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In Memorium

In April and June of this year the United States lost two of its most dynamic leaders, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Senator Robert F. Kennedy. As these two citizens fought vigorously and faithfully for equal liberties and equal opportunities for all men, their deaths are not only a loss to America, but to the world. The Kurds in the United States express their deepest sympathies to the families of Dr. King and Senator Kennedy, and to the American nation.

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The Kurds and Syrian "Arab Socialism"^{1/}

The Kurds in Syria number about half a million (10% of the whole Syrian population). They live compactly in three main Kurdish areas in the North of the country:

- * The Jazireh region, which is the northern part of the Hasaka province, in the North-East, where they number 300,000 (of a total population of 390,000 for this province);
- * The Kurd-Dagh region, to the North-West of Aleppo, entirely Kurdish, where they number 110,000 inhabitants;
- * The Ain-Arab (or Arab-Pinar) region, to the North-East of Aleppo, where they number about 50,000 people.

All these three regions are contiguous to the Turkish border and to Turkish Kurdistan. There are other minor scattered groups of Kurds living inside the country, including a quarter in Damascus of about 12,000 Kurds. The Kurd-Dagh is the only mountainous region inhabited by the Kurds in Syria.

The greatest majority of these Kurds are peasants (about 80%), and, thanks to their labour, the Jazireh plains have become the bread-basket of Syria. But there are also urban Kurds, with five Kurdish towns, of which four are located in Jazireh: Qamishli (40,000 pop.), Amouda (15,000), Derbasiya (15,000), these three being at the Turkish border, and Derik (6,000), near the Iraqi border. The fifth is Afrin (about 18,000) situated in the Kurd-Dagh region. The town-dwelling Kurds usually engage in small commerce and handicrafts.

The Kurds have been living in these areas for centuries. They were separated from Ottoman Kurdistan and included in Syria by the French-Turkish Agreement of London, March 9, 1921, which fixed the frontier between Kemalist Turkey and the new Syrian State under French mandate.

After the separation of Syria from Egypt in September 1961, the new Syrian regime of Qudsi-Azm took the following steps, with view to destroy the Kurdish people in Syria as an ethnical group and a national minority:

The elaboration of what was officially called the "Arab Belt" plan for Jazireh in 1962.

A legislative decree (NO. 93) on August 23, 1962 for an exceptional census of the population solely in the area of Jazireh. The census was carried out in November of the same year, and according to its falsified results, a great number of Kurds were deprived of their Syrian citizenship.

A general campaign of national oppression and racial discrimination was launched against the Kurds.

It was decided that those plans were a national issue and that they should engage all the succeeding Syrian governments.

^{1/} The information contained in this article has been gathered from: "The Kurdish Problem in Syria, Plans for the Genocide of a National Minority," by Ismet Cheriff Vanly, published by the Committee for the Defense of the Kurdish People's Rights, January, 1968; and from the publications of the Kurdish Democratic Party in Syria.

It is rather curious to note how the concepts of obligation and government responsibility are interpreted by some Arab governments, especially when they deal with the Kurds. The Qudsi-Azm and the succeeding Baathist governments in Syria, making sure that the Kurds are not "deprived" of their "socialist" measures, have made sure that their genocidal plans for the Kurdish national minority in Syria remain binding upon all Syrian governments. A law professor on the other hand, who at the time headed another Arab government in Iraq, later found it more convenient to disavow himself and his successors from being bound by the June 29, 1966 plan. Finding himself pressed for a statement on the question, Dr. Abdul-Rahman al-Bazzaz found it more in line with "law and Government responsibility" to deny the binding affect of a plan which he as prime minister of Iraq had publicly announced and to the implementation of which his successor Najji Talib adhered. Indeed the Kurds when dealing with the Arab governments, can always be certain that they have a clear choice between two evils.

The Baathists seized power in Syria in March 1963, thanks to a military coup d'etat. Although representing a small minority of chauvinistic Arab nationalists, they established a military one-party dictatorship and abolished all democratic liberties. They adopted and extended the above-mentioned plans, and considerably aggravated the conditions of the Kurdish people. They also sent, in the fall of 1963, an expeditionary army to Iraqi Kurdistan, and actively supported the Iraqi Baathists in the military, political and economical fields, against the Kurdish revolution. They continue to govern Syria and to implement the fascists plans for the destruction of the Kurdish people in this country. Their so-called "Arab socialism" is inly a thin ideological veneer. The following are the conditions of the Kurdish people in Syria in December 1967, after more than four years of Baathist toverment:

The "Arab-Belt" plan, according to the Arab press, was originally elaborated "to save arabism in Jazireh," otherwise to destroy the Kurdish population in this area, the most important and the richest in the country. All the Kurdish rural population living along the Turkish and Iraqi borders was to be evacuated by force. These peasants had the choice either to emigrate to other countries or to be collectively transferred by the Government to the Al-Radd or to other desert areas of Hasaka, where hardly any plant could grow, because of the saline nature of the soil and the lack of water. Arab bedouins or "fellahin", brought from other regions, were to be established in the Kurdish villages.

The "Arab-Belt" area, as traced by the Government, constitutes, in Jazireh, a long strip of good arable and well-cultivated land, 280 km in length along the Turkish border, and in depth 10 km. The depth was to be of 15 km where oil was discovered, because, as wrote the Syrian Arab press, "the oil triangle was to be saved for arabism". The number of the Kurdish villages in this area is 332. Their total population numbers about 140,000 people, all peasants, farmers or small owners. Very few were big owners. After the establishment of the Baathist regime, the KDP-S made it clear that the Kurds fully support the land reform but that the land should remain in the hands of the peasantry. On December 22, 1966, the Government refused to receive the Party and peasant delegations who came to Damascus with the hope of discussing the matter with the Authorities. Daham Al-Hadi and other chiefs of the Shammar Arab nomadic tribe profited from the circumstances to occupy, by force, some Kurdish villages, often with the help of the Syrian security forces.

When the Baathist regime began to follow more tightly a policy of what they call "Arab socialism" -- which has nothing to do with genuine socialism -- they changed the name of the "Arab-Belt" into a "Plan for the establishment of model State farms" in Jazireh (see Documents). Under the cover of this new kind of national-socialism, the Kurdish minority of Syria was thus to be struck to death.

Since 1966 the regime had been seriously implementing the plan, and extending it, on the same bases, to the two other main Kurdish areas of the North: Kurd-Dagh (where they began to implement it in the locality of Gindres) and Arab-Pinar.

In 1967, the Government told the villagers of the "Belt" area that they had no longer any right on their land and their villages, and that they should prepare to leave. They were forbidden to seed or to harvest. The defenceless Kurdish peasants adopted an attitude of passive resistance. Their spokesmen told the Authorities: "We are not moving! We prefer to die of hunger on the spot rather than to leave our villages! You may bring your Army and kill us, we shall not move!"

The Authorities then proclaimed that the lands of the "Belt" were State-owned lands, and teams of State employees, equipped with tractors and escorted by security forces, were sent on the spot to plough and seed them, for the Government. New villages are being built for those employees in the neighbourhood of the Kurdish villages. The Kurdish peasants still continue to refuse to move out, but they can no longer live on their lands. Their conditions are most tragic, because they may die of hunger and diseases. They have no work, no hospitals, no physicians, and no schools for their children. Many of them and many Party members have been arrested and are being tortured, without trial. A few families emigrated either to Turkey or to Lebanon.

The Kurdish urban population of Qamishli, Amouda and Derbasiya, situated within the "Belt" area, have not, so far, been told to move. But they suffer from another kind of national oppression and racial discrimination, as we shall see below. Their turn will come when Damascus will have achieved its "final solution" against the Kurdish peasantry.

To "save the arabism of Jazireh" -- where Arabs represent less than 20% of the population and are chiefly nomad bedouins -- it was necessary to try to destroy in one way or another the Kurdish majority. The "Arab-Belt" plan is one way towards that objective. But there are other ways.

Before the census of November 1962, the Kurds of Jazireh numbered about 300,000 people, and all had Syrian identity cards, as Syrian citizens. After the census, Damascus pretended that only roughly 60% of these Kurds were Syrians. The others, it was advanced, were not Syrians "but they had illegally infiltrated from Turkey and Iraq into Syria, with the help of imperialism, to destroy the arabism of Jazireh and to create a puppet Kurdish State". Within a few days, the Syrian nationality was thus withdrawn from about 120,000 Kurds. The way was very simple: the Administration prepared lists containing the names of those who were considered Syrians, and the population was invited to take new identity cards from the offices, the ancient ones having been "cancelled". Only those whose names figured on the lists could get the new cards. Needless to say that the lists were drawn up arbitrarily, to achieve that objective. Very often, within one family, the father was considered Syrian, but the wife, or children were not, or the contrary. In the richest areas, whole Kurdish villages and localities were refused the new cards.

Some 120,000 Kurds who thus lost their Syrian citizenship, whether peasants or city-dwellers, whether within or outside the "Arab-Belt" zone, continue, for the most part, to live in Syria, but henceforth as foreigners and suspect elements. Their conditions have become most tragic:

- * They cannot be employed by the Government as civil servants or officers in the Army and the police;
- * They cannot be employed even in the private economic sector, not having the necessary identity cards;

- * They cannot sell or buy land;
- * They cannot repair their houses without a special authorisation from the Government, very difficult to obtain;
- * They cannot send their children to the State schools -- if any. But there are hardly any private schools in the area. If the children attend a private or religious school, they will not be admitted to the State examinations for the "certificate" of elementary studies or the "baccalaureat" of secondary studies.
- * They cannot be admitted to any public hospital, but there are no private clinics in the area. More than 3,000 cases of tuberculosis and many more of malaria are known in Jazireh;
- * They cannot move from one region to another, from a village to another, unless they present a "special authorisation" almost impossible to obtain;
- * They cannot marry legally, they cannot even die legally, the children born to them are not recognized by the Government as existing human beings and, consequently, they are not registered.
- * These Kurds are, however, eligible for compulsory military service.

The Kurds of Syria, whether recognized as Syrians or not, whether they live inside or outside the "Belt" zones, are all subject to an odious and most outrageous national oppression:

- * Their existence as a national community is not recognized by the Government. They have no rights as Kurds, no Kurdish schools, no Kurdish papers;
- * Their party, the KDP-S, is an "illegal" and underground one;
- * Any Kurdish book, or any book in any foreign language on the Kurds, even if it were a classic or a primer, is strictly forbidden;
- * If a Kurd says publicly that he is a Kurd and not an Arab, he will be publicly insulted and arrested, under the charge "inciting to hatred and racism"; he will also be told "to go home", because "Syria is only an Arab country where there is no room for other national elements";
- * All Kurdish national or folkloristic manifestations, including the centuries-old "Noruz" day, are strictly forbidden;
- * Kurdish music is also forbidden. Any Kurd who tunes in to a Kurdish (foreign) station, to hear news or music, would be arrested if discovered. Kurdish music or song records were publicly broken by "zealous" Syrian officers or policemen in the coffee shops of Qamishli;
- * The administration, the Army and the security forces have been "purged" of the Kurdish officers and public servants, unless the titular proves himself servile and says that he is an Arab. Kurds are no longer admitted to the Military College;
- * Police perquisitions in the night in the Kurdish houses are daily practice. If any Kurdish book or on the Kurds and Kurdistan is discovered, the man would be arrested and beaten: "Dirty Kurd, a Kurdish dog!". If the suspected

man is not at home, his wife would be savagely beaten, the children terrorised, the house-holdings and furniture turned over. Many Kurdish women died during such perquisitions;

- * If a Kurd has something to do in some public administration, he would be repulsed, insulted and asked to go to the devil if he does not speak Arabic. If he does and says that he is "Syrian", he also would be molested, because he should say that he is an "Arab".

We should herewith like to submit to international public opinion certain concrete examples, chosen from among hundreds of others, of this policy:

Population Transfers

- * In the prefecture of Derik (a Kurdish name arabised into "Al Maliqueh" by the authorities) in Dzezireh: the authorities have withdrawn the property titles of the Kurdish peasants of numerous villages such as Tel-Jemala, Guerkahfik and Guerziyaret. These peasants had received these rights in 1959, at the time of the union with the U.A.R., under the Agrarian Reform Law. Their lands were given to members of the Arab Shammar tribe, led by the feudalist Daham Al-Hadi.
- * In the district of Tchalaga (renamed "Al-Djawadieh"): the authorities expropriated the lands of the peasants of some Kurdish villages, many of whom, including women and children, were killed and wounded in trying to resist. The villages were the following: Shabik, Abira, Kevir-Dina, Djawadieh and Guerbekil. They have been resettled by Arabs.
- * In the prefecture of Qamishli: at the end of October 1966, a "commission of Agrarian Reform" arrived at the Kurdish village of Hilaliyeh and asked its inhabitants to register on the list of persons to be transferred to the desert south of the Al-Radd region, department of Hasaka. In fact, only 26 out of 700 families could obtain this "favour". All the others had been classed as "non-Syrians" following the special census of 1962 and, consequently, deprived of their lands. Yet, those peasants were legally Syrians since long before Syrian independence. This village is situated west of Qamishli, on the Turkish border.
- * In the district of Amouda: in July 1966, the sub-prefect, Lieutenant Ramadan Obeid, announced to the inhabitants of the villages of Sorka, Gazalik, Mozan, Tobs, Hasida-Jor, Qaraqop, Simenks-Jor, Bab-Khair and Kurdo, that they had to leave their homes and choose one of the regions south of the Hasaka department to live in. These regions are deserts and nothing grows there because of the salty soil. Those villages are part of the "Arab-Belt" plan.
- * In the district of Derbaziye: at the end of September 1966, the authorities informed the Gueri family, with its more than 100 members, that they had only two months before having to leave Syria for a neighboring country. The Gueri family owns lands and houses in Derbaziye and in the village of Tel-Ilon. Their chief, Mohammed Salid Said lives with his family in this latter village, which he himself has developed.
- * In the district of Derbaziye: the authorities have asked the inhabitants of the villages located near the Syrian-Turkish border to be prepared to leave them to Arabs and to hand in petitions to choose other lands located in the South of Khabour and in the Djebel Abdul-Aziz, which are desert regions.

* In October 1966, a "commission for the redistribution of lands" appeared in the village Shor-East and Shor-West. After the redistribution, only 4 out of 35 families received lots.

* A similar commission confiscated the land of the 40 peasants living in the Kurdish villages of Guersin, Fayej and Om-Izam, in the district of the Tel-Abrak police station and gave them to Arab peasants of the Al-Djoubour tribe.

The above information can be confirmed by the Arab tribes themselves, residing or leading a nomadic existence in the Djezireh; the Djobour, Shammar, Bakkareh and Tai, particularly by their members living in the villages of Sabhed-Mabrad, Houlwa, Brer, Lazzakeh, Tel al-Farass, Halloush, Djefef and Aoul-Mikh -- in the Tel-Abrak district police station. These Arab villagers have in fact received a government order to be prepared to abandon their villages and take possession of the Kurdish villages situated near the Syrian-Turkish border.

Kurdish Teachers and the Ministry

* About thirty Kurdish teachers obtained their diplomas at the Teachers' School of Hasaka at the end of the school-year 1965-66, but contrary to the engagements of the Ministry of Education -- they were not assigned to posts in their regions of origin, in the Djezireh. Following months of waiting, they had to agree to teach in schools of the departments of Homs and Hama, without receiving the usual allocations for such transfers.

* On the 1st of June 1966, Mohammed Hitto, a villager of Tel-Ahmar, sub-prefecture of Amouda, and Abdul Haid Abdul Latif, working at the Al-Nasr Hotel at Qamishli were arrested merely for having in their possession a copy of the literary review "Cia", published in the Kurdish language in Europe. Taken to the military prison of Mezze, the two men are still being detained there without trial, daily subjected to torture and forbidden to receive any visits whatsoever.

* On the 21st of August 1966, following a full-scale police search, 170 Kurds were arrested and taken to the prison of Hasaka, on suspicion of having collected funds for and sympathising with the National Kurdish Movement. They were beaten and insulted daily in front of ordinary prisoners. After two months of such treatment, the authorities had to release the greater part of them, but others are still staying in that prison without any trial -- namely: Messrs. Daham Miro, Jamil Hajo, Sabghat Fattullah, Said Sheikmous Hesso, Salih Soesh, Mustafa Mohammed Beg Jamil Facha, Kenaan Aguid, Abdul Fattah Karim, Abdul Azziz Hesso.

In April and again on 25.12.1966, the Syrian Prime Minister Dr. Yusuf Zuain, refused to receive a Kurdish delegation which came to ask the Government for justice.

* * *

These are the tragic conditions of the Kurdish people in Syria. These Kurds are defenceless, they cannot defend themselves by arms against such barbarism, as do those of Iraqi Kurdistan. They have no arms, and if they used any, they would simply risk being massacred.

The Etymology of the Name Baghdad^{1/}

by Taufiq Wahby^{2/}

I read in the Journal Summer Vol. IV, No. 1, January 1948, an article by the well-known scholar Ya'cub Sarkees, entitled "Basra. Is the origin of this word Aramaic?" and ending with the following note: "His Excellency Yusuf Ghanima has his own theory about the meaning of the word Baghdad, which, he suggests, is "Bagdādā", meaning the city, the abode, or the house of sheep and goats". (Cf. Lughat al-Arab No. 4, year 1926/27 pp. 80). Then I looked in the fourth volume of Lughat al-Arab and read what his Excellency had said, and it went as follows: "I have my own theory about the meaning of the name Baghdad, which I formed long ago in the course of my research, but have never written about. I would like to state it tentatively and with reservations. My theory is that the name Baghdad is Aramaic in construction and, as to meaning, composed of two words. The first is "b" abridged from the word "beit", which is a common feature among the Aramaeans and common also in being the first constituent of the names of cities, such as Ba'qūba, Bāqofa, Batnāyā, Bā'shiqa, Bājarmā, and several other names. The second word is "gdādā", which means sheep or goats (Cf. pp. 91 in the dictionary Daleel ar-Raghibeen fi Lughat al-Aramiyyin, the second column, the second word, the second meaning.) Accordingly the meaning of Bagdādā would be the city, the abode or the house of sheep or goats. There may have been a market there where sheep and goats were sold. It is well known that the Aramaeans cultivated this district and raised cattle in it. They even continued to do so for several centuries after the conquest of Iraq by the Moslem Arabs. I personally prefer this theory to the interpretation based on Persian, since the name "Baghdad" occurs in ancient Babylonian inscriptions before the Persian conquest of this country." Then he addressed the editor of Lughat al-'Arab saying "I hope you will express an opinion about this interpretation, since, if it were accepted by scholars, we should be able to say that an Iraqi from Baghdad had originated it."

My Refutation of Ghanima's Opinion:

I do not intend to comment on the details of Ghanima's statement, and I shall be content to mention the following facts which refute his opinion.

- 1/ This article was written in 1948 and was published in Arabic in the magazine of the Iraqi Academy of Sciences in 1950.
- 2/ Col. T. Wahby, a native of Sulaimani, is considered a leading Kurdologist and a specialist in Kurdish anthropology, folk tales and traditions. Part of his education and military service include Ottoman Royal Military College (Baghdad) 1905-08, Ottoman Military Staff College (Istanbul), Iraqi Royal Military College (Commandant) 1925-30, Senior Officers' School, Sheerness, Kent (1929). He served as governor of Sulaimani in 1930 and between 1944-50, he served in different Iraqi cabinets as Minister of Economics, Education, acting Minister of Defense and Minister of Social Affairs and Health. He was also Senator (Member of Iraq's Upper House) in 1948-56 and 1957-58. He has been awarded the Ottoman Order of Merit, the British C.B.E. (1945) and the Afghan Order of Sardar i Ali (1950). Col. Wahby's association with different clubs and organizations include life membership in the Association of British Orientalists and the Royal Asiatic Society, the Kurdish Progress Club (Hon. President), The Iraq Academy (Vice President) and Baghdad Pen Club (President). As a student of Old Persian languages, Iranology, Kurdology and Sufism, Col. Wahby has written numerous books and articles in Arabic, English, Kurdish, Persian and Turkish. His latest publication in collaboration with C.J. Edmonds is A Kurdish-English Dictionary, Oxford University Press, 1966.

1. The earliest reference to the word "Bagdādā" is a boundary stone of king Nazī-Marutash dating back to the 14th century B.C. After that date the same word occurs on another boundary stone known as the Micheau stone and then on a third one, of king Mar-duk-apil-iddin of the late 12th century B.C.^{1/} When the 14th century ended, the Aramaeans had not yet penetrated into Iraq, that they would name a geographical site in their own language. That century saw only the beginning of their emigration from the Arabian Peninsula into Syria,^{2/} where they settled and stayed before their entry into Iraq at least two centuries later.

2. If we were to grant that the Aramaeans were in Iraq in the 14th century B.C., and that they named some sites in their own language, it would still be impossible to admit that the word "beit", was abridged to "b", e.g. that the word "beit-gdādā" became "bagdādā", in that century, for the process of shortening requires a long period of several centuries. Moreover, we do not find in the inscriptions of the Assyrians, even in those dating from the end of their period, any occurrence in the names of their geographical sites of "b" abridged from the word "beit."

Thus I wonder how the process of shortening by the Arabs could be taken as the explanation of a word that goes back to the 14th century B.C. It is impossible to consider every geographical name in Iraq beginning with "b", to be an Aramaic construction originally beginning with "beit", since not everything round is a walnut, as the Arabic saying goes, and not every red-bearded person is Hamza Agha, as we say in Kurdish. Finally I would say that the interpretation of the word "beit" as a fold, stable, or market is strange and extraordinary in itself. We who live in Baghdad, must be thankful that the Aramaic "gdada" cannot be taken to mean anything worse than sheep or goats.

My Refutation of the Karamali's Comment:

Rev. Al-Karamali, in his comments attached to Ghanima's article in his journal Lughat al-'Arab, confirms the afore-mentioned opinion with two arguments which I shall mention along with my refutation of each.

The first argument of the Al-Karamali's goes as follows: "The scholar should in advance reject the theory that the origin of the word is Persian, for how could it be so when the Persians never entered Iraq before the time of Cyrus (in the 4th century B.C.), while "Baghdad" was known by the same name centuries before the coming of the Persians." I am quite sure that if Al-Karamali had considered the facts I have just mentioned in my refutation of Ghanima's opinion, he would certainly have reached the conclusion which I reached. He would then have considered the word "Bagdad" not to be Aramaic in origin.

In this connection I would like to mention that Cyrus captured Babylon in the year 539 B.C., that is to say in the 6th century B.C., and not in the 4th century as Al-Karamali believes. The second argument is as follows: "There is no doubt that in a country inhabited by the Semites, the names given would naturally be in a Semitic language such as Assyrian, Babylonian, Aramaic or Arabic. Meanwhile, we know that the Aramaeans, who

^{1/} Cf. "Badadu" in Reallixikon der Assyriologie where it is also stated that "Bagdad" in the Kassite period was a capital of the Babylonian district. The city Bagdad is also mentioned in the list of cities which Adad-Nirari (811-891) captured. It seems also that Bagdad gradually lost its importance and passed into the Aramaeans' sphere of influence, so that Tiglath-Pilaser mentioned the word "Bagdad" in his inscription as a name of an Aramaean tribe. The latest reference to this word is in a late Assyrian document in which is mentioned a person by the name of Shalmu-Akhu of Bagdadi."

^{2/} Cf. Leonard King, A History of Babylon, pp. 120.

were Semites like the Arabs, were the ancient settlers of Iraq. If we accept that, then the word must be Aramaic. For this reason we prefer the opinion of our friend the writer - Yusuf Ghanima - to other opinions. Personally I do not want to say anything further about this argument, for a glance at the geographical names of Iraq would prove it to be groundless.

I - My Search for a Race in whose Language the name "Bagdāda" Occurs:

Having shown that "Bagdāda" is not an Aramaic word, we now search in the old books for what the early Arab historians, geographers and linguists have said about it. Almost all of these early writers considered the word "Baghdād" to be Persian in origin, and since the Persians were not in Iraq in the 14th century B.C., we have to look for some people who inhabited Iraq in that early century, and whose language was a member of the family of languages to which Persian belongs, namely the family of Indo-European languages. Such a people were the Kassites, who lived in Iraq, and especially in Babylonia, the southern part of it. Their rule lasted for about six centuries from 1749-1173 B.C.

I shall now quote what is said about their origin by some prominent historians: Mr. Leonard King in his well-known book A History of Babylon says: "The probability has long been recognized that they were Aryan by race, and we may with some confidence regard them as akin to the later rulers of Mittani, who imposed themselves upon the earlier non-Iranian population of Subartu, or Northern Mesopotamia. Like the Mittanian kings, the Kassites of Babylonia were a ruling caste or aristocracy, and, though they doubtless brought with them numbers of humbler followers, their domination did not affect either the linguistic or the racial character of the country in any marked degree."^{1/}

Monsieur Raymond Weill in his book entitled Phoenicia says: "The dynasty founded by these Kassites is the third on the standard list of the ten Babylonian dynasties whose chronology we have dealt with. These conquerors were Indo-Europeans, judging by the names of several of their chief divinities, which are Aryan, and by the names of many of their kings during the 576 years that their dynasty lasted."^{2/}

A third historian, Mr. George Cameron, has written about them saying: "Yet the number of individuals whose names we may with little hesitation call Iranian is not small. Auarparnu embodies the element aura, "lord", which in Achaemenian times is found in the name of the great god of all beings, the "Wise Lord", Auramazda. Bagbararna, like the land name "Beit Bagaia", which may have been translated into Semitic to become Bait Ili, "House of the God", contains the element "baga", already familiar from the Iranian words of Kassite times."^{3/} In the last part of this statement, "already familiar from the Iranian words of Kassite times", Mr. Cameron is referring to the word "Bagdatti" which he mentions before in the same book.

Moreover, I would like to add another quotation from the same author: "When Sargon (722-705) inherited the throne of Assyria, he was faced with the immediate problem of preserving and expanding the provincial organization in the Zagros and of combating the influence of the Urartu empire to the north and east. Danger first threatened in the kingdom of the Mannai south of Lake Urmia, where an Iranian chief, Mitatti^{4/} of the land Zikirtu, had persuaded the natives to revolt against their lord Iranzu.^{5/} The latter

1/ Cf. A History of Babylon, pp. 214.

2/ Cf. The English translation of Phoenicia, pp. 85.

3/ History of Early Iran, pp. 153-154.

4/ It seems to me that this name is derived from "Mithra-data" meaning "Gift of Mithra".

5/ I believe that this name is derived from "Aryana-zata" meaning "the son of Iran".

appealed to Sargon, who drove the rebels out in 719; but three years later the new sovereign Aza^{1/} was slain by Mitatti and another Iranian, Bagdatti."^{2/}

From the last mentioned name, one may see that naming persons "Bagdād" and especially chieftains was common among the Iranians between the 7th and the 14th centuries B.C. We may even assume that the Kassites, who had appeared in the western section of Iran and settled themselves there in the beginning of the second millennium B.C., were the first who used that word as a name.

It is of importance to notice that the afore-mentioned name "Beit Bagaia" is of special significance since it contains the element "Bag", "Bagh", standing alone, and since it establishes the theory of early Arab writers that the name "Baghdād" is a compound of "bagh" and "dad".

II - The Derivation of the Word Baghdād and its Meaning:

Now that the word "Baghdād" seems to have an Iranian origin and to consist of the two words "bgh" and "dād", it remains for us to search for the origin of these two words, and for their meaning in order to discover the proper meaning of the word "Baghdād".

A) The Origin of the Word "Bagh": The word "bagh" has been derived from the Indo-European word "bhaga" which dates back to before the third millennium B.C., that is to say it was known by the Indo-iranian tribes in the time when they were living together in their second home, and after they had left the conjectural original home of the Indo-Europeans, and before they divided to settle in India and Iran. This word occurs in Veda^{3/} as bhaga; in the Achaemenian inscriptions^{4/} as бага; in the Avesta^{5/} as bagha, and regardless of its form, it has the meaning "god".

The same word was used by the ancient Slavs, who were Europeans, in the form "bogu" and with the same meaning "god", while among the present Christian Slavs it has become "Bogh", meaning "God".

It may be permissible to assume that this Indo-European word was in the language of the Indo-Europeans when they were in their original home. Monsieur Meillet finds no reason at all to presume that the ancient Slavic "bogu" which means "god", was an alien word borrowed by the Slavs.^{6/}

Mr. Johnson^{7/} believes that there was long ago an Indo-European word "bhago" with the meaning "god", and that the same word in ancient Persian is "baga"; in Yasnaic Avesta "bagha"; in Middle Persian "bagh"; in Turfan inscriptions "bagiystom"; in Sanskrit "bhaga" and in Slavic "bogu" (compare that with the Phrygian Zeus Baghaïos).

The word "bagha" means "he who distributes the goods; or master, sovereign, benevolent".^{8/} In Avesta there is the word "hu-bagha" which means "the enjoyer of a good fortune, and the giver of it".^{9/} Monsieur Meillet says "it is also a remarkable fact of

^{1/} Aza, I think was in origin "Azata", which means "noble".

^{2/} Cameron, History of Early Iran, pp. 150.

^{3/} The Vedas are the four sacred Indian books, the teachings of which are still in force. The 1st book is entitled "Rig Veda" & the language of these books is designated as "Vidic".

^{4/} The language of these inscriptions is known as Old Persian.

^{5/} The "Avesta" is the old sacred Iranian book. Its language is closely akin to the old Persian and Vedic languages.

^{6/} A. Meillet, Les Dialectes Indo-Européens, Paris 1922, pp. 127.

^{7/} Johnson, Historical Grammar of Ancient Language, New York, 1917, pp. 47.

^{8/} De Harley, Manuel de Langue de l'Avesta, Paris, 1882, pp. 387.

^{9/} J. Duchesne, Guillemin, Les Comptes L'Avesta, Paris, 1936, para. 228, pp. 189.

semantics that the senses 'part', 'richness' and 'god' for the Indo-Iranian 'bhaga' and for the Slavic 'bogu' should co-exist."

A Compendium on the Evolution of the Usages of the Iranian "bag" in History

I believe it would be interesting to review the changes undergone by the Iranian word "bag" in its usage in history beginning with the time of the Achaemenid king Darius the First, in 521 B.C. and ending with the present day; that is to say, our view will cover a period of 2469 years. By doing so we shall see how "bag" has fallen from its grandeur as a name of the eternal gods to its present usage as a title for a mortal human being regardless of his rank and personality. In other words we shall see how mortal man, with his usual cunning and his notoriously limitless ambition, was able during those centuries to trespass on the rights of the poor gods, to rob them of their divine name "bag", and to invest himself with it.

1. The Achaemenian Period:

In the rock inscription of the Achaemenian kings (550-330 B.C.), we find "baga" used with the meaning "the gods". Thus it retained its traditional glory at that period; the Achaemenian kings never trespassed upon this word and did not share the title of "baga" with their deities. In fact the Achaemenian kings never gave themselves that title, and therefore they never claimed that they were descendants of the gods, as the Parthians and the Sassanians did after them. Nevertheless, we find "baga" used in that early time as an element in some compound names, which were a common feature among the ancient Iranians, as we have already mentioned. In the Achaemenian inscriptions are found these two examples of personal names, "Bagabukhusha" and "Bagābigna", and one name of a month, "Bāgayādish". This last was the first month in their calendar, and in it fell the Autumnal Equinox. Its meaning is "the worshipping of Gods".

In an Aramaic Papyrus discovered at Aswān, occurs the name of a person called "Bagadata son of Nabu-Kudurri" who was probably a Babylonian in the Persian army stationed in Egypt in 471 B.C. at the time of the Achaemenian king Xerxes I.^{1/}

2. The Parthian Period:

In the Arsacid, the Parthian period (256 B.C. - 226 A.D.), the word "bag" was still used to denote "the gods". Some of the Parthian kings seem to have claimed that they were of the lineage of the gods, e.g. sons of "Bag", and I am not sure if all the Parthian kings did not do the same. The Greek inscriptions on coins of the following kings indicate that they considered themselves descendants of the gods. Here are the translations of those inscriptions arranged chronologically:

- a. Artabanus I ca. 211-191 B.C.: The great king.
Arsaces, the philanthropist, the god is his father, the triumphant.
- b. Phraates II, 137/38-128 B.C.: the great king Arsac, the philanthropist,
the god is his father, the triumphant.
- c. Artabanus II, 128-124 B.C.: the great king Arsac, the philanthropist, whose
father is the god.

^{1/} A. Cowley, Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C., Oxford, 1923, pp. 12.

- d. Sinatruces, 76-69 B.C.: the great king Arsac, the philanthropist, whose father is the god.
- e. Phrates III, 69-57 B.C.: king of kings, Arsac, the just, the remarkable, whose father is the god.
- f. Unknown: king of kings, whose father is the god.
- g. Musa: the queen Musa, the heavenly goddess. Artabanus had a brother called "Baga-Asa".^{1/}

On these Parthian coins occurs in Greek the phrase "Theo Patorus," which means "he whose father is god". If we render these two Greek words into the Arsacid Iranian dialect, we get the compound word "bagh-pur(puhr)"; thus it is almost certain that the Parthian kings were entitled "bagh-pur" or "bagh-puhr" meaning "the son of god". But unfortunately, the Parthian kings have not bequeathed to us any inscription in their own language, as the Achaemenians did before them.

It seems to me that the idea of claiming descent from the gods may have been transferred from Egypt to Iran by Alexander the Great, who followed in the steps of the Pharaohs in that matter after the conquest of Egypt, since he claimed to be the son of god "Zeus-Ammon". It is likely that the Parthian kings who ruled Iran after Alexander, and also some of the minor kings who were under the Parthian hegemony, claimed descent from gods as Alexander did before them. The Achaemenian kings who ruled before the Parthians and were greater than them and had a larger empire, never thought of making such a claim.

Among the coins struck in Farsistan, the region of the Persis, situated to the east of the north-eastern shore of the Persian Gulf, is a group which dates back to about 200 B.C. bearing in the Pehlevi script the name of a Persian kinglet (Fratataka) called "Bagadat",^{2/} with his portrait, and the Aramaic phrase "Zi Ala Hia" which means "he who is from the gods" or "he who is of divine origin".

It is known from historical sources of Arabs and Persians that the Chinese emperors were entitled "Fagh-fūr" or "Bagh-būr". This epithet occurs in the Arsacid and the West Iranian dialects as "Bagh-pūr" in the old Soghdian letters which date back to 312-313 A.D., according to the date fixed by Mr. W. B. Henning.^{3/} By the rules of the northern Iranian dialects of the middle period, and in the Arsacid dialect, the form "bagh-pur" is a derivation of "bagha-puthra" which means "Son of the God".

Burhān i Qāti' says about the word "Fagh-fūr", "it is a name of a king whose word was obeyed by the kinglets ruling the vast country from Hillah to China. His reign lasted for 62 years, and he is of the Arsacid Dynasty." This statement strengthens what we have already suggested about the possibility of some of the Arsacid kings, if not all of them, being called "Bagh-pūr".

In the book of Burhān i Qāti' this word is mentioned also in the form "Fakh-fūr," from which I believe the words "fakhkhār" and "fakhkhārī" used by Arab writers, are derived. Moreover, I think that the colloquial word "faffūrī" with the meaning china-ware, is a corrupted form of "faghfūrī". In the same book occurs the word "fughustān" with the definition "this means the country of idols and it also denotes the house of idols. It

^{1/} N. C. Debevoise, *A Political History of Parthia*, pp. 40.

^{2/} George Francis Hill, *Catalogue of Greek Coins of Arabia, Mesopotamia, Persia*, pp. 164 in the introduction and pp. 28.

^{3/} W. B. Henning, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*. Vol. XII, Nos. III and IV, pp. 601, etc.

is used as well for the private haram of the kings, since it is the place of the charming concubines and beautiful lads. It was also used for the wives of the king." The word "Fughanshūr" in the same book is described as follows: "a name of a city in China, famous for its charming and beautiful inhabitants. In it dwells every sculpture in the land of China, and it contains all the idols of that land." The same word occurs also as "Faghanshūr". I believe that this word has a late Iranian form, the origin of which is "Baghan-Shahir", meaning "the city of the gods or of idols".

3. The Sassanian Period:

The Sassanians (226-652 A.D.) shared their titles with the gods, for they claimed for themselves the appellation "bag" i.e. "god", and they asserted that their descent was from "Yazdān", in other words from the Zoroastrian gods. To give an example of this, I will repeat to you the tri-lingual inscription of Ardashīr I (226-241 A.D.) engraved on his horse in the base - reliefs of his investiture by Ohrmazd, at Naqsh i Rostam,^{1/} in the two Iranian dialects, the Arsacid and the Sassanian and in Greek: "This is the image of the Mazda-worshipping bag Ardashīr (the god Ardashir)"; "King of kings of Iran, who (is) a scion."; "Of Yazdān the gods, the son of bag Papak (the god Papak), the king."^{2/} On the picture of Ohrmazd is inscribed "The image of Ohrmazd bag (the god Ohrmazd).

Among the Manichaean manuscripts discovered early in the present century in Turfan in Chinese Turkistan, are a number of religious fragments dating from the 8th century, inscribed in the Arsacid dialect in which the word "baga" occurs in the following transformations:^{3/}

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Ōhrmizd bag | = | Ohrmizd the god |
| Yīshō' bēg | = | Jesus the god |
| nērōgāvēnd bai | = | the mighty god |
| Bē Zarvān ^{4/} | = | the god Time |
| Mishēbaghē ^{5/} | = | the god the Sun, "the god Mithra." |

4. The Islamic Period: (To be continued in the next issue of this Journal).

^{1/} Naqsh i Rostam is situated about 40 miles to the north of Shiraz.

^{2/} See Herzfeld, Paikuli, pp. 84 - Paikuli is situated in Qara-dagh Mts. in Sulaimania Liwa. It is to be noticed that the title "bag" follows the names of gods, such as Ohrmazd-bag and precedes the names of kings.

^{3/} A. V. Williams Jackson, Researches in Manichaetism.

^{4/} Arthur Christensen says bē = the Persian baga in discussion of the word "Bedokh" = "Bedokht" meaning "daughter of the god". Cf. L'Iran Sans les Sassanides, Second Edition, 1944, pp. 157.

^{5/} Ibid. 186.

Facts on the Kurds: Reply to "The Story of the Kurds"

by Jamil Rojbeyani

Introduction

My friend A. K. presented me with a book entitled "The Story of The Kurds" written by Col. Sami A. Al-Ghamrawi, an Egyptian. In writing this book the author has relied on such "sources" as The Kurdish Question by Mahmoud Al-Durra, Iraq by Khalil Kannah, Lime-light on the North of Iraq by Nauman M. Al-kanaani and others, all of whom are known for their racist tendencies and their rancor against the Kurds. Instead of being motivated by a humanitarian reason or a sense of historical duty and service, it is evident that the efforts of these men in writing their books have centered around only one thing, namely the distortion of historical facts and the portrayal of the Kurds as an insignificant minority...

Al-Ghamrawi has his book divided into two major parts, the first of which includes three chapters: The Origin of the Kurds, Their Country and Their History, and In the Kurdish Society. In his first chapter, the author has borrowed a legend on the origin of the Kurds which seems to have suited his taste and thus it has inspired him to call his book "The Story of the Kurds". From the book "History of the Kurds and Kurdistan" by M. Amin Zaki, the author has also borrowed what Zaki has mentioned in his book about contradictory opinions by Arab, Persian, and Turkish and Kurdish historians and also by certain orientalist who have tried to put in their two bits. Zaki has sighted these opinions not because he agrees with them, but simply for the purpose of showing the Kurds what others think of them and reminding them of their neglect of their own history.

A first glance at "The Story of the Kurds" makes evident the author's allegation that Iraq with its present boundaries is an Arab country; that its people are pure Arabs; and that the minorities in it are alien people who wandered into the area only to scratch out a living. He further alleges that since these peoples are not a part of the original inhabitants of the land, it is small wonder that they should accept to be dissolved in the melting pot of Arab nationalism. Al-Ghamrawi thinks he is entitled to impose the name "Arab homeland" on areas which British and French colonial powers stripped off the Ottoman Empire and left them in the hands of their proteges among the Arab governments. Against this background, it is therefore little wonder that the author should speak in the most laudatory terms of those who advocate a superior Arab nationalism and of those Kurds who have cooperated with the enemy of their nation in their efforts to crush the Kurdish Revolution (in Iraqi Kurdistan). It is also no surprise that the author should launch his loathsome attacks against such Kurds as Sheikh Mahmoud Barzanji, the leader of the Kurdish Revolution Mullah Mustafa Barzani and against the Shah of Iran Muhammad Reza Pahlavi and others...

I believe that Mr. Al-Ghamrawi should have been more concerned about his competence as a military officer and should not have busied himself with writing the history of a people whom he does not know, a people of whose past and future he is ignorant...

"The Story of the Kurds" is almost an exact copy of the works of men like Durrah, Kanaani and others and as such it portrays nothing but distorted information and deliberate falsehoods... Thus in order to enlighten the readers I find myself having to enter upon the difficult course of writing the following history^{1/} which should refute what the

^{1/} Mr. Rojbeyani has deliberately used the same outline and structure as has been employed in "The Story of the Kurds".

author of "The Story of the Kurds" has contrived throughout the chapters of his book and in this effort I am only complying with the Kurdish saying: whoever pricks you with a needle prick him back with a bodkin.

J. Rojbeyani
Kurdistan, 1968

Chapter I

Origin of the Kurds

Historians of the modern age agree that the present Kurdish people are among the most ancient Aryan peoples who have been known under such names as Gutu, Kotu, Karduch (immortalized by the mountain Karadagh - Kardakh - situated between the provinces of Suleymania and Karkuk in Iraqi Kurdistan). Since the beginning of their history and up to the present day, the Kurds have remained the inhabitants of the mountainous triangle known as Zagros or the Mountains of Kurdistan (Bilad al-Akrad). None of the Assyrian raids, the Macedonian attacks or the efforts of the Achaemenians, the Kiyanis or the Sassanids could budge the Kurds from their place. Neither did the successive Islamic dynasties under the First Four Caliphs, the Umayyads, the Abbasids, the Seljuk Turks, the Moguls, the Safavids or the Ottomans succeed in dissolving the Kurds in the melting pot of another nation or changing and obscuring their language. Due to their inaccessible position in the mountains the Kurds have been saved from assimilation and extinction.

As to the legends which have been woven around the origin of the Kurds and which are found in such sources as Muruj al-Dahab by Al-Masudi, Al-Maarif by Ibn Qutayba al-Dinawari and others, they are nothing but fabrications conjured up by the clients of those countries which craved but failed to take over Kurdistan or to usurp parts of it... Faced with such failure, those countries have tried to take vengeance on the Kurds through the work of their hired pens.

It is small wonder that Sharaf Khan Bitlisi has presented (with good intentions) the legend on the origin of the Kurds as it appeared in the Shahnama by Firdausi. Bitlisi was born in "Kerkerud" (Ajam Irak of Persia), where his father had taken refuge after the war between him and the Ottomans. Sharaf Khan was thus educated as a student of theology (Mullah) both in Kerkerud and Bitlis and later when his father died, he headed the Bitlis principality which was under the protection of the Ottomans. Thus his personality seems to have developed under the mixed influence of three factors, namely, the Iranian environment, his theological education, and the Ottoman protection. Consequently, one finds Sharaf Khan repeating legends which he had either read or heard concerning the origin of the Kurds and some other tribes. He has done so without any study or thorough examination of the facts, faring in this matter just as some other religious men who show enthusiasm for everything which is transmitted or handed down and adhere to them with good intentions. For example, when Sharaf Khan Bitlisi tries to prove historically the ancientness of the Kurds, he relies on a legend in the Shahnama of Firdausi concerning Diyako's (Duhak) tyranny over his people. The legend goes that the brave men who were able to escape Duhak's sword fortified themselves in the mountains until their number increased and then they attacked and overthrew Diyako (Biorasf), the fifth king of the Fishdandanis and put in his place Faraydun. Bitlisi considers those "brave men" in the mountains the ancestors of the Kurds. Contrary to this belief, modern science and archeological evidences have proven that Diyako was not the king of the legendary Fishdandanis, but he was the founder of the Median kingdom which was established over the ruins of the kingdoms of Urartu - Mitani - Gutu, and that Faraydun who succeeded Diyako was in fact his son Fraurts, the second Median king.

As we turn to those who consider the Kurds to be descendants of King Solomon's demons - or rather the descendants of Gassad (Jasad) whose name is mentioned in the Koran... (34/38) - we find that these authors have failed to take note of the legends which other people like themselves have related to the effect that the Prophet Noah - who lived one thousand years before Solomon and three thousand years B.C. - after his Arc landed on Judi - Guti, he settled those who were with him in Baqarda (Bait Kardu) which in both Syriac and Assyrian languages means Bait al-Akrad (home of the Kurds). As Noah's group numbered eighty, the village was also called eighty... These authors also seem to have failed to note the fact that a number of ingenuous commentators on the Koran have preceded them in this line of thinking and have alleged that the person who was ordered by Namrud to light the fire (into which Ibrahim was to be thrown and to which the Koran has referred 69/31) was actually a Kurdish man, knowing full well that Ibrahim lived in 1996 B.C. or about a thousand years before Solomon who lived in 950 B.C. In addition to all this, those who allege that the Kurds are descendants of Jinn, ignore the elementary fact - that the intended meaning here of the word Jinn- is Jinn-worshippers... something which the commentators of the Koran have confirmed... (73/1) but they said that the word Jinn means the Jinn of Nusibin in spite of their knowledge that the inhabitants of Nusibin were not Jinn but the so-called Jinn-worshippers, or more correctly the Yazidi Kurds.

The two Arabic words Jinn and Shaytan seem to have developed from the words (Din-Diw) and (Shet-Sheda) which in turn have evolved from the name of the Aryan deity which means "Radiant". Zoroaster had prevented his followers from worshipping the Diw and Sheda and called those who did worship them by the name Div Yasna, which has changed into Dasni (a name by which the Kurds often refer to the Yazidis). It is also from this that stems the name of Dasin mountains which appears in Mu'jam al-Buldan by Yaqut al-Hamawi.

All this goes to show that the legends which throughout the ages have been woven around the origin of the Kurds have emanated from people who seem to have lacked the correct and unbiased attitude for such a task. Consequently, the malice with which they approached the question seems to be no less than that of Al-Ghamrawi and his contemporaries.

As to the assertions of Arab, Persian and Turkish historians who have traced the Kurds back to Kurd bin Murd bin Amr, Kurd bin Sa'sa'a, Kurdweyh, or to the Hon tribes, we feel that these assertions are too absurd to be in any way taken seriously and to be replied to. Concerning the confused and contradictory opinions of some of the orientalisists and their attempts to trace back the Kurds to the peoples of Caucasus or others, we simply say that such views being so contradictory to each other seem to collapse from themselves, and that the truth is that the Kurds like other Aryan peoples originated in the mountainous triangle of Zagros, in their homeland Kurdistan and that they did not wander into it from another place. They originated there and have, since the beginning of their history preserved and protected it. The future is bound to expose the errors in other contradictory views when the ruins are uncovered and the land brings forth the evidence to the arena of scientific study.

Chapter II: Country of the Kurds

Amidst the confusion which seems to becloud Mr. Al-Ghamrawi's thinking, he seems to proceed at random and mix between the term "Kurdistan" as the name of the country of the Kurds and its meaning as a Kurdish state and therefore he poses the questions of "has there been in history a state called Kurdistan?" and "What does the name Kurdistan apply to and when was it applied?" He then goes on to answer these questions in a manner in which he lets himself be seduced. But before answering his questions in a more erudite way, I would like to ask Mr. Al-Ghamrawi if there has been in history a state called Arabistan or the Arab State and if there has appeared at any time in history an Arab

country that ruled all the Arab territories. Evidently the answer to both questions is no. Neither before nor after Islam has there been an Arab country which ruled over all the Arab countries. On the contrary there appeared before Islam the emirates of Manaadi-ra and Ghasaasina which ruled the areas of Hira in Iraq and Sham in Syria under the dominion of Persia and Byzantium. Then came the Islamic realm at the time of the Caliphs, the Ummayyads, and the Abbasids, but instead of Arab it was always called the Islamic Caliphate. Therefore just as the Kurds never had a country which joined all their scattered parts, neither did the Arabs have such a country, and even at the present the Arab countries are not united.

As to the allegation that the Kurds have never had any form of state at any time, we can only let history itself repudiate this. Anyone who has read Al-Tamadun Al-Islami (in Arabic), Tarikh Guzida (in Persian), and Tarikh Umumi (in Turkish), will find that the Kurds at different times of their history and in different localities in Kurdistan established the following states: Dalfiyah (310-385 H.)^{1/}, the Ravadi State in Azerbaijan-Gurjistan (330-618 H.), the Sajiyah-Salariyah State in Azerbaijan (366-430 H.), the Shadadi State in Aran (Arivan) (340-645 H.), the Hasnawiyah-Ayariyah State in Hamadan-Shehrezur (350-500 H.), the Great Attabeg-Ullah State (500-850 H.), the Small Attabeg-Ullah State (550-1005 H.), which later continued in the form of a vilayet until 1346 H., and the Bitlis State (635-1066 H.). Then there were the emirates of Ardelan, Baban, Soran, Badinan, Hikari and others. All this in addition to the Dostekiyah-Marwaniyah state in Diyar Bekir and Rabia (350-486), the existence of which has been admitted even by Mr. Al-Ghamrawi and it was this state which at that time the Abbasid Caliphate had recognized.

As to the word "Kurdistan" and to what this name has been applied, we will find that the author of Qamus Al-A'lam (in Turkish) which was written half a century ago, has made particular reference to Kurdistan just as has done the Encyclopaedia Britannica, the Encyclopedia of Islam, the Encyclopedia by Butrus Al-Bustani, the Encyclopedia by Farid Wajdi and others. The word "Kurdistan" is a compound term made up of the words Kurd (the Kurds or the Kurdish people) and Astan which is an Indo-European term meaning home, region or country and it is often found linked to the name of many peoples, e.g., Hindustan, Afghanistan, Turkistan, Gurjistan, Tajikestan...etc. It is rather interesting to note that the present two provinces of Diyali and Kut (in Iraq) used to be known at the beginning of Islam as the Astan of Shad Qubad and the Astan of Hurmiz.

It is rather astonishing to see how frightened Arab writers are by the term "Kurdistan" while they do not seem to mind the phrase "Bilad al-Akrad" which means home or country of the Kurds. Perhaps the explanation lies in the fact that they are blindly following what they find in some old history books by such men as A-Waaqidi, Al-Balaadiri, Al-Tabari, Al-Masudi and others.

As to the question of when and to what was the term "Kurdistan" applied, we can answer by saying that since the existence of the Kurdish people their country has been called Kurdistan, and here we have to reject what the orientalist Lestring alleges that the Seljuki Sultan Sanjar was the one who gave the name Kurdistan to the land of the Kurds...Sultan Sanjar never created the country of the Kurds let alone giving it a name. All he did was to divide the country which was under his rule into regions and provinces according to a plan of his own. This is what Al-Mustawfi Al-Qazwini has referred to in his book Muzhat al-Qulub where the exact translation from Persian says "part ten in citing the areas of Kurdistan which number sixteen...its climate is temperate, its boundaries are joined by the vilayets of Arab Irak, ~~Kuzistan~~, Ajam Irak, Azerbaijan and Diyar Bekir...and the areas are the following: Alani, Alishtar, Bahar

^{1/} The Hijri calendar began with Muhammad's emigration from Mecca to Madina in 622 A.D.

(which was Sulaiman Shah's capital), Khifetan, Darband Taj Khatun, Darband Zangi, Dazbil, Dinewer, Sultan Abad (present Chemchemal), Shahrazur, Kirmanshahan, Kerend, Khoshan, Kengur, Maayidesht, Hersin and Westam."

Al-Mustawfi considered the part of Kurdistan which was under the control of the Persian Saljuks as consisting of sixteen vilayets...while he at the same time considered Arab Irak one vilayet. Furthermore, Al-Mustawfi did not limit Kurdistan to those sixteen vilayets, but he considered northern and western Kurdistan to be the vilayet of Diyar Bekir of which he considered Mosul and Arbil as parts - these two liwas were within the territory of the Marvanid dynasty up to the time of Al-Mustawfi and were considered as parts of the Jazira ibn Umar in the Bhotan province. The vilayet of Diyar Bekir was at that time under the control of the Saljukus of Asia Minor (Anatol) and not under the Persian Saljuks. It was for the same reason that the name Central Kurdistan was applied to the region of Dersim (Chimishkizik) and therefore it was a case where the name of the whole was used to describe a part. This should go to prove that the Kurds, whether they were in the eastern or western part of their country, applied the name Kurdistan to their land...

Mr. Al-Ghamrawi asserts that he does not wish to run after the ancient past, but if he were to remain faithful to his assertion, he should then have admitted to the more recent past and the present and should have recognized the fact that there is a Kurdish nation that has revolted for the sake of its national rights and that the Iraqi Government must submit to these rights in order to allow the Kurds and the Arabs to live together in Iraq as equals sharing the good days and the bad days. But unfortunately, Mr. Al-Ghamrawi begins by shedding crocodile tears on the Palestinian Arabs who themselves sold their land to the European Jews, and then he turns around and wreaks his anger upon the Kurds who have held out in their land.

In an attempt to determine the map of Kurdistan, Mr. Al-Ghamrawi has borrowed the kind of description of the land of the Kurds which seems to best suit his fancy...To prove that the author of "The Story of the Kurds" has not at all consulted the book Sharafnama by Sharaf Khan Bitlisi, and that what he has borrowed has been copied from the book The Kurdish Question by M. Durra, I would only like to mention that the author of Sharafnama has in his book set forth the geography of Kurdistan and has precisely delineated its boundaries when he says "The boundaries of Kurdistan begin from the shores of Hurmiz Sea (Persian Gulf) adjacent to the Indian Ocean and extend in a straight line to the vilayets of Malatia (in Kharput-Turkish Kurdistan) and Mar-ish (city north of Aleppo) where to the north of this line are situated the vilayets of Fars, Ajam Irak, Azerbaijan, Great Armenia and Small Armenia. To the south it is bound by Arab Irak, Mosul and Diyar Bekir..."^{1/} After three hundred eighty years the boundaries of Kurdistan remain exactly as they were delineated by Sharaf Khan. However, if Sharaf Khan has in his book applied the name Kurdistan to the vilayet of Dersim (Chimishkizik),^{2/} that is because he had used the name of the whole to describe a part. Confirming this belief is the exact translation of the Sharafnama where it says "as to the area of the vilayet of Chimishkizik (Dersim), its boundaries reached such an extent that the people began calling it by the name Kurdistan..."^{3/} Kurdistan today is bound from the south by the Hamrin mountains which branch out from the Pisht-Kuh, passing through Mandali and Maqdadiyah (Shahrban), then descending westward towards Jabal

^{1/} Bitlisi, Sharaf Khan: Sharafnama, a History of the Kurdish States and Emirates, Translated into Arabic from Persian by Jamil Rojbeyani, al-Najah Press, Baghdad, 1953, p. 30.

^{2/} Mr. Al-Ghamrawi is ignorant of the fact that the name Dersim is the more recent name for Chimishkizik which was known as Central Kurdistan.

^{3/} Sharafnama, p. 185.

Sanjar and to the north of Aleppo (Kurd-Dagh)...The other boundaries of Kurdistan remain the same as they have been delineated in the Sharafnama. Though Kurdistan is today a politically divided land between the countries of Syria, Iraq, Turkey, Iran and the Soviet Union, it has in the real sense remained one and unchanged in spite of all political efforts in dividing it...

Kurdistan's Political History:

Under this heading Mr. Al-Ghamrawi carries on an "engaging" argument when he says "Kurdistan was subjected to the conquests of the following empires: 1. The Parthians (he probably means the Parthians), 2. The Sassanids, 3. The Arabs, 4. The Moguls, 5. The Ottomans and the Safavids, and thus it (Kurdistan) was deprived of political independence..." To answer this, I will only say that we the Kurds do not claim that history has recognized the Kurdish nation in the form of a vast country fully unified under one flag...but we do know that historians believe that the Urartu, Kutu, Kassai, and Mitani dynasties and the Median Empire were Kurdish...This was in the ancient past, and as to the Islamic era we have already mentioned the petty states which the Kurds established, and even when under the dominion of the usurping empires, the Kurds maintained and preserved their own internal affairs...

Just for the sake of comparison let me ask Mr. Al-Ghamrawi if the Arabs and their land were not subjected to the conquests of 1. The Akkadians, 2. The Sumerians, 3. The Babylonians, 4. The Medes, 5. The Assyrians, 6. The Achaemenians, 7. The Sassanids, 8. The Byzantines, 9. The Crusaders, 10. The Moguls-Tartars, 11. The Safavids, 12. The Ottomans, 13. The French, and 14. The British? Did not the Arabs submit to the rule of the Buyids (Buwaihis), the Seljuks, the Ayyubids, and the Mamalik? Did the Arabs during any of these periods possess political independence? What is it then that in this respect separates the ten million Kurds from the eighty million Arabs?

Yes the Arab nation did indeed achieve glory through Islam. But did the Islamic Caliphate during the time of the Four Caliphs, the Umayyads or the Abbasids call itself an Arab country? The Islamic peoples whether they be Arabs, Kurds, Persians, Turks, Indians...etc., submitted to Islam in the name of Islam and not in the name of Arabdom. It was in manifesting this spirit that as soon as the Umayyad dynasty turned its back on Islam and succumbed to the slogans of the ruler and the ruled, the Kurdish nation revolted against them in different parts of Kurdistan such as Shahrezur, Azerbaijan, Luristan, Fars, and it was then that the Umayyad dynasty met its destruction at the hands of the Kurdish leader Abu-Muslim al-Khurasani in whom the poet Abu Dalaama says:

أفنى دولة المنصور تبغى غدرة -- لم لا ان اهل الفدر أبأؤك الكرد

Also when the Abbasid Caliphate disavowed itself from the promises it had made to the other peoples, the Kurdish people were among the first to revolt against it and the revolts of Jafar bin Mihr Hassan and Muhammad bin Abdullah Hezar Merd are well-known facts of history...History also confirms the fact that the Kurds in most of the areas and especially in Luristan were able to maintain their local governments during the Mogul and Tatar attacks which overran the Arab lands and swept away the Abbasid Caliphate...

Let all the fanatical Arab writers know that the Islamic peoples everywhere take pride in the glory of Islam in the name of Islam and not in the name of Arabism. We Kurds have not and will not vaunt of the Kurdishness of the Umayyad dynasty which ruled in the name of Islam. We would rather be proud of its men who in the name of Islam defended the Islamic domain and especially the Arab parts of it and saved it from falling into the hands of the Crusaders...and while we do not brag about Kurdish leaders and commanders who in a non-Kurdish spirit ruled many lands ... we certainly

take pride in the protection the Ayyubids afforded Islam, the victories of Nadir Shah Afshar, and the justice of the Zandis...

I hope I have, through this discussion, made it clear to Mr. Al-Ghamrawi what the term Kurdistan means and what it applies to. Maybe he will also realize that if the Kurds at different times in their history were subjected to foreign conquest, so were the Arabs...and that when the Kurds managed and maintained their local independence, the Arabs did so only after the dawn of Islam and in the name of Islam alone...

* * * * *

THE JEWS OF KURDISTAN

by Yona Sabar

A book recently published in Israel^{1/} counts more than two hundred villages and towns in greater Kurdistan in which Jewish communities existed. In most of these places the Jews lived together with Moslem and Christian Kurds and there were a few places which were inhabited only by Jews.

When did the Jews first come to Kurdistan? There is no concrete evidence on their first settling in this area. All that is available are legends and traditions handed down from generation to generation. According to these the Jews of Kurdistan are descendants of the ten tribes taken into exile by the Assyrian kings at the end of the eighth century B.C. and settled in the Habor^{2/} River region and the cities of Media (see: II Kings, 17:5). This legend, interestingly enough, is also told by some Christian groups in Kurdistan which keep some Jewish customs, such as celebrating Saturday as the day of rest, and they do not inter-marry with other Christian groups. They consider Benjamin, the son of Jacob, as their patriarch and many individuals are named Benjamin. They also use the Jewish calendar. The fact that the Jews and Christians both speak Aramaic may also point to a common past in the Habor region, the Aramaean center for about 2000 years.

The first real evidence we have about the Jews of Kurdistan comes from the twelfth century A.D. Jewish and other European travelers mention in their diaries of their journey large Jewish communities in different places. Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela, the famous Jewish traveler of the twelfth century, mentions that in Amadia alone there were twenty-five thousand Jews. To be sure, his estimate is very exaggerated, yet it indicates the existence of quite a large community and it is known that Amidia was an important Jewish spiritual center until after the eighteenth century. We know of two important messianic leaders of the twelfth century, Ibn-Ruhi and David al-Ro'i, both of Amidia. In the last two centuries, up until the emigration of all the Kurdish Jews to Israel in 1950-52, Zacho, rather than Amidia, was the largest Jewish community, with about three hundred families.

1/ A. Ben-Yaacov, The Jewish Communities of Kurdistan (in Hebrew).

2/ This word, in the form "hawora", has become the general term for "river" in the Aramaic dialect of Zacho.

The Jews of Kurdistan were unique in that they were almost the only community of Jews who earned their living as farmers, shepherds and loggers. Other occupations were trade, weaving and other handicrafts. They have a rich heritage of folklore and customs, popular religion and superstitions, which are a mixture of Jewish and general Near-Eastern folk culture,^{3/} and their language itself contains a great number of words from Kurdish, Arabic, Persian and Turkish. Popular ceremonies were especially enjoyed. They used to go in thousands to visit shrines where holy men or prophets were believed to be buried. Alqosh and Nabi Yunis (Ninevah), the locations of the shrines of the prophets Nahum and Jonah, were the most popular places.

Notwithstanding the daily hardships of life, the Kurdish Jews, healthy in body and spirit, lived an exuberant life full of the simple earthy joys of eating and drinking and other pleasures. The natural abundance of the land of Kurdistan generously provides this way of life. Vegetables and fruits are plentiful, as well as milk and cheese, meat, chicken and fish. Araq, the Kurdish vodka and the favorite drink was a good stimulant for the appetite. Public feasts at births, bar-mitsvas, weddings and funerals were most common. The wedding ceremony lasted for seven days and nights. At these festivals singing and dancing to the rhythms of a flute (zirne) and drum went on for hours.

All the Jews of Kurdistan have now emigrated to Israel. The first waves of emigration were between the years 1921-26, and the last main wave was in 1950-52. The emigration to Israel was for religious, economic and political reasons. They, as other Jewish communities in the Diaspora, had always longed and prayed for return to Palestine, and especially Jerusalem, where many of them are living today. Most of the Jews, like the other Kurds, had a poor economic situation and suffered from the local authorities' negligence of proper schools, vocational training, modern utilities and other facilities and services necessary for modern economic life. Politically, especially since the establishment of the state of Israel, the Jews of Kurdistan and of Iraq in general were persecuted. To bring one example, twenty-one kalak sailors from Zacho were accused of "Zionism" and imprisoned for three years, because they were found dancing to warm up in a cold day. The Iraqi police "interpreted" the dance as celebration of the establishment of the state of Israel. Confiscation of Jewish property was also very common.

As compared to the difficulties with the government's authorities, they had fairly good relations with the general population of Kurds. If there were any frictions, these were more disputes between neighbors than between enemies. I remember when the Jews left Zacho for Israel, many of our Moslem and Christian friends stood near the departing buses with tears in their eyes.

The Kurdish Jews in Israel are still deeply emotionally attached to Kurdistan. They often listen to radio stations which broadcast Kurdish songs and news, frequently with tears in their eyes, expressing their longing for the land of their birth. They follow the Kurds' struggle for autonomy and many would volunteer to help, if they could. Their fascinating folk tales, though spoken in Aramaic, are mostly Kurdish in their spirit and themes, and their songs are even sung in Kurdish.

Most of them live together, in the same neighborhood when in cities, or in agricultural settlements of their own, usually located in the mountainous area around Jerusalem. They do mainly physical work in construction and factories and as household movers. In villages they continue, as in Kurdistan, to work in agriculture.

^{3/} Erich Brauer, The Jews of Kurdistan, an ethnological study (in Hebrew), Jerusalem, 1947.

However, many of the young generation have had a good education and a few have reached the university level.

When visiting Jerusalem last summer, I told some members of the community about The Kurdish Journal and they asked me to send their warm regards to their fellow countrymen. So, I do.

Other sources:

- Fischel, W.J. The Jews of Kurdistan, Commentary, 1949, pp. 554-59.
Feitelson, D. Aspects of the Social Life of Kurdish Jews. The Jewish Journal of Sociology, Vol. I, No. 2, 1959.

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Past Issues of THE KURDISH JOURNAL

We have been gratified to receive requests from our readers for past issues of THE KURDISH JOURNAL. We have a few extra copies of some issues, which may be acquired for \$.75 each. If you wish to order Journals for which there are no extra copies, we are able to duplicate those issues for you at \$.15 per page.

Below are listed the issues published prior to this publication:

- Vol. I, no. 1 December 1963
Vol. I, no. 2 March 1964
Vol. I, no. 3 June 1964
Vol. I, no. 4 October 1964

Vol. II, no. 1 March 1965
Vol. II, no. 2 June 1965
Vol. II, nos. 3 & 4 September, December 1965

Vol. III, no. 1 March 1966
Vol. III, no. 2 June 1966
Vol. III, no. 3 September 1966
Vol. III, no. 4 December 1966

Vol. IV, no. 1 March 1967

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Notice to Subscribers

THE KURDISH JOURNAL was published only once rather than four times during 1967 because of financial and other difficulties. Subscriptions for 1967 will continue, therefore, to be in effect until our subscribers receive four issues. We will send you notification when the renewal date draws near. We appreciate your interest in the Journal and regret that we were not able to put out all four issues during 1967.

DOCUMENTS AND EXCERPTS

The following are extracts from an official Syrian "Report on the plan for the establishment of State farms in the Hasaka (Jazireh) province". The report was elaborated by the "Regional Peasant Office". It was published in the paper "Al-Mounadel" ("The Militant") No. 11, pp. 12-13, of mid-December 1966. This paper is an exclusive one edited by the "Office of publications and publicity" of "The National Direction of the Socialist Arab Baath Party". The figures of the report are false, as related to the Kurdish population, but, under a phraseology of "Arab socialism" apparently "scientific", the guilty intention to destroy the Kurdish national community is more than transparent.

REPORT ON THE PLAN FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF STATE FARMS IN THE HASAKA PROVINCE

"The dangers which faced and are facing our Arab people in Northern Iraq, and which are created by imperialism, began a few years ago to menace us in the Hasaka province. The previous governments had neglected them, but today they need a radical and frank solution (...).

Between 23 and 29 November 1966, comrade Naim Djoumaa was asked by the Regional Peasant Office of the Party to go to the Hasaka province in order to study the report presented to the National Direction by the Regional Direction of Jazireh, together with the responsible officials of the province, and entitled "The outlines for the implementation of the plan for the establishment of State farms in the Hasaka province". After the discussion of the report with comrade the governor (Mouhafiz) of Hasaka, it became obvious that it was necessary, for the agricultural year 66-67, that the Confiscated Lands and State lands should be exploited by the State itself. But the National Direction should study the problem and lay down the scientific bases necessary for a successful exploitation (...). The size of the part of the Belt which we are studying is of 3,001,911 dunam. It extends from Malikiye at the Syrian-Iraqi border in the North-East till the limit between the Hasaka and the Rakka provinces, between the villages of Tel-Kalia and Rajan. It is 10 km deep (...).

Non-Arab elements, mainly Kurds, had emigrated to this area from Turkey and Iraq, according to the imperialistic plan of creating a second Israel on our Arab land, by uniting the Kurds of Syria, Iraq and Turkey. This plan was elaborated by imperialism and is being fed and encouraged by imperialism(...). The Kurdish progression, because of tribal dissensions, obliged the Bakkarah, Shammar, Tay, Harb and other Arab tribes to transfer southwards with their cattle, and the Kurds occupied and colonised this fertile area, to which they are strangers (...).

"Out of the 3,001,911 dunam of the Belt land of Jazireh, 901,524 dunam are Confiscated* "baal"**- lands, and 16,490 dunam are Confiscated irrigated land. The State lands (public domain) of the Belt is of 204,325 dunam, mainly "baal".

Because of the presence of feudalism in the area, and because of the existence of non-Arab elements, mainly Kurds, who are trying hard to establish a national home for themselves on our northern frontier, with the help of imperialism, and because the areas in Turkey and Iraq across the frontier line are also inhabited by the Kurds, and owing to the plots, espionage and conspiracies woven against us in the frontier areas, it is of the utmost urgency to take the necessary measures in order to save the arabism of the area (...).

* Confiscated lands by the Authorities from peasants and owners.
** "Baal land" means lands irrigated only by rain.

It can be said that if things remain as they are, the Kurdish emigration would increase into the area, and that would endanger our frontier and our nation, knowing the agricultural and industrial importance of the area, especially after the discovery of oil. The following measures have been taken by the Authorities and the Party for the exploitation of the Belt by the State:

- 1) Comrade the governor of Hasaka issued an ultimatum to the rural population, farmers and owners, forbidding them to exploit the lands confiscated. After the ultimatum we began the operations of ploughing and seeding;
- 2) The Office of Land Confiscation began mapping the Confiscated Lands (...);
- 3) The Office of the Land Reform began to take the measures to transfer already 4,000 families from the Belt to other areas (...). It is hoped that the operation will be achieved without difficulties.

But on the other hand, there are within the Belt about 25,000 people who are registered in the Administration as foreigners***. The Party and the Authority in the Hasaka province think that these foreigners must be forbidden to inhabit the frontier area. The right way to achieve this objective is to wear them down and to prevent them from having any employment so that they would emigrate progressively to other countries within five years. If necessary, we should use force against them;

- 4) The Party and the Peasant Office are trying to engage young Arab elements, among those who believe in Arabism and in Arab nationalism, to work as armed workers in the Belt and protect the cultivation;

- 5) The Direction of the Party in Jazireh asked a number of comrades, among the most capable, to hold popular meetings in the Kurdish villages in the frontier regions, in order to enlighten the population of the dangers of imperialism, and thus to pave the way to carry out the plan (...). We think that the benefit of the Belt exploitation should be used to improve the plan and to realize its objective.

The difficulty would be how to defend the farms by the armed guards, knowing especially that the Confiscated lands, together with the lands of Public domain, are intermingled with those which are still private lands. In the Ras-al-Ain region, for example, there are 181 villages, of which 66 are confiscated and 14 State-owned (...). In the Qamishli district, there are 134 villages, of which 71 are confiscated and 22 State-owned (...). In the Malikiya region, there are 182 villages, of which 105 are confiscated and 30 State-owned (...). The total number of the confiscated villages in the area is 319, and that of the State-owned is 66: the total of both is 385 villages. Their exploitation, should the present conditions continue, will lead to great difficulties in the future. That is why we propose:

- 1) The Government should promulgate a new decree considering all the villages of the area as State-owned property. The State should have the right to exploit them as it deems fit (...);

- 2) To elaborate a practical and scientific plan for the future exploitation of the whole area (...);

- 3) The objectives of this plan should be: (this part of the report is merely technical);

*** The "foreigners" of the Belt are the Kurds who were, in this area, deprived of Syrian citizenship after the census of 1962.

4) The ethnical composition of the population should be changed, by transferring and exiling the non-Arab element;

5) To construct model villages for the immigrating elements established by the State, in all the regions where the original population will have been transferred (...). We ask for: 1); 2); 3) (these three demands are merely technical); 4) The High Command of the Army should order the frontier brigade in the area to help the regional Authorities when necessary. We have to add, however, that so far the commander of this brigade has satisfied all our demands (...).

(...) Eternity to the Mission of our Party;

Signed: the President of the Peasant Office (of the Baath).

* * * * *

The following are extracts of a "Special report on the Afrin region", written by the "Office of Land reform, Section of Aleppo". The Afrin district is in Kurd-Dagh, Afrin being the administrative center of the region. The report is more moderate and less systematically anti-Kurdish than that cited above on Jazireh, but still the aim of the land reform and education is to try to Arabise the Kurdish population of the area.

SPECIAL REPORT ON THE AFRIN REGION

"Between July 10 and 13, 1966, a visit was made to the Afrin area by the Chief of the Land Redistribution Office, the Director of the Aleppo Section of the Office of Land Reform and the Chief of the Land Confiscation of Aleppo. The purpose was to study the social and agrarian situation in the villages of the area which are under the regulations of the Land Reform Act (...).

(...) The area, which was known under the name of Kurd-Dagh (The Mountain of the Kurds) is mountainous, contiguous to the Turkish territory from the North and to the stolen Iskenderun (Alexandretta) region from the West (...). The Confiscated lands are concentrated in the region of Gindres (...). They do not represent more than 10% of the total area (...). 80% of the cultivated lands are composed of small properties owned by peasants who are deeply attached to the land. That is why to try to solve the national problem by the land reform would not be practicable (...).

The greatest majority of the population is Kurdish (...). They do not understand Arabic at all (...). A few Arab families live among them mainly in Gindres, but they speak Kurdish. We met a few children who knew also Arabic, but that was because they attended school (...). There is no feeling of hatred between Arabs and Kurds. The nature of this people is good and pacific (...).

This population, who has been living in the area for four centuries, has not had the opportunity to be moulded in the Arab mould, but that was not their mistake. It is our responsibility to make these Kurds progress and to integrate them in that mould (...).

The area is quiet, probably the most quiet district in the Aleppo province. The Administration and the security forces would possibly not agree with us on that, because of the activity of the Kurdish Democratic Party. We have already said that this activity does exist, but it does not constitute a danger as in Jazireh. It concerns mainly the intellectuals and the educated sons of the possessing families. Their activity and that of the few communists of the area do not seem to stir the population.

(...) That is why it would be a mistake to try to penetrate in the area politically before giving to the citizen the opportunity to become a normal Arabised citizen. That would not be an impossible objective, provided that the State draws the right plan. If there are in the area a number of separatists, enemies of Arab nationalism, we should not think that the whole population shares their convictions. These enemies constitute a danger in a receptive society. That is the subject of the apprehensions of the Security Authorities. We should therefore try to transform the recipient society from a good soil for the growth of subversive activities into a society which would reject the poison of the subversive elements. The implantation, for example, of Arab peasant families in a village, after transferring the local citizens or preventing them from exploiting their land, would be the kind of action which would precisely favour the development of subversive activities. We know the case of the village of Mohamadiya, where five Arab families were implanted. That was not a happy step, because these Arab families were notorious and some of them had been condemned for theft and had just left jail. That action provoked uneasiness and favoured rumours, especially as hundreds of Kurdish peasants possessing no land live in the immediate neighbourhood of the village. We do not say that Arab implantation must not be practised, but it should be objectively studied and the implanted Arabs should be of a peasant origin (...).

Signed: Abdulla Shamseddine Issa,
Chief of the Office of Land Confiscation, Aleppo

Abdul Razzak Al-Hassan,
Chief of the Office of Land Reform, Section of Aleppo

Adnan Sabri,
Chief of the Office of Land Redistribution in the Ministry

* * * * *

THE PROGRAMME OF THE KURDISTAN

DEMOCRATIC PARTY, AS APPROVED BY
THE SEVENTH CONGRESS OF THE PARTY IN 1966

ARTICLE (1): Name of the party: Kurdistan Democratic Party.

ARTICLE (2): Our party is a revolutionary democratic party representing the interests of the workers, peasants, entrepreneurs, professional people and the revolutionary intellectuals in Iraqi Kurdistan.

ARTICLE (3): We struggle for liberation, and the attainment of self-government (autonomy) for Iraqi Kurdistan within the framework of the Iraqi Republic.

ARTICLE (4): In the eventuality of a union between the Iraqi Republic and any Arab state, the Kurdish people shall exercise their right of self-determination.

ARTICLE (5): The party benefits in its political struggle and its social analyses from progressive scientific theories which are compatible with the prevailing conditions of the Kurdish people.

ARTICLE (6): We struggle for a parliamentary democratic regime in Iraq; freedom of worship for all religions; the right of self-expression and beliefs; freedom of the press and publication and the right of establishing political organisations and unions for all citizens.

ARTICLE (7): We struggle

- a- For the furtherance of brotherly relations between Arab and Kurdish nations.
- b- To strengthen Arab-Kurdish brotherhood and the consolidation of national unity within Iraq.
- c- To promote friendly relations between Kurdish people and all the nations of the world.
- d- For the recognition of the national rights of the minorities living in Kurdistan.

ARTICLE (8): a- We struggle for the maintenance of world peace and relaxation of international tension; adhere to the principles of the United Nations Charter; the Bandung Conference decisions and the principles of peaceful co-existence; believe in solving all international problems through negotiation; and advocate the abolition of nuclear weapons and their testing.

b- We continue to view imperialism as constituting a threat to all peoples; hence our policy is against it. We believe in strengthening friendly relations with all peoples of the world on the basis of mutual benefits, and support the national liberation movements of those nations struggling for independence and their right of self-determination.

ARTICLE (9): Cultivation of friendly relations and co-operation between our party and all parties and democratic organisations which recognise the equity of the Kurdish cause throughout the world.

ARTICLE (10): We strive for the advancement of the national economy and the raising of standard of living of the people through modern economic comprehensive planning, embracing short-term and long-term projects and the training of administrative and technical personnel necessary to undertake them.

ARTICLE (11): Our party believes that heavy industry constitutes the backbone of the political and economic independence. Hence we strive to establish heavy and light industries in view of surveys of the available mineral resources, with particular emphasis on oil and copper industries; the electrification of the whole country; protection of local infant industries against foreign competition; encouragement of investment of local capital in industry, with special safeguards for the interests of consumers; the advancement of national industries - like sugar, paper, dairy, processing, cement, cigarettes and others - and the abolition of taxes imposed on the importation of instruments, machines and factory plants necessary to support our national industries.

ARTICLE (12): We struggle for the elimination of unemployment; for legislating progressive laws which will guarantee the interests of the workers through establishment of a minimum wages policy securing a decent standard of living for the worker and his family; limiting working hours; banning employment of infants in industry; legislating laws guaranteeing pension and social security; recognition of the right of forming trade unions and sending of workers abroad and increasing the number of industrial schools in order to raise the standard of technical efficiency.

ARTICLE (13): We strive to increase the royalties from oil; the appropriation of a particular share of these royalties for expenditure on industrial and agricultural projects in Kurdistan in proportion to the population ratio of the region; supervision of the execution stage - production, marketing, etc.; the activation of the law (80) 1961; strengthening the national oil company, and the prevention of interference by the oil companies in the internal affairs of Iraq, the establishment of subsidiary industries from oil products by the government in the areas of extraction according to their particular locations; and the training and preparing of administrative and technical personnel for the eventual nationalisation of the oil industry.

ARTICLE (14): As the land problem in Kurdistan has its own distinctive characteristics which were overlooked by the Land Reform Act, we strive to amend it in a way to secure a reasonable minimum ownership for all peasants in Kurdistan. Furthermore, our party, in its endeavour to improve the lot of the peasants and to increase their incomes, shall attempt to:

First

- a. Reform and irrigate the uncultivated areas of land; distribute it to peasants who do not already own any land, or those whose ownership is less than the minimum area set by the law.
- b. Solve the irrigation problem through canals, artesian wells, dams, reservoirs, and providing opportunities for the peasants to benefit from government irrigation schemes.
- c. Assisting peasants by providing them with seeds, chemical fertilizers, machines and instruments to enable them to improve their crops, their diversification, and granting long-term and short-term loans bearing low interests to rescue the peasant from the claws of speculators.
- d. Establishment of co-operative societies amongst the peasants to market their agricultural products, purchase consumer goods and essential instruments.
- e. Propagating the usage of machines and modern agricultural methods; encouraging collective and co-operative efforts (Kurdish - HARAWAZ) amongst the peasants.
- f. Providing technical instructions in order to raise agricultural standards, and the sending of peasants from Kurdistan abroad to widen their experience.

Second

The guarantee of rearing livestock is one of the two fundamental aspects of rural production in Kurdistan; it constitutes a sizable proportion of rural income. Therefore, we strive to:

- a. Abolish all restrictions and privileges connected with rearing livestock, like grazing tolls, gifts, and other feudal dues.
- b. Settle the nomadic tribes, with special regard to their productive circumstances, by distributing land among them and securing pastures for their cattle.
- c. Establish veterinary organisations to prevent animal diseases; improve livestock breeding and their produce.

Third - We strive to:

- a. Amend the Tobacco Monopoly Act to secure the interests of the farmers and improve the quality of tobacco by abolishing anomalous restrictions on its cultivation, its classification and its prices.
- b. Provide tobacco farmers with loans and seeds on easy terms in the beginning of the season.
- c. Train experts and guides to improve the quality of tobacco, and establish modern warehouses to protect tobacco from damage.
- d. Improve and expand the cigarette and tobacco industry and establish factories in the production locations as to make Iraq one of the exporting countries of the crop.

Fourth

- a. Tend to forests and legislate for its protection in accordance with national economic interests.

b. Encourage the plantation of trees, and include fruit cultivation as part of the afforestation plans in the mountainous areas.

ARTICLE (15): Organising internal and external trade; assisting national merchants to increase their trade, with due regard for the public and private sections; fighting monopoly and unfair competition; establishing trade relations with other nations on the basis of mutual interests; and encouraging of exports and attempting to confine imports to essential items as much as possible.

ARTICLE (16):

- a. Endeavour to organise financial affairs as to economies in expenditure and provide adequate financial resources for productive projects, with a proper balance between expenditure and revenue.
- b. Establish a fair system of taxation depending on direct and progressive taxation on income and inheritance; to lessen the burden of indirect taxation which fall heavily on the lower income classes.
- c. Strengthen the national bank system through increasing their capitals, opening adequate branches, and fixing of interest rate for all types of insurance to play their part towards the prosperity of the national economy.
- d. Legislating laws regulating customs duty in a manner to secure national interest.

ARTICLE (17):

- a. Organize transport in Iraqi Kurdistan by expanding and opening roads; establish a railway network; secure oil tankers necessary to export Iraqi oil; establish national naval organisation and expand the communication networks with other countries according to the national interest.
- b. Tend to summer resorts to encourage tourism; administer them according to modern methods. To facilitate communication, a road to connect Sulaimani with Zakh.

ARTICLE (18): Until the Kurdish problem is settled in a fair and democratic manner, we deem it necessary that the forces of Pesh Merga (the Kurdish Army) should be retained, improved and strengthened; inculcate the members with true democratic and national spirit; guarantee of assistance to the families of the victims in connection with their participation in the Kurdish Revolution.

ARTICLE (19): To make available medical centers, the building of medical colleges and schools; increase medical scholarships abroad; take precautions for the prevention of diseases; medical guidance will be increased; provide free general medical treatment in all parts of Kurdistan; increase the number of hospitals, provide villages and remote areas with essential medical services; manufacturing of medicine locally and controlling their prices.

ARTICLE (20): Direct democratic elections should be the means to elect mayors and the municipal councils; a comprehensive plan for municipal projects in Iraqi Kurdistan.

ARTICLE (21): Belief in the right of women to enjoy complete political, economic and social equality, and instituting necessary legislation to protect women's rights in employment.

ARTICLE (22):

- a. We strive to secure the rights of Kurdish students; eliminate illiteracy and ignorance; direct education in a national and democratic way; fight reactionary, fascist, racist beliefs and tendencies; reconcile theory with practice.

b. We strive to revive Kurdish literature, history, arts and its enrichment with the humanistic heritage of other nations; the preservation and protection of religious shrines and historical places in Kurdistan.

c. We strive to establish an official university in Iraqi Kurdistan, co-ordinating its efforts with other Iraqi Universities. It should be independent and become an important center of knowledge and scientific research.

d. Endeavour to make the study of Kurdish language, literature, and Kurdish history included in Iraqi Universities; to spread the study of the Kurdish language in all parts of Iraq; to found a Kurdish language academy and television and radio broadcasting station in Kurdistan.

e. Primary education should be made compulsory for both sexes; to open evening schools for workers and peasants and others; increase the number of public libraries and laboratories, and organise educational clubs and lectures.

f. Advancement of Kurdish literature and art in the service of humanity in general, and the Kurdish people in particular; to encourage literary and artistic activities, to increase the number of scholarships abroad for the Kurdish students proportionate to the Kurdish ratio of the population; to establish theatres and filming industry and encourage cultural exchanges with other nations.

ARTICLE (23): We support the struggle of the Kurdish people in all parts of Kurdistan for liberation and the enjoyment of their justifiable national rights.

ARTICLE (24): Iraqi nationality should be granted to all Kurds wishing to take such a step, and those Kurds who have resided in Iraq for a period not less than five years, like "Failies, Koyans, Omerians" and others.

* * * * *

The Kurdish People Demands the Recognition of Nawroz (Norroj) as an Official National Holiday. (Translated from Xebat (Khabat) No. 483, March, 1968.)

"The Government has in a definite way as well as in the revised interim constitution, recognized Kurdish nationalism and is ready to emphasize its meaning in the permanent constitution, where the recognition of Kurdish nationalism and Kurdish national rights within the Iraqi unity, which comprises of the two principal Arab and Kurdish nationalities, will be confirmed in such a manner that both Arabs and Kurds will enjoy equal rights and responsibilities." Article 1 of the June 29, 1966 Plan.

"The above article recognizes one of the important and just demands of the Kurdish people in Iraq. However, recognizing a right is one thing, and its implementation and transformation into tangible results is another. More than twenty months have passed since the June 29, 1966 plan was announced and even more time than that has elapsed since the interim constitution was amended to this effect, yet the Kurdish people have remained deprived of being able to enjoy their national rights. Our aim here is not to elaborate on such issues but rather to demand that Nawroz be included among the official holidays of the Iraqi Republic as a Kurdish national festival. We cannot conceive of anyone's provincialism and fanaticism reaching a degree where he will deny us such a demand on the pretext that it does not constitute a national right. It goes without saying that the right to celebrate national holidays, which are reminiscences of great events in the life of all nations, is not only a national right through which each nation manifests its desire to preserve its national heritage, but it is also a

humanitarian and democratic right of individuals and communities. A right such as this can be restricted only if it was practiced in a manner incompatible with the rules of conduct or the public order. Laws of all nations have recognized the right of communities, groups and even individuals to celebrate national and patriotic occasions."

"In spite of the clarity of these facts, and except for Qassim's government which in the beginning recognized March 21 as a spring festival and allowed the Kurds to celebrate it, no Iraqi government has recognized this right of the Kurdish people. Motives behind the denial of such a right have varied. First there are those who find in the recognition of Kurdish national rights an endorsement of secession and consider the implementation of the provisions of the June 29 plan something detrimental to Iraq's national unity ... All that we can say to such people is that their call for racism and their sense of superior and hostile nationalism are contrary to a true and humane Arab nationalism; to the spirit of this age; and to the essence and magnanimity of the Islamic religion..."

"There are also those who say that Nawroz is not a Kurdish national festival but it belongs to such peoples as the Magians, the Persians and others. One can excuse the advocates of this opinion on the basis of their ignorance of the deep-rooted traditions of the Kurdish people who for a long time have been accustomed to celebrating the Nawroz festival and whose old culture is full of stories, legends and songs commemorating Nawroz as a Kurdish national festival. In addition to the fact that Nawroz is the start of the Kurdish new year, the coming of spring and the renewal of life, Nawroz to the Kurds is also the occasion commemorating the triumph of a popular revolt led by Kawe, the Kurdish blacksmith, against the tyrant Zuhak... and as such Nawroz occupies the foremost place in the heart of every Kurd."

"Even during the old regime (the Monarchy) when the celebration of Nawroz used to meet with many difficulties, the Kurds could not be prevented from celebrating it in different places, among them Baghdad the capital..."

"In addition to all this we believe that only the Kurdish people have the right to decide what constitutes their national festivals, especially since such a matter bears deeply upon the sentiments of the Kurdish people towards which the desires and opinions of others can be only of secondary consideration. We cannot see how the realization of this demand will harm Arab nationalism or that it would be detrimental to Iraq... especially since the interim constitution has already admitted the existence of Kurdish nationalism and its rights and since successive Iraqi governments have committed themselves to the implementation of the June 29 plan, which stipulates that Arabs and Kurds are to enjoy equal rights and responsibilities. Of what equality can we speak if we cannot enjoy the right of openly and legally celebrating our national festival? ... Now that Nawroz time is approaching, we suggest that the government change the Tree Festival to March 21 for the Kurdish areas and recognize it as Nawroz day..."

* * * * *

Speech by the Commander of Battalion Eight, the Xebat Brigade of the Kurdistan Revolutionary Army (K.R.A.) on the Occasion of Nawroz.

(Translated from Kurdish from Rizgari, the news bulletin of Branch 4 (Sulaimani) of the Kurdistan Democratic Party.)

"... We the members of the Kurdistan Revolutionary Army like everyone else, have our own outlook on what might have a bearing on our people and our Revolution. To us the Peshmerge - those who have promised our people and country to give nothing short of our lives towards the achievement of our goals - Nawroz is the renewal of a vow and a time of rededication to continue our struggle until our nation reaches its aim."

"The snow on the defiant mountain peaks reminds us of the sincerity and devotion with which many of our brave sons gave their lives ... It is the spirit of those martyrs that today calls upon us saying 'I implore you! Do not heed the enemy's lies and empty promises.'

"The black patches where the snow has melted on the mountains remind us of the many black-attired mothers who tell us 'Our loved ones gave their lives for this land, hurry up and liberate it so we can tear off these black dresses and see our living sons busy building and serving this beloved Kurdistan of ours.'"

"The red flowers of spring remind us of the blood of our heroes which has mixed with the soil of Kurdistan to give it life and liberty. Their souls are crying out to us saying: Now that we have fulfilled our promise by giving our lives, we leave to you the living and to your sense of dedication to give full meaning to our sacrifice."

"The dew on the green grass reminds us of the many tears which wet the eyes of the bereaved parents, the orphaned children and the homeless widows' whimpers and moans give us renewed strength and resolution to right the wrong done to them and to realize the dream of their martyred ones."

"On this day we want you and our Party to witness our rededication and readiness to fight and spare nothing for the sake of liberating our land from the colonialists. Since the start of our Revolution and from the moment we joined its banner, we decided to live our lives and meet our death with dignity and honor. It is in that spirit that we raise our voice and sing:

Pe binete xakman dujmin y kafir,
Dar u berd u xoll y le ekeyn be agir,
Her be zuyi eybezenin,
Ta sinurman eyrretenin.

"May the Mighty God take by the hands of the devoted sons of this nation and help us reach our sacred goals and celebrate the liberation of the Kurds and Kurdistan."

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How They Teach the Citizens to Spy: Translated from the newspaper Xebat (Khabat)
No. 499, December 1967.

"This is not the first time that we dwell on the government's insincerity in the implementation of the June 29 plan - that is assuming that there ever will be an intention towards such an implementation. When circumstances and events compel the authorities to initiate positive steps towards the possible implementation of this plan, the government loses no time in trying to buy off some of the Kurds and forcing some others to spy on their fellow Kurds."

"It is no secret that more than 90% of the funds appropriated to aid the victims of the war which in turn is being drawn from funds which is fallaciously claimed to have been earmarked for the reconstruction of the north, is being spent on people who have in no way suffered the hardships of the war, but have rather always benefited from their spying and other ruinous services which they render to others."

"We have in our possession a more recent example of the authorities' efforts in this respect, and that is in the form of a Bail Contract (see text below) which the authorities have imposed upon the Kurds of the Kandinawa area in the Arbil province, who for four years had been forcibly driven away from their land and have only recently returned to their villages. In this action by the authorities, we can find nothing but the government's ill-intentions against and mistrust of the Kurdish citizens and we cannot help but wonder why such steps were not taken against Hawas Sadeed (chief of an Arab tribe brought into the Kurdish land by the government) and his group. We shall let the reader judge by himself the harshness of the Contract's terms on both the sponsor and the sponsored. The severity of these terms become even more evident when we realize that no matter how much restraint was practiced by these people, they will not be in a position to prevent certain incidents from happening and therefore they should not be held responsible for them. Added to this is the fact that it is the responsibility of the government and its machinery to maintain peace, security and the rule of law in the area and at all times. In presenting the following text to our readers, we cannot but pause and ask if it is through such a spirit that order is hoped to return to the "north"."

Bail Contract

"I ... whose signature is affixed below, declare myself to be liable for 5,000 I.D. (approx. \$14,000) bail, for the inhabitants of my village, whose names are kept at the headquarters of the Nahiya (District) of Kandinawa and with the Committee for Transfer and Settlement. In the event of any infringement by those sponsored upon any of the conditions specified below, I must pay the above amount to the Government treasury.

Conditions

1. The sponsored are guaranteed to maintain peace and order for as long as they remain in the area.
2. The sponsored are guaranteed to protect the oil installations, the pipelines, the oil wells and others and they are held responsible for anything that may happen to them.
3. The sponsored are to notify the government and military authorities about any Party organization or other activities which might be detrimental to the interest of the people and the country.

4. The sponsored must not allow outsiders to enter their villagers and must not try to protect and hide armed persons. In such instances the sponsored are to oppose and expel such outsiders, and if they are unable to do so, they must immediately notify the government and military authorities.
5. The sponsor (headman in the village) and the sponsored (the village inhabitants) pledge to cultivate the land in their village; to fully cooperate with the Land Reform Committees; and to refer to government authorities all matters concerning this.
6. There must be full and true cooperation with the government and the military authorities in the area."

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Conference of the Kajik Party Organization in Europe

Translated excerpts from Bang y Kajik No. 1, April 14, 1968, of some of the decisions of the conference the Kajik Party Organization in Europe held in April, 1968.

"The Party organization in Europe looks with pride upon the Party's accomplishments in both the political and social fields and salutes all those fellow-believers of Kurdistan who have with both arms and intellect carried into effect the Party's philosophy and have for the liberation of our land endeavored and given brave sacrifices."

"The Party Organization sends Kurdish greetings to the Peshmerge of Kurdistan and especially to our big and dear brother Barzani and reminds them that we must not let opportunities pass us by without taking advantage of them ... We urge Barzani to be more firm with the enemy in asserting our rights..."

"The Party Organization in Europe abhors and protests the actions of the Arab colonialists in Syrian Kurdistan, who are trying to forcibly remove the Kurds from their land. We ask our Kurdish brethren not to pay any more attention to or be deceived by the rusty old record of 'Kurdish-Arab Brotherhood' and to strive instead for the preservation of their national existence. We consider it the responsibility of every Kurd to defend those ill-fated (Syrian) Kurds."

"As long as two parts of Kurdistan remain subjected to a colonialist treatment by the Arabs, our Party Organization will continue its opposition to Arab unity regardless of who may lead such unity efforts."

"In spite of the injustices that are being committed against our nation by some Arab colonialists, the Party Organization in Europe maintains its complete impartiality regarding the Arab-Israeli dispute..."

"The Party Organization in Europe maintains its belief that the Kurdish question cannot be solved peacefully..."

"The newspaper Al-Takhi which is published in the name of the Kurdish Revolution, must carry out its nationalistic task in a more Kurdish manner..."

"The Party Organization in Europe requests from Barzani that in case the government did not fully grant the Kurdish rights, the Kurdish radio broadcasts should be resumed. If at this point politically oriented broadcasts are not desirable, social and cultural programs may be transmitted."

"The Party Organization, after having studied the Vietnam situation, has arrived at the conclusion that world opinion's preoccupation with this issue has obscured and thus adversely affected the Kurdish question in the international press. It is therefore, of great benefit to the Kurds that the Vietnam war be brought to an end..."

Conference of the Kajik Party Organization in Europe - April 1968.

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