves. The ceasefire failed and another round of fighting began. This cycle of calls for negotiations and resumption of fighting became a feature of this period, and continued to be so for two years.

In November 1979, the Assembly of Experts approved the Islamic Constitution. For the ethnic minorities of Iran, the new Constitution was not promising. In the original draft, there were key articles giving guarantees of some rights for various minorities in Iran. Some of the articles in the draft Constitution also offered assurances to the minorities. Article 2 rejected any hegemony of one group over another. Article 5 of the draft Constitution guaranteed the equal rights of ethnic groups:

> All people in the Islamic Republic of Iran, such as Persians, Turks, Kurds, Arabs, Baluchis, Turkmen, and others, will enjoy completely equal rights.

In Article 21 the use of local languages was promised:

> The common language and script of Iran is Persian. All official texts and correspondence must be in this language and script. However, the use of local languages in local schools and press is permitted.[42]

However, the draft Constitution was criticized by the Kurdish leaders on various grounds. One criticism referred to the contradictions and vagueness of the draft regarding minority rights. On the one hand, the draft Constitution guaranteed equality between all peoples of the country (Articles 2 and 5) while, on the other hand, it specifically defined the 'Ja'fari Shi'i as the country's official school of Islamic thought (Article 13), while Kurds and many other groups in Iran adhered to the Sunni school of thought.

> The official religion of the country is Islam and the Ja'fari school of thought . . . With respect to matters of personal status and religious education, every Muslim acts in accordance with his own school of thought, in whatever area of the country he may be.[43]

The main criticism was concerned with the omission of the word 'autonomy' or 'federation' for Iranian ethnic groups. While there was no reference to these words in the draft Constitution, however, it

should be mentioned that there were plans for 'regional councils' in Article 74. The idea of 'regional councils' as a substitute for autonomous regions was discounted by the Kurdish leaders, who argued that the two were not the same and that the purpose of the former was to undermine the right to autonomy of the ethnic peoples.

The final approved version of the Constitution went further and omitted the previous admittedly limited concern for minority rights referred to in the draft of the Constitution. The reference to the equality of the various ethnic groups was dropped; there was no guarantee of the religious rights of the Sunni people; and as for the use of local languages, the Constitution stated that local languages could be used in the press, the mass media, and schools, but they could only be used alongside Persian, and school textbooks had to be in Persian. These were the issues about which the Kurdish representatives in the autonomy negotiations with the central government voiced their concerns.[44]

All through the negotiations, an issue of great disagreement concerned the difference in interpretation of the word 'autonomy' by the two opposing sides. At the end of November 1979, Shaikh Izziddin Husseini, as the head of the Kurdish Council, presented an autonomy plan to the government representatives. The government refused the plan and, instead, offered a 'self-administration' plan for the Kurds. The suggestion of a self-administrating unit was strongly rejected by the Kurdish leaders who argued that the government was treating the Kurdish issue as an administrative one, while the issue of autonomy was a national issue for the Kurds. They argued that the plan did not consider even a cultural, let alone a political, autonomy. They stated that there was much confusion and many contradictions in different sections of it. For example, in Section 1, Article 4, it was stated that the security of the area would be the responsibility of the self-administered bodies of that area but, in the same article, it also stressed that the heads of police and gendarmerie, and those under them, would be chosen by the government (though approved by the self-administered area), and would be responsible to the Interior Ministry. Furthermore, the plan allowed the local language to be taught. This point was also rejected by the Kurdish leaders, expressing their concerns that there was a difference between the government suggestion and their suggestion, which insisted that the local languages be the official languages of the respective areas.

Despite rejecting the plan, Kurdish leaders expressed their willingness to enter further negotiations, but their gesture was ignored and

instead armed clashes with the central government, which lasted several months, were resumed. The government accused the Kurds of seeking an independent state.

Disagreement arose over who the Kurdish representatives should be in the negotiations. The government insisted that it would consider the KDPI as the sole legitimate representative of the Kurds, and refused to acknowledge the other parties in the Revolutionary Council of the Kurdish People, presumably realizing that the latter (Komala and Feda¢i-i Khalq) would, one way or the other, insist on more radical demands, or else simply found it contradictory for the Islamic government to sit at the negotiating table with Marxist groups. Furthermore, it would have meant giving legitimacy to those groups. The Kurdish spokesman, Ghassemlou, repeatedly stated that the Kurdish representatives were chosen by the Kurdish people, and that if the government did not wish to have negotiations with representatives of political groups, it should consider these representatives as the collective representatives of the Kurdish people, and not the individual representatives of various political organizations. No agreement was reached on this issue.

However, the KDPI, trying hard to keep the momentum of the negotiations going, found itself trapped. The party, on the one hand, had to stay on comradely terms with the Marxist groups which had much more radical approaches to the autonomy program and which were rejected by the government, and on the other hand it needed to convince the government of the importance of the negotiations and a settlement to the issue. For the radical groups, it was essential to be accepted as part of the representative team for it was a matter of legitimacy and recognition of their power. Therefore any movement by the KDPI to have dialogue with the government alone was a matter of great concern for these groups, and a reason for elevating disagreement and rivalry between them and the KDPI.

In January 1980, yet another ceasefire was called and Ayatollah Khomeini promised to add an amendment to the Constitution guaranteeing the rights of the Sunnis in the regions where Sunnis were in the majority. The amendment never materialized and the ceasefire did not last long. In May, the power of the radical clerics rapidly increased. The occupation of the US Embassy in Tehran in November 1979 resulted in the resignation of the Prime Minister, Mehdi Bazargan, and the clerics taking full control. They announced that there would be no more room for negotiations with the Kurds and that all that was left was a war to wipe out the rebels.

The Iran–Iraq war

In September 1980, Iraq attacked Iran hoping to achieve a rapid victory over the newly established Islamic Republic, whose army and air force were falling apart and which was in the midst of a chaotic political upheaval. President Saddam Hussein counted on several factors for, as he saw it, an inevitable victory: a militarily weak, anti-imperialist revolutionary Iran, political dissatisfaction among the population in Iran, an Arabic-speaking ethnic population of southern Iran, the disaffected Kurdish population of western Iran and other ethnic groups in the country, and Western approval and military assistance. He did receive Western support and substantial help, but he miscalculated the degree of nationalist feeling among Iranians of all ethnic groups. Neither the Kurds nor the Arabs of Khuzistan supported Saddam Hussein's attack – to the contrary, the entire country united against his aggression.

The Iran–Iraq war was thought to offer opportunities for the Kurds in both countries, but it was the governments in Iran and Iraq which managed to make use of the war to confront their own Kurdish problems. Each country began massive offenses against its own Kurdish population while accommodating Kurdish dissidents from the other side. Both countries were aware of the benefits of keeping the Kurdish problem alive in the other's territory.

There was a series of shifting alliances in the region after the outbreak of the war in September 1980. At the start of the Iraqi attacks on Iranian territory, the KDPI, along with some political opposition forces, expressed its willingness to enter the war against Iraqi aggression in return for a limited autonomy in Kurdistan. The offer was turned down by the Iranian authorities, and the government expanded the war zone further north into the Kurdish areas. The idea was to block Iraqi forces in the northern borders and, at the same time, gradually to gain full control of the Kurdish regions. By 1983, all the border areas, which were previously controlled by the Peshmerges of the KDPI, were occupied by the Iranian army and the revolutionary guards. In these operations, the Iranians were assisted by the leaders of the KDP of Iraq, Massoud and Idris Barzani. The collaboration of the Barzanis with the Islamic Republic against the KDPI and the Komala forces added to the already existing mistrust and hostility between the KDP of Iraq and the Iranian Kurdish parties. This animosity had its roots in 1966–68, when the Barzanis were responsible for the arrest and killing of some Kurdish revolutionaries. These incidents took place

during the years when Mostafa Barzani was collaborating with the Shah's regime. It is interesting to note that, in the northern borders between Kurdistan of Iran and Iraq, although most tribes in Iran remained independent, some of the influential chieftains supported the Barzanis against the KDPI.

While Idris and Massoud Barzani, at least for the first few years, collaborated with the Islamic regime, Jalal Talabani's party, the PUK (the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan), supported the KDPI. The PUK's behavior stemmed from several factors, including the long rivalry between Talabani and Barzani. Historically, it has not been an easy task for the Kurdish parties to remain neutral at a time of crisis. Nevertheless, up to this period, the KDPI and PUK had been relatively more anxious to build their political independence than the KDP of Iraq. The relation between the PUK and the Barzani became antagonistic with several clashes taking place between their forces. On the contrary, the PUK and KDPI developed a more trusting and cordial relationship.[45] When in 1982–83 the KDPI came under attack from Iranian forces and the KDP of Iraq, it was the PUK who sent some of its units to assist the KDPI. The KDPI also played a role as facilitator in the negotiations between the PUK and the Baghdad regime in 1984.[46] As the war proceeded, Talabani was forced to withdraw inland. In November 1983, the PUK started negotiations with the Iraqi authorities with Ghassemlou as the mediator. Unlike the KDP of Iraq, their Iranian counterparts, in spite of receiving some limited financial assistance from Iraq, tried to maintain their distance from the Baghdad government. It should be noted that in the last several decades, all major Kurdish organizations, including the KDPI and Komala, had to rely on the financial and logistic support of Baghdad, particularly when under fierce attacks from the Iranian government forces, but the KDPI and Komala did not collaborate *militarily* with the Iraqi government against the Iraqi Kurds.[47]

Meanwhile, in Iranian Kurdistan, the towns and villages came under heavy artillery attack from two sides, by Iraqi artillery on the war front and by the Iranians on the Kurdish front. Confrontations took place in and around all the major cities of Kurdistan, with Kurdish fighters under great pressure but still determined in their demand for autonomy. The Islamic government also made some efforts to manipulate the classic shortcoming of Kurdish society, the tension between tribal elements and city intellectuals, and managed to organize the 'Islamic Peshmerge' by recruiting Kurds with tribal affiliations (mainly from Kermanshah, Bakhtaran, a region where there are Shi'i Kurds) to fight the Kurdish nationalist elements.

The situation of the KDPI since the Iran–Iraq war

While fighting the government and dealing with the clashes with Komala, the Kurdish party had to face its internal upheavals too. In 1980, a group of pro-Tudeh leaders of the KDPI left the party. The group followed the Tudeh party's policy of collaboration with the Islamic regime, but did not manage to convince many in the party to join them. Furthermore, division occurred in the KDPI itself. After the eighth Congress of the party in April 1988, Ghassemlou was challenged by 15 leading figures of the KDPI. The new faction called itself 'KDPI, The Revolutionary Leadership', and published a ten-point statement in which Ghassemlou was criticized personally for moving the party to the right by uniting with the 'Western liberal/democrat elements,' distancing himself from the socialist camp, and being willing to enter negotiations with the government in Tehran.[48] This group was not a unified force and each member had different motives for leaving the party as long as it had Ghassemlou as its leader.

However, Ghassemlou's leadership did not last long after that. On the evening of July 13, 1989, Ghassemlou and two other Kurds were shot dead in Vienna during negotiations with the Iranian government representatives. The other two killed were an Iranian Kurd, the KDPI representative in Europe named Abdullah Qaderi, and an Iraqi Kurd named M. Fazil Rasoul, whose flat was the meeting place for the negotiations. The PUK had acted as the mediator between the party and the Rafsanjani government.[49]

Ghassemlou never hid his willingness for negotiation over Kurdish autonomy with the Iranian authorities, a willingness which created many enemies for him. The meeting was the second session of the negotiations. The first took place on July 12. As was announced by the party, the meeting of July 12–13 was the third round of talks with the Tehran government. The two previous rounds took place in December 1988 and January 1989 with the knowledge of the party's politburo.[50] But the third round, which resulted in the assassination of Ghassemlou and his colleagues, was kept secret even from the party. As regards who was behind the assassination, the Austrian police announced that, based on their evidence, they were convinced that the mission was carried out by agents from Tehran during the meeting between Iranian delegates and Kurdish leaders. The wife of the Iraqi victim told the police that, the night before the assassination, she was told by her husband that the Iranians were very accommodating and had agreed to almost all the demands of the Kurds, and that they were

on the verge of signing a protocol. One cannot but think of the similarities between this ambush and the one in which Simko was killed.

Among the three Iranians from the government, there was a high-ranking revolutionary guard who was accidentally injured. It was said that he was very close to the speaker of the Parliament, Rafsanjani. He was later released and went to Iran. Of the other two, one, apparently, disappeared and the other took refuge in the Iranian Embassy in Vienna. The Iranian authorities at the Embassy refused the Austrian police request to interview him. The matter, as the Austrian police stated, was out of the police sphere and was a matter for diplomacy between the two countries.

Many who knew him believed that Ghassemlou was, by far, the most experienced and pragmatic politician in Kurdistan of Iran. It was these characteristics which resulted in his attempts to explore non-military solutions to the Kurdish question in Iran. On the national level, Ghassemlou, with his moderate, democratic political orientation, and as the leader of the KDPI which held the unique position of being the only substantial military and political opposition organization inside Iran, would have been an important partner in any future opposition alliance including forces inside and outside Iran.

Whoever the assassins were, and whatever the motive for his assassination, it is obvious that Ghassemlou's assassination, and the assassinations of the other top Kurdish leaders, were blows to the prospects of Kurdish nationalism, as well as to democracy in Iran. The future of the Kurdish movement in Iran will very much be determined by the future leadership of the KDPI, as well as that of the country. After these assassinations, the party announced that it would base its long-term strategy not on a military solution for Iranian Kurdistan but on an exploration of political avenues for Kurdish demands.[51]

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined the three principal features in the development of the Kurdish nationalist movement in Iran from the 1950s to the 1980s. By far the most interesting feature is how the economic and social structure of Kurdistan has shaped the differences of ideology, goals, demands, language, and leadership of the two main Kurdish organizations in Iran since the 1979 revolution. The first is the KDPI, a liberal nationalist organization with classic nationalist language and goals, and the second is Komala, a radical Kurdish organization, a branch of the Communist Party of Iran with classic Marxist

language and ultimate goals but nevertheless a Kurdish nationalist organization if only because it has Kurdish autonomy on its agenda. Furthermore, I have tried to demonstrate the relationship between the economic development in Kurdish areas and the social/political development in Kurdistan arguing that it was easier for Komala, which advocates class conflict within Kurdish society, to have more influence in areas where there has been large landownership and a more expanded market economy and labor market. It was possible for Komala to organize the population along the lines of peasants and workers vis-à-vis the landlords and industrial bosses because, in the regions around Sanandaj, such notions were close to the daily experience of Kurdish people. As was argued in the economic chapters, the traditional herding/tribal communities had a more egalitarian social and economic system which provided cohesiveness and solidarity among the members of the community as a whole, in contrast to the landlord–peasant society where market relations are a more decisive element, and conflict between ordinary members of the community and the wealthy section of it is such that the latter can be seen as the oppressors. In Iranian Kurdistan, the nationalist movement started in the north and northwest part of the country, where too radical a national struggle would not have survived. The KDPI's activities began in the regions where, due to the geographical limitations (most of the region being mountainous), herding naturally developed to be the main economic activity. The economic limitations in these regions have affected the form the Kurdish political movement has taken. In these regions, the emphasis of the political organization has been on the conflict between the Kurdish people and the enemy, namely the central government.[52] The clashes between the Kurds and the government highlighted the fact that, at this stage of the Kurdish movement, the main obstacle in reaching the goal of autonomy appeared to be the central government.

The second feature of the Kurdish national movement examined in this chapter is the degree of its maturity when seen as a whole. By maturity I mean the active participation of the masses in the national movement, the presence of various political trends within the movement, and the existence of popular, voluntary militias. This is the sense in which Hroch uses the term to describe the advanced stage in the development of a nationalist movement. The Kurdish movement in Iran in the 1990s was a very different organization from that of 1947 when the Kurdish Republic collapsed. Surviving the years of the revolution and its aftermath transformed the KDPI and the Kurdish

movement on the whole from an inexperienced, underground movement, highly dependent on the Kurds in Iraq, into a relatively independent political force, which not only could determine the destiny of Kurdistan of Iran, but could also play a significant role in the political outcomes of the country as a whole. The changes that the KDPI has undergone are the manifestations of the development in the Kurdish society as a whole. Once a 'face-to-face' tribal society totally dominated by tribal politics, it has transformed itself into a society whose social/political outlook and demands correspond to its economic state. The KDPI, as the main political representative of the Kurds in Iran, along with the smaller political organizations such as Komala, demonstrated that the Kurdish movement has come a long way from the days of the 1920s and 1946–47. It was different in its geographical and political scale. Its political message was supported by a majority of the Kurdish population in almost all of Iranian Kurdistan. Its fate is determined, more than ever, by secular political organizations rather than by tribal influences. The movement has a militia force, whose foremost loyalty goes to the Kurdish cause, regardless of the possible tribal affiliation of its members. This is a movement which sees the Kurds as a nation and has successfully mobilized them on the basis of Kurdish nationalism, even though its demands remain autonomy and the recognition of ethnic rights rather than the formation of a separate state.

Finally, the third principal feature examined in this chapter is the relationship between the Kurdish national movement on the one hand, and the central government of Iran on the other in the years after the 1979 revolution. The Iranian revolution, which was welcomed as the harbinger of democracy in Iran by its opposition to the Shah, failed to live up to some people's expectations. In spite of many promises, the Kurds received very harsh treatment. Later, the war between Iran and Iraq was thought to provide a golden opportunity for the Kurds of both countries. Instead, it proved to be another opportunity for repression of the Kurds in both countries.[53]

If there was any misunderstanding at the beginning of the revolution in Iran about the intentions of the Islamic government to grant autonomy to the ethnic minorities, that soon changed. The idea of an autonomous Kurdistan, or any autonomous minority in Iran, does not accord with the idea of the universality of Islam as described by Ayatollah Khomeini and his followers. As he expressed repeatedly, in Islam and Islamic countries there is no room for such divisive ideas which aim at weakening the unity of the Islamic community. Ayatollah Khomeini's attitude to the nationalism of minorities was that:

> There is no difference between Muslims who speak different langua-
> ges . . . It is very probable that such problems have been created by
> those who do not wish the Muslim countries to be united . . . They
> create the issues of nationalism, of pan-Aryanism, pan-Turkism, and
> such isms, which are contrary to Islamic doctrines.[54]

There is another important factor at work. There is enough historical
evidence to demonstrate that a minority opposition gains the upper
hand in a political challenge when the established power is weak and
vulnerable. The government of the Islamic Republic in Tehran in the
1990s was no more vulnerable than when it first seized power. If any-
thing, the contrary was true. Without changes in the political leader-
ship of Iran, the Kurds will not be able to advance their cause peacefully.
The consolidation of the Islamic government has increased frustration
among its opposition, and the 1988 split in the KDPI was partly due to
this.

However, despite the argument about the unity of Muslims as one
nation and nationalism being an evil thought created by the enemies
of Islam, the rejection of Kurdish autonomy is nothing but a rejection of
separation from a sovereign nation-state called the Islamic Republic
of Iran. Finally, it is the official nationalism of the Iranian government
with its political power called Islam which refuses to recognize the
legitimacy of Kurdish autonomy. The fundamental conflict between
the universalism of Islam advocated by the Islamic government of Iran
and the Kurdish nationalism in Iran is, mainly, the conflict between
Iranian nationalism and Kurdish nationalism, which is perceived as a
threat to the sovereignty of the country. This is the single most
important reason for the military assaults on the Kurdish areas and the
assassinations of the Kurdish leaders abroad.

Conclusion[1]

I have tried to trace the development of Kurdish nationalism in Iran through its progression from a society whose economic, social and political relationships and understanding was totally based on the definition of tribe, tribal affiliation and loyalties, to a society whose economic activities, social behavior, and political understanding relates and belongs to a period of our history we refer to as the age of nation-states. I discussed the political movements of the Kurds in Iran in three periods to demonstrate the differences between them, and argued that the distinction was apparent in the way the Kurds comprehended the issue of autonomy and independence. In this progression, I argued, the economic development of Kurdish society at different phases played a great role in determining the way the Kurds saw themselves and expressed their political demands for autonomy.

I divided the political history of Kurdistan in Iran from World War I until the 1979 Revolution in Iran loosely into three distinct periods, examining one political movement related to each period. Each movement had its own specific features, presenting different phases of the development of Kurdish society and its political, social, and economic conditions. However, I believe that overall, there was progression from a tribal 'face-to-face' to an 'imagined community' of a nation. The three periods can be identified first with Simko's uprising of 1918–22, second with the Kurdish movement of 1946 known as the Mahabad Republic, and finally the Kurdish autonomy movement at the time of the 1979 revolution and later.

I have argued that the Kurdish nationalist movement as a modern phenomenon could only have happened when social, economic, and cultural circumstances were ripe. I marked such a point with the formation of political parties, Komala J. K. and the Kurdish Democratic

Party of Iran during the autonomy movement of 1946, which culminated in the establishment of the Kurdish Republic in the Mahabad region. Prior to that period, Kurdish society in Iran simply lacked the social and economic institutions and political and ideological organizations and understandings necessary to form a nationalist movement. Prior to the 1946 movement any uprisings – including the most significant of them, Simko's uprising, which many Kurdish historians refer to as a nationalist movement – were, in leadership, organization, and structure, predominantly tribal. It was the consequences of Reza Shah's policies of the destruction of the political, social, and military organizations of the tribes by way of their forced settlement and disarmament, by separating the tribal leadership from its body by the imprisonment and exile of its leadership, and by its replacement with government officials, that made Kurdish society receptive to nationalist ideas. What Reza Shah's government did was to change the perception of Kurdish people of themselves by changing the economic and social life of the Kurds. This, eventually, changed their political life too.

The first period I examined involving Simko's uprising should primarily be characterized as a phase of tribal consciousness, and corresponds to an economic period during which a nomadic lifestyle, mixing agriculture and herding, was dominant. The traditional economic life of the Kurds had come under greater and greater pressure through increasing central government intervention by forced settlement of the Kurdish tribes and their gradual sedentarization. These political-economic measures taken to expand central government authority in Kurdistan led to political reaction by the Kurds, an example of which is the famous Simko revolt. However, Simko was the embodiment of nomadic, tribal society, fighting not in the name of the Kurdish nation but for personal, clan, and tribal grievances. Consequently, a strong feature of the revolt was dissension among the various Kurdish tribes, and government success in forging alliances with other tribal chiefs against Simko. In that period, the economic, social, and political life of most Kurds was based on certain relationships. Using Peter Laslett's terminology, I called this the 'face-to-face' period of tribal life. Furthermore, I argued that this 'face-to-face' society was only able to demonstrate certain forms of political expression as a consequence of its economic structure. Simko's movement was the manifestation of such a society.

Simko's revolt could only have occurred within the context of a 'face-to-face' society, one in which all contact, economic and political,

is personalized. In such a society, abstract concepts like nation, state, and market have no meaning. In such a society an abstract concept like nationalism, which presupposes strong, inherent bonds with people one has never seen, is an impossible one to grasp. Simko's movement characterizes that period of Kurdish history.

I argued that the second phase, the period of developing nationalism, was inaugurated by Reza Shah's suppression of tribal revolts and extension of central government authority. Following his centralization policy, Reza Shah succeeded in partially disarming the Kurdish chiefs. He also exiled or imprisoned them and in their place appointed military officers, whose corruption and brutality left the Kurds profoundly bitter and enhanced the feelings of mistrust and hostility already existing towards the central government and its officers. Nationalism developed in the context of people being uprooted and forced to give up their traditional way of life within whose limits they felt a great sense of familiarity and comfort.

By the end of Reza Shah's reign Kurdistan, along with the rest of the country, but to a lesser extent compared to some regions, developed into an agrarian society with a market economy. Although, herding remained a significant part of economic activity, purely nomadic tribes almost ceased to exist. The sons of the tribal chiefs and other elites and notables of the society had learned the modern ideas of equality, democracy, freedom, and nationalism in the schools established by Reza Shah's government. It was this group of educated Kurdish intelligentsia who in the 1946 movement formed the political organization and leadership and cultural institutions to lead a nationalist movement for the first time.

I have argued that the government policies of prohibition of migration, forced settlement and sedentarization of nomadic tribes, which were aimed at destroying nomadic tribal life in Iran, brought fundamental changes to the tribal structure, weakening that 'face-to-face' character of it. The result of such policies was the end of a specific lifestyle which was very much determined by the way the community interacted economically, particularly a special kind of herding which was greatly related to distance migration. These policies, along with other harsh anti-tribal government policies, transformed most of Kurdistan from nomadic tribal communities to settled agricultural communities, which by their nature required a different set of social, economic, and political relationships among the population. These policies made people face an increasing differentiation of their society and a determination of status in that society on the basis of land

ownership and the amount of income the individual received. This was contrary to the tribal economy of herding, where a certain egalitarianism existed among the tribe's members, since the land their animals grazed on was communal and the whole process of migration was a communal effort for the survival and welfare of the tribe on the whole. The gradual introduction of the market economy, new education, and new communications to Kurdistan, as part of the new changes in the entire country, added to the further development of this process. It was as the result of this transformation that Kurdish society and its leadership came to a new understanding of themselves, most apparent of all the understanding of the Kurds as a nation. The comparison of the two Kurdish movements, Simko's uprising and the autonomy movement of 1946, clearly highlights the fundamental changes which took place in the social institutions and leadership and political and ideological organizations of the Kurdish people.

I argued that the first political expression of a Kurdish nationalism was in the establishment of the Kurdish Republic in Mahabad in 1946. The Kurdish Republic considered itself a separate state, with separate flag, anthem, written program, and official language. A key factor in encouraging the expansion of Kurdish nationalism came from outside Iran, both in the form of the stated aims of the Atlantic Charter, which the Allies enunciated in the process of fighting Nazism and Fascism and creating a new world order in which the right of self-determination for peoples would hold pride of place, and in the occupation of a part of the country by the USSR which allowed the possibility of practical support and assistance to those who expressed sympathy and solidarity with them. These international pressures certainly accelerated the process of nationalist development.

At the same time, international pressures helped doom the Kurdish Republic by lending negative connotations to the association with the USSR, thereby ensuring a lack of international response to its suppression. Ultimately, the Kurds did not yet have the sort of strength and unity of purpose to make any attempt at suppression of their nationhood futile. This period, though significant in the development of Kurdish nationalism in Iran, was still an intermediate phase between tribalism and the full-scale Kurdish nationalism of today. The Mahabad movement was torn between tribal influences and the urban intellectuals. It represented the beginning of the idea of a Kurdish nation-state in Iran. It had many features of a nationalist movement. However, it was unable to free itself from dependence on tribal military and political might. The 1946 Kurdish republic became feasible when two forces

of Kurdish society, the educated elite represented by the urban middle-class intelligentsia, among whom were some educated sons of tribal chiefs, and the military elite represented by the influential tribal leaders came together. Undoubtedly, the favorable international atmosphere encouraged it, but it was the internal mechanism of the Kurdish society at the time that created this nationalist movement. A favorable international atmosphere also existed at the time of Simko, but that did not result in a modern nationalist movement then.

In retrospect, it can be seen that with the collapse of the Mahabad Republic, the Kurdish national movement entered a new phase in search of an institution to create a political, organizational, and military structure which could gain the support of the peasantry and draw them into an active struggle for national autonomy. In this process, the Kurdish national struggle received a major boost from the economic and social changes which occurred in Iran between 1950 and 1979. The resulting shifts in the values and the loyalty of the Kurdish peasants were the direct result of a more fundamental change in the material and social conditions of life in rural Kurdistan stemming specifically from the introduction of the land reform program.

The third period of Kurdish nationalism I discussed really commences with the introduction of the Shah's land reform. While the land reform did not accomplish all that it ostensibly set out to, its effects, both intended and unintended, were far-reaching. It accelerated the process of involvement of even poorer peasants and landless laborers within the wider community, and often resulted in considerable dislocation and upheaval, including migration in search of work and wage labor on an extended scale. It is this process of transformation, often turning traditional relationships upside down, that has contributed to the political development of Kurdish nationalism in Iran.

I have discussed the connections between the economic and demographic issues and the political sociology of Kurdish nationalism, arguing that demographic and economic changes transformed rural Kurdistan from isolated communities into societies well integrated with the rest of Kurdistan and its urban centers. I further showed the substantial inequality between Kurdistan and Iran, a very significant factor in developing a feeling of solidarity and awareness of national identity among ethnic groups.

I concluded that there are two main themes in the development of Kurdish society to its present state, continuity and change. The change aspect has already been discussed and is the more visible (for example

the transition from a 'face-to-face' society and so on). The continuity in Kurdish life, particularly the nomadic or rural life, is due to the peculiarity of its natural environment, the fact that the region is predominantly mountainous. It is this factor that encouraged and developed nomadism in the past as a form of economic and social organization, where the egalitarianism of nomadic life was important in determining the relationships among the community. It is this feature that also later determined the form taken by Kurdish agriculture and rural life. The environment allowed only small-scale farming and therefore a large-scale labor market or large land ownership could not have developed. This meant a relative economic and social equality within Kurdistan and greater solidarity among its people. A principle reason that the mainstream Kurdish nationalist movement has been less involved with class conflict within Kurdistan is related to this issue. However, these favorable conditions for the further advance of Kurdish nationalism were utilized to their best potential only when the political conditions in the whole country became favorable. That happened with the downfall of the Shah's regime and the existing authority enforcement institutions in Iran. It was only then that the Kurdish movement was, very rapidly, transformed from a Kurdish nationalist intelligentsia movement into an advanced nationalist mass movement with political, ideological, and military organizations and social and cultural institutions of its own.

Today, Kurdish nationalism is not just the province of urban intellectuals or rural notables; it is not just an elite movement. It is now a movement with an extremely wide social base and a highly developed consciousness. In many ways, Kurdish nationalism is the most highly politicized and conscious political movement in Iran, as signified by the degree of effective autonomy maintained in the region and the degree of wariness with which the issue has been approached by the Islamic Republic in Iran in the years after the Revolution.

A major theme developed in this study is how the economic structure of rural Kurdistan has shaped the ideological composition and geographical sphere of influence of the two main Kurdish political parties. More specifically, I argued that the economic structure of a mountain society has undermined the growth of class conflict in much of Iranian Kurdistan despite all the economic and demographic changes that have taken place in recent decades. Since the absence of such class divisions manifests itself in social cohesion,[2] I employed this cohesiveness characterizing most of the areas of rural Kurdistan as a working hypothesis in Chapter 6 to explain the relatively unimportant

role of the Komala as a Marxist organization and the dominance of the Kurdish nationalist movement by the KDPI with a more compromising, reformist, nationalist outlook. What this working hypothesis suggests is that parties based on a Marxist outlook are unlikely to gain substantial mass support in Kurdish rural communities which are characterized by a significant degree of equality and social solidarity.[3] By contrast, this working hypothesis also suggests that class-inclusive nationalism is unlikely to thrive in agrarian societies with deep social divisions. Since these are issues of a general nature, it may be useful to see if they can be supported by historical evidence from elsewhere. For this purpose, I have chosen two historically significant cases to briefly examine, one from Russian/Soviet history, and the other from the early period of the history of Chinese communism during the Japanese occupation.

Among the traditional Russian communes organized on the egalitarian notion of land ownership, there existed a tradition of radical, as opposed to conservative, solidarity. Indeed, this solidarity and absence of class division was considered a threat to the state, and as Barrington Moore has pointed out, the official Tsarist policy since 1905 was to reverse it. Barrington Moore writes:

> In a rebellious and revolutionary form of solidarity, institutional arrangements are such as to spread grievances through the peasant community and turn it into a solidarity group hostile to the overlord. There are strong indications that this was happening in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Russian villages. One of the main consequences of the periodic revision of property in the *mir*, or peasant commune, seems to have been to generalize land hunger, to align the richer peasants with the poorer ones. Certainly this was the conclusion of Stolypin, who reversed earlier official support for the *mir* and tried to establish a Russian version of sturdy yeomanry to prop up the tottering throne of the Romanoffs. It is also worth recalling that the Chinese communists, before they took power, had to create this kind of solidarity out of refractory social materials.[4]

This radical solidarity also proved to be the cause of much difficulty for the Bolshevik state during the NEP and the period of war-communism, where the need for the cooperation of the peasantry and their mobilization in defense of the Soviet state was great. Shanin, pointing out such difficulty, writes:

> ...influencing the Russian peasant communities by political mobilization of various groups of the peasantry was limited to an extreme; various exercises in pressure and coercion were the main, if not the only, contact and in these the power of the state found its match in the silent stubbornness of the peasant communities.[5]

It was precisely this lack of communist success to mobilize the peasantry in the early 1920s that, Shanin argues, set the stage for the 'drama' of forced collectivization.

This example provides some support for our hypothesis, but only a limited one. The Kurdish rural communities are also characterized by radical rather than conservative solidarity, i.e. focusing their hostility towards the state. On the other hand, the solidarity in each Russian village existed side by side with the disunity among villages and the absence of this solidarity as a political force on a national level. The Kurdish experience in this regard is quite different in that such rural solidarity has been successfully built into a national political force and has manifested itself mainly in the KDPI.

The case of the Chinese rural communities is of more direct relevance to the growth of nationalism as it displays the problems to be overcome before the peasantry can be successfully mobilized for the cause of nationalism. In his study of the process of peasant mobilization by the Chinese communities, Barrington Moore repeatedly remarks that: 'The cohesiveness of Chinese peasant society appears to have been considerably less than that of other peasant societies.'[6] It was against this background of rural social structure that the Chinese nationalists had to mobilize the peasant masses of an underdeveloped agrarian society, a task which proved to be impossible for them. The main organization led by Sun Yat Sen, the founder of Chinese nationalism, consisted of a patriotic, Western-educated, urban intelligentsia. Although the movement grew in importance, number, and resources – and especially, under Sun's successor, Chiang Kai-shek, military might – and was, in the early decades of the century, much superior to the communist forces, it failed to make any significant gains in rural China and remained an essentially urban movement. This was a handicap for a nationalist party active in a predominantly agrarian society.

The reason for this handicap was the inability of the nationalist party to address the only main issue that would have affected peasant life, namely the question of land. This inability stemmed from the fact that the Chinese landed class had a very significant influence on the nationalist movement and, indeed, they provided the officer cadres of

Chiang's military machinery. With the land question being ruled out as the platform for peasant mobilization, Chiang only had his military power as the instrument of obtaining national unification and peasant support. This was just not enough to overcome peasant indifference to the cause of national cooperation. The presence of a foreign power in rural China might have made the peasantry more receptive to this form of nationalism, but this occurred later. This period may be referred to as the first phase of the Chinese nationalist movement, and it displayed the formidable difficulties of nationalism in an agrarian society when facing a deeply divided rural society. However, the second phase of Chinese nationalism under communist leadership is just as instructive for our purposes.

The second phase of Chinese nationalism receives special treatment in a study by Chalmers Johnson, [7] who shows, first, how occupation of rural China by Japan facilitated the communist mobilization of the peasantry, and, second, that to do so successfully, the communists had to set aside their politics of class war and focus their movement on the question of defending the motherland for the entire duration of the war. With Japan's invasion of northern China, Chiang's forces abandoned all rural areas, retreating to the cities. The Japanese conduct of the war brought the peasantry into close contact with the occupying force. As Japan was an alien power and did not distinguish between common peasants and active guerrillas, the Japanese started indiscriminate reprisals, thus forcing the issue of resistance. The ensuing lawlessness resulting from spreading banditry added to the climate of anarchy. These circumstances provided the opportunity for the communists to obtain peasant support on a large scale, for the experienced communist military cadres offered the Chinese peasantry the leadership they needed for military training and organization of the resistance. Crucially, despite all these favorable conditions, Johnson emphasizes, the communists focused almost exclusively on the struggle of the entire peasantry against Japan. This confirms Moore's earlier remark that the communists had to 'create' rural solidarity before they could successfully mobilize the Chinese rural masses.[8] Thus, to the extent that the Chinese communists had to practically abandon their ideology in favor of an outlook embracing most social classes as a unified entity, we seem to have another piece of evidence on the importance of social solidarity as a prerequisite for the emergence of a mass nationalist movement. Such solidarity proved so indispensable that it had to be invented. Hence we may draw some support for the hypothesis advanced in this study on the relationship between social cohesiveness

and mass nationalism from the above limited, though historically significant, examples.

Johnson's study of peasant nationalism in China puts great emphasis on the issue of nationalism as a mass movement. Hroch's analysis also agrees that mobilization of the masses is the key factor in the development of nationalism. Dealing, as I have, with the evolution of a nomadic people into a national community, I had to highlight the changes and the forces that have brought about the politicization of, to use a term due to Hobsbawm, 'pre-political' people. This process has been forceful, violent, and rapid. It should be remembered that most ordinary Kurds of Iran have come to nationalism as first-generation migrant labor or marginalized nomads, whose parents were not forced to enter the world of nationalism, but who have had to do so without necessarily understanding the forces that have compelled them. The success of nationalism as a mass movement depends on such forces, and hence the prominence given to their discussion in this work. Hobsbawm's description of the entry of such 'pre-political' people into the world of capitalism is just as relevant to the entry of Kurdish nomads into the 'modern' world of nationalism. He writes:

> They come into it as first-generation immigrants, or what is even more catastrophic, it comes to them from outside, insidiously by the operation of economic forces which they do not understand and over which they have no control, or brazenly by conquest, revolutions and fundamental changes of law whose consequences they may not understand, even when they have helped to bring them about. They do not as yet grow with or into modern society: they are broken into it.[9]

This is not to ignore the persistent work carried out by the Kurdish nationalist intelligentsia and the main Kurdish political organization, the KDPI. They have, no doubt, benefited from the peculiar economic structure of Kurdistan and some of the recent changes, whether or not they have fully understood them. However, the role of the KDPI should not be underestimated. The function of the KDPI in the Kurdish movement since the Kurdish Republic of 1946 can be related to Gramsci's notion of the Jacobins.[10] Gramsci used this term to indicate how an urban based social class/group can obtain the consent of the peasantry and bring it under its own leadership, as the Jacobins did in the French Revolution. In the context of the formation of the Italian nation-state, Gramsci saw Machiavelli's *Prince* as the first work to

have discovered the importance of a Jacobin force for mobilizing the masses.[11]

Machiavelli's recipe for the unification of Italy was the abolition of the mercenary armies on which the city-state of the Renaissance period was dependent and the establishment of a unified, all-Italian, citizen's militia in which people have a voluntary desire to participate in defense of their homeland. He also recognized that such voluntary support would not be forthcoming unless people had a strong sense of moral and ideological attachment to their national community and its leadership. He thus created an ideal prince with the virtues needed to ensure the continuing bond between the people and their community. As we saw in this work, not only the creation of a Jacobin force, but also the more specific citizen's militia suggested by Machiavelli, are relevant to the historical experience of the nationalist movement in Kurdistan.

What are the human resources which this 'Jacobin force' of Kurdish politics has employed in mobilizing peasant consent and active support which is the 'Modern Prince' of Kurdish nationalism? Two factors are important. The first is the extension of influence of the Kurdish Democratic Party into the rural areas of Kurdistan. The KDPI has supporters and sympathizers who assist its activities in the Kurdish village community, such as headmen, teachers, even landlords and mullahs. Such people are agents of nationalism who conduct their activities relying on 'face-to-face' social relations. But, this type of 'face-to-face' relationship differs from the previous type in that their reference is not to a small geographical area but to something larger, the invisible Kurdish nation. To this extent, they are similar to religious preachers in a 'face-to-face' society. The relationship between rural agents of nationalism and the peasants are similar to a 'face-to-face' relation in form, but not in content. Perhaps this explains why Kurdish nationalism in its early stage relied on leaders with dual roles, that of preachers and that of nationalist propagandists, members of the universal community of Muslims and the national community of Kurds.

The second is the development of what one might justifiably call a 'citizen militia', the 'Peshmerge.' The 'Peshmerge,' or Kurdish volunteer military force, was first referred to during the organization of the Kurdish Republic of 1946. Note that the Kurdish Peshmerge volunteer force was a replacement for a mercenary army of sorts. It was a substitute for another form of Kurdish force based on tribalism and loyal to tribal leaders, not to the nationalist cause or the Kurdish nation. The Mahabad Republic was significantly dependent on the

armed support of the tribal force of Barzanis of Iraq for its defense against the central government. The Kurdish nationalist intelligentsia had learnt to their cost that the loyalties of tribal armies are to their chiefs, not to the Kurdish nation as a whole, and at difficult times, when survival became the main concern, they chose to save their own forces rather than the Republic. Thus the Machiavellian call for a civilian army as the tool of national unification and especially national cohesion by drawing the desperate mass of peasantry into a relatively unified structure has a direct echo in Kurdistan.[12]

There seems to be little doubt that the recruitment of Kurdish peasantry has been greatly facilitated by the general economic features of rural Kurdistan. In his study of social banditry, Hobsbawm describes the social and economic environment particularly conducive to peasants taking up arms against the state. His list of factors reads like those discussed in Chapter 5 of this study on migration. Hobsbawm writes:

> The first, and probably the most important source of bandits is in those forms of rural economy or rural environment which have relatively small labor demands, or which are too poor to employ all their able-bodied men, in other words, the rural surplus population. *Pastoral economies and areas of mountain and poor soil, which often go together, provide a permanent surplus of this kind, which tends to develop its own institutionalized ententes in traditional societies: seasonal emigration, the surplus of soldiers, raiding and banditry.* 'Minifundism' (that is the prevalence of holdings too small to maintain a family) may have the same effect. So, for even more obvious reasons, may landlessness. The rural proletarian, unemployed for a large part of the year, is '*mobilizable*' as the peasant is not.[13]

He further adds other conditions such as 'male youth between puberty and marriage' and people 'marginal' to the rural economy, who have nevertheless retained some connection with their community.

Hobsbawm's list is significant to our case: surplus population prevalent in 'areas of mountain' or self-subsistence holding 'minifundism' resulting in migration, and a ready 'supply of soldiers' mostly comprising young, single men with some links to their original rural communities from which they may draw some support should they become outlaws. Almost everything on this list applies to the economy of Kurdistan as described in Chapters 2 and 5 of the present study. Indeed, using Hobsbawm's criteria, we may describe the Kurdistan of Iran, in many ways, as the classic terrain for the emergence and

growth of armed outlaws. When seen in this context, the achievement of the Kurdish nationalist parties, both the KDPI and Komala, has been, not so much the creation of a body of armed men, but rather their development into an organized, disciplined force at the service of Kurdish nationalism. In the absence of such organized nationalistic forces, one would expect a greater prevalence of armed rural banditry as described by Hobsbawm.

However, such a military force is seen by Kurdish leaders as a defensive organization, not aimed at, or indeed capable of, a frontal assault on the central government. Indeed, its function as the tool of national consciousness and cohesion is as important, perhaps even more important, as shown in the repeated statement of Kurdish leaders that they do not believe that the nationalist movement has the capability of achieving its aim militarily by a challenge to the central government. Thus a political/military Jacobin force has successfully drawn the masses into support for the nationalist cause. The importance of this force was shown during the events after the 1979 revolution in Iran.

The existence of such a militia force is the indication of a greater development of the Kurdish national movement. However, I have argued that further measurement of its advance is the diversity of the political organizations within the Kurdish movement. Interestingly enough, this diversity corresponds to the logistic diversity of these organizations in Kurdistan. The mainstream Kurdish nationalist party continues its activities based on the traditional Kurdish solidarity against the central government in the northern and northwestern areas of Kurdistan where mountainous conditions dictate small farming and herding. In southern and southeastern Kurdistan, where flat land and large land ownership exist, a more radical organization emphasizing the class conflict between Kurdish workers and peasants, on the one hand, and the landlords and industrial bosses, on the other, has developed. It is this relationship between the cohesiveness of pastoral Kurdistan and the peculiarities of Kurdish political parties which is probably the single most important and decisive feature of Kurdish nationalism in Iran.

Epilogue: The Situation of the Kurds in Iran and Neighboring Countries, 2002

The situation of the Kurdish movements in Iran, Iraq, and Turkey has changed drastically since the 1980s, each being affected by political developments in the respective countries.

Iran

The political assassination of Kurdish leaders did not end with Ghassemlou and his colleagues. His successor, Dr Mohammad Saddeq Sharfkandi, along with three other Kurds, was also assassinated in Berlin on September 18, 1992. Four masked gunmen burst into the restaurant in Berlin where the Kurdish leaders were holding a meeting and killed the four men. Sharfkandi, like Ghassemlou, was an intellectual. He held a doctorate in chemistry from the University of Paris. It was in Paris where he met Ghassemlou and joined the party.[1]

It was after the 1979 revolution, when the party became legal, that Sharafkandi was elected alternate member of the Central Committee and appointed as the party's official in Tehran. He ascended the party hierarchy and assumed the position of the Secretary General temporarily, but after the Vienna killing, in December 1991, he was unanimously elected Secretary General at the Party's IXth congress.[2] In the short period of leadership, Sharafkandi, like his predecessor, understood and reiterated that the Kurdish struggle for political, social, and economic justice was closely connected with the struggle of the rest of Iran to achieve democracy and political eqality. Indeed, it was during one of his meetings with the members of opposition groups that he was assassinated on September 18, 1992 at the Mykonos restaurant in Berlin.

To investigate the killing, German police formed a commission of inquiry called 'the Mykonos Special Commission.' The commission met with many obstacles in its attempts to uncover the truth about the assassination. Soon after the investigation started, the commission and many who had followed the events began to connect the killings to the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI). On October 28, 1993, the commission passed on its findings to the court, and it was under heavy security that the court started its process. It took three years and six months for the Mykonos court to conclude that the political assassinations of Sharafkandi, and those earlier of Ghassemlou and others, were all IRI attempts to put an end to the political grievances of the Kurds. Despite the absence of those accused of the killings, in April 1997 the court sentenced two to life in prison, one to eleven years, another to five years and three months, and the last to three years. The trail ended with political embarrassment for the IRI and a political victory for the Kurdish and other Iranian opposition. Relations between Iran and Germany and the rest of the European Union became tense.[3] Sharafkandi's death was a blow to the already drastically hampered Kurdish movement delivered by the Islamic government. Many of the Kurdish activists had to escape to neighboring countries, particularly to Kurdish-controlled areas of Iraq, operating under tremendous pressure. The little known Abdullah Hassanzadeh became the Secretary General of the KDPI.

The position of Komala was worsened too. By the middle of the 1980s, as the KDPI[4] was pushed into Iraqi territory, surviving by means of military assistance from the PUK, Komala, which still pursued the ideology of class struggle, was forced into exile. In addition, Komala had to bear an extra setback – that of gradual alienation from its Kurdish base due to its policies of criticizing the Kurdish movement as politically narrow-minded for concentrating solely on Kurdish issues.[5] The government's military control of the region, along with the miscalculated and misconceived policies and the sense of alienation felt by the Kurds towards Komala, made it practically impossible for Komala to continue to be physically active.

In the summer of 2000, after years of internal disputes, Komala, which was the main force behind the formation of the Communist Party of Iran in 1982, left the CPI. Soon after, some of the members of Komala and some of the CPI cadres once again formed a new alliance under the old name of Komala, the Revolutionary Organization of People of Kurdistan. Since then, Komala has changed its political demands from 'autonomy' to demands for the creation of a federal

government, and insists on achieving their goals through peaceful means. There is no doubt that the collapse of communism had its impact on Marxist movements around the globe, and has even impacted those movements of national liberation more broadly, such as the Kurdish movements in Iran, Iraq, and Turkey.

The situation for both parties continues to be very difficult. By the middle of the 1990s, Kurdistan was a totally militarized zone. An estimated 200,000 troops controlled the regions.[6] As far as the KDPI was concerned, despite all the setbacks endured by that party since the 1980s, it continues to pursue peaceful solutions to the issue of the Kurds in Iran. An example of such a policy was evident in the XIIth Congress, held on November 24–26, 2000. A resolution of the congress reads:

> We regard negotiations as a mode of struggle. Accordingly, if at any time the Central Government makes an overture to negotiate with our party aiming at resolving the Kurdish question in Iran through peaceful ways, we will promptly accept it. To actually start negotiations, though, some immutable preconditions should have been materialized: Negotiations must focus on the demands of the inhabitants of Kurdistan, i.e. the national rights of the Kurdish people in Iran; it ought to be done openly and declared beforehand so that the Kurdish people can be quite aware of the procedures; it has to be carried on with the government in its entirety and the most high-ranking, authorized officials representing the state. Besides, such negotiations, if any, should be performed under the supervision of a non-biased international body accepted by both sides.[7]

The Kurds in Iran have put much of their effort into pursuing a peaceful solution to Kurdish problems, and have tried to achieve their goals through legal channels. The 1997 presidential election, which resulted in a landslide victory for Muhammad Khatami, also gave hope to the Kurds. Khatami, who won the election with 69 percent of the votes, promised greater political and social freedom for the people, and a better economic situation. The Kurds, like others, though skeptical, participated in the election to protest against the policies of the hardliners and to encourage the ideas of the reformists. They overwhelmingly voted for the reformist platform, demanding more local representation in parliament and a larger allocation of local positions for Kurdish officials. Abdullah Ramezanzadeh, a Shi'i Kurd, became the first Governor General of Kurdistan. He appointed several Sunni Muslims to important positions, including key roles in economic, and financial affairs, indus-

tries, and administration. Ramezanzadeh not only enjoyed immense popularity among the local people, he also received endorsement from President Khatami for his reformist ideas. His ascent to power and the degree of support he received from his constituencies should all be seen as part of the attempt by the Kurds to achieve their demands through peaceful and participatory representative methods. These developments coincided with an important political change in Kurdistan; the end of military control of the region, and the start of law enforcement control. The lifting of nearly two decades of military control in Kurdistan was perceived as a great victory for the reformist government of Khatami and the Kurdish delegates.

However, the Kurdish representatives, like the others who demanded change, realized the obstacles in achieving their goals. The most dramatic manifestation of their demands for equal treatment came in the form of a mass resignation of Kurdish representatives. In October 2001, a legislator and five deputies of the Majlis from the province of Kurdistan collectively resigned in protest, accusing Khatami's government of double standards in discriminating against the Kurds. In the letter they presented to the Interior Minister, they asked for equality and social justice. One of the main concerns expressed was their unhappiness with the appointment of a non-Kurd as the new governor general after the popular Ramezanzadeh was summoned to Teheran to become a cabinet secretary in President Khatami's Cabinet. The letter, reads, in part: 'unfortunately, Kurdistan province and the Kurds, especially Sunnis, are denied their legitimate rights, and executive officials are turning their backs on calls for justice on the political, economic, cultural and social issues they have brought out.' The mass resignation was a political embarrassment for Khatami's government, which has had to deal with many political embarrassments and fallouts. In a report by the UN on the human rights issues, including the treatment of minorities in Iran, the Special Representative of the Commission on Human Rights, Maurice Danby Copithorne, summed up the major concerns that the Kurds had:

Representations concerning the status of the Kurds

The following is a list of specific complaints received by the Special Representative:

Violent deaths of individual Kurds, apparently the result of reckless or intentional acts of the law enforcement forces;

The recent kidnapping and death of a popular local cultural figure;

Death sentences imposed and in most cases carried out against Kurdish activists;

The continuing refusal of the authorities to allow Kurdish to be taught at any level in schools in Kurdistan;

The limited use of Kurdish in the print and electronic media and, even then, usually a translation of Farsi material; the air time for Kurdish programming is 'drastically shorter' than it was before 1979;

Various forms of economic discrimination, including access to jobs in general; in the case of the Piranshehr Sugar Company, the discharge in May 2001 of 80 per cent of the Kurdish employees by a non-Kurdish president and their replacement by workers of other ethnicities, 'and those who collaborate with the Pasdaran';

The use of Kurdish territory, particularly Kermanshah province, as a 'resting place' for drug addicts, criminals and other difficult groups from around the country;

The disallowance of the election to the Majlis of two Kurds representing Orumieh and Naghade districts;

The gross under-representation of Kurdish districts in the Majlis, as also perhaps other districts dominated by other ethnic groups, as seen for example in the failure to add any new seats for Kurdish districts in the latest 5th Majlis redistribution.[8]

The reality of Kurdish politics is that its fate is tied to the fate of Iranian politics as a whole. Despite the political suppression, political prisons, executions,[9] and social and economic deprivation, the Kurds, like the other ethnic groups in Iran, have attempted to work within the system. Many analysts believe that the Kurds, as did other Iranians, cast their votes in the last presidential elections not to endorse Khatami but to reject the hardliners. There is also an element of 'rejection voting' – many Kurds genuinely hoped that the reformist government would act on the promises of 'Iran for all Iranians' and a greater recognition of their minority rights. Their disappointment with the

reformist government is the same as that of the rest of the country, which put their trust in the Khatami government for change. Kurdish politics is, and has been, an integral part of the bigger political picture in Iran.

Iraq

While the Kurdish movement in Iran was suffering internal and external blows the situation of the Kurds in the neighboring countries of Iraq and Turkey was hardly satisfactory. In Iraq, during the war, President Saddam Hussein's main effort was directed towards Iran. This offered a respite for the Kurdish Peshmerge in Iraq to establish their control over many areas. However, towards the end of the war, the regime in Baghdad intensified its military operations in the area and launched brutal retaliatory actions against civilians with the aim of destroying Kurdish resistance and any aspiration of nationalism. It had many characteristics in common with genocide; certainly, the aim was to eliminate the Kurds as a unified political force and to ensure their forced resettlement outside of Kurdistan.

Saddam Hussein appointed his cousin, Ali Hassan al-Majid, as the chief of the Baath Party's Bureau for Northern Affairs.[10] Under his command, the Iraqi army, including members of the Republican Guard, carried out three offensives during which chemical weapons were used. Thousands of people were forced to go to desert camps where many died, and many thousands were forced to flee to Iran or Turkey. The world showed little concern about the horrifying events in Iraq. It was the Halabja massacre in March 1988 that made the international communities realize what was happening in northern Iraq, particularly after Iran invited foreign journalists to visit the site. Halabja is a small town near the Iranian border and Iranian forces managed to occupy it in the spring of 1988 for a short time. The Iraqi forces, in retaliation, bombarded the town with chemical bombs and hundreds of Kurdish civilians died a horrible death. However, no pressure was put on Saddam Hussein for his treatment of the Kurds and, only six months later, in August 1988, more chemical bombardment destroyed many Kurdish villages, killing many and forcing many more to flee to Turkey and Iran. Saddam Hussein was successful in silencing the Kurds for a time. It was reported that by the end of 1991, 4000 (out of 7000) villages were destroyed, thousands of Iraqi Kurds forcibly resettled in camps away from the borders, while thousands remained in Iran and Turkey in refugee camps.

The next disaster came to the Iraqi Kurds as a result of the aftermath of Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. In March 1991, encouraged by Hussein's defeat in Kuwait and hoping for support from the Allies, the Kurds in Iraq, who had kept quiet during the war fearing Saddam Hussein's retaliation, rose in revolt. For a few weeks it seemed that they were free and masters of their own fate. However, it soon became painfully clear that Saddam Hussein's military might, which many were led to believe was destroyed, in fact was still powerful enough to launch massive air attacks on Kurds using phosphorus and sulfuric gas. These attacks resulted in a panic flight of more than two million Iraqi Kurds to the Iranian and Turkish borders. In a matter of a few days, in addition to 35,000 Gulf War refugees already present in Iran and 20,000 in Turkey, a great number of refugees from Iraqi attacks headed towards Turkey and Iran's borders. Turkey, to some extent unwillingly and under pressure from Western countries, allowed within its borders approximately half a million Kurds while Iran allowed more than a million refugees into the country.[11] International attention, however, was almost entirely focused on those refugees in Turkey.

The UN Security Council adopted Resolution 688 on April 5, 1991, which called on Iraq to refrain from attacking its Kurdish population and to allow the international community to provide aid. The UN Coalition agreed to establish 'safe havens' where the Kurds would be protected inside Iraq by international military forces and aided by non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Operation Provide Comfort began in April 1991 with air support. A 'no-fly' zone was declared for fixed-wing Iraqi aircraft in the area north of the 36th parallel. Forces were deployed from Zakho to Amidya, reaching Dohuk in the south. By September, however, all ground troops were withdrawn from the zone.[12]

Kurdish political leaders, witnessing the survival of Saddam Hussein despite the war on Iraq, decided to enter into negotiations with the Iraqi regime. They were, initially, in a relatively strong position in negotiations with Saddam due to the 'no-fly' zone and the presence of coalition troops. However, as was expected, demands for free elections and a new constitution were not accepted by Saddam, nor were the demands for the recognition of any altered legal status for the Kurds. Despite the obstacles, on May 19, 1992, in an attempt to create a Kurdish regional government, Kurdish regions held presidential and parliamentary elections. The main competition was between the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), and the election results showed the two contenders tied at 45

percent. The two parties agreed on a national unity government, and the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) was officially formed in Erbil City. There were 105 members elected for the Kurdish National Assembly; the PUK and KDP each had 50 members.[13]

However, the practice of democracy proved to be much harder for the new Kurdish Regional Government than was thought. It didn't take long for the old animosities to prevail and force the region into a civil war that resulted in partition of the region into KDP and PUK camps, and loss of lives for both organizations. It was the ceasefire agreement of July 1994 in Paris that eased the situation temporarily, but left the region with practically two governments, each having their own zones of control in coalition with other smaller organizations. The military clashes never ceased between the two rival parties, and soon another round of fighting started. In 1998, the two advocacies signed another peace accord in Washington. The fighting for a larger share of power harmed the KRG the most. The two leaders, Barzani and Talbani, each tried to gain more political power and recognition by playing politics outside the KRG frame, forming new alliances, and therefore deprived the KRG of the support it needed to grow. The energy that should have gone into the development and practices of democratic government in the Kurdish regions went into the strengthening of individual power over the rival. This attitude stems from long years of tribal politics and the absence of democratic practices in the political life in Kurdistan and the region as a whole. After the Gulf War, many, Kurds, and non-Kurds, hoped for a democratic entity in Iraqi Kurdistan, a testing ground for the development of democratic institutions and the practice of true democratic participation and power-sharing, but so far, after one decade, Iraqi Kurdistan is still suffering from the old politics of individualism.

The Kurdish situation in Iraq could have had a more impressive impact on regional politics, but the rivalries between the Kurdish organizations have hindered that potential. The fact that Iraqi Kurdistan enjoys a greater degree of freedom and better standard of living than any other regions of greater Kurdistan is quite visible, but a long-lasting peaceful life for the Kurds in Kurdistan will always be in doubt so long as non-democratic regimes exist in that region.

Turkey

The events of the 1980s in the region brought some changes to the Kurdish situation in Turkey too. For the first few years of the early

1980s, the Turkish government continued to deny having any problem with its Kurdish population. However, towards the end of the decade, government policy began to shift with a lifting of the ban on the use of the Kurdish language. Furthermore, the Turkish government allowed the Kurds from Iraq to have a meeting in Turkey, and even suggested a federal solution for the Kurdish problem in Iraq. Many interpreted this as a gesture indicating a possible consideration of some autonomy for the Kurds in Turkey.

These unprecedented actions on the part of the Turkish government towards its Kurdish citizenry had several reasons. Turkey has been under pressure by the European powers which consider Turkey's treatment of its political opponents and its Kurdish population as an obstacle to Turkey's membership in the European Community. The softening of the policy is also the result of years of efforts by those critics of the Turkish government, Kurds and non-Kurds, at great risk to themselves, which brought the issue to the attention of the Turks and the world community.

However, a major factor in the reevaluation was the activities of the radical guerrilla organization called the 'Kurdish Workers' Party' (PKK). It was the horrifying news about the assassination of many government officials and Kurdish 'collaborators' carried out by the PKK that kept the issue of the Kurds alive in the minds of the people and the government. Since the mid-1980s, despite the number of assassinations carried out by the PKK, its popularity in the Kurdish areas, some believe even in some non-Kurdish areas, reached a height that the government could no longer ignore. In April 1990, the Turkish government introduced a decree giving the Regional Governor of the Kurdish Region sweeping powers and granting immunity from prosecution to those who implemented it. It authorized the closure of publishing houses, which 'falsely reflect events,' and the forcible resettlement of those deemed a threat by the Minister of the Interior. However, the Turkish government under President Turgut Ozal, of purportedly ethnic Kurdish background, did move to rescind the law that declared that Turkish was the mother tongue of all Turkish citizens, and allowed spoken Kurdish and the playing of Kurdish music. Later in 1991, the Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel provided a kind of backhanded recognition of a separate Kurdish 'entity.' However, Kurdish could still not be used in education, publishing, or broadcasting.[14]

In 1993, the PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan announced a unilateral ceasefire, of limited duration, hoping that a conciliatory move might find some response from the other side. However, President Ozal's

death seemed to remove the one Turkish mainstream politician who may have been prepared for movement on the issue, at least for the time being. The PKK responded subsequently by killing numbers of Turkish soldiers in Bingol, though it is not clear if this was by order of, or despite, Ocalan. Escalation of confrontations occurred, including actions aimed at Turkish tourism, well outside the Kurdish region. Furthermore, banks and offices throughout Western Europe were subject to PKK actions. The PKK had certainly 'internationalized' the Kurdish issue, and the Turkish government came increasingly under the European microscope. Criticism of Turkish human rights practices followed, and the European governments made clear that there would be no early entry of Turkey into the European community without a satisfactory solution to the Kurdish issue.[15]

The Turkish response was to try to remove what they saw as the source of the problem. They had increasingly gained the upper hand militarily because of the cutting of the PKK off from access to land bases and supplies from outside Turkey. They decided to press their advantage by trying to capture the symbol of the PKK and Kurdish resistance, Ocalan. After fruitlessly attempting to obtain asylum in a number of countries, including Russia and Italy, Ocalan was kidnapped by the Turkish military in February 1999 while in Nairobi, under apparent Greek protection. In Turkey, the state security court sentenced him to death for treason and the PKK role in a war which has claimed over 30,000 lives. While in prison, he repeatedly announced his disbanding of 'armed struggle,' his recognition of Turkish sovereignty, and invited the Turkish government to peacefully negotiate a solution to the Kurdish problem. The Turkish government has refused this.

Ocalan's lawyers, recognizing European views of Turkey's human rights records and in an attempt to save his life, took the case to the European Court of Human Rights. The ECHR immediately asked Turkey to suspend the sentence until final decision on the ruling of the appeal.[16] Ocalan, while waiting the final court outcome on his death sentence, continues to emphasize the change of policy from guerrilla struggle against the Turkish government to willingness to accept a ceasefire and a willingness to converse in negotiations on the Kurdish issue in Turkey, offering loyalty to Turkey and rejecting any ideas of a separate Kurdish state. The Turkish government has rejected his offerings as insincere and refuses to consider negotiations with the PKK leaders.

The most recent demonstration of the willingness to abandon terrorist activities and engage in peaceful negotiation has been the

announcement of the new name for the organization, 'The Congress for Freedom and Democracy in Kurdistan' (KADEK). However, the Turkish government was quick to reject the announcement as a cosmetic move.[17]

The Kurdish movement in Turkey is definitely going through an important transformation, but it will be interesting to see how Turkey can release itself from the suffocating grip of Atatürk's legacy that a great Turkey is a Turkey that denies it has any non-Turkish groups. It remains to be seen whether Turkey will recognize what seems to be obvious to European Union observers and many others: the recognition of Kurdish ethnic rights.[18]

Notes

Introduction

1. Hugh Seton-Watson, *Nations and States* (London, 1982), 5.
2. Ibid., 3.
3. Tom Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain* (London, 1977), 41–2.
4. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 1983), 15.
5. Ibid., 20.
6. Ibid.
7. Miroslav Hroch, 'From National Movement to the Fully Formed Nation,' *New Left Review* 198 (March/April 1993), 3–20.
8. Ibid., 6–7.
9. Ibid., 18.
10. Seton-Watson, *Nations and States*, 147–8.
11. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 127.
12. Ibid., 86.
13. Ibid., 102.
14. In the case of Iran, the Belgian constitution was the model for the Iranian constitution with two major adaptations to suit the country's conditions. There were numerous references to religion and the importance of religious leaders. The constitution also made a point of recognizing the existence of the provincial councils. Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions* (Princeton, NJ, 1982), 90.
15. Peter Laslett, 'Face-to-Face Society,' in P. Laslett (ed.), *Philosophy, Politics and Society* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967), 157–84.
16. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 122.
17. Arjun Appadurai, 'Introduction, Commodities and the Politics of Value,' in A. Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge, 1986), 3–63.
18. Ibid., 9.
19. Luca Anderlini and Hamid Sabourian, 'Some Notes on the Economics of Barter, Money and Credit,' in Caroline Humphrey and Stephen Hugh-Jones (eds), *Barter, Exchange and Value* (Cambridge, 1992), 75–106.
20. Ibid., 89.
21. The principal issue in the rise of Kurdish national awareness is the erosion in the fabric of the Kurdish 'face-to-face' society. The particular form this assumed in Kurdistan is of a secondary importance. Although I have not come across contrary evidence suggesting that the tribal structure in Iranian Kurdistan had not been of a nomadic type prior to the twentieth century, the notion of the 'face-to-face' society, and the factors which account for its erosion, employed in this study are broad enough to encompass both nomadic and settled types of tribal communities.

22. Teodor Shanin, *The Awkward Class: Political Sociology of Peasantry in a Developing Society: Russia, 1910–1925* (London, 1972).
23. E. J. Hobsbawm, *Bandits* (London, 1969), ch. 2, 30–40.
24. See P. Laslett, *The World We Have Lost* (New York, 1973). Laslett argues that in pre-industrial rural England there were social distinctions, but not class divisions, hence his notion of 'one-class society.'
25. On this notion, see the conclusion of this work.

Chapter 1   Introduction to the Kurds and Kurdistan

1. Hassan Arfa, *The Kurds* (London, 1966), 2.
2. This does not, generally, include the official government definitions, since there have always been attempts to deny or undermine the presence of a Kurdish identity by the governments in Iran, Turkey, and Iraq.
3. Gerald Chaliand (ed.), *People without a Country* (London, 1980), 4.
4. David McDowall, *The Kurds: A Nation Denied* (London, 1992), 8.
5. For the translation of the KDPI autonomous plan, see Charles MacDonald, 'The Kurdish Question in the 1980s,' in M. Esman and I. Robinovich (eds), *Ethnicity, Pluralism, and the State in the Middle East* (Ithaca, NY, 1988), 242.
6. An example of lack of harmony and peaceful coexistence between Kurds and their neighbors goes back to 1915 when some Kurds helped the Ottoman army to kill and expel Armenians from the Kurdish area. Years later, Armenian nationalists, having not forgotten this cooperation with genocide, threatened the Kurds with revenge.
7. Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou, *Kurdistan and the Kurds* (London, 1965), 14.
8. Ibid., 85.
9. For the text of the treaty, see Kendal, 'The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire,' in Chaliand, *People without a Country*, 42–3.
10. For more about Shaikh Said's revolt see Robert Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism 1800–1925* (Austin, TX, 1991).
11. Martin Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State* (London, 1992), 54.
12. Ibid., 254.
13. Arfa, *The Kurds*, 35.
14. David McDowall, *The Kurds*, the Minority Rights Group Report, No. 23 (London, 1989), 18.
15. Ghassemlou, *Kurdistan and the Kurds*, 63.
16. The treaty was implemented in 1932.
17. Ismet Sheriff Vanly, 'Kurdistan in Iraq,' in Chaliand, *People without a Country*, 163.
18. 1979 National Census.
19. The Plan and Budget Organization of Iran, 1986.
20. These fugures are from the last national census published by the Plan and Budget Organization of Iran, 2000
21. Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 105.
22. William Eagleton, *The Kurdish Republic* (London, 1963), 16–17.
23. For a background to the Kurdish tribes in Iran, I have used the information in the Public Record Office documents of 1944 (FO/371/40178, October

1944). It should be mentioned that all these tribes exist to this day. However, for further study of Iranian tribes, including Kurdish tribes, see Iraj Afshar Sistani, *Ilha, Chadurnishinan, va Tavayif-i A'shayeri-i Iran* (Tribes, Tent-dwellers and Nomads of Iran) (Tehran, 1987).

24. FO/371/40178, October 1944.
25. FO/371/35093, June 1943, and FO/371/40178, October 1944.
26. Ghassemlou, 'Kurdistan in Iran,' in Chaliand, *People without a Country*, 113.
27. For information on this period, see Ghassemlou, *Kurdistan and the Kurds*, chs IV and V.
28. Mostafa Azkia, *Khushnishinan-i Kurdistan* (Landless Peasants of Kurdistan) (Tehran University, 1976), 59.
29. Ibid., 61.
30. Ibid., 63.
31. Tehran University, *Barisi-i Natayj-i Islahat-i Arzi dar Haft Mantaqi* (Study of the Effects of Land Reform in Seven Regions) (The Institute of Social Study and Research, Tehran University, 1969), 194.
32. Azkia, *Khushnishinan-i Kurdistan*, 76.
33. The Plan and Budget Organization, *Moqadimeh-i bar Shenakht-i Masayl-i Iqtesad-i va Ijtima¢-i Jama¢i-i A¢shayer-i Kurdistan* (Introduction to the Economic and Social Problems of the Tribal Society of Kurdistan) (The Plan and Budget Organization, 1979).
34. See Mahabad in *Geographical Dictionary of Iran*, Vol. 4 (Tehran, 1953).
35. McDowall, *The Kurds*, 65.
36. FO/371/40219, April 1944.
37. Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism*, 1–7.
38. Ibid., 2.
39. Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions* (Princeton, NJ, 1982), 50–101.
40. Ibid., 120.
41. Ibid.
42. A. Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia* (London, 1953), 285.
43. Akbar Aghajanian, 'Ethnic Inequality in Iran: An Overview,' *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 15 (1983), 211–25.
44. *Abrahamian, Iran between Two Revolutions*, 137.
45. Ibid., 11.
46. Ghassemlou, *Kurdistan and the Kurds*, 109.

Chapter 2   The Political Economy of Kurdish Tribalism

1. T. Firuzan, 'Darbariy-i Tarkib va Sazman-i Ilat va 'Ashayer-i Iran' (The Composition and Organization of Iranian Nomads and Tribes), in *Ilat va 'Ashayer* (Tribes and Nomads) (Tehran, 1983), 14–16.
2. Amir Hushang Kishavarz, 'Nezam-i Iqtesad-i va Sakht-i Ijtima'-i dar 'Ashayer-i Iran' (Social and Economic Structure of Iranian tribes), in *Chashmandaz*, 3 (Autumn 1987), 40.
3. John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge, 1979), 323.
4. Ibid., 324.
5. Andrew Roberts, *A History of Zambia* (London, 1976), 65.

6. Richard Tapper (ed.), *The Conflict of Tribe and State in Iran and Afghanistan* (London, 1983), 9.
7. Martin Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State* (London, 1992), 51.
8. Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou, *Kurdistan and the Kurds* (London, 1965), 106.
9. Ibid., 107.
10. Kishavarz, 'Nezam-i Iqtesad-i va . . .', 45–6.
11. A. Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia* (London, 1953), 285.
12. Camilla Toulmin, *Economic Behaviour Among Livestock-Keeping People*, Development Studies Occasional Paper No. 25 (University of East Anglia, 1983), 5.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid., 19.
15. Ibid., 26.
16. Ibid., 31, 41–3.
17. Ibid., 62.
18. Ibid., 5, 44.
19. Ibid., 44.
20. Fredrik Barth, *Nomads of South Persia* (Oslo, 1961), 110.
21. Toulmin, *Economic Behaviour*, 45.
22. Barth, *Nomads of South Persia*, 108.
23. Ibid., 3.
24. Toulmin, *Economic Behaviour*, 58.
25. Cows are not popular among the tribes in Kurdistan for they are generally not suitable for long journeys through mountains where often livestock have to pass through narrow passages in the rock.
26. Goats and kids are more tolerant of changes in temperature, long journeys, and shortages of food and water. There is some vegetation which can be consumed by goats but which is fatal for sheep.
27. Kishavarz, 'Nezam-i Iqtesad-i va Sakht-i Ijtima'-i dar 'Ashayer-i Iran', 49–50.
28. Ghassemlou, *Kurdistan and the Kurds*, 109.
29. Ibid., 107.
30. Ibid., 106.
31. Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 269.
32. Ghassemlou, *Kurdistan and the Kurds*, 108.
33. J'afar Furugh, *'Ashayer va Damdari* (Tribes and Herding) (Tehran, 1976), 15. The exact date of the research is not very clear from the report; however, from the content of the report one assumes that the date of the research was not much prior to the publication date.
34. The Plan and Budget Organization, *Moqadimeh-i bar Shenakht-i Masail-i Iqtesad-i va Ijtima-i Jamai-i 'Ashayer-i Kurdistan* (Introduction to the Economic and Social Problems of Tribal Society of Kurdistan), (The Plan and Budget Organization, Tehran, 1979), 22.
35. Afshar-Naderi, *Khanivade va Tuse'eh-i 'Ashayer* (Family and Development among Tribes) (Tehran University, 1976), 13.
36. Ghassemlou, *Kurdistan and the Kurds*, 90.
37. Ibid., 90.
38. Azkia, *Khushnishinan-i Kurdistan*, 59.
39. The Plan and Budget Organization of the Province of Kurdistan, *The Statistics Report for Kurdistan 1985*, 5.

Chapter 3   Nationalism or Tribalism? Simko's Revolt

1. Sharif Mardin, *Religious and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nuri* (New York, 1989), 34. Van Bruinessen, in analyzing the situation of the Kurdish tribes in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries also highlights this development. Martin Van Bruinessen, 'Kurdish Tribes and Simko's Revolt,' in Richard Tapper (ed.), *The Conflict of Tribe and State in Iran and Afghanistan* (London, 1983), 371.

2. Shaikhs were/are not generally associated with any specific tribe. However, one ethnic tribe could consider itself to be the followers of a specific shaikh. See Van Bruinessen, 'Kurdish Tribes...,' 371.

3. Another factor which contributed to the shaikhs' rising influence was their role as Muslim religious leaders and representatives of legitimate accepted authority against the increasing European/Christian influence in the region as represented by the missionaries.

4. Van Bruinessen, 'Kurdish Tribes...,' 376.

5. Ibid., 376–7.

6. Roger Owen, *State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East* (London, 1992), 9.

7. For detailed reading on this period see Albert Hourani, *The History of the Arab Peoples* (Cambridge, MA, 1991), and Owen, *State, Power and Politics...* (London, 1992).

8. David McDowall, *The Kurds: A Nation Denied* (London, 1992), 32.

9. For the case of the Kurds, see Chapter 1 of this work regarding the treaty of Sèvres signed on 20 August 1920 and the treaty of Lausanne in 1923. As for the Armenians, due to systematic massacre and deportation through 1896–1922, they practically ceased to exist in Anatolia. In the case of Palestine, as Owen puts it, they were prevented from having a Palestinian state by 'force majeure,' Owen, *State, Power and Politics*, 11.

10. FO/371/40219, April 1944.

11. Heshmatullah Tabibi, *Tuhfi-yi Naderi, dar Tarikh va Jughrafiya-yi Kurdistan* (On the History and Geography of Kurdistan) (Tehran, 1987), 531.

12. The largest was the Kalhurs, located in western Kermanshah. Van Bruinessen, 'Kurdish Tribes ...', 381.

13. Hassan Arfa, *The Kurds* (London, 1966), 48.

14. There were a total of about 6000 in the Christian militia in the region at the time. William Eagleton, *The Kurdish Republic* (London, 1963), 9–10.

15. Mohammed Tamadun, *Tarikh-i Rezaiyeh* (History of Rezaiyeh) (Tehran, 1971), 186.

16. Arfa, *The Kurds*, 53.

17. Eagleton, *The Kurdish Republic*, 10, and Van Bruinessen, 'Kurdish Tribes...,' 385.

18. Van Bruinessen, 'Kurdish Tribes...,' 383.

19. FO/371/10115, 1924

20. FO/ 371/6347, 1921.

21. FO/371/7835, 1922.

22. FO/371/9009, 1923. This is the time that the British were considering a mandate for a Kurdish state in southern Kurdistan.

23. Van Bruinessen, 'Kurdish Tribes...,' 383.

24. Ibid., 384.
25. Tamadun, *Tarikh-i Rezaiyeh*, 322.
26. In 1906 the Ottoman army took over Persian Azerbaijan and occupied considerable sections of Kurdish inhabited districts of the Azerbaijan province.
27. Tamadun, *Tarikh-i Rezaiyeh*, 344.
28. Van Bruinessen, 'Kurdish Tribes . . . ,' 387. Arfa and the PRO documents also confirm such figures.
29. Among those who joined him were the Mamash, Mangur, Dehboukri, Piran, Zaza, Govrik, Fayzulla Begi, Pizhdar, and smaller tribes from around Baneh. This was in addition to the entire Shakak confederation and the Herki tribe.
30. Tamadun, *Tarikh-i Rezaiyeh*, 371.
31. FO/371/40219, April 1944.
32. Tamadun, *Tarikh-i Rezaiyeh*, 372.
33. Arfa, *The Kurds*, 62.
34. FO/371/14552, October 1930.
35. Miroslav Hroch, 'From National Movement to the Fully Formed Nation, the Nation-Building Process in Europe,' *New Left Review*, 198 (March/April 1993), 3–20.
36. FO/371/7808, July 1922.
37. Van Bruinessen, 'Kurdish Tribes . . . ,' 390.
38. Ibid., 388.
39. FO/371/6347, 1921.
40. FO/371/7808, August 1922.
41. Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions* (Princeton, NJ, 1982), 112.
42. Ibid., 113.

Chapter 4   The Kurdish Republic in Mahabad

1. Vincenzo Cuoco was an important thinker of the Italian Risorgimento who, having studied Burke on the French Revolution, came to the conclusion that revolution must be avoided and, as an alternative to the French experience, suggested the model of the Neapolitan Republic of 1799, the work of a bourgeois class backed by French armies which involved no mass participation. Cuoco coined the term 'passive revolution' to describe this kind of social change from above. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (trans. and ed.), *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (London, 1986), on Italian history, especially pp. 106–24.
2. Nikki Keddie, 'The Iranian Power Structure and Social Change 1800–1969: An Overview,' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 2 (1971), 3–20.
3. FO/371/31391, 1942.
4. FO/371/31426, May 1942.
5. FO/371/31388, January 1942.
6. FO/371/31414, May 1942.
7. Mahabad, which was formerly called Savouj Bulagh and renamed Mahabad when Reza Shah came to power, was founded about four centuries ago. The tribes living in and around the Mahabad region are the Mangur, Mamash,

Piran, Kavar, Sousani, Molkari, and Beyazi, who live in Iran, and the Poustari and Margiey, who live in Iraq. The City's main tribe is the Dehboukri. In the 1940s, there were about twenty important families in the town who shared economic, social, and political power, and moral influence. Perhaps the most influential families were the Shamsi Borhan, the Shaikhs of Zambil, and the Qazi families. The last of these played an important part in the history of the Kurdish Republic. Samad Samadi, *Tarikhcheh-yi Mahabad* (History of Mahabad) (Mahabad, 1984).

8. William Eagleton, *The Kurdish Republic* (London, 1966), 12–13.
9. Qazi Mohammed played the most important role in the development of the events leading to the establishment of the Kurdish Republic, and later became the president of the Republic.
10. Samad Samadi, *Negah-i Digar Be Zh. Kaf* (Another Look at J. K.) (Mahabad, 1984), 6–7.
11. FO/371/40172, 24 July 1944.
12. FO/371/40172, 24 July 1944.
13. FO/371/35094, August 1943.
14. FO/371/E8605, December 1941.
15. FO/371/8463, December 1941.
16. FO/371/31390, February 1942.
17. Miroslav Hroch, 'From National Movement to the Fully Formed Nations,' *New Left Review*, 198 (March/April 1993), 3–20.
18. Ibid., 6.
19. Ibid., 6–7.
20. Ibid., 12.
21. Ibid., 18.
22. Sayyid Mohammed interviewed Mulla Qader Modarresi. The interview is in Samadi, *Negah-i* . . .
23. The three colors in the Kurdish flag were the colors of the Iranian flag. It was the order of the colors in the Kurdish flag which differentiated it.
24. Eagleton, *The Kurdish Republic*, 36.
25. Samadi, *Negah-i* . . . (Mahabad, 1984), 10.
26. Ibid., 14.
27. Eagleton, *The Kurdish Republic*, 36; and also Samadi, *Negah-i* . . . , 12.
28. For a while the newspaper was printed in 'Sa'adat' printing house. The type-setting was to be prepared off the premises. Abdul-Rahman Zabihi, Mahmud Valizadeh and a few others took responsibility for printing equipment brought to their homes, and returning the finished product to the printing house the next night for printing. Samadi, *Negah-i* . . . , 13.
29. Eagleton, *The Kurdish Republic*, 40.
30. The exact date of the Party's foundation is a matter of dispute. Eagleton claims that it happened after the Kurdish leaders visited Baku for the second time, assuming that the establishment of the party was the will of the Soviets. (The Soviet authorities invited the Kurdish leaders to visit Baku on two occasions in November 1941 and September 1945.) However, many writers on Kurdish history suggest that the Party's foundation was 16 August 1945, which preceded the Baku trip (September 1945). Chris Kutschera, *Kurdistan*, reprint from *Ketab-i Jumeh*, 19, 20, and 21 (KDPI publication, Paris, 1981); Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou, *Chehel Sal Mubariz-i Dar Rah-i*

Azadi (Forty Years Struggle For Freedom), Vol. I (Publication of Democratic Party of Kurdistan of Iran, 1985).

31. To the best of his knowledge, Hassan Qazi believes such a Center did not exist. 'There were Soviet Cultural Centers in Tabriz and Rezaiyeh but not in Mahabad. Before the establishment of the Republic there were several Soviet citizens living in Mahabad as sales agents providing grain for the Soviet soldiers. During the Republic a Soviet officer, Salahiddin Kazemov who was a Soviet Kurd used to live in Mahabad. There was another Soviet officer, Namaz Aliar, who had contact with the Kurdish chiefs in the area.' Taken from a personal letter from Hassan Qazi, October 7, 1985.

32. Eagleton, *The Kurdish Republic*, 56.

33. FO/371/45436, November 8, 1945.

34. Hassan Arfa, *The Kurds* (London, 1966), 75–6.

35. FO/371/45478, March 23, 1945.

36. Eagleton, *The Kurdish Republic*, 63.

37. The information on the background of the Kurdish Republic's cabinet members was gathered from Eagleton, *The Kurdish Republic*, 70, and Nahid Bahmanpour, trans. Chris Kutschera, *Kurdistan*, reprint from *Ketabi-Jumeh*, 19, 20 and 21 (KDPI publication, Paris, 1981), 20.

38. The Barzani shaikhs and their supporters inhabited the area southwest of Rowanduz, on the left bank of the Greater Zab River. Nuri Said's government, eager to reach an agreement with the Kurds, began negotiations with them. Mulla Mostafa Barzani and other Kurds were granted amnesty in March 1945. But peace did not last long, and once again the Iraqi army was dispatched to Kurdistan. Mulla Mostafa withdrew to Iranian Kurdistan, where in parts there were no British or Soviet troops and where a strong national movement was developing. A British Foreign Office report mentions that he crossed the Iranian borders 'together with his followers who numbered some 2000 men – among them were 500 armed men in whose possession were 6 heavy machine guns, 40 tommy guns and 7 mounted guns.' FO/371/45440, December 1945.

39. Eagleton, *The Kurdish Republic*, 71.

40. Martin Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State* (London, 1992), 74.

41. After the collapse of the Iranian government in 1941 and until his return to Iranian Kurdistan with 200 fighting men, Hama Rashid led a series of military offensives in Iran. His area of control was in the Saqqiz-Baneh region.

42. This was an important attempt, for it could have, potentially, weakened the military reliance of the Republic on the tribal forces, which had demonstrated an ability to change loyalty in the past.

43. Eagleton, *The Kurdish Republic*, 78.

44. In September 1945, when Qazi Mohammed and other Kurdish leaders visited the Soviet Union, they were promised political as well as material support, including some arms. However, the Soviets made it clear that they preferred to see the Kurdish movement as an integrated part of the Azerbaijan movement. The Kurdish leaders also made it clear that they did not intend to be a satellite to Azerbaijan. FO/371/45459, October 1945.

45. Eagleton, *The Kurdish Republic*, 64.

46. Ibid., 103.

47. Ibid., 84.
48. As to what happened to these students who stayed behind, Eagleton wrote: 'a few did not return; Sultan Utamishi, who is now a doctor in Baku; Sayyid Karim Ayubi, who also finished his studies and remained in Baku as a plastic surgeon; Rahman Garmiani, now in Baku; Hesam Hesami, a doctor now in Iraq; Rahim Saif-i Qazi, now in the USSR; and a youth called Gilawezh (Kurdish for the planet Venus) who in 1961 was broadcasting anti-Iranian propaganda in the Kurdish language from East Berlin.' Eagleton, *The Kurdish Republic*, 85.
49. Ibid., 100.
50. Ibid., 100.
51. Ibid., 87–8.
52. FO/371/52702, May 1946.
53. Archi Roosevelt, Jr, 'The Kurdish Republic of Mahabad,' in *People without a Country*, ed. Gerald Chaliand (London, 1980), 143.
54. Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions* (Princeton, NJ, 1982), 400.
55. Archi Roosevelt, Jr., 'The Kurdish Republic of Mahabad,' 143–4.
56. Ibid., 144.
57. Abrahamian, *Iran between . . .* , 239.
58. Shortly after the occupation of Iran by the Allied forces in August 1941 and the abdication of Reza Shah, attempts were made to negotiate a treaty with the Iranian government to legalize the Allied presence in Iran. The treaty was eventually approved by the Majlis (the Iranian Parliament) and was signed on 29 January 1942. Eagleton, *The Kurdish Republic*, 72.
59. Ibid., 73.
60. Arfa, *The Kurds*, 97.
61. Eagleton, *The Kurdish Republic*, 111.
62. FO/371/52688, December 1946.
63. Eagleton, *The Kurdish Republic*, 111.
64. Kutschera, *Kurdistan*, 33.
65. FO/371/52702, December 11, 1946.
66. Kutschera, C., *Kurdistan*, reprint from *Ketab-l Jumeh*, Nos 19, 20 and 21 (Tehran, 1981). 33.
67. Eagleton, *The Kurdish Republic*, 122–3.
68. Ibid., 122–3.
69. Ibid., 115.
70. FO/137/61986, April 13, 1947.
71. FO/137/61986, April 22, 1947.
72. Eagleton, *The Kurdish Republic*, 126.
73. FO/371/61982, June 26, 1947.

Chapter 5 The Political Economy of Kurdish Nationalism

1. A. Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia* (London, 1953), 269.
2. Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou, *Kurdistan and the Kurds* (London, 1965), 170.
3. As in the previous section the type of 'face-to-face' communities we shall discuss in this section are settled village societies as mobile nomadic

societies in the post Land Reform period were no longer the dominant form of 'face-to-face' community. At any rate we have discussed the transition from the latter to settled community of land cultivators in Chapter 2.

4. Among the reasons cited by the migrants for their preference for Kurdish cities were the lower cost of migration, the presence of relatives and friends in the cities to provide help, and cultural and linguistic familiarity. This last source must not be underestimated. According to the 1985–86 National Census (p. 86) a staggering 55 percent of the population in the province of Kurdistan do not understand Farsi at all.

5. Marriage contributes a very large part of female migration to nearby villages, 39 percent for the latter and 28 percent for the former.

6. Mostafa Azkia, *Khushnishinan-i Kurdistan* (Landless Peasants of Kurdistan) (Tehran University, 1976), 107.

7. Ibid., 105.

8. Ibid., 202.

9. Ibid., 113.

10. Ibid., 209.

11. Ibid., 115.

12. Ibid., 210.

13. Ibid., 118.

14. According to the 1985–86 Census (p. 73), 99.64 percent of the population in the province of Kurdistan had Iranian nationality; most of the remaining 0.36 percent were from Iraq.

15. 'Internal migration' from other parts of Iran into the province during the ten years prior to 1985–86 constituted 17 percent of the population in Kurdistan (1985–86 Census, p. 79.) Most of this internal migration is probably due to movements of Kurds from other neighboring provinces, especially from west Azerbaijan.

16. Azkia, *Khushnishinan-i Kurdistan*, 136.

17. The Plan and Budget Organization of Iran, *Majmu'i-i Barisi va Shenakht-i Vaz'e Moujoud dar Ostan-i Kurdistan* (Collection of the Studies on the Current Conditions in the Province of Kurdistan), Vol. I (Tehran, 1987).

18. It should be noted that radio and anti-government broadcasting have also been the means by which political Kurdish parties and organizations publicized their programs during the past several decades.

19. Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Harmondsworth, UK, 1981), 162–227.

20. Teodor Shanin, *The Awkward Class: Political Sociology of Peasantry in a Developing Society: Russia, 1910–25* (London, 1972).

21. Ghassemlou, *Kurdistan and the Kurds*, 118 (from Iranian sources).

22. A. Lambton, *The Persian Land Reform 1962–66* (Oxford, 1969), 169.

23. All Iranian villages are divided into six parts or 'shishdangs.' 'Shishdang' refers to a whole village, or the equivalent of six 'dangs' in different villages. It simply means the entire property.

24. Azkia, *Khushnishinan-i Kurdistan*, 12.

25. Lambton, *The Persian Land Reform*, 121.

26. Agricultural Statistics, Province of Kurdistan, 1960, vol. 6, 52.

27. Azkia, *Khushnishinan-i Kurdistan*, 119. Emphasis is mine.

28. Ibid., 11.

29. Eric Hooglund, *Land and Revolution in Iran 1960–80* (Austin, TX, 1982), 17–21.
30. Ibid., 94–8.
31. Ibid., 97.
32. Azkia, *Khushnishinan-i Kurdistan*, 102.
33. Ibid., table 205, 449.
34. The Plan and Budget Organization of Iran, *Majmu'i-i Barisi va Shenakht-i Vaz'e Moujoud dar Ostan-i Kurdistan* (Collection of the Studies on the Current Conditions in the Province of Kurdistan), vol. I (Tehran, 1987), tables 151 and 451.
35. Ibid., 450.
36. Tom Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain* (London, 1981).
37. W. G. Runciman, *Relative Deprivation and Social Justice* (London, 1966).
38. Collection of the Studies on the Current Conditions in the Province of Kurdistan, Vol. I, 494.
39. Ibid. – see tables 164 and 168, pp. 472 and 480 respectively.
40. Figures in this table are not from a population census but rather from the list of households registered receiving coupons for rationed goods during the early stages of the Iran–Iraq war carried out by the Ministry of Labor. Such a list does have some disadvantages as a source of population census; for example, richer households not using the coupon system are left out and the deceased who are not reported so that their ration quotas can continue to be purchased are counted in. More specifically, we cannot establish from this publication whether illiterate refers to someone who cannot read and write, or to someone who cannot read and write in Farsi. Nonetheless, the general picture given by this publication is also confirmed by other published data on illiteracy and by the totally different indication of relative inequality, namely average food share.

Chapter 6   Kurdistan from the 1946 Republic to the 1979 Revolution and the Islamic Republic

1. These are based on obituaries and announcements over a 12-month period (1985–86) from the publication, *Communist*, the organ of the Communist Party of Iran (CPI), created by Komala and others in 1983. Issues looked up are from the fifth and sixth years, Nos. 39–52.
2. The absorption of young Kurds by Kurdish political groups is in line with the pattern of migration reported in Chapter 5 as being mainly confined to the Kurdish towns and cities and to the 15–35 male age group.
3. For instance, Ghassemlou was 48 on his return to Iran on the eve of the revolution in 1979. A similar age range also exists for most of those in the leadership of radical Iranian groups whose views Komala shared.
4. Khaseh Rang, *Hashi-yi bar 'Mubarizat-i Mardum-i Kurdistan* ('Some Notes on the 'Struggle of the Kurdish People'), broadcast on 'Radio Mihanparastan' (The Patriot Radio), (1979), 20.
5. Ibid., 26.
6. Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions* (Princeton, NJ, 1982), 453. Taking this piece of evidence in isolation, approximately two-thirds of

those killed, excluding the intellectuals and mullahs, were common folk by social background, suggesting that the KDPI, in the early 1960s, was already a mass party enjoying the active support of the Kurdish population. Given what is known of the voting behavior of Kurdish people in the only free election held in recent years to be discussed later, one would have to conclude that we are in the presence of a mass party leading a politically mature nationalist movement.

7. Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou, 'Kurdistan in Iran,' in Gerald Chaliand (ed.), *People without a Country* (London, 1980), 124–5.

8. Ibid., 125.

9. David McDowall, *The Kurds: A Nation Denied* (London, 1992), 70.

10. For an elaboration of this line of thought see B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London, 1983). Similar reasons are also offered for the weakness of Scottish nationalism in Britain by T. Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain* (London, 1977).

11. Translation from *The Times*, March 4, 1979.

12. Miroslav Hroch, 'From National Movement to the Fully Formed Nation, the Nation-Building Process in Europe,' *NLR*, No. 198 (March/April 1993), 7.

13. While a comparison of the emergence of Kurdish nationalist movements with those of other minorities in Iran requires a separate volume on its own, it may be noted in passing that some authors have pointed to the similarity between the development of Kurdish nationalism away from independence and towards autonomy, and those of other national minorities such as the Baluchis and the Arabs in Khuzistan. See, for example, Fred Halliday, *Dictatorship and Development* (Harmondsworth, 1979), 221–5.

14. See the publication by the 'Feda'i-i Khalq-i Iran,' Dahghani branch on the situation in Kurdistan (1979).

15. This is not to say that the KDPI does not have any influence in southern Kurdistan. The KDPI, being the largest and the main Kurdish nationalist organization, has presence in all parts of Kurdistan, but in the south it has to share its power with the others.

16. Anybody who has traveled through the Kurdish regions, particularly in the north, would be hard pressed to find much difference in the standards of living of a poor herder/farmer and a better-off one. My own observations in the early 1980s certainly support the idea. Also see *Vizheh Nameh-i Kurdistan* (Kurdistan Special Edition), a publication of 'Feda'i Khalq-i Iran' (Paris, 1983), 17.

17. He was assassinated on June 13, 1989.

18. *The Constitution and Programs of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan of Iran*, the 8th Congress of KDPI, January 1988.

19. Van Bruinessen, 'Kurdish Tribes and the State of Iran, the case of Simko's Revolt,' in R. Tapper, ed., *The Conflict of Tribe and State in Iran and Afghanistan* (London, 1983), 395.

20. Van Bruinessen claims that from the unity of these unions and the urban leftist groups emerged the 'Komala,' the more radical Kurdish political organization. See Bruinessen, 'Kurdish tribes and the State of Iran . . . ,' 395.

21. Ibid., 394.

22. The existence of a popular, voluntary military force willing to fight and die for their motherland has long been recognized as an important condition for the emergence of a nation-state. See the Conclusion on this.
23. *The New York Times* (August 26, 1979). The precise number may be exaggerated; however, the estimate suggests considerable confidence in the power of this force by its leaders.
24. *The Central Committee's Report to the Sixth Congress of KDPI*, a publication of the KDPI, January 1984.
25. *Barname-i Komala baray-i Khudmukhtari-i Kurdistan* (Komala's Program for the Autonomy of Kurdistan), a publication of the Fourth Congress of 'Kurdish Organization of the Communist Party of Iran' (1983).
26. Ibid., 5.
27. Ibid., 12–14, 19–21.
28. Printout of the broadcast from the radio 'Voice of Kurdistan', November 1984.
29. Martin Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State* (London, 1992), 42.
30. He used to be referred to as the 'red' shaikh.
31. *The New York Times* (March 1, 1979), A.3.
32. A few of the royalist generals, such as Palizban and Oviysi, also set up headquarters in Kurdistan with the claim of building a 'liberation army' there. This group was not concerned with the Kurdish cause and used Kurdistan as a base for their anti-government activities for, soon after the revolution, Kurdistan became the center for any opposition to the Islamic government. Some young officers joined them, but the unity did not last long and, before the government began its heavy offenses against Kurdistan and as a result of corruption among the generals themselves, the initiative collapsed and the 'liberation army' was abandoned.
33. By that time Ghassemlou had already boycotted the assembly.
34. *The New York Times* (August 20, 1979).
35. *The Washington Post* (August 20, 1979).
36. *The New York Times* (August 21, 1979).
37. Khalkhali was the notorious 'Chief Justice' at the time.
38. *The New York Times* (August 29, 1979).
39. *The New York Times* (August 25, 1979).
40. *The New York Times* (August 25, 1979).
41. 'Cultural autonomy' was used in an unclear way. It was assumed to be a recognition of the Kurdish language and the Kurds as a religious minority.
42. C. G. MacDonald, 'The Kurdish Question in the 1980s,' in Milton Esman and Itaman Robinovich (eds), *Ethnicity, Pluralism, and State in the Middle East* (New York, 1988), 244.
43. Ibid.
44. The government representatives or the 'special envoys' in the negotiations with the Kurds, were Daryush Fruhar, Sabaghian, Sahabi (the Council Minister), General Asari (the envoys' military adviser), General Malek (the Commander of the Gendarmerie), General Sa'atsaz (the Head of the Police), Haghgou (the Governor of West Azerbaijan), and Shekiba (the Governor of Kurdistan). On the side of the Kurds, there were: Shaikh Izziddin Husseini, Karim Daneshyar from Husseini's office; Ghassemlou, Ahmed Qazi, Aziz Mamali, Ghani Bulourian, Hassanzadeh, and Hesami from the

Democratic Party of Kurdistan of Iran; Behrooz Sulimani and Mohammed-Amin Shirkhani and Anvar Sultani from the Fedaʾi-i Khalq-i Iran, Kurdish branch; Yosef Ardalan, Abdullah Mehtadi, Alizadeh, and Shfiʾi from Komala.

45. PUK support for the KDPI has been shifted in recent years.
46. Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 39.
47. Ibid., 38.
48. Among the new faction (KDPI-Revolutionary Leadership), there are the following: one member of the KDPI Politburo, eight members of the Central Committee, four deputy members, and two councilors.
49. Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 42.
50. *Le Monde* (21 July 1989).
51. At Ghassemlou's funeral on 20 July 1989 in Père Lachaise in Paris, M. Abdullah Hassanzadeh, a member of the KDPI Political Office, announced some details of the assassination and the party's general lines after Ghassemlou's death. Others assassinated with Dr Sharfkandi were: Fattah ʾAbduli, the KDPI's representative in Europe; Homayun Ardalan, the KDPI's representative in Germany; and Noorullah Noori Dehkordi, a well-known opposition personality. This information was cited in *Chashmandaz*, No. 11 (Winter 1992), 23.
52. See Teodor Shanin's argument in the Introduction to this work.
53. McDowall writes that ʿ . . . by early 1984 a Kurdish-controlled region of Iran had been virtually eliminated. At least 27,500 Kurds were reckoned to have died by this stage, of whom only 2,500 were fighters.' See McDowall, *The Kurds: A Nation Denied*, 77.
54. MacDonald, 'The Kurdish Question in the 1980s,' 245.

Conclusion

1. This is the concluding chapter to my DPhil thesis: *The Economic and Social Base of Kurdish Nationalism in Iran.*
2. Such social cohesion is based on 'equality in poverty, ' and is not a positive factor in the context of the economic development of Kurdistan. However, in the context of nationalism, this cohesion assumes a different role, that is to say it becomes a potent weapon in the service of nationalism.
3. They may be forced to moderate their class conflict outlook, in which case it would support our position.
4. Barrington Moore, *Social Origin of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Harmondsworth, 1966), 475–6.
5. T. Shanin, *The Awkward Class: Political Societies of Peasantry in a Developing Society: Russia, 1919–1925* (London, 1972), 198.
6. Barrington Moore, *Social Origin . . .* , 213.
7. Chalmers Johnson, *Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power: The Emergence of Revolutionary China: 1937–45* (Stanford, CA, 1962). On this issue, see especially Chapter I of his work.
8. Johnson provides the example of the communist pamphlets written for the peasantry in which no mention of class struggle or other issues of communist ideology can be found. He further maintains that it was the extent

to which the communists abandoned their own ideology and became spokesmen for Chinese nationalism that they turned into a mass party of rural China, and secured their accession to power after the war. Ibid., 4.

9. E. J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Manchester, 1959), 3.

10. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey N. Smith (trans. and eds), *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (London, 1986), 125–33. See 'The Modern Prince, ' especially 'Brief Notes on Machiavelli's Politics.'

11. Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. G. Bull (Harmondsworth, 1971).

12. '. . . the arms on which a prince bases the defense of his state are either his own, or mercenary, or auxiliary, or composite. Mercenaries and auxiliaries are useless and dangerous. If a prince bases the defense of his state on mercenaries he will never achieve stability or security. For mercenaries are disunited, thirsty for power, undisciplined, and disloyal; they are brave among their friends and cowards before the enemy; they have no fear of God, they do not keep faith with their fellow men; they avoid defeat just so long as they avoid battle; in peacetime you are despoiled by them, and in wartime by the enemy. The reason for all this is that there is no loyalty or inducement to keep them on the field apart from the little they are paid, and this is not enough to make them want to die for you.' Ibid., 77–8.

13. Hobsbawm, *Bandits*, 31. Emphasis is mine.

Epilogue

1. *The New York Times* (September 19, 1992).

2. Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan–Canada, *Daily News*, March 2002.

3. For the details of the assassinations of Sharafkandi and others and the trial of the case see *Cheshmandaz*, no. 18, 1997.

4. In the more recent publication of the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran, the abbreviation of the party appears as PDKI (as in the Kurdish translation of the Party's name). For the sake of continuity, I will continue to refer to the Party as KDPI.

5. One could argue that this processes started with the formation of the Communist Party of Iran in 1982 by Komala and a few smaller leftist groups.

6. David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, (London, 1996), 277.

7. PDKI's Archive: *The PDKI's Endeavors Aimed at Finding Peaceful Solutions for Resolving the Kurdish Issues in Iran*.

8. UNESCO, Commission on Human Rights, 'Report on the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran,' January 16, 2002.

9. One of the latest executions that caused international condemnation was that of Karim Tuojai. In 1998, despite his refugee status granted by the UNHCR at Turkey, Tuojai, a Kurdish political activist, was arrested by the Turkish military forces and handed to the Iranian authorities. On 1 January 2002, after several years of imprisonment and torture, he was executed. His execution was followed by a new wave of political executions of Kurds and other political prisoners. PDKI Press Release, January 29, 2002.

10. Martin Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 43.

11. Bill Frelick and others, *Mass Exodus, Iraqi Refugees in Iran*, published by 'US Committee for Refugees' (Washington, DC, 1991), 1.
12. Sarah Graham-Brown and Zina Sackur, 'The Middle East: The Kurds – A Regional Issue' (December 1995), writenet.com.
13. McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 382.
14. Van Bruinessen refers to an interesting aspect of the PKK's activities and how it influences local policies in other Turkish cities away from Kurdistan. Since the killing of the government officials in the towns and villages, many have left Kurdish areas and have moved to other cities in western Turkey. It seems that these people have been influencing local representatives and government officials to put pressure on the government to find a solution to its Kurdish problem. Ibid., 46.
15. Graham-Brown and Sackur, 'The Middle East: The Kurds – A Regional Issue.'
16. Hakan Yavuz and Michael Gunter, 'The Kurdish Nation,' *Current History*, January 2001.
17. BBC News, April 16, 2002
18. To learn more about the situation of Kurds in Turkey, see Michael Gunter, *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey* (New York, 1997).

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I have used some of the numerous websites on Kurdish issues:

Kurdish Language and Linguistics (Kurd_lal): Excellent academic source for linguistics, language engineering, literature, reference materials, magazines. In English.

Kurdish Worldwide Resources Growing collection of links. Categories include: *Politics*, Culture, Academic, Networks, *Language*, Folklore, Music, Pictures, Personal Homepages and *Upcoming Events*.

Kurdish Study Group Very informative Australia-based academic site. Links to *articles*, a *newsletter*, a photo *gallery*, language and grammar info and links.

Kurds & Kurdistan Homepage with links to general information, a basic language course, Kurdish proverbs, songs (with audio), and pictures, including the Kurdish national bird (*Kev*).

Kurdistan Web (Information & Documentation Database) Large multilingual site with links to History, Politics, Culture, *Music*, News (Kurdish *newspapers* and publications) and *intl. human rights documents*.

Kurdish library/books Multilingual bibliography of publications. Visit the homepage for cultural links, music, poetry, a new magazine ''Rojbas'' and a mailing list form. Also link to *biographies of famous Kurds*.

StudentInnengruppe Kurdistan Student network site with *literature*, a Kurdish–English *dictionary*, and excellent *links* to newsgroups, media, archives and other Kurd-related sites. (mostly German language)

Kurdistan Observer Useful site with daily *news in English* and Kurdish, and submitted *opinions*.

Badlisy Center for Kurdish Studies U.S.-based scholarly/research organization which publishes *Namah* newsletter and sponsors academic *conferences*.

Mario's Cyberspace Station: Kurdistan Mixed language site (mostly English) with links to intl. news services and major newspapers at top. Links to organizations, articles and sites in countries where Kurds live.

Kurdish Culture Network Sweden-based site (mostly Kurdish language) with links to literature, poetry, art, magazines, Kurdish publishing houses and some human rights information.

American Kurdish Information Network (AKIN) Washington, D.C.-based site (English) with daily updated *newswire stories*, press and academic articles. ''Quote of the Week'' contest. (Win a T-shirt).

Kurdish Information Network European site with general data, cultural information, songs (with audio), ''national liberation movements'', and large link list to other Kurdish sites. English and Dutch versions.

Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) Homepage of Iraqi Kurdish political party of Jalal Talabani.

Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) Homepage of the Iraqi Kurdish political party of Masoud Barzani.

Kurdish InfoTech Association Sweden-based site (English, Kurdish, Turkish language) with excellent *photographs*, Amnesty International *reports*, and a *Kurdish map* with clickable cities!

ROJBAS homepage of new, non-political magazine (mostly Kurdish language). Asking for contributions.

Kurdish Students Association of North America Homepage of Kurdish students association.established ''to facilitate the unity of Kurdish students in Diaspora.''

Kurdistan Homepage of *Bijan*, with links to *political groups* and other *networks and institutions*.

Kurds, Turks, Human Rights Norway-based site of researcher Erik Sauar, mostly English. Links to Turkish Government sites, Kurdish sites and international human rights.

Kurdish Learning & Language Resources ''growing collection of on-line language learning resources: language lessons; socio-cultural studies and language learning references; fonts and productivity tools.

Kurdistan Report Online U.K.-based *journal* (by subscription) with variety of articles on Turkey, other Kurdish issues and a link to some English translations of *Ozgur Politika* articles.

Virtual Kurdish Consulate Links include *Kurdish Studies Program* (Florida State Univ) and site of the Kurdish *Parliament in Exile*.

Kurdish Links Regularly updated alphabetized sites (multilingual) include *KURD-L news archive*, and collection of *Sorani poetry*.

Kurdistan's Homepage Links to *Kurdish Socialist Party* (PSK) bulletin, ''The Kurdish Question – Its History and Present Situation'' by PSK leader *Kemal Burkay*, and a German language *bulletin* with current info.

Komala Homepage of the Communist Party of Iran (Kurdish branch) which actively opposes Iranian regime. Information about its political agenda and *relations* with Iraqi Kurdish parties.

MED-TV Europe-based Kurdish language satellite television station. Operational info and background on broadcast efforts. Contains some general info, links to Kurdish and news sites. (English language).

Kurdistan Women's Society In Europe Info on struggle of Kurdish women, *Beijing UN Conference* on Women, a Kurdish womens' publishing house and the situation of Kurds in *Syria*

Kurdish Poetry Page by Ciran. Kurdish and Turkish poetry beautifully presented. Riddles and other cultural expressions. Good selection of *links* to organizations and individual pages.

Forum of Yezidism Multilingual. Dengê Êzidiyan homepage provides information on often misinterpreted yezid-kurds, who live in Iraq, Turkey, Syria, Georgia and the diaspora in Germany.

Kurdistan Undernet homepage. Interactive discussion forum. (IRC). *Instructions* to install software provided. Format allows real time communication on Kurdish issues with an ever wider group of people.

Newsgroup: soc.culture.kurdish Interactive discussion forum focused on Kurdish and related issues.

Infoseek : Kurds Search engine set for ''Kurds'' with more than 1000 relevant returns. Enter any topic at bottom of the page.

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