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# The Republic of Kurdistan, 1946



**Hawar Khalil Taher Nerwi**

# **The Republic of Kurdistan, 1946**

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**door**

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geboren te Beruman (Iraakse Koerdistan)  
in 1970**

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## **Preface**

During my studies of the Middle East and then of international relations, my primary interest was the Middle East relations with Europe. But as my study of the Middle East continued, I quickly noticed that my interest was mainly in the broader study of international relations. So, after completing my Master's in Islam in the Modern World, I decided to do another Master's courses study focussing on international relations. It was an interesting and worthwhile choice for without following of the international relations Master courses, it would have been difficult to understand the plethora of complex issues pertaining to Iran in 1940s. The courses on international relations improved my knowledge about the international context and enabled me to make this context the basis of my analysis of into Kurdish issues with respect to international relations.

The rise and fall of the Republic of Kurdistan is the theme of this dissertation. To analyze the Republic of Kurdistan, four aspects regarding it must be considered within this dissertation, namely: 1- ethnicity. 2- autonomy. 3- the Iranian central government, the Autonomous Government of Azerbaijan and the role of neighbouring countries, Turkey and Iraq. 4- the Great Powers in Iran. This thesis has paid careful attention to these factors, with particular focus on the existence of the Great Powers in Iran, which is not only an important element in the rise and fall of the Republic of Kurdistan, but also insofar as it relates to the origins of the Cold War in the Middle East. As a part of the introduction (chapter I), various Kurdish elements were studied, and the internal factors of the Republic of Kurdistan were expanded upon in chapter IV. For the research of this significant topic within Kurdish history, I did everything in my power to be impartial. Indeed, I regard it to be essential to this research. Furthermore, the critical expressions within the dissertation should be seen in a positive light as constructive criticism for improving our knowledge on the question of Kurdish nationalism for generations to come.

The strength of this dissertation depends on its primary source materials, such as a: the Iranian archives, the parliament records during 1944-1946, and the National Archives of Great Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union archives. Kurdish materials, such as the newspaper *Kurdistan* in 1946, are another significant primary source behind this research, without which this study would have been incomplete. An analysis of the autonomous Kurdish government in Iraqi Kurdistan from 1991 onward also makes this study unique. During this period, a revival of Kurdish literature took place and many books and documents in different subject areas were published and disseminated.



In the period of the study of this dissertation, many scholars and friends provided support through various ways. I would like to thank everyone, especially my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Touraj Atabaki, for his encouragement, suggestions and critical arguments. And of course, I want to thank my co-promoter, Prof. Dr. Hamit Bozarlan. I am very grateful to Gerdun Brosk and Jan Reinhart for their willingness to edit my work. Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my wife, Janan, and our three children, Hoshwan, Hojin and Kiyaksar, for their patience and support.

Hawar Khalil Taher Nerwiy

January 2012

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## List of Abbreviations

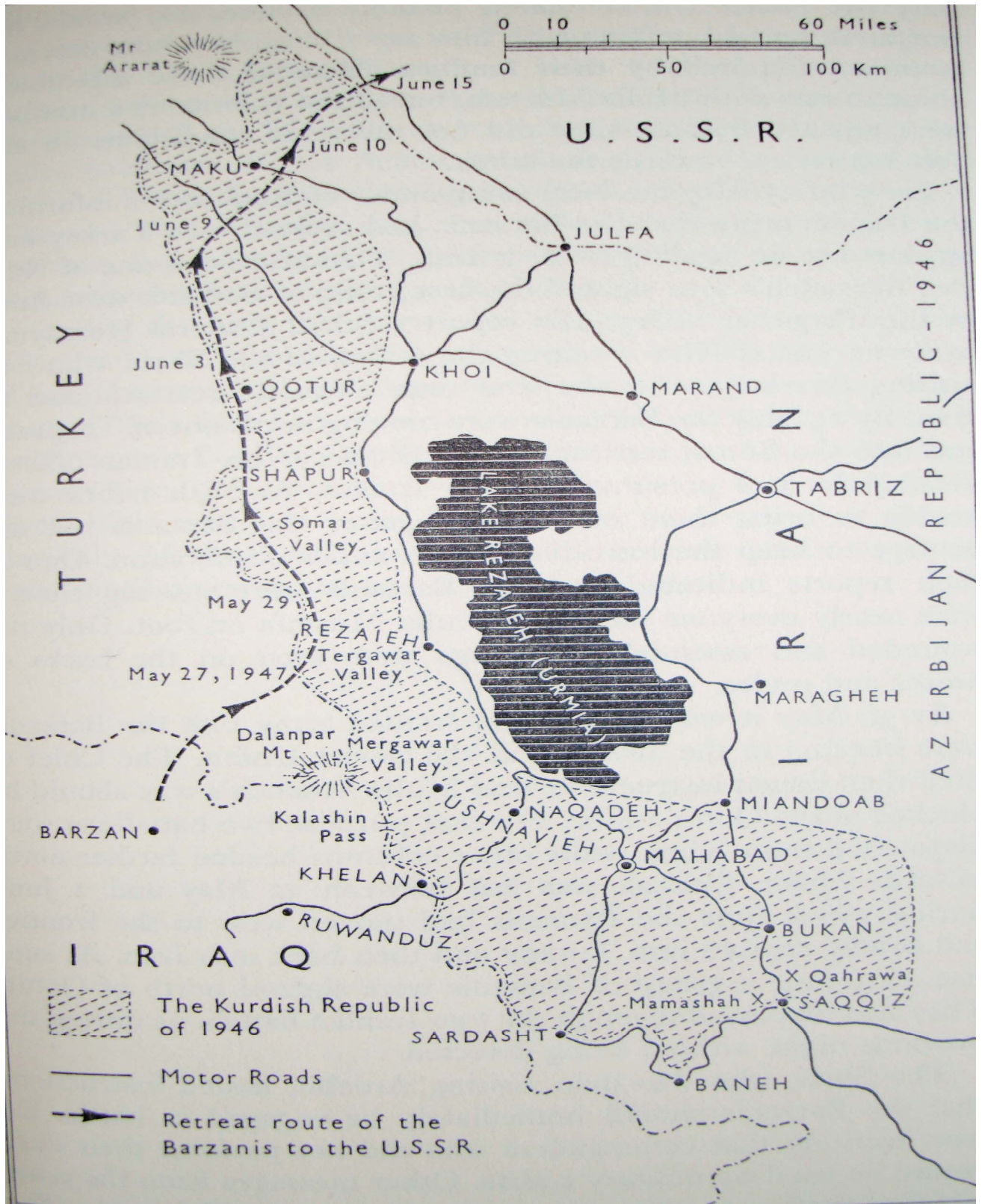
ADP	Azerbaijan Democratic Party
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
DP	Democrat Party
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council of the UN
IGO	International Governmental Organization
INGO	Inter-Non-Governmental Organization
IPC	Iraqi Petroleum Company
IR	International Relations
JK	Society of the Revival of Kurdistan
KDP	Kurdistan Democratic Party
KDPI	Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran
KGB	Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Bezopastnosti (Soviet security and intelligence service)
KTC	<i>Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti</i> (Society for the Advancement of Kurdistan)
KYO	Kurdish Youth Organization
NA	National Army
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PGC	Persian Gulf Command
PNAK	Presidential National Assembly of Kurdistan
PUK	Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America

## **Transliteration**

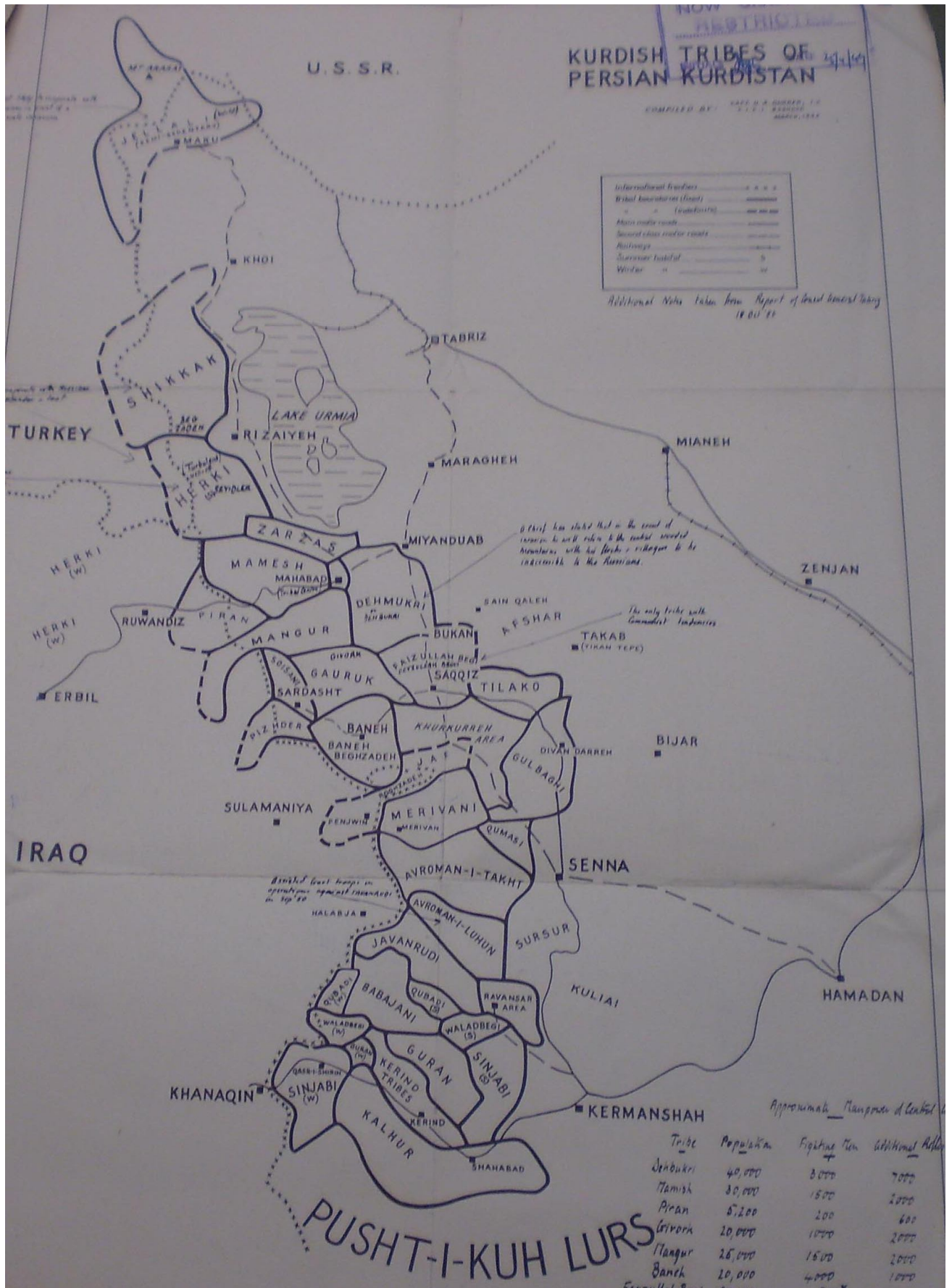
English translation of Persian and Kurdish texts is provided without transcription of the original text whenever possible. Anglicized names have not been transliterated. For example, the name of president of the Republic of Kurdistan has been written as Ghazi Mohammad instead of its Romanized Kurdish transliteration *Qazi Mohammed*. For transliterating of some Persian and Kurdish letters I have opted for a simplified transliteration based on the transliteration used at the Library of Congress, such as *ayn* and *alif* rendered as [‘] and [’]. For the names of well-known figures and locations common English spelling are used.



Map 1: The Great Kurdistan claimed by Kurdish nationalists. William Eagleton, *The Republic of Kurdistan of 1946* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963).



Map 2: The boundaries of the Republic of Kurdistan, Sites of Battles, and the route of the Barzanis retreating to the Soviet Union. Eagleton 1963.



Map 3: Kurdish Tribes of Persian Kurdistan, British War Office 2613/45, 26 March 1945.

## **Abstract**

The invasion of Iran by the Great powers (the Soviet Union and the Great Britain) in 1941 not only changed the political setting of the Iranian government but also led to the exile of Reza Shah, the leader of the Iranian autocratic regime. Although the presence of the Great Powers gave more power to the Iranian parliament -- mainly for political and economic benefit of the Powers -- it also split Iranian society into various adversarial factions, such as pro-Soviet, pro-British, and pro-American groups. Furthermore, during this period, the very idea of Iran's territorial unity was called into question. In the period from 1941 to 1946, some ethnic groups prepared to establish their own governments, which led to the break up of relationships between the Iranian central government and the representatives of ethnic groups in their respective provinces, including the region of the Kurds and Azeris.

In 1942, *Komalay Jiyanway Kurdistan* (The Society for the Revival of Kurdistan) or *Jiyani Kurdistan* (Kurdistan Life), commonly referred to as the JK Party, assumed the mantle of the nationalist Kurdish political party. By 1945 it evolved into the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP). The formation and subsequent activities of these two Kurdish political parties played a principal role in the establishment of a brief Kurdish polity in Iran.

The political struggle, especially between 1945 and 1946, that led to the establishment of a Kurdish government was made possible in part by one of the Great Powers then active in Iran. The Soviet Union, for political and economic purposes of its own, at varying capacities encouraged and supported the two breakaway provincial governments of the Kurds and Azeris. During the same period, Anglo-American policy favoured the Iranian central government. The conflicting interests and subsequently diverging policies of the Great Powers contributed significantly to what many authors refer to as the 'Iranian Crisis'. This crisis led to the breakdown of relations between the Iranian central government and its peripheral powers, Azerbaijan and Kurdistan.

Besides the presence and policies of Great Powers in Iran, the unfolding of the Iranian Crisis and the formation of two Kurdish political parties, there were a number of other factors that influenced the events leading to the establishment of the Kurdish government. Among these were the emergence of nation-states in the Middle East following the First World War, the after-effects of Reza Shah's autocratic regime, and the establishment of the Azeri autonomous government. This dissertation takes a close look at the developments leading to the formation and the overthrow of the Kurdish government of 1946, which at times called itself the Republic of Kurdistan.



# CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

## 1 Introduction

The twentieth century witnessed many Kurdish uprisings. Several of them succeeded in creating self-governing Kurdish areas for varying lengths of time. Three of these Kurdish governments took place in Iraqi Kurdistan: the Kurdish government, led by Sheikh Mahmud, in Suleymaniye in 1920s; the period of Kurdish autonomy from 1970 to 1975, led by Mulla Mustafa Barzani; and the period of autonomy that began in 1991 and continues now, which is led by the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iraq (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). The Kurdish movement that led to a Kurdish government was the Republic of Kurdistan of 1946, which took place in Iranian Kurdistan and constitutes the subject of this dissertation.

When the Allied Powers (Great Britain and the Soviet Union) entered Iran in August 1941, the relations between the central government and its peripheries broke down. At the centre, the shah was overthrown and the parliament became the most important governmental organization representing the Iranian people. In the peripheral province of Azerbaijan, Azeri politicians and intellectuals were gradually heading for the formation of an autonomous government, which became a reality in 1945. Kurdish inhabitants in West Azerbaijan also followed the example of their neighbouring ethnic group to build their own autonomous region. The distinct political movements of these two different ethnic groups not only challenged the centre to make serious attempts to ensure territorial integrity and sovereignty of Iran, but also exacerbated the tensions existing between the peripheral movements. An analysis of the tense relationships between the centre and both peripheries as well as the relations between these peripheries, that is between Azerbaijan and the Mahabad centred Republic of Kurdistan, is an important part of this study. The main goal of this dissertation is the description of the northern Iranian Kurdish political movements, which very shortly after the Second World War, between 1945 and 1946, established two political institutions, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP)<sup>1</sup> and consequently ‘the Republic of Kurdistan’.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In 1973, the word ‘Iran’ was added to the name, transforming it to the KDPI.

<sup>2</sup> Although the use of the term ‘Republic’ by the Kurdish leaders to define their government raises questions as to the aptness of the term as well as their understanding of it, the commonly accepted name of the political entity

The Iranian Pahlavi dynasty was established by Reza Shah in 1925 and lasted until 1979. In 1941, he left his kingdom to his son, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi. During his reign until his forced abdication in 1941, he established a central government and brought all provinces under a more strict central control. Reza Shah's dream was to build a modern nation-state that, according to him, would be possible via modernization. One of his main policy goals was the transformation of the traditional Iranian society into a modern society. His policies included: modernizing the education system, establishing the University of Tehran, sending Iranian students to Europe, initiating a process of industrialization, and implementing a policy of forced migration and sedentarization of the nomads and tribes. Between the two world wars, the autocratic regime of Reza Shah pursued a hard-line assimilation policy towards non-Persian ethnicities including Kurds. Publishing and teaching in the Kurdish language were strictly forbidden. These modernization policies were not based on democratic principles. On the contrary, they were accomplished by suppressing the majority of the Iranian populace.

From 1941 to 1946, although there was an Iranian central government in place, the Allies were the de-facto rulers. This period was marked by a multi-party system, return of some elites and tribal leaders from exile and parliamentary elections. It was also a period, particularly during 1945 and 1946, of crisis (referred to by many authors as the 'Iranian Crisis'). A multitude of political problems contributed to the Iranian crisis between 1945 and 1946. Of these, the nation's sovereignty, geographical integrity, the Cold War, and the occupation of the country in 1941 by the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom were the most important. The Iranian government was deeply dependent on the Allied Powers, so far as its political, economic, and military wellbeing was concerned. Many tribes, particularly in the north and northwest of the country, independently managed affairs in their territories – in fact many of the significant leaders of the Republic of Kurdistan were also the leaders of such tribes. After 1941, the desire of some ethnic groups (Azeris and Kurds) to retain control of their territories was bolstered.

Between 1942 and 1945 Iranian Kurds formed two political parties, a development which has been cited as the beginning of a new era of political history in Iranian Kurdistan. *Komalay Jiyanyway Kurdistan* (The Society for the Revival of Kurdistan) or *Jiyani Kurdistan* (Kurdistan Life), commonly referred to as the JK Party, was proclaimed in 1942 as a

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that was established in Iranian Kurdistan between January-December 1946 is in fact the Republic of Kurdistan. Thus shall it be used in this thesis, as it is in the official documents of the concerned political entity itself.

nationalist Kurdish political party. The urban Middle Class played a considerable role in the JK party and its political activities continued until 1945 when the majority of the JK politburo accepted the KDP as its new political party. The formation of the KDP in the second half of 1945 was nearly synchronous with one of the key events in the modern history of Iran, namely those centering on events in Azerbaijan. The Azerbaijan Democratic Party (ADP), which was founded in September 1945, was proclaimed the Autonomous Government of Azerbaijan in December 1945. The central government of Iran saw this event in the periphery as a great threat to national sovereignty. This was also a significant event for the Great Powers in their ongoing competition for political and economic advantage. It could also be argued that the establishment of the Autonomous Government of Azerbaijan was one of the central causes of the proclamation of the Republic of Kurdistan. Throughout this thesis, this argument will be explored in greater detail.

The establishment of the Republic of Kurdistan was an essential inspiration of the nationalist Kurds in Iran who had, for the first time, the support of a superpower, the Soviet Union. However that support that was patchy and unreliable, as shall be more clearly explained in the later parts of this thesis. Despite the brevity of the Republic, it enabled a remarkable outpouring in Kurdish Letters. Indeed, this was the golden age of the revival of the Kurdish language and its literature.<sup>3</sup> Several Kurdish journals and newspapers were published and Kurdish became the language of education. Although the Republic tried to build formal governmental institutions to legitimize its status as a nation state, it retained in the end a more tribal character. Religious figures, landlords and particularly chieftains were the significant components of policy-making in the Republic of Kurdistan. It was a society that still respected the tribal affiliations, kinships, family ties and religious brotherhoods.

Events in the northern peripheries were largely propelled by the Great Powers' policies in Iran, especially those of the Soviet Union. The presence of the Great Powers in Iran changed the political atmosphere in the country. In August 1941, Reza Shah was deposed by the Great Powers and Iran was divided into three zones: Soviet troops were in the north, British in the south and Tehran and some adjacent central regions remained unoccupied. The Allied Forces had created a buffer-zone in Iranian Kurdistan, which was accordingly divided into three zones. 1- Northern Kurdistan to Ushnawiyeh and Miyanduab was under the sphere of Soviet troops, 2- Southern Kurdistan up to Sanandaj went under the control of the Britain,

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<sup>3</sup> Joyce Blau, 'The Kurdish Language and Literature' (February 2010):

<http://www.institutkurde.org/en/language/>

and 3- a Kurdish-held territory from Mahabad to Saqqiz was a buffer-zone located between the two super powers. The presence of a small Iranian army force during the Second World War ended when these Iranian military units were removed by the Kurds. This region became the centre of Kurdish political activity, which gave way to the establishment of the Republic of Kurdistan in 1946.

The Allied Forces had promised not to intervene in Iranian internal affairs and to withdrawl their troops at the end of the war. Non-intervention was, however, according to Homa Katouzian, a myth due to the indirect and questionable intereference that took place in practice.<sup>4</sup> First, there was the extensive use of Iranian resources, ranging from foodstuff and raw materials to roads, railways and telecommunications networks, especially during the Battle of Stalingrad, which lasted from August 1942 until February 1943. Secondly, there were the practices based on the ‘conflict of interests’ of the Great Powers, which intensified further when the United States (US) became the third power in Iran after 1945. The presence of Allies in Iran not only thrust Iran onto the international stage and caused a major transformation in the country’s external relations, but also opened the way for profound internal changes. The British policy was not linked to any Iranian political parties or movements but it was oriented towards supporting certain individuals and the central government. The Anglo-American policy was simply supporting the Iranian central government. Soviet policy, on the other hand, was different. The Soviets aimed to achieve their political and economic goals by helping ethnic groups fight the central government. The concept of the ‘right of nations to self-determination’ came to guide the Soviet foreign policy and led to the apparent ethnic groups rallying around the slogan ‘liberty for the Kurds and the Azeris from the oppression of the Persians’.

These two different approaches caused a diplomatic crisis between the Soviets and the British, which only worsened when the US began to exert its influence on the Middle East in general and on Iran in particular. In fact, the confrontation between the US and the Soviets during the Iranian crisis of 1945-1946 played an important part in the origins of the Cold War in the Middle East. All of the Western occupiers were preoccupied with their own interests in the region and sought to influence particular ethnic groups, parties and individuals. This resulted in exacerbating the problems in Iranian politics, with the Iranian people being split among pro-British, pro-American, and pro-Soviet factions. This political polarization not only

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<sup>4</sup> Homa Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran: Despotism and Pseudo-Modernism, 1926-1979* (London: Macmillan Press, 1981), 141-2.

plunged Iran into a crisis, but, as stated above, was also an important factor in the origins of the Cold War. The Cold War was a protracted global political, economic, and ideological confrontation between the US and its allies vis-à-vis the Soviet Union and its allies. An important part of this dissertation is the analysis of events surrounding the Iranian crisis of 1946 within the international relations framework that clarifies the influence of external factors on the nascent Republic of Kurdistan.

## 2 Kurds: An overview

This section introduces the Kurds, the target group of this thesis, on the basis of geographic, population, linguistic and religious characteristics.

### 2.1. Geography

The Kurds are one of oldest communities to have continuously inhabited Mesopotamia and the largely mountainous region of the Near East and the northern boundaries of the Middle East.<sup>5</sup> According to Elphinston the word Kurd in modern form appears in Arabic sources in the ninth century, in the plural form *Akrad*.<sup>6</sup> The term ‘Kurdistan’, as a geographical term, was for the first time introduced in the fourteenth century by the Saljuqs Empire.<sup>7</sup> McDowall, however, claims that the word Kurdistan was introduced in the twelfth century by the Saljuqs.<sup>8</sup> Given the fact that the Saljuqs reigned between 1037-1157, the twelfth century seems to be the period when that imperial people would have introduced the term Kurdistan.

The central part of the Kurdish territory is situated among three mountain systems: the Armenian extension of Taurus on the north, Inner Taurus and Zagros. Zagros stretches from Ararat to the southern point of Khanagin on a northwest – southeast axis.<sup>9</sup> Before 1937, Iran was traditionally divided into four large *ayalat* (provinces) and *velayat* (districts).<sup>10</sup> Today Iran has twenty-four *ostan* (provinces). One of these provinces is Kordestan, with Sanandaj as its capital. A substantial portion of the waters in the Middle East have their origins in Kurdistan. Headwaters of Euphrates, Tigris, Khabur, Great and Small Zab, Diyala, Alwand, Aras, Safid-Rud, Kerkhan and Dizful, among others, are all located in the mountains of Kurdistan and they flow through Kurdish lands extensively before heading towards neighbouring territories.

Kurds are the biggest ethnic group in the Middle East without a sovereign state of their own. Because the borders of Kurdistan are not officially recognized by either the countries in which parts of Kurdistan are situated or by other relevant international bodies, it is difficult to

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<sup>5</sup> The Encyclopaedia of Kurdistan. [www.kurdistanica.com](http://www.kurdistanica.com)

<sup>6</sup> W.G. Elphinston, ‘The Kurdish Question’, *International Affairs* (Vol. 22, No. 1, Jan. 1946), 92.

<sup>7</sup> Abdulrahman Ghassemloo, *Kurdistan and the Kurds* (London: Publishing House, 1965), 13.

<sup>8</sup> David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds* (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 1996), 6.

<sup>9</sup> For more information about the geography of Kurdistan, see Abdullah Ghafor, *Coghrafie Kurdistan* [The Geography of Kurdistan], (5<sup>th</sup> ed., Hewler Publisher, 2008).

<sup>10</sup> Touraj Atabaki, *Ethnicity and Autonomy in Iranian Azerbaijan: The Autonomous Government of Azerbaijan 1946* (Ph.D. thesis, Utrecht University, 1991), 88.

ascertain the exact borders of Kurdish lands. Without internationally recognized borders, it is also difficult to arrive at an accurate estimate of the Kurdish population. Below, is an attempt to draw an estimate of the Kurdish population through the evaluation of various sources.

## 2.2. Population

The extent of the Kurdish population is a subject of much discussion. Here three sources will be compared for the estimation of the Kurdish population. The first source is from western scholars, Cecil J. Edmonds, Martin van Bruinessen and David McDowall. The period of Edmonds' research was in the middle of the first half of the twentieth century, van Bruinessen's was in the middle of the second half of the twentieth century and McDowall's in the late twentieth century. The second source is from the countries in which Kurdistan has been located (Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria and Soviet Union) and the third source comes from the Kurds themselves.

According to Edmonds,<sup>11</sup> when the League of Nations Commission came in 1925 to inquire about the dispute between Great Britain and Turkey regarding the Mosul *wilayat* (province), they estimated the Kurdish population at:

Turkey 1,500,000; Persia 700,000; Iraq 500,000; Syria and elsewhere 300,000; making a total of 3 million.<sup>12</sup>

Edmonds did not agree with these numbers, however. He believed that the total Kurdish population was more than three million and suggested 'a grand total of between 4 and 4½ million.'<sup>13</sup>

Fifty years after Edmonds, in 1975, van Bruinessen made the following estimation of the Kurdish population, see table 1.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Edmonds was a British political officer who particularly focused on Iraqi Kurdish issues between 1920-25. He served with the British Expeditionary Forces in Mesopotamia. From 1935 to 1945, he was adviser to the Ministry of Interior in Iraq. He published a famous book titled: *Kurds, Turks, and Arabs: Politics, Travel and Research in North-Eastern Iraq, 1919-1925*, (1957), which provides detailed notes on social and political conditions, personalities and local practices in the districts where he served.

<sup>12</sup> Edmonds 1957, 3.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>14</sup> Van Bruinessen 1978, 22.

Countries	Grand Population	Kurdish Population	Percentage
Turkey	40/2	7/5	19
Iraq	10/5	2-2/5	23
Iran	34	3/5	10
Syria	7/3	0/5	8/5
Soviet Union	--	0/1	--
Total		13/5 to 14	

Table 1: Population estimates for 1975, see Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: On the Social and Political Organization of Kurdistan* (Ph.D. thesis, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Rijswijk, 1978), 22.

About twenty years after van Bruinessen, McDowall estimated the total Kurdish population between 24-27 million.<sup>15</sup>

The second source comes from the countries within which Kurdistan is located, where it should be noted that there have never been official statistics documenting minority populations such as Kurds. These governments then have a tendency to underestimate the size of the Kurdish population. Religious statistics of Iran show that about 90% of the populations are Shi'ites and approximately 10% are Sunnis. The majority of the Kurds in Iran are Sunnis. However, Shi'ite Kurds are also the majority of the inhabitants of the Kermanshah province and a certain portion of the population of Ilam. The Great Soviet Encyclopaedia of 1952 presents that Kurds are 7 million.<sup>16</sup> The third source is from the Kurds themselves. Most Kurdish scholars claim that the Kurdish population consists of approximately 30 million or more. For example, Kendal Nezan claims that the total number of the Kurdish population, including the diaspora, to be around just over 30 million.<sup>17</sup>

### 2.3. Language

Kurdish is an Indo-European language and belongs to the family of Iranian languages. It is a distinct language, in that it has its own historical development, continuity and grammatical system. Simply classified, Kurdish can be sub-divided into the following dialects: 1.

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<sup>15</sup> McDowall 1996, 3.

<sup>16</sup> Ghassemloo 1965, 21.

<sup>17</sup> Kendal Nezan, 'The Kurds: Current Position and Historical Background', in Philip Kreyenbroek and Christine Allison (eds.), *Kurdish Culture and Identity* (London: University of London, 1996), 7-9.



Kurmanji: Also categorized as Northern Kurmanji. It is the dialect spoken by most Kurds in Turkey, in northern Iranian-Iraqi Kurdistan, in the Kurdish inhabited north-eastern region of Syria, and in the former Soviet Union, especially throughout the Caucasian republics of Georgia and Armenia. 2. Sorani: Also categorized as Central Kurdish dialects group. It is spoken by most Kurds in and around Arbil, Suleymaniye, and Kirkuk in Iraq as well as in the region of Mukriyan and Ardalan in Iranian Kurdistan. 3. Pehlewani: It is also categorized as Southern Kurdish. It is mostly spoken in Khanaqin and Mandalin districts of Iraqi Kurdistan and in the Kermanshah region in Iran. 4. Dimili: Also known as Zazaki or Kirmancki. It is spoken by widely-scattered small pockets of communities in Kurdistan in Turkey throughout Dersim, Erzincan, Elazig, Diyarbakir, Bingol, Mush, and Urfa. 5. Hewrami: It is mostly spoken in the far corners of Southern Kurdistan.<sup>18</sup> For writing in Kurdish a modified version of Persian-Arabic alphabet is used in Iran, Iraq and Syria. The literate Kurdish population in Turkey uses the Latin alphabet. Although Kurds in the former Soviet Union adopted the Cyrillic alphabet for the most part of their modern history, there were periods during which certain circles used the Latin alphabet.

The territorial boundaries between the Ottoman and Persian<sup>19</sup> empires from the sixteenth century to the end of the First World War show similar characteristics as those of the Byzantine and Islamic empires. During the Byzantine and Islamic empires, Kurdistan was divided between north and south and in the period of the Ottoman-Persian empires Kurdistan was divided between north-west and east. The historical division of Kurdistan is one of the main reasons for the development of dialectal differences within the Kurdish language, and is also a fundamental obstacle to the formation of unified Kurdish nationalism.

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<sup>18</sup> Some sources about the Kurdish language: 'Kurdish Academy of Language' at <http://www.kurdishacademy.org/?q=node/41>; see also languages of the World at [www.ethnologue.com](http://www.ethnologue.com). For several scholarly studies about the Kurdish language, see van Bruinessen, 'het Koerdisch, een problematische taal [Kurdish, a problematic language]', in Mahabad B. Qilorî, Nêçîrvan Qilorî (eds.), *Woordenboek Koerdisch-Nederlands* (Amsterdam, 2002); Baran Rizgar, *Learn Kurdish: A Multi-level Course in Kurmanji* (London, 1996); Hassan Ghazi and Hewa Cardoi, *Svensk-sydkurdiskt lexikon* (Sweden, 1992); Feryad Fazil Omer, *Kurdisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch*, dem institut für Iranistik der frein universität Berlin und medico international, (Berlin, 1992).

<sup>19</sup> Up to 1935 Iran was called Persia by westerners after the manner of the Greeks, who identified all of Iran with the name of one of its provinces: Fars, or Persia. In 1935 Reza Shah changed the official name of country to 'Iran' and requested that all countries follow his usage.

From the beginning of the Turkish Republic in 1923, the Kurds were oppressed and could not speak their own language in governmental institutions. The Turkish government does not recognize the status of the Kurds as either as a distinct nation or as an ethnic minority group. The institutions of the Turkish government have played prominent roles in the design and content of curricula for all Turkish educational institutions from primary schools to universities. The speakers of Kurdish are not recognized as a legitimate cultural minority and education in Kurdish is considered a manifestation of terrorism as persecuted as such. The unresolved Kurdish issue remains one of the main obstacles to the Turkish government's ambition to join the European Union. Since 2002, Turkey has shown a certain willingness toward recognizing a number of Kurdish cultural rights. Questions remain, however, about the extent of these rights and whether they will actually be upheld or merely recognized on paper as a sop to political and diplomatic pressure.

In Syria, until the end of the French mandate, at the end of the Second World War, control over the Kurdish minority was relatively loose. During this period, a number of Kurdish intellectuals were able to work on standardizing the Kurmanji dialect and produce various Kurdish publications. It was in this period that for the first time Jeladet Ali Badir Khan<sup>20</sup> adopted the Latin alphabet for Kurdish. Although this was a too short-lived positive period for the Kurdish language, works of this era have had significant influence on succeeding generations of Kurmanji speakers.<sup>21</sup> After the French mandate released the entire governmental control to the Arab administration, however, the Syrian Kurds were deprived of even the few concessions that they had secured under French mandate. Since then, any attempt by the Kurdish population in Syria to assert their cultural or political rights has been met with brutal suppression.

In Iraq, the government that was constituted under the British mandate recognized the basic cultural rights of its Kurdish minority, such as the right to don traditional garb, the use, teaching of and publication in Kurdish. Partly due to the fact that the Iraqi government

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<sup>20</sup> Jeladet Ali Badir Khan (1893-1951) was the son of Emín Ali Badir Khan and the grandson of the Emir of Badir Khan (Botan emirate). He was a famous politician at the time of the Ottoman Empire. For most of his life, Jeladet divided his time between France, Germany, and Syria. He held a master's degree in law from Istanbul University and completed his studies in Munich.

<sup>21</sup> Jeladet printed and published a Kurdish journal, *Hawar*, in Damascus, based on Latin scripting system which is currently used as the standard northern Kurdish alphabet. He published the Kurdish grammar lesson '*Bingahîna rézimana Kurdi*' through the paper. *Hawar* was published from 1932 to 1935 and from 1941 to 1943. For more short information about Jeladet's activity, see: <http://www.kurdishacademy.org/node/91>

accepted Sorani as the educational language of the Kurdish minority, from the second half of the 1920's on, Kurdish literature in this part of Kurdistan enjoyed the opportunity to develop. This situation continued until 1991 with periods of improvements and decline depending on which administration led the Iraqi government.

Kurds in diaspora, especially those in Europe, through tremendously popular Kurdish cultural activities, played significant roles in the revival of the Kurdish language and literature. Within the last two decades, Kurdish radio and television outlets in Europe have played a considerable role in the social mobilization of the Kurdish community. Another important element for the revival of the Kurdish language, history and culture since 1991 has been the autonomous region of Iraqi Kurdistan. This area may yet continue to play an important role for all Kurds in their efforts to preserve their language, culture and politics.

#### **2.4. Religion**

The majority of the Kurds are Muslims, but there are also a number of religious variations, such as Yezidis. It should be noted that some European scholars (e.g. Jacques Waardenburg), as well as a number of Arabic and Persian scholars, are under the impression that there is a connection between Yezidis and Yezid Ibn Mo'awiye (Umayyad Caliph, 680-83).<sup>22</sup> However, historical evidence suggests that this is an entirely erroneous conception of Yezidis. Yezidis have a distinct religion of their own, predating even the birth of Islam.<sup>23</sup>

Alevism is another notable religious variation among Kurds. There is an ongoing discussion among Alevis as to whether they should count themselves as Muslims or not.<sup>24</sup> Over the past ten years, a small segment of Alevis began manifesting themselves as a separate

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<sup>22</sup> Jacques Waardenburg (ed.), *Islam: Norm, Ideaal en Werkelijkheid* (5<sup>th</sup> ed., Houten: Fibula, 2000), 410; for Iranian author, see Safizada Burakayi Şadiq, *Tarikhi Kurd va Kurdistan* [History of Kurds and Kurdistan], (Tehran: Nasri Atiya, 1999), 46.

<sup>23</sup> More about Yezidis, see Kreyenbroek 1996, 96-104; John S. Guest, *Survival among the Kurds: A History of the Yezidis* (London: Kegan Paul, 1993).

<sup>24</sup> It is difficult to define what Alevism exactly is. This is because Alevism, unlike other religions as Judaism, Christianity and Islam, has no specific source, but over the centuries through various adaptations from other religions, cultures and lifestyles it has become what we today observe as 'Alevism.' Although Alevism in many respects seems to be a different religion, most Alevis for defensive reasons usually call themselves Muslim. Throughout the centuries many Islamic principles crept inside Alevism as well. Because of political motives related to assimilation purposes, Alevism in Turkey is considered as an Islamic movement. More about the Alevis community, see David Shankland, *The Alevis in Turkey: The Emergence of a Secular Islamic Tradition* (London, 2003).

ethnic group.<sup>25</sup> The majority of the Kurdish population in Kermanshah and Khanaqin are Shi'ites. Most of the Kurdish population in and surrounding areas of Dersim (Turkey) are Alevi. A number of Sufi orders are also active in all parts of Kurdistan. Naqshbendi and Ghadri are the two of the major Sufi-orders.

### **3 A descriptive framework**

The establishment of the Republic of Kurdistan is the primary field of investigation for this study. Accordingly, the problem of this study can be formulated as such: 'Was the establishment of the Republic of Kurdistan based on the principles of modernity and the maturation of Kurdish nationalism's internal dynamics or was it a product of hasty reactions to the larger events surrounding it, such as the presence of the Great Powers in the region during and after the Second World War, the formation of the Autonomous Government of Azerbaijan?'

A thorough exploration of this problem requires an investigation of several contextual frameworks, as they will enable the reader to better understand the thesis' question and the answer(s) offered throughout this dissertation.

Any definition of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which is an interdisciplinary approach in the sense that it blends social theories with that of language and discourse, will be challenged by most scholars. CDA is an instrument that opens a dialogue between various social and linguistic theories. It is, according to Lilie Chouliaraki and Norman Fairclough, a method for analysing social practices and focuses more on their discourse moments within the linking of the theoretical and practical concerns.<sup>26</sup> The CDA framework chosen for this research touches upon a number of interrelated social and international relations theories within distinct academic fields and methods. The theoretical framework consists of the following four components:

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<sup>25</sup> More debate about the Alevi identity, see van Bruinessen, 'The debate on the ethnic identity of the Kurdish Alevi', unpublished paper, *Centre for the Study of Asia & the Middle East* (Malvern, Victoria (Australia): Deakin University, 1997).

<sup>26</sup> Lilie Chouliaraki and Norman Fairclough, *Discourse in late Modernity: Rethinking Critical Discourse Analysis* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 16.

### 3.1. Ethnic group

Before Fredrik Barth's work in 1969, in general, ethnic groups were seen as a cultural characteristic that distinguished from other ethnic groups. Barth has made other common perspective, he emphasized the social organization of differences and similarities.<sup>27</sup> Following Barth's lead, other scholars, such as Thomas Hylland Eriksen, saw ethnic groups as a social differentiation within a population or by an expansion of system boundaries bringing hitherto discrete groups into contact with each other.<sup>28</sup> The diversity of ethnic groups inside a society often becomes a loaded source of dispute that sometimes leads to open conflicts. Asia has have encountered many of these conflicts, particularly in the Middle East. The mosaic of ethnic groups within Iran has not only led to reflection but also to a problem in the country's sense of national identity, which was at its worst when the country was invaded in 1941. Considering Kurds as a nation or as an ethnic group depends more on the definition of both of these socio-political terms. It should be noted that, there is no agreement among scholars as to the definition of either of the abovementioned terms. Can any group of people call themselves a nation without its own independent state? If so, then what are the requirements of being recognized as a nation? In chapter II, theoretical debate of this framework and related terms are described more in detail.

### 3.2. Autonomous minority

John Ogbu classifies minority groups into *voluntary (immigrant)*, *involuntary (non-immigrant)* and *autonomous* minorities. This classification calls attention to an important difference in the histories of the peoples who is referred to as minorities. Voluntary minorities are those who have more or less willingly moved to another state because they expect better opportunities such as better jobs, more political or religious freedom. Involuntary minorities are people who have been conquered, colonized, or enslaved.<sup>29</sup> In contrast, autonomous minorities according to Ogbu, 'may have a distinctive racial, ethnic, religious, linguistic or

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<sup>27</sup> Fredrik Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Long Grove/Illinois: Waveland Press, 1969, reissued in 1998), 6.

<sup>28</sup> Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives* (London/Colorado: Pluto Press, 1993).

<sup>29</sup> John Ogbu, *Minority Education and Caste: The American System in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (New York: Academic Press, 1978).

cultural identity that that is guaranteed by a national constitution or by tradition.’<sup>30</sup> Voluntary and involuntary minority groups are the main topics of Ogbu’s investigation. Autonomous minority received little attention in Ogbu’s typology beyond persistent mention. Kurds, as a minority, who are ruled by dominant groups of Persian-, Turkish- and Arabic-speakers have a similarly distinctive cultural identity and demand, autonomy, its recognition by national constitutions.

This demand for autonomy by various Kurdish movements, which was a hot topic in the past century, was a collective response to rapid social transformation. In order to explain the concept of political autonomy, Ruth Lapidoth categorized it into five main types: federal system, decentralization, self-government, associate statehood and self-administration.<sup>31</sup> Out of all of these varieties of autonomy, self-government autonomy is the term that most applies or could be adapted to the demands of the Kurdish movements. In this study, self-government autonomy is defined as a territorial community that manages its own internal affairs, without external intervention.<sup>32</sup> It does not have a much broader meaning than self-determination because self-determination also has both external and internal aspects. The external aspect is the international status of the rights of a people, while the internal aspect is the right of a people to choose its own system of government and to participate in the political process that governs it.<sup>33</sup> This internal aspect of self-determination can also be found in the self-government category of autonomy as described by Lapidoth. This kind of autonomy draws attention to the cultural and political rights of the autonomous minority. For the Kurds, cultural rights would refer to their ability to determine their education based on indigenous language, wear their traditional clothes, and practice their religions freely. Important Kurdish political rights would include self-rule free from external control or interference. Autonomous self-government was the fundamental aim of the Kurdish movements in the twentieth century. Several Kurdish movements and the KDP and their government, the Republic in 1946, are

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<sup>30</sup> John Ogbu, ‘Minority status and schooling in plural societies’, *Comparative Education Review* (No. 27 (2), 1983a), 169.

<sup>31</sup> Ruth Lapidoth, *Autonomy: Flexible Solutions to Ethnic Conflicts* (Washington D.C.: United State Institute of Peace Press, 1996), 49. For the definition of the various autonomies, see *ibid.*, 50-7.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 52. For details on relations between internal and external aspects, see Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 35-48.

<sup>33</sup> For more on self-determination among several minority groups, see Hurst Hannum, *Autonomy, Sovereignty, and self-determination: The Accommodation of Conflicting Rights* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 27-49.

examples of autonomous minority struggling for self-government, which will be analyzed in this dissertation.

### **3.3. Iranian central government, Autonomous Government of Azerbaijan and the role of neighbouring countries, Turkey and Iraq.**

Inter-state relations among Iran, Iraq and Turkey relating to the Kurds are described in this framework.

The theory that is most applicable to the inter-state relationships in the Middle East is the ‘omni-balancing’ theory.<sup>34</sup> It concentrates on third world countries and highlights inter-state relations with references to internal conflicts and the influence of greater political powers in the background. Omni-balancing is the model, according to Robert Olson, that best characterizes the Turkish and Iranian foreign and domestic politics, in which the Kurdish question plays a dominant role.<sup>35</sup> This is one of the significant theoretical approaches related to the balance of power theories within the realist and neorealist schools. It has different emphasis in the Third World states and particularly on leaders of such states. The essential aspect of the omni-balancing theory is that the ties between Middle Eastern states were based more on internal threats, which not only caused obstacles for the cooperative relations between these states, but also brought into question the continuity and practical application of the treaties signed among these states. For example, although the Sa’dabad Treaty, signed in 1937, between four Muslims countries (Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Turkey) was about inter-state relations, the fundamental aspects of this agreement were scarcely adopted due to internal threats from the leadership of the various intra-state political actors. The role of these internal threats is an essential element of omni-balancing theory, which suggested that the leaders in the Middle Eastern states competed against each other for internal policy-making capabilities. This kind of political theory is different from that of the realist school, which concerned itself with the competition for external or inter-state policy-making capability.<sup>36</sup>

Internal threats had been increasing in the Middle East, especially with the formation of new states after the First World War. According to Fred Halliday, to protect their

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<sup>34</sup> The omni-balancing theory is the most revered when it comes to explaining Third World issues. For more on this, see Steven R. David, ‘Explaining Third World Alignment’, *World Politics* (Vol. 43, No. 2, 1991), 233-56.

<sup>35</sup> Robert Olson, *The Kurdish Question and Turkish-Iranian Relation from World War I to 1998* (Costa Mesa/California: Mazda Publishing, 1998), 14.

<sup>36</sup> David, ‘Explaining Third World Alignment’, 1.

legitimacy, the leaders from the majority of the Middle Eastern states aligned themselves with one of the Great Powers, which led to the latter becoming players in regional politics.<sup>37</sup> An important example of balance of power theory is the creation of the new Iraqi government by Great Britain. Although Great Britain decided not to create a Kurdish state in their mandate territory in Iraq, it sometimes supported and encouraged Kurdish nationalism to establish a balance of power between ethnic Kurds and the Arabs and between both the religious Sunni and Shi'ite communities. This realist theory of balance of power was an instrument for the British policy to easily control the territories under their sphere of influence.

Another aspect of omni-balancing theory holds that states that are driven by internal threats are, according to Steven David, 'likely to be weak, in which case they will not affect the global balance of power anyway.'<sup>38</sup> With regard to the Kurdish question in the Middle East, this argument is controversial for many Middle Eastern experts. For example, due to strategic or internal elements, both Turkey and Iran have sufficient power to influence the balance of power in the region. According to Olson, Iran and Turkey are not weak states and their inability to deter the Kurdish nationalist movements, particularly the formation of an independent Kurdish state, would affect the global balance of power.<sup>39</sup>

### **3.4. Presence of Great Powers in Iran**

In order to arrive at a sound comprehension of the political agendas followed by the Great Powers during and after the Second World War in Iran, as well as in other parts of the world, it is important to evaluate some of the major international relations theories. As necessary tools to arrange, analyze and structure reality, theories are, according to Kenneth N. Waltz, one of the leading realist scholars, assessed in terms of what they attempt to explain or predict.<sup>40</sup> In this dissertation, three international relations theories are evaluated: 1- (Neo-)realism. 2- (Neo-)idealism/liberalism, and 3- Structuralism. Below, these three theories are described briefly. In chapter V, they are examined in more detail. Because chapter V described the behaviours of political and economic interest of the Great Powers in Iran,

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<sup>37</sup> Fred Halliday, *The Middle East in International Relations: Power, Politics and Ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 177.

<sup>38</sup> David, 'Explaining Third World Alignment', 253.

<sup>39</sup> Olson 1998, 12.

<sup>40</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York, Columbia University: Waveland Press, 1979), 1-10.



however, it would be logical that these international relations theories were also explained in the same chapter.

The fundamental feature of sovereignty is 'claim'. Others may not 'respect' this claim, but if the legitimacy of sovereignty is formally 'recognized' then the issue is less important. In the modern world-system, the legitimacy of sovereignty requires reciprocal recognition.<sup>41</sup> This reciprocal recognition has two dimensions, external state relations and internal state operation. The first, which is an important aspect within the realist school and was a significant Anglo-Americans policy to holding relations with central governments, such as Iran, refers to the sovereignty of a state. This sovereignty recognised by the majority of other sovereign states, but it can also be not accepted by some other states. Respecting the sovereignty of a state depends on the weakness and strength of a state. Internal sovereign reciprocity refers to the relations between a central state and its peripheries, where the local peripheries must recognize the sovereign authority of the central state. The central authority must, according to Immanuel Wallerstein, also recognize the legitimate authority in the peripheries and defend the sphere of their authorities.<sup>42</sup> In many democratic countries the power is divided between the centre and peripheries and even the political power of the local authorities is recognized as independent. When the central government does not recognize the political power of local authorities, it could lead to internal conflicts. It could even be exacerbated enough to cause a civil war. The breakdown of relations between the central government of Iran and its peripheries, such as Azerbaijan and Kurdistan, in 1945 and 1946 is a good example.

Balance of power, an important international relations theory, is the second aspect within the (neo)realist and (neo)idealist schools and it can be used to explain the inter-state policies that existed amongst the Great Powers. A definition of this theory, by Hans Morgenthau, a realist scholar, will suffice to make things clear. According to Morgenthau, balance of power refers, 'to an actual state of affairs in which power is distributed among several nations with approximate equality.'<sup>43</sup> For Waltz, balance of power is one of the most important political theories in international relations. He claimed that 'if there is any

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<sup>41</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein, *World-System Analysis: An Introduction* (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2004), 44.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>43</sup> Hans Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (4<sup>th</sup> ed., New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), 173.

distinctively political theory of international politics, balance-of-power theory is it.<sup>44</sup> This theory is more a historical generalization than a theoretical concept.<sup>45</sup> After the end of the First World War, the significance of the balance of power was a hot subject between the Great Powers. However, there were obstacles towards realizing the goal due to the instability of the international order at Versailles. This was due to the temporary weakness of Germany and Russia and meant that the balance of power was essentially artificial and the balance would be increasingly threatened if the two countries were to strengthen themselves further. The (neo)idealism school takes more the transnational elements of international relations into account. Robert O. Keohane emphasizes the importance of studying international institutions and how collaboration can take place in world politics without hegemony.<sup>46</sup> (Neo)idealism also claims that several (inter)national and inter-states organizations, such as the League of Nations and the United Nations, must obtain more political power to solve the internal and external issues of its member nations.

The last international theory, structuralism, is concerned with the division within societies, between the rich and poor within countries and between the rich and poor worldwide. This difference increases the importance of transnational relations and intergovernmental links. According to this theory, the structures of world politics are defined by economics and the interaction between sovereign states is not important. Structuralists emphasize the relationships between classes, both within states and among states. Structuralism was an important theory within the Marxism-Leninism political ideology of the Soviet Union policy, especially during Joseph Stalin's regime.<sup>47</sup> In this thesis, it would be examined to what extent the Soviet policy encouraged an ethnic group within a state, such as Kurds in Iran during the Second World War.

While exploring each of the abovementioned frameworks and the research question, many sub-contextual questions are delved into:

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<sup>44</sup> Waltz 1979, 117.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 164.

<sup>46</sup> Robert O. Keohane, *Neorealism and its Critics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

<sup>47</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the Soviet policy among structuralist theory, see Amitava Krishne Dutt and Jaime Ros (ed.), *Development Economics and Structuralist Macroeconomics* (United Kingdom: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2003).

- 1- In what ways do ethnic communities maintain their identities despite the presence of a dominant group?
- 2- To what extent did the Kurdish political movements between two world wars affect and encourage the Iranian Kurds to mobilise themselves into their own political parties?
- 3- How much solidarity and national unity existed among different tribes in Iranian Kurdistan?
- 4- To what extent has religious affinity infiltrated Pan-Kurdism or has tribalism infiltrated Kurdistaniness?
- 5- Which factors led to the weakening and the eventual fall of the Republic of 1946?
- 6- What were the most important friction points between the Iranian central government and the Kurdish government?
- 7- Did the Iranian government and Autonomous Government of Azerbaijan ever take the Kurdish government in Mahabad seriously?
- 8- What caused the disagreements between the Azerbaijan and Kurdish governments?
- 9- What obstacles were raised by Turkey and Iraq before the Republic of Kurdistan?
- 10- What were the policies of the Great Powers, especially those of Soviet Union's, towards the Republic of Kurdistan?

#### **4 Research sources**

In the past three decades, especially after the 1990s, numerous books and articles came out concerning the matters of ethnicity and nationalism.<sup>48</sup> These provide researchers with better opportunities to understand the Kurds' insistence on ethnically distinguishing themselves from such neighbours as Turks, Arabs, Persians and others. The basic literatures of this research are the primary sources. Throughout August and September of 2009, I travelled in Kurdish areas to conduct archival research and interviews and to find relevant books. During

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<sup>48</sup> Other important books and articles in this category are: Abbas Vali (ed.), *Essays on the Origins of Kurdish Nationalism* (Costa Mesa/California: Mazda Publishers, 2003); Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001); \_\_, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (2<sup>th</sup> ed., London/New York: Verso, 1991); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983); Koohi-Kamali Farideh, *The Political Development of the Kurds in Iran: Pastoral Nationalism* (Hardcover - Mar 4, 2004); Wilson N. Howell Jr., *The Soviet Union and the Kurdish Question: A study of National Minority Problems in Soviet Policy* (Virginia: University of Virginia, 1965).

my travels, I collected a large body of particularly relevant, useful, and reliable information in the form of historical documents, interviews and books. To my knowledge, there is no Ph.D. thesis about the Republic of Kurdistan of 1945-46. Although there are a few books, articles and masters theses, they are not comprehensive.<sup>49</sup> It needs to be remembered that until 1991 accessing the Soviet archives was difficult or impossible for non-Soviet citizen. Since 1991, Dr. Afrasio Hewrami has translated into Kurdish almost all the Soviet's archival documents that relate to the Kurdish and Azerbaijan issues in Iran during the period of the Second World War. Fortunately, in recent years, these important documents have been published in Iraqi Kurdistan (Suleymaniyeh and Arbil).<sup>50</sup> The presence of these documents furnishes a solid foundation for my thesis. Incidentally, this is the first English language Ph.D. research on this subject that avails itself of the archives of the former Soviet Union. The Kurds who live in diaspora and the Regional Autonomy of Iraqi Kurdistan (1991-present) have played an important part in the revival of the Kurdish literatures.<sup>51</sup> Along with the primary sources of

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<sup>49</sup> Several secondary sources about the Republic of Kurdistan are: Archie Roosevelt Jr., 'The Republic of Kurdistan of Mahabad', *Middle East Journal* (Washington DC, July 1, 1947), 247-69; Noshirwan Mustefa Emin, *Hekometi Kurdistan, Rebendani 1324-Sermawezy 1325: Kurd le Gemey Soviet da* (The Government of Kurdistan, 22 Jan-17 Dec 1946: The Kurds in the Soviet Game), (3<sup>th</sup> ed., Suleymaniyeh Publisher, 2007); William Eagleton, *The Republic of Kurdistan of 1946* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963).

<sup>50</sup> These primary documents that have been published in couple books are: Afrasio Hewrami, *Rojhalati Kurdistan le Sardami Dowem Cangî Cihanida: Be peyi Balgehnamekani Arşivi Yeketi Sovjet* (Eastern Kurdistan during the Second World War: according to the documents of Soviet Union Archives), (Suleymani: Zheen Publishing House, 2008a); \_\_, *Peywendyekani Kurdistan u Azerbaijan u Hereshenani Herdula le salî 1946 da: Le Belgeh u Sarchawekan da* [Kurdistan and Azerbaijan Relations and the fall of both in 1946: in the documents and sources], (Suleymani: Sardam Publishing, 2008b); \_\_, *Rodawekani Rojhalati Kurdistan le Balgenameyi Sovjet da: 1945-47* [the events of the Eastern Kurdistan in the documents of Soviets], (Suleymani: Binkai Zhin, 2007); \_\_, *Mustafa Barzani le Hendek Belgenome u Dokumenti Sovjet da: 1945-58* [Mustafa Barzani in several Evidence and Documents of the Soviets], (Erbil: Aras Publishing, 2002).

<sup>51</sup> Some of the primary sources for my research are: Ali Karimi (ed.), *Nishtiman: Belawkrehweyi biri Komelayi Je-K* [Nishtiman: dissemination of the ideas of the Society for the Revival of Kurdistan], (Suleymani: Binkai zhin, 2008); Himdad Hoesen, *Rojnamevani Kurdi: Sardemi Komari Dimokrati Kurdistan 1943-1947* [Kurdish journalism: during the Democratic Republic of Kurdistan 1943-47], (Erbil: Aras Publisher, 2008); Mahmud Mulla Izzat, *Dewlati Cemhori Kurdistan, Name u Document* (The Democratic Republic of Kurdistan, Correspondence & Documents), (vols. 2, 2<sup>th</sup> ed., Suleymani: Tishk Publishing, 2003a); \_\_, *Cemhori Kurdistan: Lekolineweyeki Mejoyi u Siyasi* [Kurdistan Republic: political and historical investigation], (2<sup>th</sup> ed., Suleymani: Sardam Publishing, 2003); Rafiq Saleh & Sadiq Saleh (eds.), *Rojnameyi Kurdistan: Mahabad 1324-1325 Hetawi (1946)* [the journal of *Kurdistan*, Mahabad, 1946], (Suleymani: Binkai zhin, 2007).

footnotes 50 and 51, the Iranian parliament records, during 1944-1946), British and US archives are also key sources for my research.

An essential part of my thesis is the role and the influence of the Great Powers in Iran during and after World War II. The first major post-WWII international political crisis in the Middle East began in Iran. Historians have given much attention to the Cold War. Many books and articles have been published about the origins of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe, especially in Poland. However, little interest has been shown in the conflict between the US and the Soviet Union in the Middle East, particularly in the Iranian crisis (1945-1946).<sup>52</sup>

## **5 Construction of the thesis**

Chapter II is concerned with manifestation of ethnic identity. After the collapse of Ottoman and Tsarist empires, the concept of the nation and nation-states became the most influential factor in determining new geographical borders. The imagining of ethnicity and ethnic identity among Kurds are central to the case of the Republic of Kurdistan. Therefore, chapter II will address the dynamics and interactions among concepts of ethnic identity, ethnicity and nationalism. Several of these theories will be compared in this section, followed by a close analysis of Kurdish ethnic identity.

This dissertation will examine the development of political identity in modern Kurdistan in general and especially in Iranian Kurdistan. Kurdish political movements between two world wars make up one of the main topics that will be dealt with in chapter III. It will discuss the Kurdish political movements between the two world wars, which in turn affected and encouraged the Iranian Kurds to mobilise themselves into their own political parties. One of the results of these movements is the Republic of Kurdistan of 1945-46, which

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<sup>52</sup> Some secondary literature about the Kurds, the Azeris and the Iranian government in the World War II in international policy are: Bruce R. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980); Yassin 1995; McDowall 1996; Fred H. Lawson. 'The Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946 and the Spiral Model of International Conflict', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (Vol. 21, No. 3, Aug., 1989); Kerim Yildiz and Tanyel, B. Taysi, *The Kurds in Iran: The Past, Present, and Future* (Hardcover - Mar 22, 2007); Louise L Estrange Fawcett, *Iran and the Cold War: The Azerbaijan Crisis of 1946* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Natalia I. Yegorova, *Iran Crisis of 1945-1946: A view from the Russian Archives* (Washington DC, 1996); Olson 1998; Touraj Atabaki, *Azerbaijan: Ethnicity and the Struggle for Power in Iran* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., London: I.B. Tauris and Co Ltd, 2000).

will be discussed in chapter IV. In order to thoroughly understand the rise and fall of the Republic of Kurdistan, it is also necessary to understand the socio-political events during the period of 1941-46. The KDP was one of the movements that played an essential role in the proclamation and establishment of the Republic of Kurdistan. This political party and its relations with other parties and the Iranian government will also be discussed in this chapter. Thus chapter IV presents an illustration of the Republic of Kurdistan's structure as well as its socio-political standing. Further, it examines the opinions of the opponents and supporters of the Republic who provide insight into the extent of the Republic of Kurdistan's achievements and its shortcomings.

The final chapter, chapter V, focuses on the role and influence of the Great Powers, especially of the Soviet Union, and the countries neighbouring Iran, such as Turkey and Iraq on the Republic of Kurdistan. Further the chapter describes the relations between the Great Powers in Iran and the governments of Iran and Azerbaijan with the Republic of Kurdistan. Within the context of the Cold War, the Superpowers' struggle to gain hegemony over the 'Third World'<sup>53</sup> emerges mainly after the second half of the 1950s. In Iran, however, it began even before the war had ended. Shortly after the Second World War, the Cold War between the two Great Powers (the Soviets and the US) became central to the study of International Relations. The specific reasons for the manifestation of the Cold War in Iran will also be described in chapter V.

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<sup>53</sup> The term 'Third World' was used during the Cold War to define countries that remained non-aligned or neutral towards capitalism (First World) or communism (Second World). The term continues to be used colloquially to describe the poorest countries in the world. This usage is widely disparaged, because the fall of the Soviet Union deprecated the terms 'First World' and 'Second World.' While there is no identical contemporary replacement, common alternatives to the term 'Third World' include 'developing world'.

## CHAPTER II. ETHNIC GROUP

This chapter intends to offer concise descriptions of and discussions about notions of ethnicity, ethnic identity, ethnic group, nation and nationalism. Moreover, general theories about ethnicity are also discussed in broad lines within the framework of Kurds as an ethnic group. To this end, certain answers will be being begged of their questions, such as: What is a particular ethnic identity? In what ways do ethnic communities maintain their identities despite the presence of a dominant group?

### 1 Ethnic definitions

#### 1.1. Ethnicity

Since there is no universally agreed-upon definition of ethnicity, social scientists have several distinct approaches to using this term. One of the reasons it remains undefined is that ‘ethnicity seems to be a new term’.<sup>54</sup> The term ‘ethnicity’ was first used by the American sociologist David Riesman in 1953.<sup>55</sup> It was derived from the Greek word *ethnos*. The word ‘ethnics’ gradually became common in the United States around the time of the Second World War to identify people of non-Anglo race groups, such as Jews and Italians. This term has become more popular and was increasingly used after the 1960s. Ethnicity has something to do with classification of people and group relationships.<sup>56</sup> It refers to aspects of relationships among groups that regard themselves as culturally different and are considered by others distinct as well. Colloquially, the term ‘ethnicity’ evokes minority issues and race relations. In social anthropology, however, it refers to aspects of relationships among groups that consider themselves culturally distinctive.<sup>57</sup> In Iran, Kurds and Azeris play such a role. Their cultures and languages are distinct enough for them to be categorized as different ethnicities who live amid the dominant ethnic group of Persians.

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<sup>54</sup> Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan (eds.), *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience* (Cambridge/Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975), 1.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*; Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives* (London/Colorado: Pluto Press, 1993), 3.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

Before the celebrated work of Fredrik Barth, ethnic groups were defined as social groups that are divided according to their shared origin, history, language and culture. As an alternative to this definition, Barth suggested the following:

Ethnicity is a matter of social organization and beyond questions of empirical cultural differences: it is about “the social organization of cultural difference”.<sup>58</sup>

Barth claims that ethnicity stems from contact between two groups that are different from each other. He suggests that the self-definition of a group as an ethnic entity in a given geography provokes the definition from other groups also living within the concerned territory. Consequently the process constructs these entities as groups distinct from each other. In situations where there are no developed complementarities, groups tend to grow distant from each other and thus we get cultural variation without ethnicity.<sup>59</sup> Ethnicity, by definition, must arise either from a process of social differentiation within a population, which is divided into two or more groups, or by an expansion of system boundaries that create contacts with new groups.<sup>60</sup> Boundaries are relevant to ethnicity and can change and respond ‘strongly to the political environment, particularly to the territorial frame in which groups find themselves.’<sup>61</sup>

Iraqi Kurds, both during the British mandate and since the independence of Iraq, have had to resort to armed struggle against the central government in order to take control of their territories. The struggle for autonomy in Iraqi Kurdistan originally stemmed from the tribal confederation and gradually reached a ‘national unity’ under the leadership of Mulla Mustafa Barzani.<sup>62</sup> Horowitz called this process of creating a large ethnic accumulation ‘supertribalism’ or ‘artificial ethnicity’.<sup>63</sup>

Another example of supertribalism is the role of several tribes in the Republic of Kurdistan. An important component of the Republic of Kurdistan was the existence of and the

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<sup>58</sup> Barth 1969, 6.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 6-38.

<sup>60</sup> Eriksen 1993, 79.

<sup>61</sup> Donald L. Horowitz, ‘Structure and Strategy in Ethnic Conflict’, (Paper prepared for the Annual World Bank Conference on Development Economics, Washington D.C., April 20–21, 1998), 25.

<sup>62</sup> Mulla Mustafa Barzani in 1961 (*shoresha eylole*, September uprising) has forged from different tribes a national unity against the Iraqi government.

<sup>63</sup> Horowitz 1998, 26.



interaction among its tribes. Typically, a Kurdish tribe, according to van Bruinessen, is a socio-political and generally also territorial unit based on descent and kinship, real or putative, with a characteristic internal structure.<sup>64</sup> Van Bruinessen claims that tribe is a 'social organization.'<sup>65</sup> Tribes are entities within which aspects of transformation scarcely occur. It is a social and cultural conservative. The collective character is an essential principle of tribes. They evaluate and decide collectively. There is no place for individual opinion, such as 'I believe' or 'I think.' The 'we-form' is the norm: 'we do this', 'we have said this.'<sup>66</sup> Tribes still play a vital role in the Kurdish society in some parts of Kurdistan. The use of the term 'ethnic group' implies namely the contact and relationships among these groups.<sup>67</sup>

Anthony D. Smith believes that there are two distinguishable broad trends in the study of ethnicity. The first is represented by the 'Primordialists' and 'Perennialists' and the second trend is Heraclitan.<sup>68</sup> The first offers answers to the perennial problems of life: the origins, destiny, and the meaning of life.<sup>69</sup> This refers to the objective definition of ethnicity that is based on the cultural commonness in language, historical background, religion and the common territory.<sup>70</sup> Smith remarks that the second trend, Heraclitan, is that ethnicity itself is a highly variable and disposable resource. He claims that while the masses may in some instances be charged by ethnic sentiments, in other cases they may be quite oblivious to any collective cultural attachments.<sup>71</sup> This second study of ethnicity uses the subjective definition of ethnicity that is based on the identity, belonging, solidarity and common interest.<sup>72</sup> The pioneering work on this definition of ethnicity was done by Joshua Fishman, who claimed that ethnicity is a matter of 'being', as well as 'knowing' and 'doing', and that:

Ethnicity has always been experienced as a kinship phenomenon, a continuity within the self and within those who share an intergenerational link to common ancestors. Ethnicity is partly

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<sup>64</sup> Van Bruinessen 1978, 40.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>66</sup> My own surname, Nerweyi, is the name of a tribe in northern Iraqi Kurdistan, which may exemplify I - we form within a tribal setting.

<sup>67</sup> Eriksen 1993, 9-10.

<sup>68</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 210.

<sup>69</sup> Eriksen 1993, 45.

<sup>70</sup> Abdollah Ramezanzadeh, *Internal and International Dynamics of Ethnic Conflict: The Case of Iran* (Ph.D. thesis, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 1996), 9.

<sup>71</sup> Smith 1986, 210.

<sup>72</sup> Ramezanzadeh 1996, 9.

experienced as being ‘bone of their bone, flesh of their flesh, and blood of their blood’. The human body itself is viewed as an expression of ethnicity and ethnicity is commonly felt to be in the blood, bones and flesh.<sup>73</sup>

The study of ethnicity can teach us about how ethnic groups relate to each other, as well as about their interactions with broad social organizations such as the nation and the state. This is especially relevant for the countries where more than one ethnic group resides. Iran is one of such countries with its mosaic of different ethnic groups. Several ethnic relationships have their own unique histories. Eriksen identifies some patterns of ethnicity, including the one called proto-nation, a term that is applied to Kurds. Eriksen claims that:

Proto-nations (ethnonationalist movements) by definition [refer to] these groups (Kurds, Palestinians, Tamils) that have political leaders who claim that they are entitled to their own nation-state and should not to be ‘ruled by others’. They are always territorially based, differentiated by class and education and are often large groups. It is a kind of ‘nations without a state’.<sup>74</sup>

Ethnicity has long been understood as culture. Barth has offered a different perspective: ethnicity is a social organization of differences and similarities. Following Barth, ethnicity was studied in terms of situational interaction and transaction where boundaries occupy the highest priority for groups.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Joshua Fishman, ‘Social theory and ethnography: neglected perspectives on language and ethnicity in Eastern Europe’, in Peter Sugar (ed.), *Ethnic Diversity and Conflict in Eastern Europe* (Santa Barbara: ABC Clio, 1980), 84-5. For Eric J. Hobsbawm have also the ‘kinship’ and ‘blood’ obvious advantages in bonding together members of the group and excluding outsider. Hobsbawm 1993, 63.

<sup>74</sup> Eriksen describes four typical empirical foci of ethnic studies, these are: (a) urban ethnic minorities (b) indigenous peoples (c) proto-nations and (d) ethnic groups in plural societies. Eriksen 1993, 13-4.

<sup>75</sup> Maykel Verkuyten, *Etnische Identiteit: Theoretische en Empirische Benaderingen* [ethnic identity: theoretical and empirical approaches], (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 1999), 4.

## 1.2. Ethnic identity

During the last two decades of the twentieth century, the focus of discussion on ethnicity has gradually shifted towards the construction of ethnic identity. Barth describes ethnic identities as practical processes. In 1982, however, Anthony P. Cohen claimed that ethnic identities are ways of symbolizing community. Unlike Barth, who remains interested in cultural variation, Cohen delimits the field to political processes involving informal corporate groups.<sup>76</sup> In his 1993 criticism of Cohen's position, Eriksen claims that ethnic identity is created through political processes and that ethnic identity has a non-instrumental, non-political element. What Cohen does not discuss, according to Eriksen, is the nature of the stuff on which these groups feed. Eriksen argues that 'the shared identity of the individuals who eventually form an ethnic group is taken for granted in Cohen's model.'<sup>77</sup> Identity should no longer be considered as a 'given', as Barth claimed, but as a continuous process of social construction. Emphasis was placed on how identities, with the assistance of collective representations and ideological issues were defined and legitimized.<sup>78</sup>

Identity means, in anthropological discourse, 'being the same as oneself as well as being different.'<sup>79</sup> This is not a definitive definition, however. There is no consistency among social scientists regarding the definition of identity. Scientists have different answers, which often converge in a central theme. There are various distinct levels of identity, among which the personal and social levels are important. Personal identity refers to the self-concept by which a person makes a distinction between him or herself and other individuals or groups. Social identity concerns the status of the individual's presentation of him or herself in social interaction.<sup>80</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, whose work on identity is influenced by Eriksen, explains that identity is the self-image of an individual or a group. It is a product of self-

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<sup>76</sup>Anthony P. Cohen (ed.), *Belonging: Identity and Social Organization in British Rural Cultures* (Manchester: University of Manchester, 1982). This book examines the nature of belonging, social association within localities, and how these may relate to wider appreciations of nation.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 55-6.

<sup>78</sup> Verkuyten 1999, 4.

<sup>79</sup> Eriksen 1993, 60.

<sup>80</sup> Jacobson Jessica, *Islam in Transition: Religion and Identity among the British Pakistani Youth* (London: Routledge, 1998), 9; Wasif A. Shadid, *Grondslagen van Interculturele Communicatie: Studieveld en Werkterrein* [Foundations of intercultural communication: Studyarea and workfield], (Houten/Diegem: Bohn Stafleu Van Loghum, 1998), 173-5. Ramezanzadeh claims that collective identity is also one of the distinct levels of identity. Ramezanzadeh 1996, 10-1.

consciousness, where I or we have the disposal of certain qualities which distinguish 'me' from 'you' and 'us' from 'them'.<sup>81</sup> The systematic application of identity is the distinction between insiders and outsiders and the boundaries between us and them. Two groups can be relatively equal and treat each other with respect or they simultaneously are more aware of their otherness. Eriksen described these two interethnic relationships complementarisation and dichotomisation.

According to Eriksen, complementarisation refers to ethnic differences as a fact and through a process of respect for each other. Dichotomisation on the other hand essentially expresses a form of us-them relationship in which cultural differences are emphasized leading to repression and often violence. In Eriksen's words, complementarisation can have two directions with relation to power. The subordinate group may use it to acquire a similar position with regard to the dominant group or the dominant group can use discrimination and assimilation.<sup>82</sup> The interethnic interaction within the first option is usually valid for democratic states. The relations between Sami ethnic minority and Norse dominant group in Norway may be presented as an example of complementarisation. In case of boundary conflicts or cultural competition between these groups, a solution is usually achieved without resorting to violence.<sup>83</sup>

However, if there is dichotomisation, as mentioned above, the dominant group resorts to discrimination and forced. This situation is often seen in Africa and Asia. During the post-World War I period, especially following European decolonization from the 1940s and 1960s, a multitude of new states in were formed in Africa and Asia with a markedly and visibly multi-ethnic character. Internal ethnic conflicts in many new states in these continents were often protracted and violent.

Following the creation of new boundaries in the Middle East after the First World War, Kurdish territories were redistributed among Iraq, Turkey and Syria. Consequently, Kurds have carried out a number of secessionist uprisings<sup>84</sup> or movements for autonomy to

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<sup>81</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *Who are we? The Challenges to American National Identity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004), 21.

<sup>82</sup> Eriksen 1993, 26-8.

<sup>83</sup> Relations between Sami ethnic group and Norse, see Arja Koskinen, 'Language policy towards ethnic minorities in Northern Norway and on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua', *International Journal of Educational Development* (Vol. 15, Is. 3, July 1995), 221-30.

<sup>84</sup> Secession is a distinct and specific kind of ethnic-based political mobilization. The term secession is most often used to refer to a declaration of intent by a minority to pursue independence. David Carment, 'Secessionist

attain cultural and political rights. A similar example is the conflict between the Sinhalese dominated central government and militant Tamil groups fighting for Tamil rights in Sinhalese controlled Sri Lanka.<sup>85</sup> In order to understand the ethnic conflicts experienced by certain proto-nations (Kurds in Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria, Tamils in Sri Lanka, the Kashmiri Muslim separatists in India), Heraclides describes three characteristics of violent separatist conflicts, two of which are: 1., all separatist wars have occurred in settings where power is highly centralised and democracy is weak or non-existent; 2., separatist wars involve minorities at risk of political and economic discrimination and/or military repression.<sup>86</sup>

There are three main approaches to examining the protracted conflicts among various groups in the process of defending their economic, political, and social group-interests: Socio-Political approach, Psycho-Social approach, and Cultural approach.

The socio-political approach asserts that culture is not the only element that holds groups together. According to this approach, the social balance of power within a given society is also a significant factor. The socio-political approach regards ethnic groups as group-interests and also as political phenomena.<sup>87</sup>

Secondly, based on the psycho-social concept of ethnic identity, Huntington claims that socio-biology and the theories at the end of the twentieth century about distinctiveness, social identity and attribution support the conclusion that at the root of hatred and rivalry is the need for enemies. Accordingly, individual and group violence and the tendency toward war are inescapable aspects of human nature.<sup>88</sup> The social and individual interactions within ethnic groups are the components of the psycho-social approach.

The third approach is the cultural approach, which was originated in early twentieth century as a method for studying the population composition in the United States. It became known as the cultural approach because it categorized distinct ethnic communities that made up the US population as cultural groups. It was utilized as an integral component of the melting-pot doctrine, which aimed to assimilate groups over time within the culture of the

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ethnic conflict in South and Southeast Asia: A comparative perspective', in Rajat Ganguly and Ian Macduff (reds.), *Ethnic Conflict and Secessionism in South and Southeast Asia: Causes, Dynamics, Solutions* (New Delhi etc.: Sage Publications, 2003), 25.

<sup>85</sup> For about the conflict between Tamil and central government, see Chelvadurai Manogaran and Bryan Pfaffenberger (reds.), *The Sri Lankan Tamils: Ethnicity & Identity* (Boulder etc.: Westview Press, 1994).

<sup>86</sup> Carment, *Secessionist ethnic conflict* 2003, 27-8.

<sup>87</sup> Shadid 1998, 170-2.

<sup>88</sup> Huntington 2004, 41.

dominant Anglo-Saxon group.<sup>89</sup> Eriksen calls this process of assimilation the ‘melting-pot metaphor.’ Following the ‘ethnic revival’ of the 1960s and 1970s, it has become commonplace to criticise the notion of the melting-pot. The different ethnic groups do not amalgamate with each other. Social mobility of an ethnic group leads to tension in relation to another group. If an individual moves through different social strata, it may be due to changes in the relative importance of his or her ethnic membership.<sup>90</sup>

### 1.3. Ethnic group

An ethnic group can be defined as a collectivity within a larger society with a real or supposed common descent, shared historical memories of a past and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements<sup>91</sup>, such as kinship, religious affiliation and language. Barth’s definition of ethnic group is clearer. He states that an ethnic group (a) is largely biologically self-perpetuating, (b) shares fundamental cultural values, realized in overt unity in cultural forms, (c) makes up a field of communication and interaction and (d) has a membership which identifies itself, and is identified by others, as constituting a category distinguishable from other categories of the same order.<sup>92</sup>

Eriksen and Barth are the most prominent authors concerned with the definition and characteristics of ethnic groups. For both authors ethnic group is a social interaction. For Eriksen ethnic group is a social differentiation within a population or by an expansion of system boundaries bringing hitherto discrete groups into contact with each other.<sup>93</sup> He claims that ‘it would therefore be misleading to argue that ethnic boundaries contain ‘cultures’. Cultural differences relate to ethnicity if and only if such differences are made relevant in social interaction.’<sup>94</sup> The social interaction between various ethnic identities is an important way to stipulate ethnic boundaries. When the social interaction between two ethnic groups take place then the second element, cultural differences, become relevant.

Barth however focuses on something other than the cultural content of an ethnic group. The matter of ethnic groups’ boundaries is the focal point of Barth’s theory. He suggests that

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<sup>89</sup> Cheko H. Gülşen, *De Koerden: Een Verbeelde Natie? Kirmanc Identiteit en Medya-tv* [the Kurds: an example of nation? Kurmanji identity and media-tv], (Utrecht, 2002), 28.

<sup>90</sup> Eriksen 1993, 19-20.

<sup>91</sup> Anthony D. Smith and J. Hutchinson (eds.), *Ethnicity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 17.

<sup>92</sup> Barth 1969, 10-1.

<sup>93</sup> Eriksen 1993, 79.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

the determining element of ethnic group is its 'boundary' and that research on boundaries is necessary to define a group.<sup>95</sup> Ethnic groups are heavily dependent on maintaining their boundaries. For the following three reasons, according to Barth, an ethnic group boundary maintaining mechanisms must be highly effective:

The complexity [of poly-ethnic systems] is based on the existence of important, complementary cultural differences. These differences must be generally standardized within the ethnic group [...] so that inter-ethnic interaction can be based on ethnic identities. The cultural characteristics of each ethnic group must be stable, so that the complementary differences on which the systems rest can persist in the face of close inter-ethnic contact.<sup>96</sup>

For Barth, the term 'boundaries' goes beyond physical boundaries. It also includes social and invisible boundaries between two groups. According to him:

Ethnic groups are not merely or necessarily based on the occupation of exclusive territories. The ethnic boundary canalizes social life – it entails a frequently quite complex organization of behaviour and social relations.<sup>97</sup>

In 1998, about thirty years after Barth's theory on the social interaction of boundaries between ethnic groups, Jacobson declared that ethnic boundaries have three dimensions: Conceptual dimension, social dimension, and cultural dimension. The conceptual dimension refers to individuals' desire to belong to a group or their consideration of themselves as members of a minority group. The social dimension includes the patterns of social relationships among the members of an ethnic group. These relationships strengthen their sense of belonging to the group. The cultural dimension covers the actions of an ethnic group's members. These actions are related to their culture, tradition, language, social class and status. Phenomena such as music, language and dress, which can act as the symbols of an ethnic group, help to differentiate members of a minority ethnic group from the majority.<sup>98</sup>

By definition, an ethnic minority is numerically fewer than the rest of the population in a society. As an ethnic category, they produce identifications for outsiders and insiders of

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<sup>95</sup> Barth 1969, 15.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>98</sup> Jacobson 1998, 89.

an ethnic group. Identification is seen and accessed by others as a member of an ethnic group. Verkuyten claims that identification is a link between individual and group. He believes that ethnic identification is discussed in relation to self-esteem, the perception of discrimination and cultural differences, intergroup differentiation and interethnic relationship.<sup>99</sup>

Ethnic minorities are not dominant groups but in some countries they play a dominant political position, such as the religious Alevite Nusayri minority in Syria under the leadership of Al-Asad family. In Syria, the majority of the population is actually composed of Sunni Muslims. Eriksen has ascertained that the concepts of minority and majority are relative and relational. They exist only in relation to each other. He argues that the relationship between minority and majority is contingent upon the relevant system of boundaries. Today, this system of boundaries is nearly always state boundaries. Eriksen claims that contemporary states use one or several of three main strategies in their dealings with minorities. These three strategies are: 1- The state may insist on the assimilation of entropy – resistant elements. Although such policies of assimilation are often believed to help their target groups to achieve equal rights and social status, they often inflict suffering and loss of dignity on the minorities. 2- The state may opt for dominance, which means segregation for the minority group. In this case, the minority is physically removed from the majority. This is justified by referring to the presumed cultural inferiority of the former. 3- The state can transcend ethnic nationalism and adopt a policy of multiculturalism, where citizenship and equal rights are independent of cultural identity, or the state may implement a decentralized system in which a high degree of local autonomy is made possible.<sup>100</sup>

Minorities have their own approaches to object to the dominant group within a society where generally this dominant group is associated with the state. Minorities have three principal ways to respond to state dominance: 1. Assimilate. In some cases this is not an option because they are prevented from assimilating by the other group. Such ethnic minorities have often low position in the labour market and they are the victims of ethnic segregation. 2. Cooperate with the state to seek some form of peaceful co-existence. 3. Seek cessation, which is always against the will of the state.<sup>101</sup> According to Handelman, groups that are willing to separate are always ethnic communities.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Verkuyten 1999, 53.

<sup>100</sup> Eriksen 1993, 121-4.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, op. cit., 123.

<sup>102</sup> Handelman 1987, 35.



The state strategies to deal with minorities and the minority's self-defense approaches will usually lead to a combination of assimilation and segregation, and ethnic incorporation. Incorporation, where one group may lose its identity by merging into another group, is one of the principal varieties of assimilation. The second variety of assimilation, according to Horowitz, is amalgamation. Horowitz defines amalgamation as the unification of two or more groups to form a new group.<sup>103</sup> Today, the combination of incorporation and amalgamation is termed as 'integration'. It refers to the participation of a minority in the institutions of a society and a reproduction of group identity and ethnic boundaries. As it noted above, boundaries are one of the important principals of ethnic groups. Boundaries are also one of the basic ideological principles for nations and nationalism. The following section is formulated to substantiate this statement.

#### **1.4. Nation and nationalism**

Most celebrated masterworks of the theories of nation and nationalism use Europe as a their frame of reference. The most important academic authorities on contemporary theories of nation and nationalism include Ernest Gellner, Anthony D. Smith, Benedict Anderson, Eric J. Hobsbawm and Thomas Hylland Eriksen. Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1991) and Gellner's *Nations and nationalism* (1983), refer mostly to developing countries, where the agro-industrial society (Gellner) and print-capital (Anderson) have measured effects on nation and nationalism.

Before a group creates a nation and eventually declares a nation-state, there is the presence of strong movement and that is nationalism. Nationalism is a powerful weapon of the proto-nation. As Hobsbawm explains, 'nationalism comes before nations. Nations do not make nationalisms but the other way round.'<sup>104</sup> Smith claims that 'nationalism is an ideology that places the nation at the centre of its concerns.'<sup>105</sup> And if nationalism takes place before nation, then it would be logical to first study nationalism and then nation.

Nationalism is a new subject for anthropology. It became one of its topics of study mostly during the 1980s and 1990s. The central determinant of the origin of nationalist movements is the definition of the term nationalism. There is no consensus among scholars on the definition of nationalism. Smith suggests that nationalism is 'an ideological movement for

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<sup>103</sup> Horowitz in Glazer 1975, 115.

<sup>104</sup> Hobsbawm 1990, 10; Smith 2001, 10.

<sup>105</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), 9.

attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity for a population which some of its members deem to constitute an actual or potential “nation”.<sup>106</sup> From the above definition of nationalism, we can deduce that there are three elements that empower the ideological movement of nationalism: 1. National autonomy, 2. National unity, and 3. National identity. It is necessary to offer descriptions for these three elements as well as for the ideological movement of nationalism.

In the beginning of his famous book on nationalism, Gellner gives the following definition:

Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unity should be congruent.<sup>107</sup>

He begins a new paragraph and continues with the definition of nationalism:

[Nationalism] as a sentiment, or as a movement, can best be defined in term of this principle. Nationalist *sentiment* is the feeling of anger aroused by the violation of the principle, or the feeling of satisfaction aroused by its fulfilment. A nationalist *movement* is one actuated by sentiment of this kind.<sup>108</sup>

According to Gellner, political and national unities are essential to create a concept of nationalism. Gellner sees the national unity as synonymous with the ethnic group. He observes that ‘nationalism is a theory of political legitimacy, which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones.’<sup>109</sup> He further clarifies that there is a link between ethnic group and the state. Nationalism is an ethnic ideology to attain territorial unity or that their group should dominate a state. Hobsbawm does not attempt to go beyond Gellner’s definition of nationalism and concludes that nationalism is ‘primarily a principle which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent.’<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 1.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 1-2.

<sup>110</sup> Hobsbawm 1990, 9.

For Anderson nationalism is ‘an imagined political community, and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.’<sup>111</sup> For a large part, Anderson’s perspective on nationalism is compatible with Gellner’s. Both Gellner and Anderson argue that nations are ideological constructions that create a link between a cultural group and a state, and thus are different from a dynastic or kinship-based community. Unlike Gellner, however, and other scholars that concentrate on the political aspects of nationalism, Anderson focuses on the force and persistence of national identity and sentiment, and underlines three paradoxes that often obscure a clear definition of nationalism. Anderson argues that for theorists the definition of nationalism is a problematic one due to the following paradoxes:

(1) The objective modernity of nations to the historian’s eye vs. their subjective antiquity in the eyes of nationalists. (2) The formal universality of nationality as a socio-cultural concept [...] vs. the irremediable particularity of its concrete manifestation. (3) The ‘political’ power of nationalisms vs. their philosophical poverty and even incoherence.<sup>112</sup>

Eriksen sees the intensive research and study of ethnic boundaries and identity as a means to shed light on paradoxes that are identified by Anderson. The dialog that took place through academic articles of Gellner and Anderson on the theory of nationalism inspired Eriksen’s work on the topic of nationalism. Eriksen draws parallels between the works of Gellner and Anderson. He claims that studies of ethnicity and nationalism demonstrate that ethnic or national identities are constructions and are not ‘natural’. Eriksen explains that at the political organization level nationalism is ethnic in character and represents the interests of a particular ethnic group. Furthermore, according to Eriksen, the state is a form of political legitimacy for convincing the popular masses that they represent a cultural unity. The state also has an emotional force, which is derived from symbols, because they give people a sense of loyalty. In Eriksen’s words, symbols are multifocal and that they have an ‘instrumental’ and a ‘sensory’.<sup>113</sup>

Symbolism and language together compose one of the three main factors to understanding the term nationalism. The other two factors are the socio-political movement

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<sup>111</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities – Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., London/New York: Verso, 1991), 6.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>113</sup> Eriksen 1993, 100-1.

and the ideology of the nation.<sup>114</sup> Nationalism uses symbols that are extracted from cultural contexts, such as kinship, which are important for people in everyday life. Therefore, nationalism can be seen as a form of symbolic kinship. Smith observed that the symbols and language of nationalism are the main elements to awakening the ideals of the nation. The descriptions of other the two main factors of nationalism are as follows:

The goals of the socio-political movement are defined not by the activities or the personnel of the movement, but by the basic ideals and tenets of the ideology. The ideology of nationalism serves to give force and direction to both symbols and movements. [I]t is the ideology that must supply us with an initial working definition of the term 'nationalism', for its contents are defined by the ideologies which place the nation at the centre of their concerns and purposes.<sup>115</sup>

If there is one point on which there is agreement among some scholars, it is that the 'ideology' is the foundation of nationalism. Nationalism as a political ideology uses the idea of 'the nation' to achieve political goals. It is not easy to locate nationalism on a left-right 'ideological spectrum.' As Eriksen claims, by placing an emphasis on the equality among citizens, nationalism may be an ideology of the left. But by emphasising vertical solidarity, it may as easily belong to the right.<sup>116</sup> According to Michael Freeden, nationalism is concerned with creating or maintaining the very political unit that the left-right ideologies need to achieve their political rights.<sup>117</sup> When discussing the goals of nationalist ideologies, Smith is the preminent scholar. He claims that nationalist ideologies have 'collective self-rule, territorial unification and cultural identity, and often a clear political and cultural programme for achieving these ends.'<sup>118</sup> Smith sees ideology as a 'belief-system' that is based on three components: (i) a set of basic propositions to which most nationalists adhere, (ii) some fundamental ideals which are present in every nationalism and (iii) a range of cognate concepts that give more concrete meaning to the core abstractions of nationalism.<sup>119</sup>

The ideological movement of nationalism will be understood as referring to one or more of the last three aspects: national autonomy, national unity and national identity.

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<sup>114</sup> Smith 2001, 6.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 8-9.

<sup>116</sup> Eriksen 1993, 107.

<sup>117</sup> Michael Freeden, 'Is nationalism a distinct ideology?', *Political Studies* (vol. 46, No. 4, 1998), 751.

<sup>118</sup> Smith 2001, 21.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 22.

National autonomy refers to self-regulation and self-determination, having one's own internal laws and free of external constraint. Self-determination can be in the form of a sovereign territorial state or it can refer to the internal form of federal self-government. By national unity, the group does not seek some objective of cultural uniformity, but rather a social and cultural unification of the members of the nation. Feeling an intense bond and solidarity is central to the national unity.<sup>120</sup> Nationalism and other ethnic ideologies hold that social and cultural boundaries should be unambiguous. They should also coincide with political boundaries.<sup>121</sup> Distinguished from collective character and its historical-cultural basis is the ideal of national identity. For the collective character of national identity, Smith refers to the Rousseau's and Herder's claim that: 'the first rule which we have to follow is that of national character: every people have, or must have, a character.' As for cultural character, Herder claims that each nation possessed, and had to follow, its own peculiar national 'genius'.<sup>122</sup>

Political ideology, for Smith, was the first step to understand the concept of nationalism. Of course, there are some other basic elements of nationalism. Smith claims that religion is the second element of nationalism. Smith used the Durkheim's definition of religion for understanding the surrogate religion of nationalism. Namely that religion is 'a unified system of beliefs and practices [...] which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them.' Smith says this is particularly evident when a great leader dies in the battlefield. For a nationalist group this represents martyrdom wherein the 'glorious dead' sacrifice their lives for their country. The group or nation as a 'sacred communion of citizens' is a characterization that accords with an interpretation of nationalism as 'surrogate religion.'<sup>123</sup> As Anderson suggests that in some ways nationalism is historically the 'successor' of religion. Anderson sees *religious community* and the *dynastic realm* as cultural systems and suggests that nationalism must be understood within these cultural systems. Further, Anderson states that Christianity and *Ummah* (community) Islam were highly imaginable through the medium of a sacred language and a Scripture.<sup>124</sup> Both Eriksen and Hobsbawm point out a strong relationship between religion and nationalism. According to Eriksen, nationalism lays claim to religious symbols which have great significance for

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 25-6.

<sup>121</sup> Eriksen 1993, 114.

<sup>122</sup> Smith 2001, 27.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 33-5.

<sup>124</sup> Anderson 1991, 12-3.

people and represent the nation-state.<sup>125</sup> Hobsbawm used Poland and Ireland as two examples of countries who demonstrate the close relationship between religion and nationalism. Hobsbawm claims that this relationship seems to grow closer where nationalism becomes a massive force rather than a phase as a minority ideology and activists' movement.<sup>126</sup>

The industrial social organization is not the only factor impacting nationalism. As Gellner points out, other developments, such as the fascinating relationship between nationalism and religious reformation, too, have consequences for nationalism. According to Gellner, certain aspects of the reform movement laid the groundwork for the nationalist period that came afterwards. They include reformers' emphasis on literacy and adherence to the letter of Scripture, an attack on the monopoly of priesthood, celebration of individualism and its links with mobile urban populations. He argues that Protestantism has played a major role in the development of industrial society. The developments and reforms in the Islamic world of the past one hundred years are largely the same story of the progress and victory of reform. Gellner calls this a kind of Islamic Protestantism with a strong emphasis on adherence to the Scripture.<sup>127</sup> The religious echo in nationalism, as well as reformers political, reinforces the concept of a nation as a sacred community.

The third element of the development of nationalism, according to Smith, is cultural nationalism or, more broadly, cultural identity. There is a strong link between cultural nationalism and the issues of cultural identity, such as solidarity and moral purpose. Smith believes that cultural and political forms of nationalism often succeed each other, and nationalism may oscillate between these two forms. In case the political nationalism falters in its aims, the cultural nationalism muscles in and builds or prepares the community's common cultural assets. Representative cultural nationalism depends on certain techniques to consolidate the position of a group or, as Smith points out, to mobilize 'the people' to engage in the regeneration of the nation, such as by using the ethnic symbols, myths and memories. However, there must also be a number of strong institutions behind the cultural nationalism. These institutions play a crucial role within a group on its way to becoming a nation. Some of such institutions are: rituals and festival organizations, armies, linguistic code,<sup>128</sup> schooling and education. As Gellner observed, complex and long-standing schooling and education is an

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<sup>125</sup> Eriksen 1993, 107.

<sup>126</sup> Hobsbawm 1990, 67-8.

<sup>127</sup> Gellner 1983, 59-60.

<sup>128</sup> Smith 2001, 73-8.

important factor within a cultural-industrial community. Gellner also states that the common economic infrastructure of the advanced industrial society and its inescapable implications will continue to ensure that people depend on culture. Culture requires standardization in very broad subject areas and must be preserved and maintained by centralized bodies.<sup>129</sup>

Language is one of the most important aspects of cultural nationalism. Scholars are unanimous on this point. Hobsbawm points out that languages used by communities of the educated became central to the European nationalism of 1880-1914.<sup>130</sup> Language is also the main focus point of Anderson's research on nationalism. He argues that nationalism is an invention of the print-languages, not of a particular language per se. These print-languages, according to Anderson, laid the basis for national consciousnesses in three distinct ways. Firstly, they created unified fields of exchange and communication in a language below scholarly Latin and yet above the common daily spoken language. These fellow-readers, who were connected through print, formed the base of the nationally imagined community. Secondly, print-capitalism gave the language a tangible form, which in the long term was a factor in the development of that image of antiquity so central to the subjective idea of the nation. Thirdly, print-capitalism created languages-of-power of a kind different from the older administrative vernaculars.<sup>131</sup> For example, the Turkish language became a catalyst for the modern Turkish state upheld by the new Turkish nationalism, although *Türkiye* was not a term used before 1914.<sup>132</sup> At the expense of any wider Islamic identification, Atatürk imposed compulsory Romanization. Atatürk ordered in 1928 a commission to develop a phonetic Turkish alphabet using the Latin alphabet in place of the existing Arabic one. In 1932 legislation, Atatürk made the issuing of the call to prayer in Turkish, instead of Arabic, obligatory.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Gellner 1983, 155-6.

<sup>130</sup> Hobsbawm 1990, 102.

<sup>131</sup> Anderson 1991, 44-5.

<sup>132</sup> More details on the Turkish language and nationalism, see Aaron Scott Johnson, *The Road to Turkish Language Reform and the Rise of Turkish Nationalism* (Montreal: Institute of Islamic Studies McGill University, 2004); T. Atabaki, 'Pan-Turkism and Iranian Nationalism', idem (ed.), *Iran and the First World War: Battleground of the Great Powers* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006).

<sup>133</sup> For more on the reform and secularization processes of Atatürk in modern Turkey, see T. Atabaki and Erik J. Zürcher, *Men of Order: Authoritarian Modernization under Atatürk and Reza Shah* (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004).

Language is one of the objective factors involved in the definition of nation. Other major factors are religion, customs, territory, and institutions. As Hobsbawm has observed, language and ethnicity are associated closely with the definition of nation.

As can be seen below, another central component of the definition of nation is sovereignty, which is defined by most scholars as having one's own state. Nationhood then is a 'community of sentiment that would adequately manifest itself in a state of its own; hence, a nation is a community which normally tends to produce a state of its own.'<sup>134</sup> In this regard, can we categorize Kurds as a nation? If asked, most Kurds without hesitation will give an affirmative answer. It may thus be interesting to consider a Kurdish scholar's take on the matter. Hassanpour defines a nation as a:

Historically formed community of people bound together by common language, culture, homeland, and community of economic life (i.e., existence of division of labour among various parts of the territory, and especially the existence of a middle class)... national development in the process of consolidation of 'ethnic peoples' or tribal/rural societies into modern nations.<sup>135</sup>

Interestingly, some Kurdish scholars, such as Hassanpour's, concept of nation are based on Marxism-Leninism, which has had great influence in the Kurdish autonomy movement. Stalin claimed that a nation 'is a historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture.'<sup>136</sup> According to van Bruinessen, Kurdish nationalist movements, claiming to represent a nation by this definition, attempted to secure Soviet support for their cause.<sup>137</sup> It ought to be noted that Stalin insist on sovereignty as a prerequisite for nationhood, which contrasts starkly with some European scholars who consider sovereignty as a fundamental component of the definition of nation.

One of the main characteristics of a nation, according to Anderson, is sovereign statehood. Anderson's definition of the nation is formed on four terms or characters:

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<sup>134</sup> Smith 2001, op. cit., 25.

<sup>135</sup> Amir Hassanpour, 'The Making of Kurdish Identity: Pre-20<sup>th</sup> Century Historical and Literary Sources', in Abbas Vali (ed.), *Essays on the Origins of Kurdish Nationalism* (Costa Mesa, California: Mazda Publishers, 2003), 143; Hassanpour 1992, 44.

<sup>136</sup> Hobsbawm 1990, 11; Smith 2001, 11.

<sup>137</sup> Martin van Bruinessen, 'Kurdish Nationalism and Competing Ethnic Loyalties', Original English version of: 'Nationalisme Kurde et ethnicités intra-Kurdes', *Peuples Méditerranéens* (No. 68-69, 1994).



*imagined, limited, community and sovereign.* The nation is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members. Secondly, the nation is limited because even the largest of them has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lay other nations. Thirdly, the nation is a community because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail therein, it is always understood as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Finally, the nation is sovereign because the concept originated in a time when the Enlightenment and revolution destroyed the legitimacy of the God-given and hierarchical dynastic realm. The result of this liberation from dynasty is the sovereign state.<sup>138</sup> According to Daniel Philpott, the modern sovereign state began at the Peace of Westphalia (1648)<sup>139</sup> and formed a system of interstate relations that was based on mutual recognition of the principles of sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs. For Philpott, the Westphalia Peace Agreement was a watershed in European history as it marked the beginnings of the forming of modern state dominance.<sup>140</sup>

Although the previous sections attempted to clarify certain major elements used in defining the concept of nationhood, it must be noted that, in Smith's terms, nationhood is the most problematic and contentious term in the field, because there is disagreement among scholars about the definition of nation. Smith defines the concept of the nationhood as 'a named human community occupying a homeland, and having common myth and a shared history, a common public culture, a single economy and common rights and duties for all members.'<sup>141</sup> Here, the term 'occupy' is approximately the same as Anderson's 'sovereignty' for the definition of the nation. Hobsbawm defends the position of Adam Smith who claims that nation 'means no more than a territorial state.'<sup>142</sup> Hobsbawm decidedly claims that there are only three criteria which allow a people to be firmly classed as a nation: 1. A link between

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<sup>138</sup> Anderson 1991, 6-7.

<sup>139</sup> For a more detailed reading on Westphalian system, see Benjamin Kaplan J., *Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2007); for a discussion of some important elements that lead to the creation of the Westphalian Peace, see Leo Gross, 'The Peace of Westphalia' *The American Journal of International Law* (Vol. 42, Is. 1, 1948), 20-41; see also my unpublished article on my website, Hawar Nerweyi, 'Hoe het Westfaalse systeem is ontstaan', How the Westphalian system was created (Utrecht University, March 2009). <http://nerweyi.blogspot.com/>

<sup>140</sup> For a detailed discussion on sovereignty, see Daniel Philpott, *Revolutions in Sovereignty: How Ideas Shaped Modern International Relations* (Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001).

<sup>141</sup> Smith 2001, 10-3.

<sup>142</sup> Hobsbawm 1990, 26.

historic association and current state. 2. The existence of long-established cultural elite, possessing a written national literary and administrative vernacular. 3. Proven capacity for conquest. By the third point, Hobsbawm means that conquest must be provided as Darwinian proof of evolutionary success as a social species.<sup>143</sup>

The historical influential route for a nation to attain a sovereign state is based on two main elements: territorial nation and legal concept of the nation. In Smith's words "the terms 'territorial nation' and 'legal concept of the nation' also signify a route for attaining nationhood, for creating or forming nations."<sup>144</sup> Although Kurds have a homeland and compose the majority population in their regions, they do not have a sovereign state of their own and are dominated by others. As Gellner points out, it is a great injustice for a culturally homogenous population not to have their own state. Its members are required to live in one or more states that are ruled by other foreign cultural groups.<sup>145</sup>

The core concepts of the nation, which relate to practical, cultural, and political programmes, are authenticity, continuity, dignity, destiny, attachment and the homeland. Each of these aspects examines and evaluates the past and the present state of the nation. For Smith, authenticity means to find the 'authentic' elements of our being and it refers to the originality of the nation. Smith claims that the concept of authenticity overlaps with that of autonomy. As for continuity, a nation must have a history that lends itself to the nation's future as well keeps its interests and ideals in sight. It can, according to Smith, also signify a gradual movement of transformation or an accumulation of layers of past states, without necessarily opposing changes that occur over time. Dignity refers to a nation's continuous effort to find and maintain an inner worth, to realize the dignity of the authentic self. Smith believes that dignity can also come from noble pedigree and antiquity, which attract reverence and piety. Destiny, for nationalism, always signifies glorious future. Rather than return to the glorious past, however, the destiny of each nation is oriented towards recreating its glory in modern terms. Attachment essentially refers to a feeling for one's country or the place where one is born, such as falling in love with something special. The final core concept of the nation is homeland. One of the main elements of this concept is the need of nations to re-root and re-

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 37-8.

<sup>144</sup> Smith 1986, 135.

<sup>145</sup> Gellner 1983, 172.

attach themselves to their pristine origins, their authentic self even if they are already residing in their homelands.<sup>146</sup>

In terms of nationalism, homeland refers to a political claim over an area of land in the name of a nation. Nationalism strives to bind the national group together and define its members as citizens. It involves more than a simple hyphen between nation and state and is often mediated through the idea of homeland. As Alexander C. Diener recently noted, homeland itself remains a slippery subject for many reasons. In his view, the subject eludes sustained and focused academic inquiry partially due to the prosaic, accepted nature of homeland, and partially because of its multivalent definition.<sup>147</sup> There is a strong relationship between homeland and diaspora nationalism. Homeland is a central symbol of transnationalism. One of the most important political reasons that strengthen the feeling for a homeland is the 'diasporas nationalism.' Myths about return and imaginings concerning ancestors, birth, root and soil all contribute to the power that homelands exert over people who live in diasporas around the world. One of the best examples of diaspora nationalism is that of the Jewish communities across the world, which eventually succeeded in creating a homeland in Palestine in 1948.

Therefore, the notions of 'territory', 'community', 'cultural unity', 'language' are crucial elements in defining the term 'nation' with the provision that some nations still do not have their own state. Many states can be called a nation-state, while other states which contain more than one nation within them are appropriately named 'multinational states'.<sup>148</sup> Can a nation without a state be categorized as a 'nation' or should it be categorized differently, such as an ethnic group? A stateless ethnic group, such as Kurds, feels compelled to stake out claims for self-determination as an aspirant 'nation'. Smith uses the term 'triple movement' in reference to such ethnic groups. The term indicates movements 'from isolation to activism, from quietism to mobilization, and from culture to politics.'<sup>149</sup> Complementing the above discussion about the concept of nation, the following section contains a comparative review of ethnic group and nationhood.

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<sup>146</sup> Smith 2001, 28-31.

<sup>147</sup> For recent detail about diaspora nationalism and relations with homeland, see Alexander C. Diener, *One Homeland or Two? The Nationalization and Transnationalization of Mongolia's Kazakhs* (Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2009).

<sup>148</sup> Ramezanzadeh 1996, 14.

<sup>149</sup> Smith 1986, 154.

### 1.5. Differences between nation and ethnic group

In place of the English term ethnic group, Smith uses the French term *ethnie*<sup>150</sup> to indicate communities that are not only connected to a homeland and possess common myths of ancestry, shared memories, and other elements of shared culture, but also have a measure of solidarity, at least among the elites.<sup>151</sup> Using this definition of ethnic group we can conclude that there is no fundamental difference between nations and ethnic groups. As Smith points out, 'both belong to the same family of phenomena (collective cultural identities).'<sup>152</sup> But a nation is not an ethnic community. In both Anderson's and Smith's definition of nationhood, sovereignty composes an important characteristic feature. This is one of the basic differences between ethnic groups and nations, for an ethnic community usually has no sovereignty. Even if it has territory it is stateless. Smith claims that ethnic community has no political referent, whereas a nation must occupy a homeland of its own to constitute itself as a nation.<sup>153</sup>

As another major difference between ethnic communities and nations, Smith points to the lack of 'common public culture' in ethnic communities.<sup>154</sup> However, recalling Barth's take on this matter, cultural differentia is a strong determinant of the boundaries of an ethnic group. In cultural terms, there are also differences between the personal status of individuals according to membership in an ethnic group or a nation. Membership in an ethnic group is defined in hereditary terms and is a matter of self-definition, whereas membership in a nation is defined in terms of citizenship and political rights.<sup>155</sup> Similar to ethnic groups, nations also have collective names, common myths, and shared memories. Conversely, nations diverge from ethnies by affording their citizens common public culture, homeland, common rights and duties, and a single economy.<sup>156</sup> In the case of the Kurds, although there is a claim over a common history and a large territory as a homeland, van Bruinessen points out that the Kurds' opponents have deprived them of a common economic life. Furthermore, he points to the fact that the unity of Kurdish language and culture were also disputed issues.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> On the development of the term ethnic from ancient Greek to the modern European language see *ibid.*, ch. 2.

<sup>151</sup> Smith 2001, 13.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 12; Ramezanzadeh 1996, 15.

<sup>153</sup> Smith 2001, 12.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 13. For largely overlapping and yet subtly distinct descriptions of ethnic communities and nations, see *Ibid.*, 10-5.

<sup>155</sup> Ramezanzadeh 1996, *op. cit.*, 15.

<sup>156</sup> Smith 2001, 14.

<sup>157</sup> Van Bruinessen 1994.

For some countries that are comprised of different ethnic groups, or certain specific regions where different ethnic groups live in close proximity, William H. McNeill uses the term polyethnicity.<sup>158</sup> Smith, on the other hand, expands the definition of ‘polyethnic nations’ by introducing two important components: 1. Forging of a common history, and 2. sharing of a political memory.<sup>159</sup> Many countries, on some level, are examples of polyethnic nations, such as Canada, Switzerland, Spain, and Belgium. In Canada, where English and French are the official languages, many political debates have taken place between Anglophone and Francophone citizens, who mainly live in the province of Quebec.<sup>160</sup> There are four official languages in Switzerland: German, French, Italian and Rumantsch or Romansh. However, the national identity and political horizon have inspired the Swiss population to define for themselves a public culture, a unitary homeland, a single economy and common rights.<sup>161</sup> The Basque and Catalan national movements, which developed in opposition to the dominance of the Castilian Spanish state, are two of the few ethnic groups in Europe who have resorted to violence in order to obtain certain political rights. Belgium is divided roughly as north and south between its Dutch (Flemish) speakers in Flanders and its French speakers in Wallonia, respectively. Consequently, Belgium hosts a parliamentary democracy that is ethnically polarized. According to Arend Lijphart, members of the Chamber of Representatives are reserved to the Walloons and Flemish. In addition to ideological divisions, political parties in Belgium have been divided linguistically and ethnically as well.<sup>162</sup> Under what circumstances are the harmonization and cohabitation of a polyethnic nation peacefully maintained within a state and when is the state torn apart, such as Ex-Yugoslavia?

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<sup>158</sup> William H. McNeill, *Polyethnicity and National Unity in World History* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1985), 85.

<sup>159</sup> Smith 2001, 15.

<sup>160</sup> Claude Bélanger, (August 2000). "[The Rise of the Language Issue since the Quiet Revolution](#)". Marianopolis College. Retrieved 2009-11-22.

<sup>161</sup> Smith 2001, 15.

<sup>162</sup> Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 39.

## 2 Theoretical review of ethnicity

The previous subsections reviewed different approaches to the definition of the concept of nation. The following three subsections will analyze three different theoretical approaches to ethnicity: *Primordialism*, *Instrumentalism* and *Structuralism*. Just as in the definition of the concept of nation, these theories are quite heterogeneous.

### 2.1. Primordialism

Until recently, according to Eriksen, two fundamental theoretical approaches dominated the debates within the study of ethnicity. These are: ‘primordialism’ and ‘instrumentalism.’<sup>163</sup> According to some other scholars, however, such as Crawford Young, there is another theoretical approach to the definition of ethnicity: ‘constructivism’ or structuralism, which focuses on the contingent nature of identity and the dynamic of its construction.<sup>164</sup> This debate is mainly shaped around the question of whether ethnic identity has a primordial or more situational, also referred to as instrumental, character. Both primordial and instrumental approaches were largely a reaction to the assimilation processes in the United States. The essence of the assimilation policy was the idea that ethnic-cultural differences are temporary and over time these differences disappear in the melting-pot.<sup>165</sup>

More recently, according to Smith, there is discussion of two kinds of primordialism: socio-biological and cultural givens. The first refers to the fact that ‘nations, ethnic groups and races can be traced to the underlying genetic reproductive drives of individuals and their use of strategies of ‘nepotism’ and ‘inclusive fitness’ to maximize their gene pools.’<sup>166</sup> The evidence that genes incline people to prefer others who are genetically similar to themselves comes from studies of social assortment, differential heritabilities, and the comparison of identical and fraternal twins, blood tests, and family bereavements.<sup>167</sup> In this circumstance, culture and cultural symbolism (language, religion) served as biological affinity and played an important role for a group network. The second kind of primordialism, cultural givens, holds

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<sup>163</sup> Eriksen 1993, 54.

<sup>164</sup> Crawford Young, ‘Nationalism and ethnic conflict in Africa’ in Montserrat Guibernau and John Hutchinson (eds.), *Understanding Nationalism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), 173-4.

<sup>165</sup> Verkuyten 1999, 50.

<sup>166</sup> Smith 2001, 52.

<sup>167</sup> Philippe Rushton J., ‘Ethnic nationalism, evolutionary, psychology and Genetic Similarity Theory’, *Nations and Nationalism* (11 (4), 2005), 489.

that ethnic groups and nations are formed on the ‘basis of attachments to the cultural givens of social existence.’<sup>168</sup> As examples of scholars who favour this form of primordialism, Smith mentions particularly two names, Clifford James Geertz and Edward Shils.

According to Geertz, the primordialist view maintains that the participant perceives ethnic ties collectively, as an externally given, even coercive, social bond. Geertz argues that humans generally attribute an overwhelming power to primordial human ‘givens’ such as blood ties, language, territory, and cultural differences. In Geertz’s opinion, ethnicity is not in itself primordial but humans perceive it as such because it is embedded in their experience of the world.<sup>169</sup> In developing countries, ethnic groups are superimposed on the primordial realities. Primordialists believe, according to Josep Llobera, that ethnic identity is deeply rooted in the historical experience of human being to the point of being practically a given.<sup>170</sup> The history of ethnic groups sometimes conjures up emotions in its members and these emotions are the reasons that members maintain their identity. Verkuyten points out that the feelings of commitment and connectedness to their own ethnic group, which members believe they are descended from, give people a strong and emotional foundation to the question of who and what one is.<sup>171</sup>

Authenticity and originality of an ethnic group is one of the important elements of primordialism. Groups that are formed on the unity of common language, territory and culture will be able to keep their authenticity. These groups are created by neighbourhoods and families, which Shils called ‘primary groups’. Shils observed that the role of primary groups in the society includes three elements: (a) the affinity between political or ideological enthusiasm and a tendency to organize into primary groups, (b) the role of the mediating or linking person in binding the primary group to the corporate body and (c) the dependence of corporate efficiency on primary group morale.<sup>172</sup> The main emphasis of primordialists is on

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<sup>168</sup> Smith 2001, 53.

<sup>169</sup> Clifford J. Geertz is seen as one of the most important scholars behind the explanation of the cultural theory and his ideas had a strong influence in later twentieth century anthropology. One of his important works is: *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Free Press, 1973).

<sup>170</sup> Josep R. Llobera, ‘Recent Theories of Nationalism’, *Institut de Ciències Polítiques i Socials* (WP núm. 164, Barcelona 1999).

<sup>171</sup> Verkuyten 1999, 51.

<sup>172</sup> Edward Shils, ‘Primordial, Personal, Sacred and Civil Ties: Some Particular Observations on the Relationships of Sociological Research and Theory’, *The British Journal of Sociology* (Vol. 8, No. 2, Jun. 1957), 133-7.

the reproduction and modification of society through primary groups. Horowitz also claims that the family is the unit that constantly replenishes ethnic group members. It is the first group to which individuals belong and, because of the long period of human maturation, its influence is extraordinarily durable.<sup>173</sup> History and ancestors thus play important roles in the primordial community. The primordialist approach argues that ethnic ties are 'natural', that they are recorded under the same principles as the links that people have with their families and other primary groups. Shils remarks that in family attachments there is a significant 'relational quality' that can only be called primordial. And this is because there is an ineffable attribute to the ties of blood.<sup>174</sup>

This feeling of commitment may be the result of personal affection, practical reasons and common interests. Brown refers to the argument that one is born into a particular linguistic, racial or homeland community as the 'primordial bond'.<sup>175</sup> Reed C. Eller summarizes the primordial bonds in the following three key ideas: 1. Primordial identities or bonds are 'given'. They are fixed, even before any experience of interaction. Primordial social ties have no sources. 2. Primordial sentiments are overwhelming and compelling and cannot be analyzed in relation to social interaction. When an individual is a member of a group, then he necessarily feels of that group. 3. Primordialism is essentially a matter of emotion. Primordial identities are qualitatively different from other kinds of identities.<sup>176</sup> The accumulative influence of community ties based on blood, language, religion, tradition, and homeland is strongly felt not only by the members of a given group but also by other groups.

In the Middle East and most of the developing countries during the 1950s and 1960s, the primordialist explanations of ethnic assertions were largely dismissed. The ethnic groups that relied on these explanations to build cases for their national liberation movements meet with state violence. Especially in the Middle East, this period is highlighted by a secular nation-building pattern and by the efforts of ethnic groups, such as the Kurds, to manifest and proclaim their identities, which was often brutally repressed.<sup>177</sup> Primordialists argue that ethnic conflicts and the desire for independence or autonomy stem from the systematic denial

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<sup>173</sup> Horowitz 1998, 17.

<sup>174</sup> Shils 1957, 142.

<sup>175</sup> Brown, 'The conceptual language of nationalism' and 'New nations for old?', 2000, 6.

<sup>176</sup> Reed C. Eller, 'The Poverty of Primordialism: the Demystification of Ethnic Attachments', In J. Hutchinson, A.D. Smith, *Ethnicity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 45.

<sup>177</sup> For multi-ethnic societies and the congruence between the nation and the state, see Walker Conner, 'Nation-building or Nation-destroying?', *World Politics* (Vol. 24, No. 3, 1972), 319-55.



of minority aspirations. Self-determination is the most fundamental aspiration of the ethnic minority. Stephen Ryan writes that ‘structural incompatibilities between the ideology of state-building and minorities are a key determinant of whether a group will pursue organised violence.’<sup>178</sup> One of the ten alternative descriptions of ethnic conflicts proposed by Horowitz is that ethnicity is a primordial affiliation. Horowitz explains that:

Ethnicity is a primordial affiliation, in the sense that it is connected to the things people cannot live without, among them, traditionality, the persistence of the past into the present, and a sense of collective self-consciousness. A sense of community of this sort—*Gemeinschaft* rather than *Gesellschaft*—necessarily generates awareness of other communities, and this spills over (by mechanisms unspecified) into conflict and violence. Ethnic affiliations are highly charged and, on some accounts, non[-]rational. It seems futile to gainsay the emotive power of ethnic affiliations, and a good explanation will have to come to grips with the thick, compelling character of group membership.<sup>179</sup>

A strong emphasis on the responsiveness of ethnic groups to the deep needs of group members is not at odds with a keen sense of the variability of ethnic phenomena, as Horowitz notes:

It follows that group members may entertain sentiments so intense that theorists identify them as primordial, even though group identities are socially constructed, recently constructed, founded on relatively little in the way of palpable differences, and mutable as environmental conditions change.<sup>180</sup>

There are many factors that may cause an ethnic conflict to erupt and an ethnic group to claim self-determination or self-government. The primordialist approach offers the following three explanations: 1 - Ethnic conflicts and the desire for independence stem from the systematic denial of the aspirations, goals, and values of minorities by the state. 2 - A transition to violence takes place after negation of the separate identities, the absence of security for

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<sup>178</sup> Cited in Carment, ‘Secessionist ethnic conflict’, 2003, 29.

<sup>179</sup> Horowitz, ‘Structure and Strategy in Ethnic Conflict’, 1998, 5.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

minorities and the absence of effective participation for this minority. 3 - A lack of confidence in the intentions of the state leads minorities towards open conflict by gradual escalation.<sup>181</sup>

In general, the control of the territorial resources of the indigenous population by the majority also creates potential for conflicts. Many ethno-political movements are struggling to protect their rights to these resources. In Iraq, the Kurds provide an example such a struggle. They have lost a good deal of territory during the Arabization-politics. Between 1921 and 2003, from the establishment of the Iraqi state until the occupation of Iraq by the US, and especially during the period of the Ba'th regime (1968-2003), hundreds of thousands of Kurds as well as Turkmens and Assyrians were forced to leave their homes by governmental actions notoriously known as the 'Arabization campaigns'.

The Arabic government of Iraq used Arabization to gain the full control of oil fields and fertile lands in northern Iraq, especially in Kirkuk region. This campaign changed the demographics of certain areas in favour of Arabs by forcefully displacing other ethnic groups from these areas. Furthermore, the Ba'th regime continually increased the political violence and persecution of local residents in Iraqi Kurdistan. It must be noted that since the 1970s, Kirkuk oil revenues represented approximately more than half of the total oil income of Iraq. Even, after the formation of the 'New Iraq' under the US occupation in 2003, retraction of the Arabization-politics has remained one of the main diplomatic issues between the central Iraqi government and the Kurdish Regional Government. Additionally, Kurds claim that Kirkuk belongs to Kurdistan and Iraqi government constantly raises obstacles before the Kurdish efforts to reclaim the city.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Brown, 'The conceptual language of nationalism', 2000, 6-12.

<sup>182</sup> For Arabization-politics in Kurdistan under the Ba'th regime see Human Rights Watch, 'III. Background: Forced Displacement and Arabization of Northern Iraq', (October 2004). For Arabization of Kirkuk region, see Nouri Talabany, *Arabization of the Kirkuk Region* (Uppsala, Sweden: Kurdistan Studies Press, 2001). For a detail and general history of Iraq, see Charles Tripp, *A History of Irak* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

## 2.2. Instrumentalism

Instrumentalism, according to Abner Cohen, argues that ethnicity is essentially as an ad-hoc resource to be used strategically by interest groups for achieving secondary goals such as increasing their wealth, power or status. Cohen sees ethnicity as a stipulated form of informal political organization, which creates cultural boundaries to insure the resources and the symbolic capital of the group.<sup>183</sup> Eriksen criticized Cohen's position with the argument that, 'if ethnic identities are created wholly through political processes, then it should have been possible to create any identity at all. Ethnicity must have a non-instrumental, non-political element.'<sup>184</sup>

The prominence of instrumentalism came from the results of the melting-pot processes in US in the second and third decennia of the twentieth century. With respect to certain ethnic groups, the melting-pot ideology of the US government has not produced its expected results. Afro-Americans and Native Americans, for example, have not melted within the pot of the dominant culture. Moreover, in certain circumstances, the efforts to suppress certain ethnic groups have ultimately benefited the oppressed groups.<sup>185</sup> As Smith pointed out, there was debate throughout the 1970s over the degree to which ethnic groups in the US should be seen as interest groups behaving instrumentally in the political marketplace. Afterwards, however, generations increasingly shed their cultural distinctiveness. Smith points out that the concept of melting-pot in the US has been promoted by certain ethnic groups and underlines the following:

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<sup>183</sup> Cohen 1982, 27-32.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>185</sup> When about two million Iraqi Kurds fled to the mountains in 1991, after all-out attacks of Saddam's regime, this forced exodus led the UN to intervene on humanitarian basis, which was followed by the UN resolution 688, which guaranteed a 'safe-haven' for the Kurds. Since this period, the Kurdish society has sustained strong economic, social, political and otherwise developments. For a detailed debate on the humanitarian intervention in Iraqi Kurdistan in 1991, see Gordon W. Rudd, *Humanitarian Intervention, Assisting the Iraqi Kurds in Operation Provide Comfort, 1991* (Ph.D. thesis, Washington D.C.: Department of the Army, 2007). For more general discussions on humanitarian intervention, see Duco Hellema and Hilde Reiding (eds.), *Humanitaire Interventie en Soevereiniteit: de Geschiedenis van een Tegenstelling* (Humanitarian intervention and sovereignty: history of a contradiction), (Amsterdam: Boom, 2004).

The implication was that ethnic leaders and elites used their cultural groups as sites of mass mobilization and as constituencies in their competition for power and resources, because they found them more effective than social classes.<sup>186</sup>

Instrumentalism is an ethno-political instrument which makes use of the benefits associated with belonging to a particular ethnic identity. Instrumentalism allowed group demands to be shifted away from cultural and religious realm toward political, material and territorial gains, which subsequently created the demand for self-determination. From the instrumentalists' perspective, the ethnic identity is a collective action or, as Joane Nagel calls it, the 'competition theories'. According to this view, the interpersonal and intergroup relations occupy a central role in classical and contemporary social theory. The central definition of competition theory is that the collective action of an ethnic group takes place when distinct groups compete with each other for the access to relatively scarce resources, such as status, jobs, political or economic positions, etc.<sup>187</sup> In Carment's words the 'political dimensions of ethnic group behaviour, including protest, rebellion and non-violent action are either as a way of protecting entitlements previously enjoyed or as a way of gaining access to new entitlements.'<sup>188</sup> Some instrumentalist approaches are based on the suggestion that ethnic groups are the product of political, economic and social processes. For example, according to Llobera, ethnic groups have no fixed boundaries; they are a collective and change their size depending on circumstances. Here ethnicity is seen as dynamic. In other words, not only are individuals not assigned permanently to an ethnic group, but they can also be members of more than one ethnic group at the same time.<sup>189</sup>

Instrumentalists emphasize on the instrumental, pragmatic, situational and variable aspects of ethnicity. According to the supporters of instrumentalism, ethnic identity is a rational reaction to a stipulated situation or to social pressure within a community or between communities. In the instrumentalist perspective ethnicity is sometimes used in reference to communities making claims for cultural autonomy, whereas nationalism is used when territorial homeland claims are being made. However, since both refer to the political defence of rational attachments to the interactive community, the distinction is an unconvincing

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<sup>186</sup> Smith 2001, 55.

<sup>187</sup> Joane Nagel, 'Resource Competition Theories', *American Behavioral Scientist*, (Vol. 38, No. 3, January 1995), 442.

<sup>188</sup> Carment, 'Secessionist ethnic conflict', 2003, 31.

<sup>189</sup> Llobera, 'Recent Theories of Nationalism', 1999.

one.<sup>190</sup> For example, the political rationality and cultural and institutional framework of the Muslim elite in Pakistan, before partition from India in 1947, mobilized the population to create a country based on Islam. According to Paul Brass, Pakistan was created by Muslim elites who manipulated Islamic symbolic resources in order to mobilize the Muslim masses of northwest India. This is a cultural approach, but using a more political approach, Francis Robinson claims that the existing Muslim attachments and ideologies (*ummah*) persuaded the Muslim elites of the need to safeguard the Muslim community and culture by seeking greater autonomy for Muslims in India.<sup>191</sup> In the first twenty-five years of its existence as a modern Muslim state, Pakistan aspired to attain a leadership role in the Islamic world. Subsequently, it organized international conferences about Islam and several meetings with Muslim leaders.

Politics and rationality, for Smith, compose the most significant feature of instrumentalism. Politically, Pakistan is seen as an example whereby national units lead by Muslim elites, afford convenient instruments for generating mass support in the universal struggle for territory, wealth and power. According to this view, Smith proclaims that ethnicity is fundamentally 'instrumental' because it serves purposes other than the 'cultural goals which its spokesmen proclaim to be its *raison d'être*, but it does so by combining economic and political interests with cultural affect.'<sup>192</sup>

As to political aspect of instrumentalism, to a large degree Verkuyten also agrees with Smith. He described two different aspects dimensions of instrumentalism, the background of ethnicity and the interests that people have. In the first case, ethnicity depends on existing principle orderings in society. The external circumstances and condition which shape ethnic boundaries are important. Within this approach ethnic groups were studied as the product of political, social, economic and legal conditions. The second accent, interests, focuses on the interaction and group relationships in the struggle for such as: goods and position. For Verkuyten, the starting point is the socio-cultural conception of the contrast of interests and the balance of power.<sup>193</sup>

Rationality is the second significant feature of instrumentalism. Some authors consider this feature to be a distinct theory and call it the rational choice theory. Within this method, an individual's preferences of ethnic affiliation are more effectual. According to instrumentalists,

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<sup>190</sup> Brown, 'The conceptual languages of nationalism', 2000, 15.

<sup>191</sup> Smith 2001, 55.

<sup>192</sup> Smith 1986, op. cit., 9-10.

<sup>193</sup> Verkuyten 1999, 52.

the affiliation of an individual with a particular community has little to do with emotions and it is rather related to its possible practical advantages, which is to say that the connectedness of an individual with a community derives from a rational choice. The community is for individuals an instrument to achieve their personal goals. This theory, according to Llobera, is based on two assumptions: 1) individuals behave with a view to maximise their benefits (in term of economic gains and prestige); 2) present actions restrict future choices.<sup>194</sup>

### **2.3. Structuralism**

Structuralism or constructivism is considered by many as a third alternative, next to primordialism and instrumentalism. This third theory is broadly similar in principle to instrumentalism, such as its emphasis on elites' role in the society. According to both theories, ethnic or nationalist elites attempt to mobilize the masses, mostly for the pursuit of their own private interests. This usually happens when social contacts are broken by the state and the repression by the state is weakened. However, Brown pointed out that constructivists pay more attention to the concept of the language of a community; to the ways in which identities and boundaries are historically arbitrary; to how these identities and boundaries are often the structures of members of the elite in a group, who seek political power. For constructivists, ethnic phenomena do not actually exist but are rather promulgated by nationalist-elites with aims to further their personal goals.<sup>195</sup> According to John Comaroff, the history shows that there are no arbitrary inventions. Further, historical causality not only limits the potential option for the construction of identities but also the form of these identities. Ethnicity is always created by specific historical forces that are both structural and cultural.<sup>196</sup> As Gellner argues, constructivists view national and ethnic identities as the product of historical forces, often recent, even when the identities are presented as old.<sup>197</sup>

The positive or negative 'interpretations' of important historical events, that took place within a community are necessary for structuralism. By means of interpretation frameworks, events and experiences receive significance. As Verkuyten claims, for the extreme constructivist approach, the reality is equal to the order of the interpretive framework.

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<sup>194</sup> Llobera, 'Recent Theories of Nationalism', 1999.

<sup>195</sup> Brown, 'The conceptual languages of nationalism', 2000, 20-2.

<sup>196</sup> John Comaroff, 'Of Totemism and Ethnicity: Consciousness, Practice and the Signs of Inequality', in R.R. Grinker, *Perspective on Africa: A Reader on Culture, History and Representation* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 70.

<sup>197</sup> Gellner 1983, 132-3.

Language, however, is not the only medium for the formation of experience. Moreover, according to Verkuyten, every situation and experience allows multiple interpretations. Some interpretations, for example, are more consistent with the social reality, and actual changes in a situation are not always sufficient to change the language.<sup>198</sup> Whether the language changes or not is an essential question within the structuralist approach.

For Verkuyten, however, there are three interrelated reasons that make language an important factor in ethnic identity. Firstly, verbal expressions form one of the key aspects of everyday life. Specification and discussions of situations in the community play an important role in how that life is seen and experienced. Nevertheless, language belongs to the social reality and is used as a main instrument to shape it. The second reason is the connection between language and behaviour. Words have not only a representational or expressive function but often also a practical one. Communication among individuals is mainly carried out through language and its proceedings have significant impact on social life of a community. Finally the notion of ideology itself puts a significant weight on language. The functions of language are not limited to interpersonal domain but have wider social implications. Language is the main diffuser of ideology.<sup>199</sup>

A combination of these three approaches to ethnicity, primordialism, instrumentalism and structuralism, helps to address the question of separatism or autonomy movements by focusing on the political and economic disparities between minorities and the state centre. At least four elements are of crucial importance to the mobilization of a minority against a state:

1. The degree of economic, social and political differences among groups – highly disadvantaged groups are more likely to resort to political activism.
2. Clarity of group identity and the degree of cohesion within a group.
3. Regional concentration and organizational skills throughout the development of political activism.
4. The degree of reaction elicited by the ethnic mobilization against the dominant group or state.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Verkuyten 1999, 10.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid., 106-8.

<sup>200</sup> For more general discussions on minority rights, see Marc Weller (ed.), *Universal Minority Rights: A Commentary on the Jurisprudence of International Courts and Treaty Bodies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

### 3 Reflection on the theoretical understanding of ethnicity among Kurds

Kurdish nationalism views the Kurds mostly through two main lenses of the primordialist theory: socio-biological and sociological. The first asserts that ethnicity is an extension of kinship and that kinship is the normal vehicle for the pursuit of collective goals in the struggle for survival. The second regards language, religion, race, ethnicity, and territory as the basic organizing principles and bonds of human association throughout history.<sup>201</sup> Although Kurdish nationalism preceded more complex political formations, the question still remains whether it is truly primordial. Abbas Vali observed that the ‘mainstream Kurdish nationalist, hailing from Diyarbakir, Mahabad or Arbil, is a “primordialist”’.<sup>202</sup> Kurdish nationalists stress that modern Kurds are descendents and historical representatives of the Medians (Meden). Some even go further to claim that the Guti and the Lullubi are among the Kurds’ distant ancestors.<sup>203</sup> The magnum opus *Mam û Zîn* of Kurdish scholar Ahmedî Khanî is considered by nationalist Kurds to be a national epic in pre-modern history. Many Kurds claim that Ahmedî Khanî had a Kurdish ‘nationalist’ agenda.<sup>204</sup>

The formations of pre-modern and modern Kurdish semi-autonomous principalities were considered by some Kurdish intellectuals as fundamental political events in the history of Kurds and Kurdistan. Amir Hassanpour criticized the argument of Ferhad Shakely that the Persian and Ottoman Empires established the Kurdish principalities to the maintain security of their borders. According to Hassanpour, from the rise of the Kurdish semi-autonomous principalities in the sixteenth century began an important history of Kurdistan: the period of the formation of the political organization known as *dewlati Kurdi* (Kurdish government).<sup>205</sup> Vali criticized the opinion of Hassanpour and believed that the political Kurdish movement

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<sup>201</sup> Verkuyten 1999, 12.

<sup>202</sup> Vali 2003, 59.

<sup>203</sup> For the role of Kurdish elements in history, see Amir Hassanpour, *Nationalism and Language in Kurdistan 1918-1985* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1992); and for a wider discussion, see Mehran Izady R., *The Kurds: A Concise Handbook* (Washington: Crane Russak, 1992).

<sup>204</sup> For details on this claim, see Ferhad Shakely, *Nationalismi Kurd la ‘Mam û Zîn’ Ahmedî Khanî da* [Kurdish nationalism in Mam û Zîn of Ahmedî Khanî], (Brussels: Kurdish Institute of Brussels, 1991). According to van Bruinessen, it is justified to call Ahmedî Khanî a Kurdish nationalist, see van Bruinessen, ‘Ahmedî Xanî’s Mam û Zîn and Its Role in the Emergence of Kurdish National Awareness’, in Vali 2003, 40-57.

<sup>205</sup> Amir Hassanpour, in *Gzing*, Journal on Literature and Culture, No. 9, spring 1995, 5.



was exploited by the Kurds after the fall of the two Middle Eastern empires, Persian and Ottoman.<sup>206</sup>

The First World War put an end to the highly developed dynastic empires: the Ottoman, Qajar, and Habsburgs. In place of the Congress of Berlin, came the League of Nations, in which included non-Europeans. From this moment on, nationhood became the legitimate international norm. After the Second World War, there was an increase in the number of nation-states existing in the world.<sup>207</sup> After the First World War, the emergence of new nation-states in the Middle East, such as Turkey, Iran, and Iraq, created the political identity of the Kurds.<sup>208</sup> The formation of these states usually meant the suppression of other cultures and ethnic groups and consequently, the Kurds suffered terribly from these policies. To defend their identity and state-building aspirations, Kurds organized and established several political movements in the twentieth century. Their demands for cultural and political were refused by the dominant group in the nation-states of the region.

According to Vali, the identity politics of the Kurds was formed in the twentieth century.<sup>209</sup> Identity politics is the political activity of various ethnic groups with the goal of gaining economic, social and especially political rights or self-determination. Identity politics represents and seeks to advance the interests of particular groups in society, the members of which often share and unite around common experiences of actual or perceived social and economic injustice, relative to the wider society of which they form a part and exist in. In this way, the identity of the suppressed group gives rise to a political basis around which they then unite and begin to assert themselves in society.<sup>210</sup> Vali stated, those who believed in territorial Kurdish nationalism in Iran wanted to have a national identity in the form of rights and recognition of a Kurdish nation. Conversely, those who believed in Kurdish autonomy but sought rights within the territorial and sovereign political state of Iran, wanted to maintain an

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<sup>206</sup> For a discussion on the remarks in which Vali criticized the arguments of some Kurdish scholars, such as Hassanpour, see Vali, 'Genealogies of the Kurds: Constructions of Nation and National Identity in Kurdish Historical Writing', in Idem 2003, 73-97.

<sup>207</sup> Anderson 1991, 103.

<sup>208</sup> Abbas Vali, 'masaleyi Kurd u qayrani siyasi le Iran' [Kurdish question and political crisis in Iran], *Gzing*, No. 21, winter 1998, 7.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid, 'modernist we nationalism' [modernity and nationalism], *Gzing*, No. 22, winter 1999, 35.

<sup>210</sup> Joan W. Scott, 'Multiculturalism and the Politics of Identity', in John Rajchman (ed.), *The Identity in Question* (New York, 1995), 3-11.

ethnic identity.<sup>211</sup> Self-identification with a political framework based upon identity is exemplified by the Kurdish movements in the twentieth century in Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria, where the ethnic question of the Kurds has continuously flared up and acted as a source of internal conflict. Identity politics was instrumental behind the Iranian crisis of 1945 and 1946, with different ethnic groups, Kurds and Azeris, demanding political rights.

The Kurdish ethno-nationalism can be understood within the framework of ethno-symbolic approaches and it encourages a socio-historical and cultural study of nationalism. According to Smith, the use of this approach is an important to understanding the relationship of the ethnic past to the modern nation. This approach is, according to Smith, a subjective element which focused more on the past: memory, sentiment, myth; and it seeks the inner world of ethnicity and nationalism. Using this approach, Smith tried to explain that nationalism was rooted in the pre-modern and modern history of ethnicity.<sup>212</sup> Van Bruinessen wrote an article titled 'Kurdish Nationalism and Competing Ethnic Loyalties', in which he used Barth's definition of ethnicity and analyzed the concept of ethnicity utilizing Smith's ethno-symbolic approach. He did so because, for him, Smith's work is important for a thorough understanding of the Kurdish question.<sup>213</sup> Van Bruinessen's article concentrated on Kurdish nationalism in the early twentieth century and after the First World War. Van Bruinessen argues that in the early twentieth century there were no distinct boundaries between Kurds and non-Kurds since the boundaries were defined more on the grounds of religion and tribes. He also finds that after the period of nation-building and the subsequent repressive policies towards the Kurds in Turkey, Iraq and Iran during the second decade of the twentieth century, an interactive movement toward Kurdish nationalist movements.<sup>214</sup> The following chapter will focus more on the question of whether the Kurdish nationalist movements, after the First World War, were ethno-nationalist or not and on the question of when the Kurdish political national identity was created.

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<sup>211</sup> Abbas Vali, 'masaleyi Kurd u qayrani siyasi le Iran' *Gzing*, No. 21, 7.

<sup>212</sup> Smith 2001, 57-60.

<sup>213</sup> Van Bruinessen 1994, 25.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, 11-37.

## CHAPTER III. KURDS BETWEEN TWO WORLD WARS (1918 – 1941)

In general, this chapter discusses the most significant Iranian and Iraqi Kurdish movements between the two world wars. During this period, social and political movements erupted in Kurdistan and these leading to the formation of political parties, especially by the Iraqi Kurds, which in turn, directly, affected and encouraged the Iranian Kurds to mobilise themselves and eventually to form their own political parties. This chapter focuses on the movement of Simko's rebellion in Iran, Reza Shah's policies towards Kurds and Kurdish political parties in Iraq.

### 1. Simko's rebellion

Referring to the several significance events and transformations in Iran, before the First World War, are crucial to understand the motivation and tribal uprising of Simko's movements in Iran.

The rivalries and non-cooperation between Shi'a and Sunni Kurds in Iran is an example of discord within the Kurdish community. The reign of Karim Khan Zand dynasty (1751-94) clearly illustrates this example.<sup>215</sup> In the middle of the eighteenth century, Karim Khan, a Shi'a Kurd from the Zand tribe near Kermanshah, brought the Iranian government under his control. This was the first time since the eleventh century that a non-Turk or non-Mogul figure was heading the government in Iran. During the period of Karim Khan's reign, Shi'a Kurds came to occupy high leadership positions. This was especially the case in the Kurdish regions. They enjoyed much less support among the Iranian Sunni Kurds.<sup>216</sup>

After the death of Karim Khan Zand, the tribal Turkic Qajar dynasty (1794-1925) came to the power. During the reign of two Qajar Shahs, Fath Ali Shah and Nasir al-Din Shah, the central Iranian government coexisted with powerful and largely self-ruling tribal authorities. This was also the period when the influence of the European powers began to take root in Iran, with Russians encroaching from the north and the British from the south (see chapter V).

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<sup>215</sup> For more information about the Zand dynasty, see John R. Perry, *Karim Khan Zand: A History of Iran, 1747-1779* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1979).

<sup>216</sup> Nerweyi, A. 2002, 57.

During the reign of Nasir al-Din Shah (1848-1896),<sup>217</sup> Iranian military power was weak. Iran did not attempt to reform its military, as Egypt and the Ottoman Empire had done. Although the Iranian government made attempts to increase role of the formal government, *ulama* still had considerable influence over Iranian society. Because of *zakat* contribution (alms. tithes), the ulama had gotten much richer and financially more independent. They also had income from their educational institutions and the *Waqf* (religious endowment). Consequently, Shi'ite religious figures enjoyed a largely independent position within the Iranian society. While the Safavid Shahs had claimed to be descendents of the Hidden Imam (Mohammad Mahdi)<sup>218</sup>, the Qajar shahs made no such divine claims, which left the Shi'ite ulamas as the main religious authority who enjoyed the exclusive right to *ijtihaad* (free interpretation of the religious sources).

During the first half of the nineteenth century, the ulama made use of two concepts: 1. All Shi'ite Muslims must commit to a *mudjtahid*, and 2. Accept his rulings as valid on matters of religious observance: the rulings of living mudjtahids were preferable to all other existing rulings.<sup>219</sup> Since there was no longer a link between the state and Shi'a Islam during the Qajar Dynasty, the faithful were bound to religious dignitaries. The situation enabled the mudjtahids to gain extensive sway over the society. In other words, the ulama maintained the strongest voice in Iranian political life.

The policies of the government of Nasir al-Din, combined with its policy that created a permeable situation for the foreign interference and economic exploitation. This led to unrest among the Iranian people and ultimately to open revolt. In 1890, the Shah awarded a British company the exclusive right to produce and sell Iran's entire tobacco crop. This led to mass protests under the leadership of intellectuals, *Bazaris* and ulama's. Additionally, mudjtahid used their power to *ijtihaad* to block the government's policy via a nationwide boycott of tobacco production. The Shah repealed the concession in 1892. The ulama learned from this experience that the Iranian people were receptive to calls for political activity based on an Islamic framework.<sup>220</sup> Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Iran was overwhelmed by

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<sup>217</sup> For a detail debate about Nasir al-Din Shah, see Abbas Amanat, *The Pivot of the Universe: Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar and the Iranian Monarchy, 1831-1896* (London: Tauris, 1997).

<sup>218</sup> Shi'ites believe that the Hidden Imam lives but nobody can get into contact with him. His return among the people has an eschatological meaning. He is also the *Sahibzaman* (Lord of Time). Waardenburg 2000, 128.

<sup>219</sup> William Cleveland L., *A History of the Modern Middle East* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Simon Fraser University: Westview Press, 2000), 109.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, 113-4.

its debts to the European states, the situation provoked further anger among the populace. Finally, in 1896, Nasir al-Din was assassinated.

The political and economic policies of the Qajars were based on a tribal structure of society. They, therefore, made efforts to preserve the tribal lifestyle. In certain cases, the Qajars tried to foster and manage feuds and rivalries, thereby ruling through dependent chiefs rather than without them. This was the case of the chieftains of Ardalan, Kermanshah, and most Iranian Kurdish regions. Qajars relied on the provocation of hostilities among tribal chieftains in order to buy loyalty from certain sides. Khusro Khan Ardalan, for example, was brought in to the royal palace to ensure the loyalty of his father, who was the Wali (governor).<sup>221</sup>

The absorption of some Kurdish tribal leaders into the state system illustrates another example of the Qajars' political structure. Through marriages, the Qajar's drew some chieftains more closely into the reaches of imperial authority. According to McDowall, Khusro Khan, who succeeded his father as Wali, married one of Fath Ali Shah's numerous daughters.<sup>222</sup> The struggle for power between Mamash and Manguri in the Sawujbulaq (present Mahabad) district is another example of the Kurdish tribal feuds. Rivalries among the tribal leaders for leadership, as well as the loyalty, of some tribes to the government via marital bonds to the Qajar family, were some of the main causes of division among the Kurdish community at the time.<sup>223</sup> The situation changed in the beginning of the twentieth century, when a new movement, generally known as the constitutional revolution, took place in Iran. The wave eventually was to inspire Kurds to attempt to build a more coherent movement for Kurdish nationalism.

The Constitutional Revolution had cultural as well as political effects on the Kurdish communities in Iran. The combination of several factors in the early twentieth century — a decentralized government, a powerful religious organization, merchants and intellectuals — sparked in Iran the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-09.<sup>224</sup> This revolution provided a

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<sup>221</sup> McDowall 1996, 68.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> For a detailed study of Kurdish tribalism in the Ardalan region (presently the province of Kordestan), see Abdulhamid Heyrat Sajadi, *Illat ve Ashayire Kordestan* [tribe and tribalism of Kordestan] (Sanandaj: University of Kordestan 1381 [2003]).

<sup>224</sup> About the history of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution of 1905-9, see Ahmad Kasravi, *Tarikhe Mashruthiye Iran* [History of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution], (Tehran: Negah Publications, 2003); for

foundation for Kurdish nationalism, particularly in Iran. It is, therefore, necessary to analyze this event.

The constitutional revolution is generally viewed as a nationalist religious movement. According to Edward G. Browne, the most popular Western scholar of Iranian culture at the time, the constitutionalist movement that stood for progress, tolerance and freedom insisted that nationalism 'Persia for the Persians, [Iran for the Iranians]' was the force that characterized the movement.<sup>225</sup> During and after the constitutional revolution, the idea of 'Persia for the Persians' compelled Kurds, especially the urban populations, to establish some Kurdish associations in Sawujbulaq, Urumiyeh, Saqqiz, Sinna and Kermanshah. The more urbanized Kurdish communities and Kurdish intellectuals were mostly supportive of the constitutionalist movement, as it offered a hope for relief from the arbitrary and corrupt policies of landlords, chieftains, and governors. One of the popular associations was *Sedaqat* (honesty/loyalty), which was created in 1907 by certain intellectuals in Sinna under the leadership of Mohammad Mardokh. Nerweyi believes that most fundamentally, the members were to swear not to commit falsehood and not to tolerate oppression.<sup>226</sup> The Kurdish nationalist movement was mainly based on the last point. It was fighting not only for self-rule but also against the tribal chieftains, who were deemed responsible for the intertribal rivalries and the backwardness of Kurdish communities.

Unlike the urban intellectuals, Kurdish tribal chieftains and certain Kurdish religious figures were against the constitutionalist movement. In general, they identified with the monarchy and the existing hierarchical system, which they were a part of. Because of the intertwined ideological and political interests of Qajars and tribal leaders, the tribal chiefs were not sympathetic to constitutionalism. Although the tribal chiefs had some autonomy with their own boundaries, their rule was permitted by and depended on the Shah. This situation ensured a certain level of loyalty by the tribal chiefs to the Shah. One of the pillars of constitutionalism was secularism, which had an archenemy, the Shi'ite cleric. The modernist concept is for Mangol Bayat one of the five conventional views of religion and religious leadership in the politics of Iran at the turn of the century. According to Bayat:

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English version see Ahmad Kasravi, *History of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution [Tarikhe Mashrutihye Iran]*, Volume I, tra. Evan Siegel (Costa Mesa, California: Mazda Publications, 2006).

<sup>225</sup> For more discussion of the clerical influence on the Qajar Shahs, especially the role and effect of Sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, see Edward G. Browne, *The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., London: Cambridge University Press, 1966).

<sup>226</sup> Nerweyi, A. 2002, 130.

Modernist concepts and ideas were introduced by the religious dissidents who mobilized the masses, preaching the merits of the movement in mosques and religious schools, wrapping their innovative thought in the traditional language of the Koran and the holy texts. Far from attempting to safeguard Islamic traditions, they called for socio[-]cultural and political changes which, they insist[ed], constituted a return to true Islam.<sup>227</sup>

The founding leaders of this religious reformation were the two famous political and religious figures: Sayyed Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838/39-1897) and his disciple Mohammad Abduh (1849-1905). Afghani is known as a quite political and revolutionary figure, who opposed imperialism and the corrupt Muslim rulers. Abduh is more known as an advocate of reform within the context of Islamic education, particularly in the areas of morality and religion. The ideology of Afghani, pan-Islamism against imperialism, became more clearly defined when most of the Iranian Kurds cooperated with the Ottoman Empire against the Allies in the First World War (Afghani left via Iranian Kurdistan to the Iraqi Kurdistan, when he was deported by the Iranian Shah in 1891).<sup>228</sup> Some of the most important families in Sawujbulaq, such as Ghazi Mohammad's family, supported the *jihad* (holy war) of the Ottoman Empire<sup>229</sup> against the Allies, and especially against the Tsarist Russia, but other Kurds did deals with the Russians.

As above-mentioned, the Constitutional Revolution of Iran in 1905-1909 afforded people more freedom to assemble through association. During this period, Kurdish intellectuals and religious figures established a range of associations throughout most of the Iran's Kurdish regions. These associations formed the basis for the first modern awakenings of the Kurdish national identity in this territory. After the constitutional revolution, Kurds

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<sup>227</sup> Mangol Bayat, *Iran's First Revolution: Shi'ism and the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1909* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 10.

<sup>228</sup> For details about these two figures, see Nikki R. Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani: A Political Biography*, (Berkeley: University of California, 1972); \_\_\_, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani*, (Berkeley: University of California, 1968); Elie Kedourie, *Afghani and Abduh: An Essay on Religious Unbelief and Political Activism in Modern Islam*, (London, 1966); My master thesis Hawar Nerweyi, *De Islam in het Denken van Afghani en Abduh: religieuze inspiratie of politiek opportunisme* [de Islam in the thought of Afghani and Abduh: religious inspiration or political opportunism] (Utrecht: University Utrecht, 2006). [www.nerweyi.blogspot.com](http://www.nerweyi.blogspot.com)

<sup>229</sup> Nerweyi, A. 2002, 133.

became more responsive to modern political and social movements.<sup>230</sup> From the constitutional revolution to the end of the Qajar Empire in 1925, which marked the beginning of the Pahlavi dynasty, the territorial sovereignty of Iran was vulnerable. The north, south, and west of Iran gradually drifted away from the central government. In some parts of the country, relations between the centre and the periphery broke down through movements such as the one in Gilan in the north, under the leadership of Mirza Kochak Khane Jangali, and the movement in the Kurdish area under the leadership of Simko<sup>231</sup>. The Simko movement, which took place right after the First World War, attempted to create an autonomous government in the south-west areas of Lake Urumiyeh.

After the First World War the only great tribal uprising in Iranian Kurdistan against the central government was that of Simk, a chieftain of the large Shikak tribe and confederated his movement with some other Kurdish tribes. He was looking after his own wealth and power instead of entertaining national or ethnic Kurdish concerns. Simko, Ahmad Kasravi notes, fought the Russians on behalf of the Ottoman Empire, and then shifted his alliance to fight in the Russian front against the Azeris. For Kasravi, Simko's movement had tribal character and had nothing to do with nationalism. He refers to Simko as a murderer and bandit. In 1917, Simko killed a leader of the Assyrian people in a bilateral negotiation and proclaimed later that it done for the sake of Iran.<sup>232</sup> For Kasravi and many other Iranian writers Simko was a 'mercenary', who had no grasp of 'civilization'. Some Kurdish writers, however, reject these ideas about Simko and describe him as a hero. They believe that Simko had strong nationalist ideas.<sup>233</sup>

Shikak, after Kalhur, was the second largest Kurdish confederacy in Iran. It grew further by forming a confederacy with some other small tribes. It had reached its greatest autonomy under the leadership of Simko, particularly in the period of 1918-22. In 1919,

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<sup>230</sup> Regarding the influence of the constitutional revolution on Kurds in Iran, see Ali Tatar Nerweyi, *Bizava Siyasi li Kurdistanê: 1908-1927* [the political movements in Kurdistan: 1908-1927], (Duhok: Pires Publisher, 2002), 64-7.

<sup>231</sup> Simko has also been called Semitqo and Ismael Agha.

<sup>232</sup> Ahmad Kasravi, *Tarikhe Hijdah Sallhye Azarbajjan* [The Eighteen Years History of Azarbajjan] (Tehran: Amirkabir, 1982), 454-3.

<sup>233</sup> Mehmed Resul Hawar has not doubt that Simko's uprising was a political and nationalist Kurdish movement, see Mehmed Resul Hawar, *Simko (Esmâ'il Axayî Shukak) u Bizutnewey Netewayetiy Kurd* [Simko and Kurdish nationalist movement], (Stockholm: Apec Publishing, 1996); Sallar Fendy also agrees with Hawar, see Sallar Fendy, *Bizaven Simkoy Shikak: 1919-1926* [Simkoy Shikak movements: 1919-1926], (Hewler: Kurdistan, 1999).



Simko organized a meeting of the most important chieftains of Iranian Kurdistan, to establish an independent Kurdistan -- an open insurrection against the Iranian government.<sup>234</sup> The majority of Simko's operational military successes against the central government took place between March 1921 until July 1922. During this period, his authority covered all Iranian territory west of Lake Urumiyeh and to the south as far as Baneh and Sardasht, as well as the northwestern borders of Iraq, where the British and the Kemalists were still competing for control.<sup>235</sup> Except for the entire Shikak confederacy and the Harki tribe, most of the northern tribes of Iranian Kurdistan and some tribes in southern Iranian Kurdistan took part in Simko's movement. In 1921, Simko's troops occupied Sawujbulaq, according to van Bruinessen, unlike Urumiyeh, its inhabitants were mainly Kurds.<sup>236</sup> Although the Kurds composed one of the largest populations in the Urumiyeh region, in the city centre the Azeri were predominant. Perhaps that was why when Simko's forces occupied the city of Urumiyeh, they did not spare the city from plunder. Khalil Fettahi Ghazi, however, cites another possible motive for the pillage. According to him, the aggression of Simko's troops in Urumiyeh was revenge for the losses they had suffered while capturing Mahabad. According to Fettahi Ghazi, Simko had demanded fifty thousand tomans for his tribesmen killed in Mahabad.<sup>237</sup>

Reza Khan after seizing power via a coup d'état in February 1921, had devoted most of his energies to the building of a modern, disciplined, and cohesive national army, which was hugely instrumental in defeating Simko's uprising. Similar to Atatürk's position vis-a-vis the uprising of Sheikh Sa'id, the movement of Simko was a great test for the modern army of Reza Khan. By 1923, Simko's ventures had not led to any political solution for himself or his followers. He fled to Turkey and then to Iraq. Eventually, Simko was killed in an ambush in 1930, after being insincerely invited by the Iranian government to be a governor of Ushnawiyeh. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century the Kurdish uprisings remained largely old-fashioned and tribal in character, as opposed to modern entities with an interest in nation building. Although Simko asserted his authority over a wide territory, he

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<sup>234</sup> Van Bruinessen, 'A Kurdish Warlord on the Turkish-Persian Frontier in the Early Twentieth Century: Isma'il Aqa Simko', in Atabaki (ed.), *Iran and the First World War: Battleground of the Great Powers* (London: I.B.Tauris & CO. Ltd, 2006), 88.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., 89-90.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>237</sup> Khalil Fettahi Ghazi, *Korteh Mêjoey Binemaleyi Aazi le Wilayeti Mukri* [short history of the Ghazi family in Mukri province], (Hewler: Aras Publishing, 2009), 94.

established no formal organization, no political party to organize his followers, and no formal government or war council.<sup>238</sup>

Simko's movement was essentially a tribal one, but one of the most successful in uniting a number of tribal Kurdish leaders against the Iranian government. In an interview in 1921 with Mustafa Pasha, a nationalist Kurd from Turkey, Simko claimed that at this moment there was no organization, and he maintained that they had no need for such a thing as a flag, since Shikak has already has its own flag.<sup>239</sup> Simko's resistance, according to Hashem Ahmadzadeh and Gareth Stansfield, was inspired mainly by his tribal ambition and lacked organization and a nationalist Kurdish agenda. Both academics proclaimed that although Simko's movement was deficient in terms of an intellectual nationalist discourse, it nevertheless provided the foundations of the Kurdish nationalist movement in Iran.<sup>240</sup> This movement was a reaction to the homogenizing policies of Reza Khan, who sought to build a nation based on the cultural-linguistic imprint of the dominant Persian ethnic group. At the end of Reza Shah's reign, the Kurds had not only mobilized against the centralistic policies of Reza Shah but also found their ambition and activities focused on Kurdish self-determination or self-government. Therefore, it is necessary to analyse Reza Shah's policies in Iran, particularly as they relate to the Kurds, in order to understand one of the important motivation behind the Iranian Kurds' mobilization during the Second World War.

## **2. Iranian Kurds in the period of Reza Shah**

Khosro Mo'tazed remarks, that via the guidance of the British political military officers, a union between Reza Khan and Sayyid Zia al-din Tabatabai was formed, which carried out a coup d'état and eventually established a strong Iranian government.<sup>241</sup> It was essential for the British government to halt any Bolshevik penetration into Iran as it was considered a serious threat against the British colonial possession of India. As noted by Ervand Abrahamian, the

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<sup>238</sup> Van Bruinessen, 'Isma'il Aqa Simko', 2006, 91.

<sup>239</sup> Mojtaba Borzowi, *Uwza'e Siyasi Kurdistan: Az sale 1258 ta 1325* [political situation in Kurdistan: from 1878 to 1945], (Tehran: Fekre now publishing, 1999), 223.

<sup>240</sup> Hashem Ahmadzadeh and Gareth Stansfield, 'The Political, Cultural, and Military Re-awakening of the Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Iran', *Middle East Journal* (Vol. 64, No. 1. winter 2010), 13.

<sup>241</sup> Khosro Mo'tazed, *Tarikhe Panjaho haft saliye Iran dar 'asre Pahlavi: Fi'aliyithaye Jodasiri ve Tajziyetalibane dar Iran az 1296 ta 1325* [fifty-seven years history of Iran in Pahlavi period: separation and disintegration activities in Iran from 1916 until 1945], (Tehran: Maharet Publishing, 2001), 173.

British provided ammunition, supplies and funding for Reza Shah's troops.<sup>242</sup> The coup d'état in February 1921 was synchronous with national and international political crises in Iran. According to Ali Murshadizad, the Treaty (Anglo-Tsarist) of 1907 was still in effect (and was renewed in 1919) and the country was on the threshold of being divided between Great Britain and the newly-built Soviet government.<sup>243</sup> The Soviet Army had occupied northern Iran and there were some insurrections in other parts of the country, such as in Gilan, Khorasan, and Kurdistan. During the First World War, as Murshadizad points out, all strata of the Iranian society, aristocrats, clerics, merchants, and labours, had tired of waiting for a charismatic leader.<sup>244</sup>

Mo'tazed observes that Reza Khan established a uniformed army, asserted his authority over the state, and used his influence to bring Majlis under his control. He created and expanded a modern army. Furthermore, he defeated the uprising that was carried out under the leadership of Simko and, via the *Qahriyeh* (aggressive) forces and by granting concessions to some tribal chieftains, such as Bakhtiari and Lur, established his central authority over regions and tribes throughout the country.<sup>245</sup> The other effective means used to eliminate the tribal character was the construction of a country-wide road and transportation network. As Richard Cottam notes, 'the railroad and new road system enabled the army to patrol formerly inaccessible tribal areas and to ensure the collection of taxes.'<sup>246</sup> Five years into the coup d'état, Reza Khan, having become the decisive authority and appearing as Iran's leader both inside and outside the country, declared himself the king of kings. Reza Shah, founder of the Pahlavi dynasty of 1925-1979, not only worked to modernize the Iranian administrative, educational and legal systems, but also aimed to shape a centralist and military state. Abrahamian observed, 'for the first time since the Safavids, the state was able to control society through extensive instruments of administration, regulation, and domination.'<sup>247</sup>

Sedentarization of the nomads was another modernization process encouraged by Reza Shah. Between the two world wars, Reza Shah used violence to force Kurdish tribes and

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<sup>242</sup> Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982), 117.

<sup>243</sup> Ali Murshidizad, *Roshinvikrane Azeri ve Howiyite Milli ve Qomi* [Azeris intellectuals and national and ethnic identity], (Tehran, 2001), 161.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

<sup>245</sup> Mo'tazed 2001, 174.

<sup>246</sup> Richard W. Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1978), 61.

<sup>247</sup> Abrahamian 1982, 136.

nomads into a settled lifestyle. Due to this campaign, whole tribes were often completely destroyed. The majority of Jalali tribe, for example, who lived on the frontiers between Iran, Turkey and the Soviet Union, were deported to central Iran. Only a small part of the deported Jalali population had survived by the time they returned in 1941. Lur and Galbeghi tribes were also deported to Hamadan and Isfahan and their lands given to Turkish-speaking peoples. Most tribal chieftains were also deported from their homelands. These forced migrations, according to Ghassemlou, suited the interests of the Iranian bourgeoisie, who needed a settled population to form a significant and dependable market.<sup>248</sup> Four important motivations determined the forced migration process and sedentarization of Kurdish tribes and nomads by Reza Shah. Firstly, it made it easier to control the tribes and nomads, who otherwise were inclined to participate in secession movements against the central government. Secondly, as Ghassemlou claims, sedentarization was very much to the advantage of both the Kurdish and Iranian landowners who were able to exploit the peasants and buy their lands for agricultural production.<sup>249</sup> Thirdly, sedentary life-style yielded better tax collection, which was crucial for the enrichment of Reza Shah's treasury. Finally, it was easier to recruit young people to the modern military service from sedentary communities.

In a historical context modernization is used to refer to the particular social and cultural transformation that has occurred in Europe since the Enlightenment. In the course of the nineteenth century and especially during the two world wars, the Islamic world increasingly came under the influence of European expansion. As well as causing political and economic changes, this influence also transformed the social and cultural dimensions of the Islamic world. Atabaki and Zürcher rightly assert that for more than two hundred years the model of European modernity has been perceived as the exclusive model for adopting modernization in non-European societies such as Turkey and Iran.<sup>250</sup> It would be a mistake, however, to consider the modernization process in the Islamic world simply as an extension of the European modernization. This is because the Islamic world, according to Atabaki and Zürcher, did not have an exclusive perception of European modernity as the instrument to implement certain changes that they fervently desired, changes such as those that had transformed a traditional, rural and agrarian society into an urban, secular and industrial one

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<sup>248</sup> Ghassemlou, 'Kurdistan in Iran', in Chaliand 1980, 114.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>250</sup> Atabaki and Zürcher 2004, 1.

in Europe. Modernisation in the Middle East was rather a defensive reaction.<sup>251</sup> In the Middle East, particularly in Iran by Reza Shah and in Turkey by Atatürk, the modernization processes were supported and accelerated by three major developments in communication: 1. The printing press: the distribution and installation of printing presses. 2. Translations: initially a small amount, but later a growing number of books (history, mathematics and novel) translated, printed and published in Turkish, Arabic and Persian. 3. Newspapers.<sup>252</sup>

In general, Reza Shah's policy toward Kurds had two phases. 1- Annihilation of tribalism, destruction of collective tribal armies, and the establishment of military bases in Kurdistan. 2- Prevention of vernacular labour engagements in Kurdistan and prohibition of Kurdish language.<sup>253</sup> During Reza Shah's reign, the Ministry of Culture, as Ghassemlou points out, had literally asked Rashid Yasemy to write a book titled *Kurd ve Piywastigy Nijady ve Tarikhi* [Kurds and their race and historical union]. The whole purpose of this book is to establish a link between the Persian language and culture and the Kurdish language and culture, thereby implying that Kurdish is not really different from Persian.<sup>254</sup> In 1933, the Ministry of Education formed a society named *dar al-mo'allimine 'ali* (the teacher-training college), with the commission to suggest new Persian terms in the arts and sciences.<sup>255</sup>

In the 1930s, the political geography of Iranian Kurdistan was purposefully subdivided. As Ghani Bulourian (who participated in the Republic of Kurdistan government and was a leader of the KDP) observed, the Kurdish district were transferred into the Kordistan and Kermanshah provinces, Ilam was separated from other Kurdish areas, Mukriyan and northern Iranian Kurdistan were assigned to the western Azerbaijan province and all of the Kurdish place names of these regions were deleted. Azerbaijan was also separated into two provinces: west and east Azerbaijan. According to Bulourian, the primary objective of the Iranian government was brought to light in the book by General Razmara, titled *Joghrafiyaye Siyasiye Iran* [political geography of Iran]. Razmara claimed that the majority of the inhabitants of the Kermanshah and Ilam areas were Shi'ites and therefore are

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<sup>251</sup> Ibid., 1-2.

<sup>252</sup> Lewis 2002, 53.

<sup>253</sup> Borzowi 1999, 262.

<sup>254</sup> Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou, *Chil sal Xabat le Penawi Azady: Kortayak le Mejoeyi Hezbi Dimocrati Kurdistanî Iran* [forty years of struggle for freedom: a short history of the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran], (2<sup>th</sup> ed., Vol. 1, 1988), 23.

<sup>255</sup> For detailed information on language reformation in Iran and Turkey see John R. Perry, 'Language Reform in Turkey and Iran', in Atabaki and Zürcher 2004, 238-59.

friendly to the central government. He feared Kordestan Province (Sanandaj), because they had large Kurdish intellectuals, but he nevertheless identified the Mahabad and Mukriyan districts as the centre of Kurdish nationalism and advised officers to be more alert in these areas.<sup>256</sup> Throughout Iran, Reza Shah reinforced his New Order with a modern state bureaucracy. Abrahamian explains how the administration of old provinces, districts and counties were changed according to a new administrative structure:

The old division of few large provinces (*ayalat*) and innumerable small districts (*vilayat*) was abolished. Instead, the ministry was structured into eleven provinces (*ostans*), forty-nine counties (*shahrestans*), and numerous municipalities by governors-general, counties by governors, municipalities by mayors, and some rural districts by official councils appointed by the Interior Minister.<sup>257</sup>

During the twenty years of Reza Shah's reign, the oppression of some ethnic groups in Iran was unprecedented. This Persian autocracy, according to Ghassemlou, was the formal political organisation of Pahlavi's regime. The Persian ethnic group became the law-giving and dominant group. In an attempt to remove the cultural and historical existence of all ethnic groups, Reza Shah gave Persian names to villages and cities, banished some cultural rituals, forbade traditional clothing (such as that of the Kurds).<sup>258</sup> European dress (uniform clothing and the Pahlavian hat) was imposed on the Kurdish people between the late 1920s and 1940. This raises the question: To what extent were these policies applied to or considered acceptable within Kurdish areas? In his memoir, Bulourian recounts those Kurdish villagers who travelled to Mahabad routinely brought along a set of modern trousers, shirts, and hats. Right before entering the city, they took off their traditional clothes and wore the ones that conformed to the standards of Reza Shah's dress policy. The police were known to seize those walking around in traditional clothing and humiliate them publicly.<sup>259</sup> The new dress policy, however, was not a success in Kurdish villages<sup>260</sup> and in some cities people began to protest.

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<sup>256</sup> Ghani Bulourian, *Alekkok: KhatIrate Ghani Bulourian* [green leaf: memorandum of Ghani Bulourian], trans. From Kurdish by Reza Kheyri Mutlaq, (Tehran: Khadimate Farhangiye Resa, 2000), 29.

<sup>257</sup> Abrahamian 1982, 137.

<sup>258</sup> Ghassemlou 1988, 23.

<sup>259</sup> Bulourian 2000, 28.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

Suppression of customs, such as the traditional costume, led to angry remonstrations by the people. Mulla Khalil's uprising in 1928 against the dress policy of Reza Shah is one example of this. The Manguri tribe, under the guidance of its religious leader, rose up in rebellion against the Shah's choice of clothing for them. Borzowi claims that during the uprising forces of Mulla Khalil captured members of the military between the Mahabad and Sardasht districts, a region inhabited by the Manguri tribe, and punished them by removing the tops of their military hats.<sup>261</sup> According to Major General Amir Lashker Khza'i, commandant of Azerbaijan armies, the uprising spread through the entire Kurdish region, including West Azerbaijan. In his telegram to the Shah, he explained that 'Sunnite clerics proclaimed jihad [against dress policy] and they decreed that the dress policy was a *kofar* (blasphemy).'<sup>262</sup> Elimination of Mulla Khalil's movement had two significant consequences: 1- Government control over Kurds was intensified to the point of centrally appointing tribal chiefs, as opposed to the traditional selection of chieftains by the tribes themselves, a policy that continued during the Qajar period. 2- On the other hand, it emboldened the Kurdish clerics and intellectuals to resistance against Reza Shah's policy.<sup>263</sup> Reza Shah's despotic policies might have been one of the reasons behind the rise of Kurdish national aspirations. The cruelty of Reza Shah's regime stimulated antagonism against central control and, after the decline of his regime in 1941, led to the formation of the Kurdish nationalist political party in Iran, called *Jiyani Kurd* (Kurdish Life). This party, commonly referred to as the JK, will be discussed in more details below. Prior to, however, for a comprehensive overview of the situation, it is essential to first review some of the Kurdish political parties in Iraq, which they directly affected to the establishment of the JK party.

### **3. Kurdish political parties in Iraqi Kurdistan**

Political parties are a quintessential product of modern life, having emerged in the nineteenth century in Europe and in the twentieth century in the rest of the world. They now serve a central role in of all political systems, including communism, liberal democracy, dictatorship, and they transcend all religious perspectives whether polytheism, monotheism, or atheism. Because political parties arose from pre-existing divisions within a given community, they

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<sup>261</sup> Borzowi 1999, 255.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid., 256. For general dress code information in Iran, see Houchang Chehabi, 'Dress Codes for Men in Turkey and Iran', in Atabaki and Zürcher 2004, 209-37.

<sup>263</sup> Borzowi 1999, 259.

were often viewed negatively when they made their debut as a political phenomenon. The contempt for political parties was a widespread phenomenon. Isaac Lipschits mentions several examples where the existences of parties are contrary to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community. James Madison, for example, one of the American founding fathers, had little interest in political parties. The president tolerated them as a necessary evil.<sup>264</sup> Such disdain, however, did not stop the emergence and spread of political parties. Today, moreover, the emergence of competing political parties is seen as an important sign of democracy.<sup>265</sup>

Political parties in the modern sense were established for the first time in Iran during the period of the Constitutional Revolution (1905-09), which ended the reign of absolute monarchs in Iranian history. Two major political parties emerged in 1908, the *Inqlabi* (revolutionary) and the *I'tedaly* (moderate).<sup>266</sup> In Kurdistan, prior to the First World War, there were no political parties as such. Instead, the period saw the emergence of groups or organizations connected with cultural associations. It was during the two world wars that Kurdish intellectuals and elites formed political parties within Kurdish communities. The emergence of these new Kurdish political parties was actually a consequence of the collapse of the old empires (such as the Austro-Hungarian, Russian, Ottoman, and Qajar empires) and of the emergence of new nation states (such as Turkey, Iraq, and Syria), which gradually divided up Kurdistan among and within their newly established borders. Below is a discussion of some of the significant Kurdish political movements and political parties after the First World War.

Since the Second World War the most successful Kurdish nationalist movements and some of the most prominent Kurdish nationalist intellectuals have emerged in Iraqi Kurdistan. This shift was, due to events between the two world wars. In this part of Kurdistan, Kurds were officially recognized after the First World War as an ethnic minority in possession of certain rights, including self-government in matters of language, dress, and education. Kurds even served in certain governmental positions. The following factors may have played a role

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<sup>264</sup> Isaac Lipschits, *Ontstaansgeschiedenis van de Nederlandse Politieke Partijen: De Protestants-Christelijke Stroming tot 1940* [Origin-history of the Netherlands political parties: the Protestants-Christian movement until 1940], (Vol. I, Deventer: Uitgeverij Kluwer B.V., 1977), 11.

<sup>265</sup> For more about political parties as a modern phenomenon, see Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

<sup>266</sup> Behrouz Tayarani, *Asnade Ahzabe Siyasi Iran: 1320-1330*, [Political Parties in Iran, A Collection of Documents: 1941-1951], (Vol. 1, Tehran: Publication of Iran National Archives Organization 1997), 12.



in the exceptional freedom of Iraqi Kurdistan: Woodrow Wilson's 14 points for World Peace was the dominant policy in place after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. It recommended autonomy for the minorities formerly under Ottoman rule. In 1919 British policy cited point no. 14 as a reason to avoid political commitments in Kurdistan and established a couple semi-autonomous Kurdish provinces, such as Suleymaniye, where Kurdish intellectuals introduced Kurdish as the administrative and public language.<sup>267</sup> The British policy was also a significant part of the plan for the solving of the overall Kurdish issue in the Sèvres Conference in August 1920.

The official recognition of Kurdish national aspirations was one of the major features of the Treaty of Sèvres. According to Jwaideh 'this Treaty [Sèvres], which provided for the establishment of a Kurdish national state, is regarded as a milestone in Kurdish history.'<sup>268</sup> For the Ottoman Empire, on the other hand, the treaty marked a dramatic defeat. It is signing by the Ottoman delegation, as Atabaki points out, 'effectively eliminated Turkey's sovereignty.'<sup>269</sup> Section III (Articles 62-64) of Part III (Political Clauses) of the Treaty of Sèvres dealt with Kurdistan and Article 63 referred to the Turkish government accepting article 62. Articles 62 and 64 read as follows:

Article 62: A Commission sitting at Constantinople [...] shall draft within six months from the coming into force of the present Treaty a scheme of local autonomy for the predominantly Kurdish areas lying east of the Euphrates, south of the southern boundary of Armenia [...] north of the frontier of Turkey with Syria and Mesopotamia. Article 64: If within one year from the coming into force of the present Treaty the Kurdish peoples within the areas defined in Article 62 shall address themselves to the Council of the League of Nations in such a manner as to show that a majority of the population of these areas desires independence from Turkey, and if the Council then considers that these peoples are capable of such independence and recommends that it should be granted to them, Turkey hereby agrees to execute such a recommendation, and to renounce all rights and title over these areas.<sup>270</sup>

There was no general agreement among Kurds about the borders of Kurdistan because of the disparity between the areas of Kurdish settlement and the political and administrative

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<sup>267</sup> Edmonds 1971, 92.

<sup>268</sup> Jwaideh 1960, 380.

<sup>269</sup> Atabaki and Zürcher 2004, 51.

<sup>270</sup> For the complete Sèvres Treaty, see Hurewitz 1956, 81-7.

boundaries of the region.<sup>271</sup> One of the obstacles facing a Kurdish unity was the Armenian frontier that had, in fact, already been determined by the Article 89 of the Sèvres Treaty. According to this article, the boundaries between Armenia and Turkey in the *Wilayets* of Erzurum, Trebizond, Van and Bitlis were to be subject to the arbitration of the President of the US.<sup>272</sup> The population of some of these Wilayets was mainly Kurdish and without pausing to consult the inhabitants or to determine their ethnic composition, Woodrow Wilson allocated these areas to the Armenian state.<sup>273</sup> The Kurdish nationalists, such as Emin Ali Badir Khan, proposed an alternative map which included Van and an outlet to the sea via Turkey's present Hatay Province.<sup>274</sup> At the time, however, 'the Kurdish nationalists were too weak to effectively press their claims.'<sup>275</sup>

The Kurds disagreed not only about the borders of Kurdistan but also about the kind of autonomy or independence they wanted for themselves. In general, there were four different arguments regarding the self-government for Kurdistan. 1. Autonomy for the Kurds within Ottoman territories, under the flag of the Ottoman Empire with Turkish as the official language, 2. A Kurdish state under the authority of the Iranian government, 3. An independent Kurdistan, and 4. An independent Kurdistan with its own flag and Kurdish as the official language under the authority of the British Empire.<sup>276</sup> However, none of these plans were implemented as the Treaty of Sèvres was replaced by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, which repeated the provisions for the three Arab states but made no mention of an Armenian or a Kurdish state. Since the Lausanne Conference, Kurdish rights have been consistently denied and consequently there have been many insurrections and political movements in Kurdish landsareas.

1- Several uprisings by Sheikh Mahmud in Suleymaniye against the British mandate of Iraq had compelled the British authorities in Iraq to concede to with his demands to a certain extent. The unrest caused by Sheikh Mahmud had actually begun in 1919 and continued to well up until 1932, when he settled for the terms offered by the newly formed Iraqi government. Sheikh Mahmud's ultimate aspiration was not limited to cultural rights. He

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<sup>271</sup> Hakan Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State: Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 38.

<sup>272</sup> Hurewitz 1956, 83. My italic.

<sup>273</sup> Chaliand 1980, 43.

<sup>274</sup> Özoğlu 2004, 40.

<sup>275</sup> Van Bruinessen, 'Kurdish Nationalism and Competing Ethnic Loyalties', 1994.

<sup>276</sup> Nerweyi, A. 2002, 145-6.

had actually aimed for an independent Kurdistan.<sup>277</sup> The British refused Sheikh Mahmud's proposal, insisting that the Kurdish region must all fall under direct British administration. Although the British mandate in Iraq had promised autonomy to the Kurds, that promise was never actually fulfilled by the succeeding Iraqi government. The British had to vigorously press the Iraqi government to even recognize Kurds' cultural rights.<sup>278</sup>

2- Between 1920 and 1925, there was a possibility for a Kurdish state in the Wilayet Mosul.<sup>279</sup> The Mosul issue in 1920s was a hot topic in international politics; the area was claimed both by Iraq and Turkey. The political crisis between Turkey and Iraq on the liability of Wilayet Mosul necessitated the establishment of a Commission within the League of Nations to find a compromise between two new countries. In February 1925, the Commission began an investigation into the Wilayet Mosul issue to determine boundaries between the two countries. The commission's study concluded that the majority of the residents were Kurds. Eventually, the Commission assigned Wilayet Mosul in 1925 to Iraq under two conditions: that Iraq would remain about 25 years under the British mandate and that the Iraqi state would recognize the rights of Kurds to self-rule, allowing them to develop their cultural identity through their own institutions.<sup>280</sup> As Edmonds observed:

In 1925 the League of Nations made it a condition of its Mosul award that 'regard should be had to the desires expressed by the Kurds that officials of Kurdish race should be appointed for the administration of their country, the dispensation of justice, and teaching in the schools, and that Kurdish should be the official language of all these services'.<sup>281</sup>

The influence of oil, however, overrode any other reason or argument. The British were no more inclined to give up the oil in Iraq than the Turks were willing to see the emergence of a Kurdish state in the region. In 1926, the Turkish and the British governments agreed that 10% of the oil proceeds, from the disputed region would be given, the former while the British promised not to interfere with Kurdish and Armenian issues in the future. In return, Turkey

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<sup>277</sup> Charles Tripp, *A history of Irak* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 57.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>279</sup> Edmonds 1971, 93.

<sup>280</sup> Tripp 2000, 87.

<sup>281</sup> Edmonds 1971, 93.

had to forgo any claim on Wilayet Mosul.<sup>282</sup> The British delivered its end of these promises at the treaty that they signed with the Iraqi government in 1930, which also marked the establishment of an independent Iraqi state. Unlike the agreement of the League of Nations, however, the Anglo-Iraqi treaty included no section on the rights of minorities.<sup>283</sup> In 1932, under the pressure from the British, the League of Nations recognized the sovereignty of the Iraqi state and in the same year Iraq became a member of the League of Nations. According to Bert Cornillie, the League of Nations insisted that the Iraqi government provide guarantees regarding the recognition of the Kurdish language (Sorani) as the official language in the Kurdish areas, alongside the Arabic language. But by the time Iraq had become a member of the League of Nations in 1932, Cornillie claims an Arabization policy was already a fact in Kurdish schools in Mosul, Kirkuk and Arbil.<sup>284</sup>

Kurdish leaders and intellectuals opposed the treaty and the Arabization policy of the Iraqi government, but there was no national unity within the Kurdish community. A transnational Kurdish political party in Iraqi Kurdistan was not to be formed until well into the late 1930s, about couple years after the independence of Iraq. There had been virtually no manifestation of political Kurdistan nationalism in Iraq.<sup>285</sup> This changed drastically in the early 1940s, when the new educated group of officers and intellectuals took up the cause of Kurdish ethno-nationalism. According to Vali, this period also marked the beginnings of the modern nationalism in Iranian Kurdistan.<sup>286</sup> This group of officers and intellectuals became the main rivals to the traditional Kurdish leadership, the tribal chieftains and Sheikhs. The nationalist movement the new men built favored the rights of the peasants and sought to liberate them from oppressive landlords.

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<sup>282</sup> Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan* (London, Zed Books, 1992), Persian tra., Ibrahim Yuonesie, *Jâmi`a-shinâsî-yi mardum-i Kurd (âghâ, Sheikh u dowlat). Sâkhtârâ-yi ijtimâ`î u siyâsî-yi Kurdistân* (Tehran: Nashr-i Pânîz, 1999), 393.

<sup>283</sup> Bert Cornillie & Hans Declercq (red.), *In de Schaduw van Saddam: Het Koerdische Experiment in Irak* [in the shadow of Saddam: the Kurdish experiment in Iraq], (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Bulaaq, 2003), 64.

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>285</sup> FO 371/24560, 'Russia and the Kurds', 15 February 1940.

<sup>286</sup> Abbas Vali, 'Desthelati Siyasi we Hakmiyet le Komari Kurdistan' [political power and sovereignty in Republic of Kurdistan], *Gzing*, No. 13, autumn 1997, 31. See also his article 'Making of Kurdish Identity in Iran', *Critique* (No. 7, 1995).

In 1939, under the leadership of Rafiq Hilmi, some of the Kurdish officers and patriotic intellectuals in Iraqi Kurdistan established a secret party called *Hiva* (Hope).<sup>287</sup> The Hiva was a modern urban-based political organization, surrounded by figures of the conservative class.<sup>288</sup> The initial branches of this political party were already in existence in bigger Kurdish population centres. They focused mainly on urban areas and away from the traditional mountainous and tribal environments. The most popular slogans of this party were: 'Unity of all four parts of Kurdistan (Greater Kurdistan)' and 'Demand an independent Kurdish state'. Their reformist slogans were shaped around the appeals for an administration by Kurdish representatives, education by Kurdish teachers and scholars, construction of hospitals, schools, and railways in the Kurdish region. The ideological framework of the Hiva movement was structured around advocacy for agrarian reform, the rights of peasants, and opposition to landlords and tribal chieftains.<sup>289</sup>

In retrospect the movement's rhetorical opposition to landlords and tribal chieftains seems hollow, however, considering some of their activities and the composition of their leadership. According to McDowall, Hiva had more than a few members who were landlords, Sheikhs and chieftains, yet there were virtually no peasants.<sup>290</sup> At the time, Sheikhs, tribes and tribal chiefs had more control over the socio-political situation in Kurdistan. So in spite of its apparent political ideology, Hiva then had no choice but to work together with some tribal chiefs. Cooperation with tribal chiefs, according to Edmund Ghareeb, weakened the Hiva movement after 1940, causing its leadership to assume more of a tribal character.<sup>291</sup> The participation of some Hiva members in Mulla Mustafa Barzani's uprising of 1943-45 is considered an example of Hiva's inclination toward a tribal character. They had chosen Barzani as a leader mainly because of Barzani's strong tribal influence and his ability to provide troops. The political polarization of the Hiva party began during the period of Barzani rebellion in 1943-45.

The last significant stage of military conflict between Barzani's troops and the Iraqi government was at the end of the summer of 1945. In this battle, Barzani had enormous

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<sup>287</sup> Ibrahim Ahmed, 'Le Birehweyekanim: Damezrandni Liqi Komalayi JK' [from my memories: establishing JK Society's filial], *Gzing*, No. 13, autumn 1997, 45.

<sup>288</sup> Vali 2003, 85.

<sup>289</sup> Abdullah Mardokhi, 'Komalayi Jiyaneweyi Kurd [the JK] u Komalayi Hiva' [Revival Kurdish Organization and Hiva Organization], *Gzing*, No. 13, autumn 1997, 60.

<sup>290</sup> McDowall 1996, 289-90.

<sup>291</sup> Edmund Ghareeb, *The Kurdish Question in Iraq* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1981), 35.

military success. The defeat of the Iraqi government was not only a humiliation for Iraqi government, a state viewed as an ally and a part of the British sphere of direct influence, but also a great political embarrassment for the British reputation in the region. With help from the British Air Force and some aghas who had sided with the Iraqi government, the Barzani rebellion was eventually defeated. Subsequently, Barzani, with many supporters took refuge in Iranian Kurdistan in October 1945. In recognition that some tribes had joined with Barzani, the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs had stated that the Iraqi 'Ministry of Domestic Affairs' endeavour to separate some tribes [Zebari] from [the Barzani movement] ended with result.'<sup>292</sup> Departure of Barzani into Iran also marked the end of the Hiva movement.

Two other important reasons explain the polarization that led to the collapse of Hiva: members were divided between right- and left-wing ideology and whether or not to support the Barzani insurgency. According to Shemzini, the right-wing within the Hiva movement, under the leadership of Hilmi, clung to looking forward to assistance from Britain. This wing believed that Britain was a great power and that its influence in the region could play a decisive role in the question of Iraqi Kurdistan. They argued that the Soviet Union would not support the Kurds due to their fear of an independent Kurdistan. According to Shemzini, the right-wing, suspecting that it might provoke an angry reaction by the British, did not want anything to do with the Barzani movement. The left-wing, on the other hand, as Shemzini points out, believed that the Soviets offered rescue, both practically and ideologically, from Britain and other overlords. This wing also assisted the Barzani rebellion against the Iraqi government.<sup>293</sup> In 1944 Hiva organised a conference in Kirkuk. In this conference, the right and left wing supporters of the party finally broke ties and the party became officially divided into different new political parties.<sup>294</sup>

Kotchera writes, in the summer of 1945 Hiva actually disintegrated into three political parties: Shurish (Revolution), Azadi (Freedom), and Rizgari Kurd (Kurdish Liberation). The Shurish Party was formed mainly by the Kurdish communist group within the Hiva movement, taking its name from its journal, Shurish. The Rizgari Kurd Party, although short-lived, had greater popular support and preserved the largest number of members, as many as

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<sup>292</sup> FO 371/45341, British Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 17 September 1945.

<sup>293</sup> Shemzini 2006, 264-7.

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.*, 267-8.

6.000.<sup>295</sup> Rizgari Kurd emphasized unity between Kurds and maintained contact with Barzani. As the British Security Defence Office in Baghdad noted, '[Rizgari Kurd] claims to embrace all Kurdish nationals [and] it has contacts with those Barzans who are now refugees in Persia.'<sup>296</sup> As the Iraqi government could not eliminate Barzani's movement on its own, it sought British support a fact illustrated by in a letter from Rizgari Kurd to the UN:

When the world war ended in the glorious victory of democracy the Kurdish nation in Iraq renewed its political activity to regain its denied rights. But the Iraqi Government supported by British imperialism is trying to put down every national movement which draws the Kurds nearer to liberation and self-determination.<sup>297</sup>

In another message to a conference of British, US and Soviet foreign affairs representatives, Rizgari Kurd underlined the following points regarding the Kurdish question and peace in the Middle East.

1- We support endeavours by our Kurdish brothers and Azeris in Iran to attain autonomy and establish a democratic regime; and their struggle against imperialism and its allies. 2- We would like to draw attention on the Kurdish situation in Turkey, for the Turkish fascist government brutally suppresses Kurds and subjects them to a policy of Turkification. 3- Kurds in Iraq are enduring appalling circumstances. British imperialism and the Iraqi fascist government hold fast all Kurdish rights, as exemplified by Barzan's destroyed villages and districts and persecuted the Kurdish patriots.<sup>298</sup>

By the last year of the Second World War, the political activities of Hiva Party had spread from the Kurdish urban centres throughout Iraqi Kurdistan and even into Iranian Kurdistan after the occupation of Iran by the Great Powers. After the party split into various groups, however, there was no mother party that could represent itself as the umbrella entity encompassing all of its offshoots. Such an entity emerged in Iraqi Kurdistan by 1946 with the establishment of the KDP of Iraq.

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<sup>295</sup> Kotchera 2003, 190-1. According to McDowall, Hiva is disintegrated in Rizgari and Shurish parties. McDowall 1996, 294.

<sup>296</sup> FO 371/52369, 'Kurdish problems: Iraqi-Kurdistan relations', July 1946.

<sup>297</sup> FO 371/52369, 'Kurdish problems: Iraqi-Kurdistan relations', 18 January 1946.

<sup>298</sup> Shemzini 2006, 276-7.

In 1946, while in Iranian Kurdistan, Barzani sent one of his representatives, Hamzeh Abdullah, to Iraqi Kurdistan for an eventual establishment of a political party, one that was similar to the political party in Iranian Kurdistan. According to Ibrahim Ahmed, Hamzeh Abdullah said that the Soviet proposal for a Kurdish political party in Iraq could be based on that of the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran and under the leadership of Mulla Mustafa Barzani.<sup>299</sup> Massoud Barzani, however, claims that the formation of the KDP of Iraq was not influenced by the Soviets, stating:

In light of the successful founding of the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDP) and the lesson of the Barzani Revolt of 1943-1945, the Kurdish struggle clearly required the founding of the KDP of Iraq, named after its Iranian counterpart.<sup>300</sup>

Ahmed, together with Abdullah, organized the First Party Conference in Baghdad in 1946. The conference proclaimed the establishment of a new Kurdish political party in Iraq, called the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP).<sup>301</sup> Thus the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iraq was officially established on August 16, 1946. Although not present at the congress, the body also elected Mustafa Barzani as the first president of the party.

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<sup>299</sup> Ahmed 'Le Birehweyekanim', *Gzing*, No. 13, autumn 1997, 51-5.

<sup>300</sup> Massoud Barzani, *Mustafa Barzani and the Kurdish Liberation Movement: 1931-1961* (USA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 107.

<sup>301</sup> Ahmed 'Le Birehweyekanim', *Gzing*, No. 13, autumn 1997, 51-5.



## 4 Conclusion

The Kurdish nationalists were in the process of establishing an internationally recognized autonomous government in their territories. This began in the second half of the nineteenth century with the concurrent uprisings of Sheikh Ubeydullah and his families and the secular family of Badir Khan of Botan. The power struggle between the abovementioned families continued until just after the First World War. It is questionable, however, whether Badir Khans, Shemdinans and other Kurdish movements could be considered as nationalist movements per se prior to World War I, because during that period, religion and religious figures were more significant in the region than *Kurdayeti* (Kurdistaness). After World War I, however, Kurdish nationalism emerged as an absolute political movement defined by political loyalties with the ultimate aim of establishing a homogeneous nation-state.

The victorious Great Powers of the First World War organized various international conferences after the war, such as those at the Mudros Armistice, San Remo, Sèvres and Lausanne. One of the positive outcomes for ethnic minorities in these conferences, as at the Sèvres conference, was the recognition of self-determination for ethnic minorities, such as Kurds, within the Ottoman Empire. However, at other conferences, like that in Lausanne, some little recognition was obtained for ethnic minorities. Therefore, Kurdish areas in general, rebelled against the newly formed central governments that were based on nation-states. There were four large organized Kurdish rebel uprisings in Turkey as well as two in Iraq and one in Iran. In Turkey and Iraq there were institutions behind the uprising, including political parties such as the Azadi, Khoybun and Hiva. Political activities of these uprisings were largely organized by political parties, but mainly the religious figures and elites were the ones making policy. The formation of political parties was a new phenomenon for the Kurdish community, one which had not occurred until the First World War.

The essential foundation of the Kurdish insurrection was the Kurd's desire to safeguard their rights and preserve their identity. To establish Turkey and Iran as modern nation-states, their respective leaders Atatürk and Reza Shah promulgated major modernization reforms. This reform and modernization process in both countries led to a massive pressure on previously unmolested indigenous peoples. Forced migration, settlement

of nomads and semi-nomads and the prohibition of major parts of the ethnic minorities' identities, such as language, clothes, and schools, drastically affected the Kurds.<sup>302</sup>

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<sup>302</sup> Reza Shah's modernization process did not last as long as that of Atatürk, which continued in Turkey but with different norms and values, such as the authorization of Islamic movements under the determinate role of the military.

## **CHAPTER IV. THE REPUBLIC OF KURDISTAN**

The occupation of Iran by the Allied forces (the Soviet Union and the Great Britain) in 1941 gave the Iranian people the opportunity to openly establish political parties. In this period, the Iranian Kurds also obtained more freedom as an ethnic group to form their own political parties. The ultimate aspiration of this movement was the creation of a Kurdish nation-state. Like other nations that had built sovereign nation-states, Kurds also wanted to exercise their self-government. To what extent, however, was this aspiration accepted by the international community?

This chapter delves into the establishment of a new political party that was based on democratic principles and which played a key role in establishing the Republic of Kurdistan. The leaders and socio-political circumstances of the Republic of Kurdistan are analyzed through the following questions. The Kurds political aspirations were finally realized in the form of a self-administered government, but to what extent was this embraced by the whole Kurdish community? How much solidarity and national unity existed among different tribes in Iranian Kurdistan? To what extent had Pan-Islamism infiltrated Pan-Kurdism? Similarly, to what extent had tribalism infiltrated Kurdistaniness? Which factors led to the weakening and the eventual fall of the nascent Republic of 1946?

### **1 The outbreak of the Second World War in Iran and the emergence of Kurdish political activities**

The Second World War was the amalgamation of several originally separate military conflicts that were fought on a global scale among the members of two alliances from 1939 to 1945. The most dramatic expansion of the conflict took place on June 22, 1941, when Germany entered the territory of the Soviet Union. Although this devastating war started in September 1939 in Europe, it soon spread beyond continental Europe. On August 25, 1941, the Allies invaded Iran. On December 7, 1941, Japan bombed the United States Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbour, compelling the United States to declare war on Japan, and in February 1943 the British Commonwealth Eighth Army crossed the border from Libya into Tunisia, eventually transferring the command of the Eighth Army from the Middle East Command to the Allied

Joint Command for the Mediterranean. The Middle East remained quiet for the remainder of the war.<sup>303</sup>

Before the German invasion of the Soviet Union, Germany tried to use Iran as a military base against the Soviet Union. The Allies needed Iran as a supply route to the Soviets. The British and Soviets had concerns over the presence of the German fifth column and they sent a note to the Iranian government demanding the expulsion of Germans.<sup>304</sup> Activities of Germans in Iran were illustrated in a letter by the British War Office to the Military Mission, according to which, 'thousands of Germans with special orders from German Legation hold important positions in Iranian industry, to sabotage main sources of Iranian revenue when Hitler gives word.'<sup>305</sup> Sayyid Mohammadamini Sheikholislami Mukri (Hêmin), a famous national Kurdish poet of the twentieth century who was active in the formation of the Republic of Kurdistan, described the Germans' activities through the press in Iran in the following words:

Some pictures and youth magazines were published via collaboration of the German Ambassador in Tehran. They write favourable articles about Nazism and make propaganda for Hitler's Germany.<sup>306</sup>

As noted above, eventually the Allies asked the Iranian government to end German activities and deport the German personnel from Iran. Their message stated:

We [Britain and Soviets] and you [Iran] both want peace. War prepared by German agents brought starvation to rich and prosperous European countries. We come as friend to save Iran's freedom.<sup>307</sup>

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<sup>303</sup> For more detail on this topic, see Alan John Percival Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War* (London, 1961); detailed information for the Second World War in Europe see John Keegan (ed.), *The Times Atlas of the Second World War* (London: Times Books, 1989); Second World War and its relation with Middle East, see Walter Z. Laqueur, *Confrontation: The Middle East War and World politics* (London: Wildwood House, 1974).

<sup>304</sup> Nikki R. Keddie, *Roots of Revolution: An Interpretive History of Modern Iran* (Yale University: Vail-Ballou Press, 1981), 113.

<sup>305</sup> WO, 106/2167, 'Operations XVIII: Persian Gulf and Iran (19-10-1940/09-09-1941)', 19 August 1941.

<sup>306</sup> Hêmin Mukriyani, edited by Sayran Hikmet and Sardar Shamzaw, *Diwani Hêmin Mukriyani* [poetical works of Hêmin Mukriyani], (Iraq Kurdistan Publisher, 2005), 60.

<sup>307</sup> WO 106/2167, 'Operations XVIII', 19-8-1941.

Upon Reza Shah's refusal of their demand, British and Soviet troops invaded Iran. A few weeks after the conquest of Iran, the Shah was deported to South Africa, where he died in 1944.

The presence of foreign powers in Iran changed the political atmosphere in the country. Reza Shah was removed from power and Iran was now divided into three zones: Soviet troops were in the north, British in the south and Tehran and other areas that remained unoccupied. Meanwhile, some ethnic groups, namely Kurds, were once more aroused with hopes of achieving their national aspirations. There were a number of noteworthy factors that increased the Iranian Kurds' ambition to establish a self-ruling government or autonomy. Many authors refer to the role of the Great Powers, specially the Soviets, who provided the Kurds in Iran with the possibility of autonomy. As McDowall pointed out, 'it was the power vacuum during the Second World War that provided the conditions in which this idea [ethnic nationalism] could take powerful root.'<sup>308</sup> The Soviets, however, had no such plans for the Kurds in Iran and when the Republic of Kurdistan was formed, the Soviet Union was not happy (see Chapter V). Some other authors believe that the 'national suppression' of the Kurds during Reza Shah's reign was to a 'great extent' the reason behind the Iranian Kurds' desire to built 'national institutions' after August 1941.<sup>309</sup> Farideh Koohi-Kamali, along the line of Borzowi's argument, believes that the situation in the 1940s in Iranian Kurdistan, 'to a great extent, was the result of the social, political, and economic changes which were introduced by the new ruler of the country in the 1920s and 1930s.'<sup>310</sup> But it must also be noted that the political and military activities of the Iraqi Kurds in Iraq and in Iranian Kurdistan also had a great effect on the Iranian Kurds.

During the time of Reza Shah, Kurds were suppressed and their language and some cultural customs were prohibited. Kurds in Iraq, on the other hand, under the mandate of the British, had relative freedom. This relative freedom not only allowed Kurds to organize themselves in various organizations, particularly within political parties such as above mentioned Hiva party, but also enabled them to produce literary publications in the Kurdish language. Although, from the perspective of the Iraqi government, the Hiva party was illegitimate in its origins, it was able to actively propagate its nationalist activities outside

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<sup>308</sup> McDowall 1996, 231.

<sup>309</sup> Borzowi 1999, 260-69.

<sup>310</sup> Farideh Koohi-Kamali, *The Political Development of the Kurds in Iran: Pastoral Nationalism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 91.

the borders of Iraq, particularly in Iranian Kurdistan. Three Iraqi Kurdish officers who were members of the Hiva party worked with some Iranian Kurds to launch the Kurdish nationalist party in Mahabad. These officers also played a key role in the organizing and dissemination of the political ideology of the JK party in Iranian and Iraqi Kurdistan. Additionally, print capital, such as novels, theatre plays, poems, magazines that were published in Iraqi Kurdistan, increased Kurdish ethnic nationalism in Iran.<sup>311</sup> As Hêmin notes, 'the Kurdish leaders sent people to Iraq to take Kurdish newspapers and magazines.'<sup>312</sup> It must also be remembered that the political and military participation of Barzani and his followers, when they were forced to flee to Iran, in the Republic of Kurdistan had substantial influence over the course of affairs at the time. As Massoud Barzani points out, 'Barzani again played a leading role in bringing them [some recalcitrant tribes] under the rule of the republic.'<sup>313</sup>

The intervention of the Allied Powers in Iran in August 1941 was seen by many Iranian Kurds as an opportunity to gain a measure of autonomy for Kurdistan. In August 1941, the Allied Forces created a buffer-zone in Iranian Kurdistan, which was divided into three zones: Northern Kurdistan until Ushnawiyeh and Miyanduab was under the sphere of Soviet troops, southern Kurdistan up to Sanandaj went under the control of the British, and a Kurdish-held territory from Mahabad to Saqqiz was located between the two super powers,<sup>314</sup> and contained a small force from the Iranian army. The situation offered a priceless opportunity for Kurdish self-government or for obtaining a certain degree of legitimate autonomy. A month into the occupation, on September 25, 1941, three officers from the Allied Forces, two British and an American, visited Mahabad and meet with Ghazi Mohammad, the future president of the Republic of Kurdistan. In this meeting, according to Kotchera, Ghazi Mohammad described the 'map of the Greater Kurdistan' and asked to be put in contact with the British supreme command. The British officers, conversely, encouraged him not to pursue the topic of Kurdistan.<sup>315</sup> Sir Reader Bullard, the British Ambassador in Iran stated in a letter to the Foreign Office:

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<sup>311</sup> Mahmud Mulla Izzat, *Jemhori Kurdistan: Lêkolînehweyeki Mêjroyi u Siyasi* [Kurdistan Republic: political and historical investigation], (Second Edition, Slemani: Sardam Publishing, 2003), 67.

<sup>312</sup> Mukriyani 2005, 69.

<sup>313</sup> Barzani 2003, 101.

<sup>314</sup> Jwaideh 1960, 713-4.

<sup>315</sup> Kotchera 2003, 200.

Our [British] resolve not to encourage any Kurdish aspirations which might have unfortunate effect in Turkey as well as here [Iran] and in Iraq.<sup>316</sup>

Disappointed by the British, the Kurds then turned toward the Soviet Union. Seeking an alternative in a rather desperate move, Ghazi Mohammad opened the political conversation with the Soviets.<sup>317</sup>

It was the interest and priority of the Soviet Union to maintain the security of the Iranian areas under its protectorate and to respect the Iranian territorial sovereignty. In November 25, 1941, in a visit upon the invitation by Mir Jafar Baqirov,<sup>318</sup> Prime Minister of the Soviet Azerbaijan, Soviet political officers in northern Iranian Kurdistan gathered some important Kurdish leaders and brought them to Baku as a delegation. Bullard, in his note regarding this journey by the Kurds to Baku, remarks, Soviet political officer collected Kurdish chiefs 'from Saqqiz and Sawujbulaq areas and took them to Tabriz as "guests" and sent them to Baku.'<sup>319</sup> Besides the fact that the incident had caused an international political issue at the time (see chapter V), the meeting of the Kurdish leaders with Baqirov in Baku is interesting because it raises some important points. According to Ghassemlou, whose father was also a member of the delegation, some 30 Kurdish chiefs, under the leadership of Ghazi Mohammad, who at the time was a famous political and religious figure, without a formal representative of a Kurdish political party or movement and with an assortment of incompatible ideas, visited Baku.<sup>320</sup> Kurds in Baku made visits to, as stated by William Eagleton, 'factories, theatres, farms, and cinemas [and meet] Baqirov who spoke in the general terms of Soviet friendship and of Kurdish-Azerbaijani brotherhood.'<sup>321</sup>

The Kurdish delegate to Baku had discussions with mainly, cultural and political themes. Although behind this journey lay a political context, it was ostensibly a cultural delegation. In a dialogue with the Soviet Ambassador in Tehran, regarding the Kurdish group's trip to Baku, Bullard notes that the Soviet diplomat affirmed that 'visit to Baku was

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<sup>316</sup> FO 371/27245, '1941, Persia File No. 5068', December 1, 1941.

<sup>317</sup> Kotchera 2003, 200.

<sup>318</sup> After Stalin's death, Baqirov were executed for treason for his association with Lavrenti Beria in April 1956.

<sup>319</sup> FO 371/27245, '1941, Persia File No. 5068', December 1, 1941.

<sup>320</sup> Ghassemlou 1988, 61.

<sup>321</sup> William Eagleton, *The Republic of Kurdistan of 1946* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 23. Most sources of Eagleton were based on recounts of some high ranking officials, such as Menaf Karimi who was a deputy leader of the KDP and minister of education, of the Republic of Kurdistan.

purely cultural.<sup>322</sup> The purpose of the trip in actuality, according to Ghassemlou, was more for the Kurds and the Soviets to get to know each other. The Soviets wanted to be acquainted with the Kurdish leaders and to extract any information that they could from them. The Kurdish leaders, on the other hand, wished to directly observe Soviet society.<sup>323</sup> Politically, the conversation between Baqirov and some Kurdish leaders was, according to some writers, a volatile. Ghassemlou notes that the members of the delegation had returned with gladness and with heightened hopes for winning Kurdish rights.<sup>324</sup> In his memoir, Haji Baba Sheikh, a member of the delegation to Baku and future Prime Minister of the Republic of Kurdistan, refers to the following exchange with Baqirov:

We understood each other very well, because we both could speak the Azeri language. In the beginning, Ghazi Mohammad spoke of the oppression suffered by Kurds throughout history under different foreign authorities and eventually he told that we, as representatives of Kurds, expected help from the great Soviet Union. Baqirov replied that as long as the Soviet Union was in existence, freedom of Kurds and Azeris in Iran are guaranteed and the Soviets shall back the Kurdish uprising and movements. Subsequently, Baqirov announced that Kurdish areas are dependent on both Azerbaijan's provinces. When I heard this statement, I answered quickly: we are Kurdish representatives and fight for freedom. Kurdistan is currently dependent on the Iranian Shah and now you want us to be a part of Azerbaijan, which is no better than falling out of the frying pan into the fire. If Kurds are to remain a subject people, then it is better to live under the control of the Shah than that of Azerbaijan. The meeting was terminated following my speech and we returned to home without results.<sup>325</sup>

The areas under the protectorate of the British sphere, intended to protect Iraqi eastern oil fields such as Kirkuk, was centred on Kermanshah. For many reasons, this region was relatively quiet compared to the northern Iranian Kurdistan in terms of the promotion of and mobilization of the Kurdish ethnic nationalism. One of the reasons behind this peacefulness was the British policy in Kermanshah. British officers had more experience (Mesopotamia and India) in terms of convincing tribal chieftains to submit to the British control. Secondly,

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<sup>322</sup> FO 371/27245, '1941, Persia File No. 5068', December 8, 1941.

<sup>323</sup> Ghassemlou 1988, 62.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid., 65; Kotchera 2003, 201.

<sup>325</sup> Emer Farooqi, *Haji Baba Sheikh: Serok Wezirani Hekomati Milli Kurdistan* [Haji Baba Sheikh: Prime Minister of the National Government of Kurdistan], (Suleymaniye: Suleymaniye Publishing, 2008), 36-7. Translation by author of this dissertation.



Britain had functioned as a link between tribal leaders and the Iranian government and ensured some degrees of independence or autonomy for some tribes. This was an important reason that the tribes remained loyal to the central government.<sup>326</sup> Another reason for the aforementioned relative calmness in Kermanshah was the somewhat feeble enthusiasm in the region for Kurdish ethnic nationalism. In this region Shi'ites were the predominant population and since ancient times Shi'ites have had a strong relationship with the central government in Iran. The central government was not overly concerned about the people in Kermanshah as they were co-religionists. But shortly after the arrival of the Allies in Iran, the uprising by Hama Rashid Khan Baneh spread out into the districts of Baneh, Saqqiz, Sardasht, and in the capital of the Kordestan Province (Sanandaj).

One of the main events in Iran, after the exile of Reza Shah, was the restoration of the tribes.<sup>327</sup> Before the exile, many tribal leaders were in prison or had fled outside Iran. One of those tribal leaders was Hama Rashid Khan. Hama Rashid, chief of a section of the Baneh Begzadeh, had crossed the border of Iraq with some followers and gathered supporters in Iran in order to, according to Elphinston, establish his authority as a semi-autonomous chieftain in the Sardasht-Baneh-Meriwan region.<sup>328</sup> The presence of the Soviet troops in Baneh caused concern on the British side. West Azerbaijan, until a line was drawn across from Ushnawiyeh to Miyanduab, was occupied by the Soviet forces, according to the agreed-upon borders by Soviets and the British. Shortly after the evacuation of the Soviet military forces in September 1941 Hama Rashid captured Baneh.<sup>329</sup> At the same time, the tribal chieftains of the Meriwan areas captured the Bashmak frontier post, thus opening the way for an eventual seizure of Meriwan.<sup>330</sup>

According to Keywan Azad Anwer's biography of Hama Rashid, in order to institute some form of administrative and authoritative order in the city of Baneh, Hama Rashid

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<sup>326</sup> WO 106/5961, 'Tribal Map 1944-45: main tribes west & north west of Kermanshah', March 20, 1945. British officers spend several weeks collecting information on the socio-political situation of tribes living in Kermanshah regions.

<sup>327</sup> Kaveh Bayat, 'Urumiyeh ve Taharokate Komiteye Najat', [Urumiyeh and Committee Freedom's movement], *Goft-o-gu* [dialogue], *Journal on Culture and Society* (No. 53, August 2009), 8.

<sup>328</sup> W. G. Elphinston, 'The Kurdish Question', *Royal Institute of International Affairs* (Vol. 22, No. 1, Jan. 1946), 97.

<sup>329</sup> Keywan Azad Anwer, *Hama Rashid Khani Baneh* [Hama Rashid Khan of Baneh], (Hewler: Badir Khan Publishing, 2001), 77-9.

<sup>330</sup> Hassan Arfa, *The Kurds: An Historical and Political Study* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 67.

appointed civil servants, including Mulla Rehim Ghazi as the head of the court, Hama Amin Begi Goli as governor and Hama Amin Beg, the brother of Hama Rashid, as the chief of the police.<sup>331</sup> In his declaration of intent to bring order to the city, some of the points outlined by Hama Rashid were as follows:

Our fighters must be withdrawn from the city and beyond its limits, government officials must be protected by our fighters, the surrendered soldiers can decide to stay here or transfer to another city.<sup>332</sup>

Furthermore, Hama Rashid similarly attempted to expand his authority to Saqqiz and Sardasht. He had captured these cities soon after Baneh. Later he gathered his troops to also capture Sanandaj in December 1941. According to McDowall, however, he did not go through with this military plan. On his way to the city, British officers strongly advised him against the move, and he abided their advice.<sup>333</sup> Hama Rashid with the collaboration of several tribal leaders in the districts of Sardasht and Meriwan forced the Iranian government to formally recognize his governorate, and the weakness of the central government ensured the petition's success. The Iranian government appointed Hama Rashid in May 1942 as an official governor of Baneh and the Iranian military units were kept outside Baneh-Sardasht districts.<sup>334</sup> Actually, the Iranian administration of the time recognized Hama Rashid's authority as a formal tribal semi-autonomy and Iranian government allowed monthly payment of thirteen thousand tomans to manage the city of Baneh.<sup>335</sup> His governorship was recognized until 1944, when Hama Rashid conquered the territorial areas under the authority of Mahmud Khan Kanisanan in Meriwan, who had been recognized as governor there in 1941. As some Kurdish tribes collaborated with the Iranian army in the offensive against Hama Rashid, he

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<sup>331</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>332</sup> Complete manifesto of Hama Rashid, see Anwer 2001, 81. This writer speculates that Hama Rashid is a Kurdish hero and argues that Hama Rashid is not a traitor, but that his entire life was spent serving the Kurds and Kurdistan.

<sup>333</sup> McDowall 1996, 233.

<sup>334</sup> Arfa 1966, 70. For details concerning the confrontation of Hama Rashid with the Iranian government, see Anwer 2001, 77-109.

<sup>335</sup> Mohammad Hossein Khosro Panah, 'Hezbe Tudeye Iran ve Tahawolate Kurdistan', [the Iranian Tudeh Party and development in Kurdistan], *Goft-o-gu* No. 53, 106.

burned Baneh and fled to Iraq.<sup>336</sup> While Hama Rashid's power was still expanding in southern Iranian Kurdistan, the situation was tumultuous in the northern part of Iranian Kurdistan, also.

For centuries many different ethnic groups lived together in relative harmony in the vast expanse of the Iranian plateau, although at times conflicts broke out among certain of them. In the mixed communities of Kurds and Azeris in the Urumiyeh province, for example, tensions grew between Azeris and Kurds for three main reasons: 1 – Kurds returning home (those who were forcefully displaced during the reign of Reza Shah) wanted to reclaim their homes and property. 2 – There were hostilities between some Azeri and Kurdish communities that were carried over from previous periods, such as the turbulent years of 1920 and 1921, when Simko's movement was at its height and asserted itself in the region as the dominant force, causing violent clashes between Kurdish and Azeri communities. Moreover, as Bayat explains, during the First World War varying allegiances between Kurds and Azeris worsened the polarization between these two groups.<sup>337</sup> Many Sunni Kurdish chieftains and religious figures sided with the Ottomans against the Tsarist Russia. Azeris, an overwhelmingly Shi'ite population, on the other hand, remained loyal to the Qajar dynasty in Tehran. Due to their century's long distrust and rivalry, Persians did not want to see a powerful and victorious Ottoman Empire along their western borders. Considering Sunni Kurds as possible Ottoman agents, Azeris did not think that Sunni Kurds deserved to be a part of the Iranian commonwealth. 3 - Most importantly, Urumiyeh is considered by many Kurds a part of the Kurdish homeland.

This last point was one of the most significant causes of the crisis between Republic of Kurdistan and the Autonomous Government of Azerbaijan (see chapter V). The events that took place between 1941 and 1942 were greatly exaggerated by the Iranian media, whose organs continuously issued propaganda against Kurds. The Soviet representatives in Urumiyeh, on the other hand, tried repeatedly to calm the central government, dismissing the propaganda by the Iranian media and some parliament members as inaccurate and unnecessary agit-prop. The tribal leaders who returned home tried to regain their former power and territory. As Maksimov (Soviet consular in Urumiyeh) pointed out, landlords who

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<sup>336</sup> Burning of Baneh by Hama Rashid, see Anwer 2001, 109. Plundering of some Kurdish areas by Hama Rashid fighters, see McDowall 1966, 233. On the perspective of Iranian newspapers and activities in the time of Hama Rashid, see *Goft-o-gu* No. 53, 106-9.

<sup>337</sup> Bayat, 'Urumiyeh ve Taharokate Komitiye Najat', 21-2.

had fled the country returned asking for their land back from the tenant.<sup>338</sup> In some cases, as Maksimov observed, farmers and peasants did not easily consent to returning ownership the lands they were living on since the landlords had not managed their properties for a long time.<sup>339</sup>

In the first half of 1942, the Urumiyeh question was a hot topic in the Iranian newspapers and in the parliament. The Soviet diplomats actively reported on events surrounding Urumiyeh province. In May 1942, *Itela't* newspaper published an article under the title of 'Dangerous Situation in Rezaiyeh'. *Itela't* was referring to the plundering and killings in Urumiyeh that were carried out by certain Kurdish tribes. Parcham newspaper published numerous articles about the incidents in Urumiyeh and it consistently portrayed Kurds as a danger to the Iranian sovereignty. Many other newspapers, such as Nahid, Khusheh, Siyasat, etc., reported about the region along the same line.<sup>340</sup> Afshar, Urumiyeh representative in parliament, was one of the most active figures denouncing the Kurds. He proclaimed in the parliament:

There were a number of Kurdish bands that had plundered Urumiyeh in the First World War. They destroyed more than three hundred Afshar villages, pillaging cattle and food. More than six thousand villagers had to flee to the city. Many were killed. The city itself was eventually surrounded by the Kurdish looters.<sup>341</sup>

Kaveh Bayat in his article, 'Urumiyeh and Moves of Liberty Movement',<sup>342</sup> like many Iranian commentators at the time, described the Urumiyeh incidents of 1941-42 mostly from the perspective of Iranian media and Iranian archives, where some Kurdish tribes were portrayed as plunderers. Unlike the Iranian reports, which predominantly represented reality in a distorted and exaggerated manner, Soviet and British diplomats illustrated another perspective on the Urumiyeh incidents. For the most part, confidential Soviet statements reported Urumiyeh as one of the more peaceful regions, a that although there were some incidents,

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<sup>338</sup> Afrasio Hewrami, *Rojhalati Kurdistan le Sardami Dowem Cangî Cihanida: Be peyi Balgehnamekani Arşivi Yeketi Sovjet*, Eastern Kurdistan During the Second World War: According to the Documents of Soviet Union Archives, (Zheen Publishing House: Sulaimani, 2008a), 26.

<sup>339</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>340</sup> Detail discussions in some Iranian newspapers, see Hewrami 2008a, op. cit, 15-26.

<sup>341</sup> Hewrami 2008a, op. cit, 16-7.

<sup>342</sup> Bayat, 'Urumiyeh ve taharokate komitiye najat', 7-27.

these were nothing like the Iranian government's exaggerations. As Maksimov noted in his travel report, written after a trip with Urquhart, the British Consul General in Tabriz, to the Urumiyeh province in May 1942, villages were not destroyed. We saw no looting. The Iranian army, on the other hand, had killed some members of the Kurdish community, who in turn retaliated, causing many Azeris to seek refuge in the city.<sup>343</sup> Maksimov and Urquhart, along with Marzban, the governor general of Urumiyeh, decided to resettle displaced Azeris in their original locations. According to certain sources, most of the trouble was provoked by government officers. As Bullard makes it known in a letter to Ernest Bevin, the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 'the elements of disorder are still there [northern Kurdistan], easily provoked by political agitators or corrupt administration.'<sup>344</sup> Similarly, in one of his reports, Urquhart clearly indicates that the Iranian officers were to blame as the instigators of the disturbances in Urumiyeh:

Sarhang (Colonel) Hashemi issued an order that Kurds must not carry arms into the town [Rezaiyeh ...] and had started to recruit gendarmes from among the local Shi'i population and to arm them and the others. Undisciplined men began by killing the first Kurd they tried to disarm. There was a series of incidents that made the Kurds think that the Persian officers had made attempts to restore tyrannical control over the region.<sup>345</sup>

Maksimov's report too, to a large extent, agrees with that of Urquhart. He additionally provides more details on the crisis between Azeris and Kurds. According to Maksimov, a group of Azeris fighters and gendarmes of Colonel Hashemi attacked a Kurdish village, Tumantar, and murdered six Kurds.<sup>346</sup>

After these events the political and (especially) the economic pressures surged in the region. Economically, the things were already dire before the disturbances. The retaliation of the Kurds and the siege of Urumiyeh worsened the shortage of food supplies and other commodities.<sup>347</sup> Politically, retaliatory actions, according to the Soviet consulate in Urumiyeh, were carried out by Kurds toward the end of April 1942. Zêro Beg Harki undertook the first action against the attackers of Tumantar. As the Azeris were backed by the

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<sup>343</sup> Hewrami 2008a, 84-7.

<sup>344</sup> FO 371/45450, 'Persia File No. 31', August 13, 1945.

<sup>345</sup> FO 371/31426, 'Persia File No. 25', May 1942.

<sup>346</sup> Hewrami 2008a, 47.

<sup>347</sup> Koohi-Kamali 2003, 92.

gendarmes, a number of other Kurdish leaders, such as Taher Agha, Ghadir Agha, Sheikh Jalil, and Gharani Agha gave support to Zêro Beg. Eventually Azeri fighters and gendarmes fell back and consolidated their forces in the city of Urumiyeh, while the Governor General of Urmiyeh retreated to Tabriz. In this battle, according to Maksimov, Kurdish fighters captured 160 prisoners but after disarmament they were without problem released.<sup>348</sup> Fortification around the town began to give way when other Kurdish leaders sent additional forces to join Zêro Beg. By the end of April, the Kurdish troops were estimated to be about ten thousand strong. In addition to this number were two hundred Iraqi Harki Kurds. Such a large quantity of Kurdish fighters, present around the city and ready to fight, pressured the Iranian representatives in Urumiyeh and Tehran to give in to some of the Kurds' demands.<sup>349</sup>

In May 1942, a meeting held at Urumiyeh was attended by the Chief of Police (Colonel Jalil), the Soviet Consul-General in Tabriz, and brigadier general Silwanov the vice commander of the Fifteen Red Army, as well as some Kurdish leaders. Kurdish representatives presented the following essential preconditions for a peace agreement: Schooling in Kurdish language, liberty to run their own national affairs, removal of gendarmerie posts from the Kurdish region. Some of these demands may be considered indications of budding national awareness among Kurds of their ethnic identity. The Kurds' demands, according to the British Foreign Office, were formulated and recognized under the following eight points:

1. No gendarmerie posts to exist in the Kurdish region between Khoy and Mahabad.
2. Kurds should be allowed to carry arms.
3. The confiscation of 1,200 rifles alleged to have been given to Persian villagers in the Urmiyeh district.
4. Kurds should have one representative in each of the government departments at Urmiyeh.
5. Kurds should enjoy freedom in their own national affairs.
6. The Persian government should provide schools in Kurdistan in which the Kurdish language would be used.
7. The return of certain specified lands to their original Kurdish owners.
8. The release of twenty Kurdish prisoners.<sup>350</sup>

According to the Soviet report, two more points were added to the above mentioned requisites by the Kurds: 1. Travel rights of Kurds in and out of the city must be respected, and 2. The

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<sup>348</sup> Hewrami 2008a, 47-8.

<sup>349</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>350</sup> FO 371/31414, 'Persia File No. 27', May 1942.

protection of roads and motorways must be carried out by Kurdish forces.<sup>351</sup> Although after the deal was reached following these negotiations a number of small incidents took place, the situation in and around Urumiyeh was largely normalized. As a British representative remarked, in a report dated July 8, 1942, 'in [northern] Kurdistan the situation is at present well in hand.'<sup>352</sup>

The Governor General of Urumiyeh, however, did not take these demands of the Kurds seriously after August 1942 because the battle of Stalingrad was exploited in full power and the Soviet policy toward Kurds drastically changed (see chapter V). Socio-cultural and political activities of the Kurds were closely observed by Soviet representatives and in the most severe cases Kurdish political parties were prevented from being established. Therefore, the Kurdish nationalist political party in Iranian Kurdistan was founded in secret. The following section expands on this Kurdish political party.

## **2 Formation of the JK Party**

In the first half of the twentieth century, Iranian Kurds had not established political parties or organized socio-political institutions that could play a major role in the Kurdish society at the time. They were rather politically inactive compared to Kurds in the other parts of Kurdistan. During Reza Shah's period, Iranian Kurds were quiet. Kurds in Iraq and Turkey, to a large extent, instigated violent uprisings against newly formed governments. In Iran, however, Reza Shah's policies of modernization, forced migration and settlement were on the way to building a territorial sovereign modern nation-state. These new governments (Iraq, Iran, Syria and especially Turkey<sup>353</sup>) were based on the nation-state concept, the modern way to obtain sovereignty. These success of these new states inspired Kurdish leaders, intellectuals, religious leaders and tribal chieftains to strive towards a Kurdish nation-state.<sup>354</sup> Modern socio-cultural institutions and political parties are the essential components of a modern state,

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<sup>351</sup> For the complete argument, see Hewrami 2008a, 48-9.

<sup>352</sup> FO 160/1249, 'Anglo-Soviet-Iranian relations following Allied occupation of Iran 1941', July 8, 1942.

<sup>353</sup> The term, Turkey for Turkish and assimilation of non-Turks under the Turkish domination, was introduced by Turkish nationalists at the time of the creation of modern Turkey. Mehmet Ziya Gökalp, born in Diyarbakir, was a Turkish nationalist and his ideas on the Turkification of religion and language were influential. For more on this topic, see Walter F. Weiker, *The Modernization of Turkey: From Ataturk to the Present day* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1981).

<sup>354</sup> Kurdish nationalists may reject this argument because they believe that the Kurdish question is older than the birth of the abovementioned new governments.

which the Kurds saw as a necessary condition to become organized within these institutions. Iranian Kurds were stripped of all privileges during Reza Shah's reign, but after the failure of the regime, the opportunity arose to organize themselves within certain institutions, for example, with the establishment of the JK political party.

The formation of the JK party depends on several factors, with political and sociological factors among the most important. Of the political factors three points are crucial. Perhaps the most important political factor in the revival of Kurdish national aspirations was the disregard of Kurdish identity by the Iranian government, which gave rise to the impulse to assert this identity. As Abbas Vali stated, the Kurdish question in Iran is the negation issue of Kurdish identity and Kurdish defence towards this unawareness.<sup>355</sup> Secondly, the rise of the socialist bloc from the October Revolution in 1917 offered the JK an ideological alternative besides capitalism. Although in the beginning the JK was a secret political party, it sought attention from both the Great Powers and ultimately from elected leftist politicians. Thirdly, the political and military activities of the Iraqi Kurds in Iran and Iraq were also a significant factor. Below, these three factors shall be examined more closely.

The sociological factor that had a great impact on the JK party was the urbanization process. For example, in 1950 the urban population of Iran was about 27 percent of the total population, but it grew to 60 percent by 1996.<sup>356</sup> Reza Shah's policy to force some parts of the population to a more sedentary lifestyle brought about a some degree of increased urbanization. Additionally, economic transformation, namely an acceleration in industrialization and the subsequent massive migration of peasants and villagers to cities, in the beginning of the twentieth century led to an increase in urban populations.<sup>357</sup> The rapid urbanization led to fundamental changes in the social structure of the Kurdish community. Youth, for example, moved to the cities for work and education. This resulted in a significant increase in the number of educated Kurds. In towns, tribal chieftains and their families came in contact with modern schools based on the European style of education which differed from

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<sup>355</sup> Abbas Vali, 'masaleyi Kord we qayrani siyasi la Iran' [Kurdish question and political crisis in Iran], tra. from English Hassan Ghazi, *Gzing*, No. 21, winter 1998, 7.

<sup>356</sup> Deborah J. Gerner (ed.), *Understanding the Contemporary Middle East* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000), table 8.1 Population and Urbanization in the Middle East and North Africa, 241.

<sup>357</sup> For more on the urbanization process in the Middle East, see Ira M. Lapidus (ed.), *Middle Eastern Cities. A Symposium on Ancient, Islamic, and Contemporary Middle Eastern Urbanism* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969); for urbanization process in Iran, see Julian Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran 1900-1970* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971).



traditional education at *medrese* (religious schools). These tribal chieftains and their families became a significant component in urban politics, which centralized their political power and incorporated tribal chieftains into the provincial state system and economy.<sup>358</sup> This transformation took place especially after the occupation of Iran by the Allied Forces.

Predictably, members of this new urban class played a considerable role in the JK party, as well. Disagreement still remains among Kurdish scholars about aspects of the JK party, such as its date of the proclamation and the identity party's founders. Through the organ journal of the JK, *Nishtiman* (Motherland), several confidential events could be discerned. However, because the JK was an unapproved party, some subjects were misrepresented on purpose. Names of contributing writers in *Nishtiman* were shortened or an alias was used. Many Kurdish authors accept 1942 as the foundation year of the JK. In confirmation of this date, *Nishtiman* celebrated the formation of the JK in October 1943, in an article titled 'Anniversary Celebration of Komala [society, referring to the JK].' According to the article 'on Galaweji 25 [August 16], founding anniversary of the JK was celebrated and many members presented their report.'<sup>359</sup> As a specific year is not mentioned in the article, Bulourian asserts that the JK was established in 1938 in Mahabad and subsequently opened several branches throughout the Kurdish region.<sup>360</sup> Until 1941, Reza Shah had a strong control in Kurdish regions, especially in northern Iranian Kurdistan, where the feeling of Kurdishness was stronger and more widely spread. As noted by Bulourian, due to the domination of Reza Shah's military forces in the Kurdish region, the JK was not able initially to develop as much it would later.<sup>361</sup> On September 13, 1944, in a discussion between Abdulrahman Zabihi, the JK secretary, and Hassanov, the Soviet Consul-General in Tabriz, suggested the year 1942 as the formation year of the JK. Zabihi claimed that 'this organization [the JK] has been founded approximately two years ago.'<sup>362</sup>

The political foundation and maturation of the JK was influenced more by the Kurds in Iraq. In 1942, the Hiva Party in Iraqi Kurdistan sent a representative, Captain Mir Haj

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<sup>358</sup> McDowall 1996, 237.

<sup>359</sup> *Nishtiman* No. 2, October 1943, 2. Edited by Ali Karimi (Sulaimani: Zheen Publishing House, 2008), here after referred to as *Nishtiman*.

<sup>360</sup> Bulourian 2000, 43.

<sup>361</sup> Ibid.

<sup>362</sup> Hewrami 2008a, 112. Eagleton 1963, 33. Jwaideh 1960, 723. Jwaideh used 1943 as a formation date of the JK and his source is Archie Roosevelt's article, 'The Republic of Kurdistan of Mahabad', in Chaliand 1980, 135-52. Roosevelt's article is first published in *The Middle East Journal* (Vol. 1, No. 3, July 1947).

Ahmed, to Mahabad to study the possibilities of forming a Kurdish political party and start a discussion about the Kurdish nation.<sup>363</sup> According to Mohammad Shapasandi, who was a member of the JK and had a leading role in the distributing printed information during the Republic of Kurdistan, Mir Haj had a central role in the formation of the JK. During its first two years of the JK, Hussein Zeringeran (Froher) was the president, and Zabihi and Mulla Qadri Mudarresi were the important figures within the JK party.<sup>364</sup> These city dwellers forged a Kurdish political party in modern Iran with an eye toward realizing their dream for an independent Kurdish state. In comparison to the Kurdish political parties in Turkey and Iraq (Azadi, Khoybun and Hiva), which had emerged from more traditional Kurdish circles with a specific regional and tribal orientation, the JK, whose leadership came from the urban Middle Class, was unique among Kurdish nationalist movements. In July 1943, the first issue of the journal *Nishtiman* was published in Tabriz by an Armenian bishopric office printing house,<sup>365</sup> as at the time there was no printing press in Mahabad. In this first issue, *Nishtiman* published an article titled ‘oh dear Kurdish Aghas and tribal leaders’ and followed:

Use a little pragmatism and you will realize why the enemy [the Iranian government] gives you this money. Is it really for your happiness and freedom? No. You have enough common sense to realize what this money is for, and that money is never given away without strings attached. They know that this money will result in the postponement of independent Kurdistan. Oh Kurdish Aghas and tribal leaders, reject greediness so that independence of Kurdistan is not delayed any further.<sup>366</sup>

Among the founders of the JK were civil servants, merchants, and teachers. Zabihi had a crucial role within the JK Party, especially in the printing of the *Nishtiman*. He came from a family of petty traders, surviving on meagre means. Shapasandi, a colleague of Zabihi, tells a

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<sup>363</sup> Eagleton 1963, 33.

<sup>364</sup> Sadiq Salih (ed.), *Birehweryehkani Mohammad Shapasandi* [memoir of Mohammad Shapasandi], (Suleymani: Shvan Publishers, 2007), 21-2. Other members who participated in JK formation, *Ibid.*, 22; Bulourian 2000, 43-4; Kerim Husami, *Komara Demokratik a Kurdistan (Mahabad)* [Democratic Republic of Kurdistan], tra. from Kurdish Sorani to Latin Kurmanji, Elişêr (Uppsala: Weşanên Jina Nû, 1986), 47.

<sup>365</sup> Ali Karimi (ed.), *Nishtiman: Balawkrehweyi Biri Komalayi J.K* [Motherland: ideological dissemination of the JK society], (Sulaimani: Zheen Publishing House, 2008), 5.

<sup>366</sup> *Nishtiman*, No. 1, July 1943, 3-4.

story of smuggling tobacco to Tabriz with Zabihi so that they could collect some money to print their journal, *Nishtiman*. As Shapasandi notes in his memoir:

After the bombardment [by the Allies in 1941] of Saqqiz, many tobacco warehouses were plundered by local residents and the tobacco was disseminated throughout Kurdistan. At the time tobacco was a popular contraband trade. So we [Zabihi, Shapasandi and Mohammad Nazemi] decided to smuggle tobacco to Tabriz, but on the way gendarmes seized our tobacco.<sup>367</sup>

The procedure to become a JK member was based on a relatively new method. According to Hamid Gawhari, the JK structure was based on cells, local and central committees, local conference and high council meeting of central committees. The JK's central committee was located in Mahabad and local committees were present in: Kermanshah, Bukan, Sardasht, Ushnawiyeh, Arbil and Suleymaniye. <sup>368</sup> The cultural and especially political activities of the JK were also being carried out in most cities in Iraqi Kurdistan. Ibrahim Ahmed was, for example, the head of the JK local committee in Suleymaniye. <sup>369</sup> In general, the intra-organizational relations among the JK the groups and units functioned properly according to the party agenda. Monthly meetings of local committees were held regularly, communication between central committee and local cells was generally in good order, and the party held its annual democratic conference to elect its new executive officers. In April 1943, the JK held its first conference near Mahabad and elected its central committee members, who were assigned, among other things, to distribute propaganda throughout the entire Kurdish region. Although the committee had no permanent chairman, it recognized Zabihi and some other members as the central figures within the JK party. The following passage by Eagleton illustrates the democratic character of the formation:

The fact that only a few of the founding members of the party were elected to the Central Committee was indicative of the transformation of the small group of founders into a dynamic organization.<sup>370</sup>

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<sup>367</sup> Salih 2007, 37-9.

<sup>368</sup> Hamid Gawhar, 'komalayi jiyanaaway Kurd laber roonaki belgehnamehkan' [The Society for the Revival of the Kurds towards enlighten documents], *Gzing*, No. 15, spring 1997, 41.

<sup>369</sup> Salih 2007, 22.

<sup>370</sup> Eagleton 1963, 35.

Ghassemlou criticises the JK's relationships with non-Kurdish organizations. According to Ghassemlou, the JK ideology was 'limited and gave no opportunity to build friendly relationships with non-Kurdish organizations and Iranian progressives.'<sup>371</sup> The JK's admission policies for new members were also a point of contention. Membership to the party was based on race and ethnic identity. An indication of the intense nationalism of the founders can be glimpsed in the requirement that membership be extended only to persons born of a Kurdish father and mother.<sup>372</sup> There was actually an exception made for the Assyrians. The children of a Kurdish father and an Assyrian mother could also be accepted, an indication, according to Archie Roosevelt<sup>373</sup>, of the good relations between Kurds and Assyrians.<sup>374</sup>

All elements within the JK party, according to Mulla Qadri Mudarresi, one of its founders, were totally secret. Each individual had to have a fictitious name and a number. New memberships had to take place according to the following procedure: the potential new members must, in the presence of two central committee personnel, must pledge allegiance to the flag, map of Kurdistan and take an oath seven times on the Koran (after performing one's ablution).<sup>375</sup> Below are the requisites for membership, which closely corresponded to the JK party programme: 1- Do not betray the Kurdish nation. 2- Struggle to obtain Kurdish independence. 3- Do not disclose any secrets of the party, either with tongue, pen or signal. 4- Remain a member for life. 5- Consider all Kurds, men or women, as brothers and sisters. 6- Never join another party or group without permission of the JK.<sup>376</sup> The above mentioned viewpoints, according to Eagleton, were chosen by the JK's founding members in collaboration with an Iraqi Kurd, Mir Haj.<sup>377</sup>

The JK was ready to take a leading role in Iranian Kurdistan, especially in north. The rapid expansion of the party into the tribal territory between Mahabad and Saqqiz was complete. Most tribal chieftains in Bukan, Naqadeh, Ushnawiyeh, Mukriyan and the Kurmanji speaking region, which was dominated by Emer Khan Shikak, became members of

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<sup>371</sup> Ghassemlou 1988, 34.

<sup>372</sup> Jwaideh 1960, 723.

<sup>373</sup> Roosevelt was a US Assistant Military Attaché in Tehran from March 1946 to February 1947. He made a special study, during this period, of the Kurdish situation, especially in the Republic of Kurdistan and he interviewed Ghazi Mohammad in September 1946.

<sup>374</sup> Archie Roosevelt, 'The Republic of Kurdistan of Mahabad', in Chaliand 1980, 136.

<sup>375</sup> Mo'tazed 2001, 656.

<sup>376</sup> Ibid., 657-8. See also Eagleton 1963, 34.

<sup>377</sup> Eagleton 1963, 34.

the JK. By 1945, as pointed out by Eagleton, the JK's direction had become more tribal in character as the number of members who were tribal chieftains increased.<sup>378</sup> Although one of its goals was to strive for the freedom of Kurdistan, the JK did not reach a level where it could be considered a national Kurdish political party, as such an entity would have had to maintain a clear and modern political agenda, which the JK seems to have lacked.<sup>379</sup> The main three sources used to understand and interpret the JK's social, cultural, and political ideology and activities between 1943-45 are: 1- *Nishtiman* (the JK's only official publication), 2- An official letter from of the JK to the Iranian government, which was archived by the Soviet representatives in Iran, and 3- A letter from the JK to Mulla Mustafa Barzani. What follows is a chronological discussion of these three sources.

One of the tenets of the JK ideology, that is the unity among all Kurdish entities, was dealt with in an article that was published in the first issue of *Nishtiman*. In the article, titled *Amanji Emeh* (Our Goal), the JK underlines the importance of intra-Kurd cooperation towards the independence of the Greater Kurdistan. The article continues as follows:

The JK considers hostility among Kurds, disunity, and striving for narrow self-interests as great obstacles to progress. Therefore, the JK emphasises unity among Kurds and struggles for the liberation of Kurds and Kurdistan.<sup>380</sup>

Another key position that is revealed by this article is the rejection of armed struggle and an emphasis on peaceful solutions for the Kurdish question. The article states:

Many people suggest that the Kurdish nation can be liberated through armed struggle but the JK believes that they are mistaken. Kurds must realize that today armed struggle will not liberate us. The only way to liberation is peace and civilization, which shall build our freedom.<sup>381</sup>

Within the party, the religious institution of Islam, based on Koran and *Hadith* (stories and traditions of the Prophet), and its daily ritual was considered as the norm. Bijen, pseudonym adopted by Zabihi, states, 'our main pillar is planted upon the foundation of Islam.'<sup>382</sup> The

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<sup>378</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>379</sup> Husami 1986, 47-8.

<sup>380</sup> *Nishtiman*, No. 1, July 1943, 1-2.

<sup>381</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>382</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

religious *Shari'a* (Islamic law) of Islam was regarded as the mother-law and common law was to be adjusted according to the *Shari'a*. In terms of Islam as a fundamental principle for the JK, Nishtiman declared the following:

In order to remove any misunderstandings that seem to exist about Komala, here we cite one of the articles of its constitution: Komala (the JK) is based on four principles: Islamism, Kurdishness, civilization, and peace. All laws and ordinances shall be consistent with the holy law of Islam, *Shari'a*.<sup>383</sup>

The majority of the Kurdish community was and is Muslim. For this reason, Nishtiman devoted more attention to Islam. Under the title of 'some articles of the Komala's constitution', Nishtiman published three important principles for the JK. Firstly, Nishtiman repeated the importance of Islam within the Kurdish society, 'Komala accepts Islam as the official religion of Kurdistan and strives to promote it.' The second article refers to the democratization process of Iran in general and of Kurdistan in particular, and it states, 'Komala's principal is democracy and makes an effort to bring humanity forward.' Finally, the JK sought to bring unity among Kurds and called for equality among tribes, 'Komala does not distinguish among Kurdish tribes, great or small, and strives to further brotherhood among all Kurds.'<sup>384</sup> The majority of articles in the Nishtiman were concentrated on two significant subjects: the religion of Islam and the Kurds' attempts as an oppressed ethnic group to liberate themselves and build an independent Kurdistan.

The above-discussed social and political prominence of religion and some viewpoints that relate to the JK party programme are studied below using following two methods. The first method involves the close study of articles published in the Nishtiman. The second method is the study of the letter that was sent to the Iranian government by the JK, which was archived by the Soviet representatives in Iran.

During the Second World War, the JK presented a general declaration to the Iranian government on the Kurds' behalf. In 1944, Khalil Fahimi, an advisor to the Iranian Prime Ministry, visited the Kurdish region. Mahabad was the most important destination of his visit. According to Zabihi, who held a discussion with Hassanov, it was a good occasion to present

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<sup>383</sup> Ibid., No. 5, January 1944, 10.

<sup>384</sup> Ibid., No. 6, February 1944, 16.

a petition to Fahimi regarding a peaceful solution for the Kurdish issue. The petition included the following formal requests:

- 1- The official language in Kurdistan must be Kurdish.
- 2- Education at schools and writing in administrative matters in Kurdistan must be based on the Kurdish language.
- 3- A minimum of two hours must be allocated for Kurdish programmes at the Tehran radio.<sup>385</sup>

According to Qoliyov, the Soviet vice-council in Tabriz, the JK had two aims: a) Autonomy for all parts of Kurdistan while the war (WWII) continued, and b) independence for Kurdistan after the war.<sup>386</sup>

Besides submitting the abovementioned petition to the Iranian government, the JK also took initiative and organized its own convention. According to magazine *Roji Nuw* (new day), The Central Committee of the JK held a conference in 1944 and made the following decisions:

- (a) After the end of the war, the independence of Kurdistan shall be proclaimed.
- (b) The borders of this state shall include Baneh and Saqqiz in the south, the Dalan Per mountain on the border of Turkey, and from West Maku to the west and south of Lake Urumiyeh up to the Afshar region in the north.
- (c) The regime of the country shall be republic.
- (d) In order to protect the country, an official military force shall be instituted.
- (e) The struggle for the liberation of other parts of Kurdistan shall continue.<sup>387</sup>

As part of the effort to implement the last point, the JK signed a treaty with the Hiva Party of Iraqi Kurdistan. The treaty, known as *Sê Sinor* (Three Borders) was one of the most important events in the history of Kurdish nationalist movements. It was signed in 1944 after a three-day meeting in Dalan Par (a mountain range along the borders of Iraq, Iran, and Turkey). Cooperation between both parties, unity among Kurds and the liberation of Kurdistan were the essential goals of this assembly. As the Nishtiman pointed out:

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<sup>385</sup> Hewrami 2008a, 117-8. (For a slightly different version of these demands, see *Roji Nuw* article as cited by Noshirwan M. Emin, *Hekometi Kurdistan, Rebendani 1324-Sermawezy 1325: Kurd le Gemey Soviet da* [The Government of Kurdistan, 22 Jan-17 Dec, 1946: The Kurds in the Soviet Game], (3<sup>th</sup> ed., Suleymani, 2007), 67.

<sup>386</sup> Afrasio Hewrami, *Peywendyekani Kurdistan u Azerbaijan u Hereshenani Herdula le sali 1946 da: Le Belgeh u Sarchawekan da* [Kurdistan and Azerbaijan relations and the fall of both in 1946: in the documents and sources], (Sulaimani: Sardam Publishing, 2008b), 267.

<sup>387</sup> Emin 2007, 66.

Long before this the JK and Hiva wanted to hold a conference. After three days of dialogue and negotiation we signed an agreement, and called it Sê Sinor. This was intended to increase political cooperation between both parties.<sup>388</sup>

Some authors believe that the presence of representatives from other parts of Kurdistan, Turkey<sup>389</sup> and Syria<sup>390</sup> at the Sê Sinor meeting intensified the feeling of unity among Kurds and their commitment to cooperate for the liberation of Kurdistan.<sup>391</sup> The JK made another attempt at political participation by cooperating with other parts of Kurdistan during the Barzani uprising in 1943-45 against the Iraqi government. The JK officially offered its support to Barzani's movement in an article published in *Nishtiman*, the article states:

This war that is waged under the command of the great Kurdish leader (Mulla Mustafa Barzani), is unique because it brings together Kurds of all backgrounds.<sup>392</sup>

A formal letter from the JK to Barzani, archived at the British National Archives in London, makes up the third method through which the JK's political and ideological line is analyzed in this document. The letter consists of nine points but mainly it comprises a series of questions to get more information about Barzani's movement and encouragement to convince Barzani to expand his uprising with the aim of the liberation of Greater Kurdistan. This way, the JK advised, all Kurds could participate in the uprising of Barzani. A summarized version of the letter is as follows:

We [the JK] congratulate the successful struggle for the liberation of Kurdistan and its leader. With hopes to establish unity with you as compatriots, we request the following information: I) What is the purpose of your uprising? Is it an effort to liberate only Iraqi Kurdistan or the Greater Kurdistan? II) What is your position vis-à-vis political outsider [Britain] in Iraq? III) We propose that you generalize your uprising, in other words, aim for the liberation of Greater

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<sup>388</sup> *Nishtiman*, No. 7,8 and 9, March, April and May 1944, 10.

<sup>389</sup> Salih 2007, 26-8.

<sup>390</sup> Mulla Izzat 2003, 91.

<sup>391</sup> Detail discussion about se sinor Treaty, see Kamal Abdullahi, *Sibari Azadi: Hawraz u Nshewyehkani Mejooi Xabati Komalayi J.K* [shadow of freedom: pick and dale of the JK society's historical struggle], (Suleymani: Shvan Publishers, 2008), 174-230.

<sup>392</sup> *Nishtiman*, No. 2, October 1943, 18.



Kurdistan, and form a Kurdish military force, in which all Kurds may take part. For this end, we propose that we organize a joint conference in order to come up with a national treaty and draw the parameters of joint Kurdish military force. IV) Furthermore please provide us with information regarding the situation of your fighters, of the enemy, and of Kurdish tribes that collaborate with the enemy. V) To liberate Kurdistan, support from one of the Great Powers is important. We [the JK] prefer the Soviets. What is your opinion regarding this matter? VI) What is the position of Britain with regard to your uprising? VII) Iranian Kurds are behind you and are ready to support your revolt to turn it into a national Kurdish movement.<sup>393</sup>

Concerning this letter, Noshirwan Mustafa Emin<sup>394</sup> expressed his doubts about its authenticity, formulated in three questions, and requested that the letter be further analyzed. The answers of Mustafa Emin's three questions, actually, can be found at the British Archives and it is very likely that they are for the first time published in this dissertation. Below are the questions posed by Mustafa Emin and the corresponding answers found at the British Archives.

1- How did the British Archives get hold of the concerned letter?

The letter reached the British Embassy in Iraq via the Iraqi Ministry of Interior through cooperation of some Kurdish tribal leaders in Iraq and Iran. Below is a description, by the then Iraqi Ministry of Interior, of the route that the letter followed:

The letter in question has been sent by Kaka Abdallah ibn Kaka Hamza brother of Qarni Agha Chief of Mamish tribe in Persia through a person from Girdi tribe called Hassan. That said person brought the letter to Ahmad Beg Girdi resident of Bradost Nahiya and the delivered it to the S.H.O. of Sidekan who sent it on to me [Iraqi Ministry of Interior] with Ahmad Beg.<sup>395</sup>

2- How is it that the written language in the letter is different than the dialect of Mukriyan, which was used in Nishtiman and in the proclamations of the JK?

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<sup>393</sup> FO 624/71, 'political situation in Kurdistan, No. 272, part eleven (311-350)', British Embassy in Baghdad, 22 October 1945. The originally version of this letter is in the Kurdish language. The translation was done by the author of this dissertation, who uncovered and personally read the concerned document at the British National Archives in London.

<sup>394</sup> The current president of the *Guran* (change) Party in Iraqi Kurdistan.

<sup>395</sup> FO 624/71, 'political situation in Kurdistan, No. 272, part eleven (311-350)', British Embassy in Baghdad, 6 October 1945.

As mentioned above, many Iraqi Kurdish intellectuals, officers, religious figures, and merchants travelled to Iranian Kurdistan. One of the reasons for this inflow was to participate in Kurdish political activities under the leadership of the JK. Kurds who were formerly officers of the Iraqi government played especially important roles. Likely the letter was written by one of these officers. Confirming this supposition, the British Ambassador in Iraq reported that:

The working of several sentences indicated Arabic phraseology. It is thought that some of the renegade Army Officers now with the Komalla [the JK] in Saujbulagh may have assisted in the drafting of the letter to Mulla Mustafa.<sup>396</sup>

3- The letter's content (questions and arguments) is not consistent with the JK's ideological frame.

In this regard, the date appearing on the letter must be taken into consideration. The letter is dated as 9-6-1324, which corresponds to August 31, 1945, a date more than couple months after May 9, 1945, when the Second World War ended. As it was mentioned earlier, one of the strategic goals of the JK was the independence of Greater Kurdistan after the war. We should consider the change in the JK's attitude towards armed struggle for the liberation of Kurdistan in light of their aim for the independence after the war. It is a given that the establishment of a regular military force is foreseen as part of an independent Kurdistan.<sup>397</sup> Following the end of the war, interestingly, the JK ceased its political activities and eventually renamed itself the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP). Included in this transformation was a change in the JK's principles toward a clearly defined programme. The following section will look deeper into this transformation as well as into the KDP.

### **3 Formation of the KDP**

There are two different opinions about the exact date of the formation of the KDP. Ghassemlou<sup>398</sup> and current leaders of the KDP all claim that the KDP was established on

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<sup>396</sup> Ibid., 22 October 1945.

<sup>397</sup> For the details of Noshirwan's questions regarding the authenticity of the concerned document, see Noshirwan Emin 2007, 85.

<sup>398</sup> Dr. Abdulrahman Ghassemlou was born in 1930 in the Ghassemlou valley near Urumiyeh. He went to primary school in Urumiyeh and continued his Secondary school in Tehran. At the age of 15, he became a member the Kurdish Youth Organization. He earned a Ph.D. Degree in Economics and taught International

August 16, 1945.<sup>399</sup> They refer to the days and months of the founding of the JK and suggest that the KDP formed later as it was based on the initial groundwork of the JK. Another line of opinion, which is supported by the Soviets, Europeans, Iranians and some Kurds, contends that the KDP was founded under the leadership of Ghazi Mohammad after his second visit to Baku in September 1945. The formal declaration of the KDP took place in October 1945 at their first conference and their political programme was released soon after in November of that very year. The latter line of reasoning about the date is the most logical. In order to refer to this last quarter of 1945 in Iranian Kurdistan, it is first necessary to discuss some significant events that occurred from the beginning of 1945 until the proclamation of the KDP. In this period, there was tremendous growth in the political agenda of Ghazi Mohammad, the future president of the Republic of Kurdistan and also of the KDP.

In February 1945, the last remaining policemen of the Iranian central government were disarmed in Mahabad and five of them were slain by the Kurds. As the British Consul-General in Tabriz reported, 'on February 15, crowds of Kurds attacked the police station in Mahabad and five policemen and one Kurd were killed.'<sup>400</sup> After this incident, the Kurds had complete authority over the city. Following this, Hashimov, the Soviet Consul in Urumiyeh, visited Sari'ulkalam, the Mahabad Governor. The Governor may have claimed that the only powerful religious and political figure in Mahabad was Ghazi Mohammad. Sari'ulkalam claimed, 'I am officially the governor but after the incident in February, Ghazi effectively has more influence in Mahabad.'<sup>401</sup> Although Ghazi played an effective role in Mahabad and was respected in Kurdish areas, his role was mostly based on religious affinities. Gradually he became a political leader and became more inclined to govern the Kurdish community, especially when his official membership was proffered by the JK.

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Economics at the Vysoká škola ekonomická (the Prague School of Economics) and afterwards Kurdish studies at Sorbonne University in Paris. He remained politically active for many decades and from 1973 until his death in 1989 was the General Secretary of the KDP. Ghassemlou was assassinated during a negotiation with Iranian government representatives in Vienna by the agents of the Islamic Republic of Iran in July 1989. For a biography of Ghassemlou, see ASK Encyclopaedia: <http://www.ask.com/wiki/Ghassemlou>, also see the KDP's website: <http://pdki.org/english>

<sup>399</sup> Website of the KDP, 'Historical Background of Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan'; Ghassemlou 1988, 33.

<sup>400</sup> FO 371/45447, 'Persia file No., 31', 18<sup>th</sup> February 1945.

<sup>401</sup> Hewrami 2008a, 157.

The fall of Nazi Germany was clearly slower than expected and the Allies were preparing their activities for international conferences to summon support for their cause, it relate to post-war reorganization in Europe and the Middle East. At the same time in 1945, the JK realized the imminent problem posed by the lack of an influential leader in their midst. The JK had already announced that Agha, Sheikh and the chieftains were not eligible for leadership,<sup>402</sup> but circumstances dictated that tribal chiefs and religious components would indeed play a decisive role within Kurdish society in Iran. By the time the membership conferred on Ghazi, the JK leaders were already divided into two groups. Some leaders wanted to accept the membership of Ghazi because he was a famous figure, and the JK would progress well under him. The other group was reluctant because they saw Ghazi as a totalitarian leader and feared that the JK's democratic character would disappear. Eventually, with conditional membership acceptance according to certain membership rules, Ghazi was elected as a member of the JK and he was attributed the secret name of *Binayi*.<sup>403</sup> The admission of Ghazi to the JK also coincided with three significance events. While there are varying opinions on the exact date of Ghazi's acceptance into the JK<sup>404</sup> it can be safely estimated to have occurred during the first quarter of 1945. Concurrent to the resolution of the membership date of Ghazi in the JK, it is also necessary to synchronize of following events: the accomplishment of the Kurdish opera called *Daiki Nishtiman* (the Motherland), the public announcement of the JK and the foundation of the *Anjomani Farhangi Kurdistan u Shuravi* (the Kurdistan-Soviet Cultural Relationship Society).

The role of the theater in this case can be seen as one of the instruments for the propagation of the nationalist sentiment among the people. The Kurdish nationalist movement under the leadership of the JK produced a stream of cultural events with a strong Kurdish nationalistic flavour. One of the most famous was *Daiki Nishtiman*, the aforementioned opera. According to Bulourian, Zabihi presented the libretto of the opera to them and suggested that this text be used as a vehicle for national political agitation. Thereafter the central committee of the JK turned more and more to the theatre as an important tool to encourage and stimulate the public participate in the political activity of the JK.<sup>405</sup> Mir Haj thought that the origins of

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<sup>402</sup> Emin 2007, 79.

<sup>403</sup> Salih 2007, 26; Eagleton 1963, 39; Roosevelt 1947, 253.

<sup>404</sup> According to Eagleton, one day in October 1944 Ghazi entered into the JK, Eagleton 1963, 39. Roosevelt choose April 1945, Roosevelt 1947, 252.

<sup>405</sup> Bulourian 2000, 47.

this opera were most probably transported from the Iraqi Kurdistan.<sup>406</sup> The opera had a simple story with a clear nationalist message and it was performed for forty days in Mahabad and in some free zones in the Kurdish cities. It was particularly aimed at the general Kurdish population, of which the majority was illiterate (Ghassemlou pointed out that 95 percent of the Iranian Kurdish population in 1945 were illiterate).<sup>407</sup> A brief description and summary of the opera is presented here. It featured a woman called Daiki Nishtiman, who was in danger and called for her sons to liberate her -- a coded nationalist message against the Iranian government. In March 1945<sup>408</sup>, a group of young party members performed the Daiki Nishtiman opera in the presence of many Kurdish leaders and Soviets politicians and officers. Bulourian played one of the roles in the five act opera, which went as follows:

Act I: An angel in white and long wings enters and reads a poem of Haji Ghadir Koyi<sup>409</sup>. Act II: The 1937 complot when Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan signed a treaty in Sa'dabad is portrayed. The treaty crystalized cooperation against the Kurdish movements. In this act four actors represent the role of the Kurdish folk in these four countries by showing the oppressive circumstances of the Kurds in these different lands and the need for their defence. Act III: a white-haired woman called '*Daiki Nishtiman*' [the Motherland], who is very weak, wears a black dress is held fast by an iron chain. While she remains motionless, she calls to her children in a plaintive voice to liberate her from cruel captivity. Daiki Nishtiman describes how she had been suffering agony and pain at the hands of the Kurdish enemies and, with a doleful groan yet nonetheless full of hope, reads the verses of Haji Ghadir Koyi. Act IV: Daiki Nishtiman still enchained continues to call upon her children. Suddenly, her children enter the stage with weapons in hand the Russian military at their side to liberate their mother from her iron chains. Daiki Nishtiman embraces her children in happiness. Act V: The vision of representative democracy in the new Kurdish state is dramatized by the people directly electing their president, prime minister and cabinet ministers.<sup>410</sup>

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<sup>406</sup> Ibid.

<sup>407</sup> Ghassemlou 1988, 15.

<sup>408</sup> Bulourian asserted that in summer of 1945, Daiki Nishtiman was performed, see Bulourian 2000, 51. But shortly before the establishment of Kurdistan-Soviet Cultural Relationship Society in April 1945, the opera of Daiki Nishtiman was staged, see Hewrami 2008a, 159.

<sup>409</sup> Haji Ghadir Koyi (1817-1897) was one of the famous Kurdish poets from southern Kurdistan. Most of his poems were based on the Kurdish national question, see Hassanpour 1992, 90-4.

<sup>410</sup> Bulourian 2000, 52-3.

Contrary to Bulourian's accounts mentioned here, both Eagleton and Roosevelt, (most current writers use the sources of these two Western authors) fail to give a clear and accurate recount of the first performance of the *Daiki Nishtiman* opera. According to further accounts by Bulourian, Ghazi Mohammad came onto the stage at the end of the performance and made an historical speech voicing the aspiration for the liberation of the Kurdish people. He called for unity and cooperation among the various Kurdish groups. He also gave examples from Kurdish liberation movements before and after the First World War as precedent to stimulate and encourage the Kurdish society in the direction of freedom and self-government in Iranian Kurdistan.<sup>411</sup> During and after this performance of *Daiki Nishtiman*, the JK announced its existence publicly for the first time since its formation in 1942. This was a direct consequence of their ability to remove the Iranian administration in Mahabad in February 1945. After Ghazi became a member of the JK and played a more active role within the party, the liberal sections gained a stronger footing versus tribal chiefs, bringing the party politics closer to ordinary Kurdish society.<sup>412</sup>

The Soviet VOKS<sup>413</sup>, Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, had established several associations in Iran, and also had a Kurdish branch in Mahabad. The JK leaders had spent a lot of time plan a Kurdish-Soviet Cultural Relationship Society and finally completed it in early 1945. Hashimov reported, 'on April 18, 1945, I and colleague Sharivov went to Mahabad to establish a cultural relations society.'<sup>414</sup> His first meeting was with Sari'ulkalam, the governor of Mahabad, and after discussions about some issues of concern to them, (such as the role of Ghazi Mohammad in Mahabad and the JK activities), they visited Ghazi. Hashimov wrote that 'our conversation with Ghazi covered several topics, but Ghazi mainly addressed the pivotal political issue of independence for Kurdistan.'<sup>415</sup> Afterwards Ghazi said:

We are pleased with the arrival of the Red Army in Iran because through their support the Kurds have obtained total freedom. All the people and nations in the world dreamed of ending this war.

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<sup>411</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>412</sup> Several chieftains of Mukriyan and other Kurdish regions were opposed to the JK, see Hewrami 2008a, 123.

<sup>413</sup> It was created in 1925 and was officially tasked with cultural exchanges with other countries, but it was widely derided by western government officials and press as being a propaganda organization. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/VOKS>

<sup>414</sup> Hewrami 2008a, 157.

<sup>415</sup> Ibid., 158.

But the Kurds were worried with the receding of the Allied forces and the termination of this war the Iranian government might once again control the Kurdish areas. We do not want the presence of the Iranian military in Mahabad.<sup>416</sup>

The visit of Soviet representatives to Mahabad and their meeting with Ghazi Mohammad legitimized Ghazi as the absolute leader of the JK party. He was able to make an appearance as a superior representative of the JK, which was the only political party in the Kurdish area at the time. Ghazi explained that the JK needed a 'strong and intellectual Soviet envoy to support and inform the Soviet government of the events in Kurdistan and of the JK activities.'<sup>417</sup> However, the Soviets were not interested in the political issues of the Kurds, particularly not in Ghazi's proposed political schemes, which can be gathered from their comment that 'we cannot determine or decide your questions.'<sup>418</sup> It was instead a cultural journey to Mahabad and they said that 'our intention is towards an open cultural society.'<sup>419</sup> And eventually the Soviet Consul in Urumiyeh established a formal Kurdish-Soviet, and a 'not Iranian-Soviet', Cultural Relationship Society in Mahabad on April 18, 1945 and elected Ghazi Mohammad as president and Mohammad Kaywanpor as vice-president. On this day, Kurdish poets composed verses, mostly praiseworthy, about the Soviet Union.<sup>420</sup>

The second visit of the Kurdish delegate to Baku in September 1945 probably ended the political activities of the JK. This second visit of the delegates was organized by Capitan Namazaliev, a Soviet representative in Miyanduab (a town nearby Mahabad)<sup>421</sup>, together with General Atakchiov, the chief Soviet political officer in Azerbaijan.<sup>422</sup> This second meeting had a political agenda, in contrast with the first visit which had an ostensibly cultural nature. Ghazi had conversations with Baqirov on various topics, including that of the Kurdish political question, maintenance facilities, military requirements, sending Kurdish students to Baku and the establishment of a printing press. Baqirov explained their stance on the question of the military facilities and some other related issues by saying that 'we sent tanks, cannons and machine guns to Mahabad and promised to financially support and make place for some

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<sup>416</sup> Ibid., 159.

<sup>417</sup> Ibid., 159-60.

<sup>418</sup> Ibid., 160.

<sup>419</sup> Ibid.

<sup>420</sup> Ibid.

<sup>421</sup> Roosevelt 1947, 254.

<sup>422</sup> Eagleton 1963, 43.

Kurdish students on the Baku Military College.’<sup>423</sup> A more sensitive political issue focused on the existence of the JK. According to Baqirov, ‘the JK was created by the British intelligence and was meant to operate as an instrument of British imperialism.’ With the triumph of democracy, the focus for Baqirov laid in the democratization processes and suggested the need for reform within the JK if it wanted to be a real democratic political party.<sup>424</sup>

There is no official document to confirm the dissolution or the replacement of the JK by the KDP, but memoirs of some participants in the Republic of Kurdistan, like those of Hêmin’s, confirm that a replacement occurred. Reforms and a clear program for a new party were essential steps that the Kurdish leaders had achieved after the end of the Second World War. As stated by Hêmin, a group of the JK intellectuals agreed that the JK’s programs could scarcely be adjusted to the conditions that Kurdistan and world required at that time. It was common knowledge that the most important ideology or principle of the JK was the struggle for the independence of Greater Kurdistan. This was a thorny issue for the Soviets, which may have led them to adopt measures to weed out the JK. According to Komisarov, the Soviet Consul in Urumiyeh, the JK was an English protégé, therefore the Soviets aimed to stop such British influence so close to their national borders. In September 1945, Baqirov invited several Kurdish leaders, under the leadership of Ghazi Mohammad, to Baku.

The journey of the Kurdish delegate to Baku could perhaps mark the beginnings of the dissolution of the JK and the creation of a new political party, which must be build more stronger connections with the Soviets. In October 1945, after the Baku meeting in September, Ghazi Mohammad and other Kurdish leaders proclaimed a new political party, named the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP). On December 6, 1945, *Kurdistan*, which began as a journal, but after the proclamation of the Republic of Kurdistan, became a newspaper, confirmed the formation of the KDP and wrote as follows, ‘in the beginning of *Khazalwer (Aban)* 1324 [October 1945], the Kurdistan Democratic Party was formed in Mahabad.’<sup>425</sup> This resulted in the dissolution of the JK and the absorption of its members into the KDP. Hêmin also claimed that the KDP was formed on the JK’s principles and without hesitation or

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<sup>423</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>424</sup> Roosevelt 1947, 254.

<sup>425</sup> Himdad Hoesen, *Rojnamevani Kurdi: Sardemi Komari Dimokrati Kurdistan 1943-1947* [Kurdish journalism: during the Democratic Republic of Kurdistan 1943-47], (Erbil: Aras Publisher, 2008), 489. Hereafter, journal *Kurdistan*.



opposition the majority of the JK members accepted the new party with the selection of Ghazi Mohammad as the president of the KDP.<sup>426</sup>

On the same day as the formation of the KDP, a formal declaration, signed by Ghazi Mohammad, was published. The declaration especially underlined two points: 1. Request for the autonomy of the Kurdish people, which also called for a greater political participation by Kurdish people in Iranian political processes. 2. Request for the acceleration of full institutionalization of democracy in Iran, with special reference to the respect for the rights of ethnic groups. The second request was expressed in the light of the defeat of Nazis and the victory of the Allied forces. The declaration referred to the Articles of the Treaty of Atlantic Charter, especially Article three: 'they respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live.' It was signed by the US and the Great Britain on August 14, 1941 (see appendix I for the Articles of this Treaty and chapter V for the discussion on this topic).

One can easily identify traits of the primordial theory of nationalism in this declaration as it stressed the historical struggle of the Kurdish movements for freedom. In general, it summarized the development of the Kurdish nationalist movement in Iran under the KDP's eight principles and through the guidance of Ghazi Mohammad. The original declaration was published in Kurdish and Persian (see appendix III). The most recent translation, which was done by the British National Archives, may be a faithful translation, but it needs some tweaking from the original text to date. The declaration in its entirety went as follows:

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

**Declaration of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan**

**Countrymen and Brethren:**

The valiant soldiers of our great Allies have extinguished the fire of the World War, lit by the enemies of freedom and antidemocrats. The democratic world was victorious and the fascist world which wanted to subdue and force all people and world nations under a few thugs for ever vanquished and defeated. This has opened the way for the liberation of the people and world nations.

Today all world nations from great to small wish to take advantage of the way open to them and of the promises set forth in the historic Atlantic Charter to administer their affairs in the manner they choose.

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<sup>426</sup> Hêmin 2005, 75.

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

It is for this sacred aim that the Kurdish Democratic Party has been established in Mahabad and it is beginning to work towards attaining these goals. Our dear Countrymen, you should open your eyes and ears and gather round the Party that makes sacrifices for our legal rights. The Kurdistan Democratic Party is your leader and guide and it is only through the leadership of this Party that the Kurdish Nation will be saved from annihilation, and its wealth, women and national reputations would be protected. It is this Party which will be able to secure its national independence within the borders of Iran.

Our countrymen, our only request is that of human rights, our slogans have been summarized in the points below. Read them and understand Kurdish nation.

**Our eight slogans:**

1. The Kurds must be free and independent in the management of their local affairs and they should receive Kurdish autonomy within the borders of Iran.
2. The Kurds must be allowed to study Kurdish and to administer their affairs in the Kurdish language.
3. Members of the Kurdistan Provincial Council should be elected immediately in accordance with the Constitutional laws, to supervise all public and Government works.
4. Government officials should be appointed from among the local population.

5. By the passing of a general law, the grievances existing between the farmers and the landowners should be resolved and their future positions defined.
6. The Democratic Party of Kurdistan should make special efforts to create complete unity and brotherhood between the nation of Azerbaijan and the different groups of people who live in Azerbaijan (Assyrian, Armenians, and so on).
7. The Democratic Party of Kurdistan will fight to take advantage of the boundless natural wealth of Kurdistan and to improve the agriculture, commerce, education and health of Kurdistan, in order to secure economic and moral welfare for the Kurds.
8. The inhabitants of Iran should be able to work for their freedom and for the welfare and progress of their country.<sup>427</sup>

### **Long-live Kurdistan, Autonomous and Democratic**

The aims of the Kurdistan Democratic Party for the Kurdish society were clearly propagated in its program.<sup>428</sup> For dissemination and communization of their program, the KDP organized a conference. As the journal *Kurdistan* pointed out on December 6, 1945, 'in 1324-8-2 [24-10-1945], the KDP had their first conference with the presence of some leading Kurdish representatives.'<sup>429</sup> Many regional Kurdish leaders were present at this conference:

Maku and Ararat, Salmas-Bradost-Dasht and Margawer, Ushnawiyeh, Sindos [Naqadeh], Lahijan, Piran, Bukan, Manguri, etc., and the local committee was elected at this conference.<sup>430</sup>

The program of the KDP was proclaimed at this conference, and was disseminated afterwards. According to Mahmud Mulla Izzat, the KDP was the first Kurdish party at the time of the Kurdish struggle in the Iranian part of Kurdistan, that had a clear program which was in service of the Kurdish society.<sup>431</sup> This program had four main parts and twenty-two articles and a summary, it went as follows:

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<sup>427</sup> Saleh, Rafiq & Sadiq Saleh (eds.), *Rojnameyi Kurdistan: Mahabad 1324-1325 Hetawi (1946)* [the journal of *Kurdistan*, Mahabad, 1946], (Suleymani: Binkai zhin, 2007), 351-5; FO 371/45436, 'Declaration of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan', November 8, 1945.

<sup>428</sup> Mulla Izzat 2003, 115.

<sup>429</sup> Journal *Kurdistan*, No. 1, 6 December 1945, 11. For names of participants at this conference, see *ibid.*

<sup>430</sup> *Ibid.*, 11-7.

<sup>431</sup> Mulla Izzat 2003, 116.

**Part one:** 1- The name of party is the Kurdistan Democratic Party. 2- The party principles are based on these elements: truthfulness, fairness and civilization. 3- A pen and cornflowers is the symbol of the party. **Part two:** 4- At this moment, the party's aim is protecting the people's rights and autonomy within the borders of Iran. Consultation with the people in Kurdistan must be based on democratic principles and rights should be obtained without differences between religion and ethnic groups in order to elect memberships of the Provincial Council. 5- Development of democracy based on struggle for human victory is the goal of the party. 6- There is no enmity between the party and central government, but it fights for the Kurdish people to sustain peace, cultural development, wealth and agriculture. **Part three:** 7- Organize tax collection and its equal redistribution within Kurdistan. 8- First step of the national government is the construction of the country and for this reason, not more than three percent of the income obtained from the Kurdish regions should be given to the central government. 9- All officials in the Kurdish region must be Kurds and the official governmental language will be Kurdish. 10- The party fights for the development of new techniques for agriculture. 11- Construction and building motorways for villagers. 12- Protection of the economy, culture and political lives of the people of Kurdistan without discrimination. 13- Dissemination of the sciences and civilization among the people in Kurdistan and teaching Kurdish language at schools. 14- Improve the people's lives. 15- Returning Kurdish officials, who work in other parts of Iran, back to the Kurdish region. 16- Conduct economic and cultural relations with other countries, especially with the Soviet Union, in the Kurdish national interest. 17- Participate if possible in United Nations meetings to defend the Kurdish rights and autonomy. 18- The Kurdish autonomous government has the right to use natural resources. **Part four:** 19- Guarantee the people ways to economically empower themselves in order to better the lives of the people in Kurdistan. 20- Develop the economy of Kurdistan and establish factories in all Kurdish cities. 21- Women have similar rights as men, in all political and economic aspects. 22- Give total rights to the minorities in Kurdistan, for example the Assyrians, Armenians and Azeris.<sup>432</sup>

The proclamation of the KDP was synchronized with one of the most significant events in the entire history of the Republic of Kurdistan, namely the entrance of Mulla Mustafa Barzani and his followers into Iranian Kurdistan. It is known that Barzani's struggle for the establishment of Kurdish rights between 1943-45 in Iraq not only had an effective role in Iraqi Kurdistan but it also appeared to be of crucial importance to the political and military issues in the Republic of Kurdistan.

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<sup>432</sup> Ibid., 117-9.

According to the British and Soviet reports, more than two thousand Barzani families under the leadership of Sheikh Ahmed and Mustafa Barzani crossed from Iraq to Iranian Kurdistan between 10-13 October 1945.<sup>433</sup> Hashimov reported, 'it was the British plan which stimulated Mustafa Barzani to enter Iranian territory.'<sup>434</sup> The British also accused Barzani of carrying out espionage on behalf of the Soviet Union and they said that 'Barzani may be [is an] instrument of the Soviet penetration and the raid into Persian territory may have been intended as dust in our eyes.'<sup>435</sup> In the summer of 1945, Barzani was at war with the Iraqi government and in this period, he sent a letter to Stalin and Molotov asking for support for their movement against the central government. 'It is clear for the Iraqi Kurds,' according to Barzani, 'that the British tried to remove the Iraqi Kurds, but the main aim of our struggle is to obtain Kurdish demands.'<sup>436</sup> Zatisv, the Soviet Consul General in Baghdad, at the time, also claimed that the British promise of the solution of the Kurdish issue with the Iraqi government was not implemented because the Kurds were suppressed.<sup>437</sup> In a conversation that took place on October 17, 1945, between Barzani and Lobov, the Brigadier General of Soviet Fifteenth Army, Barzani claimed that the 'struggle for our rights must be continued and your support is necessary for our liberation. After settlement of our children, we will continue the war against the Iraqi government.'<sup>438</sup> Barzani placed special importance on participation in the KDP's political activities and he asked the Soviet officers' permission to do so. The settlements of the Barzanis accompanied by the Iranian Kurds in Ushnawiyeh, Naqadeh and other districts of the province Urumiyeh,<sup>439</sup> were under the observation of Soviet officers. One of the motives behind close surveillance of Barzani by the Soviets was the Soviets' suspicion of Barzani as a British spy.<sup>440</sup> For about five months, Barzani was under the control of the Soviets. Colonel Bakir Hewezi, an Iraqi Kurd officer and commander of the front Sardasht-Baneh during the Republic of Kurdistan claimed that 'in December

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<sup>433</sup> FO 624/71, 'political situation: Kurdistan', No. 272, part eleven (311-350), 19 October 1945; Afrasio Hewrami, *Mustafa Barzani le Hendek Belgenome u Dokumenti Sovjet da: 1945-58* [Mustafa Barzani commenting in several Documents of the Soviets], (Erbil: Aras Publisher, 2002), 50.

<sup>434</sup> Hewrami 2002, 51.

<sup>435</sup> FO 371/68759, 'Persia', File No. 12877, 27 September 1948.

<sup>436</sup> Hewrami 2002, 53.

<sup>437</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>438</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>439</sup> For information on distribution of Barzanis in the Iranian Kurdish regions, see Barzani 2003, 95.

<sup>440</sup> Emin 2007, 86; Barzani 2003, 99.

1945, I was with some Barzanis, including Sheikh Ahmed in Mahabad and had to leave Mahabad on Soviets orders.’<sup>441</sup> There was also a lack of warm relations between Barzani and Ghazi Mohammad at that period, possibly due to Soviet pressure on Ghazi.

Cold weather, illness, dreadful living conditions, and particularly reduced food supplies had a negative effect on the Barzanis. A request of Barzani was explained by Hewezi by saying that ‘Barzani called me one day and said that I knew that no one helped the Barzanis and that only Barzani himself had maintained them although now there was no money left.’<sup>442</sup> The British Embassy in Baghdad reported, ‘the Shikak are said to have collected 50.000 tomans for relief of Mulla Mustafa’s peoples.’<sup>443</sup> Some claim that Barzani had requested amnesty from the Iraqi government for his return.<sup>444</sup> According to Ibrahim Ahmed, Barzani sent a letter to Ali Baba, son of Sheikh Mahmud, to mediate with the Iraqi government for his return.<sup>445</sup> The deteriorating situation of the Barzanis in Iranian Kurdistan called for a response from the Kurds in Suleymaniyeh. Sheikh Latif and many intellectuals in Suleymaniyeh and some Kurdish tribal leaders in Iraq and Iran put pressure on Ghazi Mohammad to offer help to the Barzanis. Ghazi would have done well to accept Barzani as a representative of all Iraqi Kurds, as someone who could play a decisive role in the Republic of Kurdistan.<sup>446</sup> However, Barzani was not given any responsibility until March 1946 to organize political activity for the Barzanis or for the KDP under the leadership of Ghazi Mohammad. Barzani participated in the celebration of the proclamation of the Republic of Kurdistan on 22 January 1946, but afterwards he returned back to Ushnawiyeh. In March, Barzani entered to Mahabad and he promised to be a servant of the Republic.<sup>447</sup> The newspaper *Kurdistan*, claimed that the first formal meeting of Barzani with Ghazi Mohammad took place in March 1946.<sup>448</sup> In the beginning, Barzani offered support to the KDP. Three thousand men approximately twelve hundred of whom were directly under the command of Barzani, pledged allegiance to the Kurdish nationalist struggle in this first

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<sup>441</sup> Bakir Hewezi, *Gashtek bo Komari Mehabad: 1944-1947* (A Journey Through the Republic of Mahabad: 1944-1947), (Koyi-Kurdistan: Sardam Publishing, 1993), 32.

<sup>442</sup> Hewezi 1993, 34.

<sup>443</sup> FO 624/71, ‘political situation: Kurdistan’, No. 272, part eleven (311-350), 22 November 1945.

<sup>444</sup> Ibid.

<sup>445</sup> Ibrahim Ahmed ‘Le Birehweyekanim’, *Gzing*, No. 13, autumn 1997, 51.

<sup>446</sup> Emin 2007, 183-4.

<sup>447</sup> Barzani 2003, 99.

<sup>448</sup> *Kurdistan*, No. 21, 2 March 1946, 4.

meeting with Ghazi Mohammad in March 1946.<sup>449</sup> With Barzani's forces there were also several chieftains, teachers, intellectuals (Hamze Abdullah) and many Iraqi Kurdish officers, such as Mir Haj Ahmad, Mustafa Khoshnaw, Jalal Amin, Khayrollah Abdulkarim, Nuri Ahmad Taha and Mohammad Qudsi.<sup>450</sup>

In November and early December of 1945, all Azerbaijani provinces of the west (Urumiyeh) and the east (Tabriz) openly rebelled against the Iranian central government. In Tabriz, under the guidance of the Democratic Party of Azerbaijan (DPA), the democrats attacked the Iranian military garrison and forced it to surrender. In December, eastern Azerbaijan and the capital of western Azerbaijan, Urumiyeh, were dominated by the newly formed 'Autonomous Government of Azerbaijan' (see chapter V). The establishment of the Azerbaijan government in Tabriz indicated, according to Roosevelt, that Ghazi Mohammad was going to declare his own autonomy.<sup>451</sup> On 17 December 1945, the KDP representatives were driven out of the remaining Iranian municipal offices in Mahabad, and the Kurdish flag replaced the Iranian flag. The journal *Kurdistan* celebrated this day and stated:

In *Sarmaweze* 26 [December 17], all Kurdish representatives were assembled at the central committee of the KDP in Mahabad at 10:00 o'clock. The Kurdish leaders raised the Kurdish flag in the presence of 10.000 people.<sup>452</sup>

The Kurdish flag was hanging at full staff in several Kurdish towns, including Bukan, Naqadeh and Ushnawiyeh. This was one of the images of the political ideology of Kurdish nationalism which prepared the way for a self-ruling government. It is essential to know the socio-political meanings of the colours of this flag. In the newspaper *Kurdistan*, Mohammad Qudsi explained that the colours of the flag of Kurdistan stood for:

Red colour is a symbol of the struggle and conquest for the Kurds, white symbolizes peace and human beauty for the Kurds, green stood for the devotion toward grain prevalent in Kurdistan, two gold and silver cornflowers symbolized the farmer's importance towards the economic construction of the country, and a pen stands for education and science.<sup>453</sup>

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<sup>449</sup> Eagleton 1963, 56.

<sup>450</sup> Hewezi 1993, 32-3.

<sup>451</sup> Roosevelt 1947, 257.

<sup>452</sup> Journal *Kurdistan*, No. 3, March 1946.

<sup>453</sup> *Kurdistan*, No. 5, 20 February 1946, 2.

Between red and green was the white colour and in the middle of the white was the half of a sun, with a pen above it, covered on both sides with two yellow cornflowers and the words the government of the Republic of Kurdistan was written above all.<sup>454</sup>

Kurdistan Democratic Party was moving towards political independence and organized and advocated for a possible struggle for Kurdish self-government. Around the end of December 1945, KDP leaders visited the British Consul General in Tabriz for the possible establishment of a Kurdish government and create a friendly relationship, but they returned empty-handed. On the other side of Tabriz, Ghazi Mohammad discussed the Kurdish aspiration with Ja'far Pishevari, Prime Minister of the Autonomous Government of Azerbaijan, and several Soviet officers.<sup>455</sup> However, just before his return, Ghazi Mohammad collected the KDP leaders for the preparation of a historical day, namely the proclamation of the Republic of Kurdistan.

#### **4 Formation of the Republic of Kurdistan**

Before the end of the Second World War on May 9, 1945, the San Francisco Conference in April had been organized to explore the possibility of the establishment of the UN. This was a historical opportunity for Kurdish nationalism to present their national aspiration. A Kurdish nationalist group (the Kurdish League) in Beirut, the Badir Khan families, Dr. Nuri Dêrsimi, some Iraqi Kurdish intellectuals, among others, addressed a letter to the delegates of this first UN Conference. The core essence of the Kurdish nationalists' message was the demand for Kurdish autonomy as the only solution to the Kurdish question in all parts of Kurdistan. However, until 1946 there were three main active locations of the Kurdish nationalist movement. 1- In Syrian Beirut (mostly Kurdish refugees from Turkey and some Iraqi Kurdish intellectuals). 2- In Iraqi Kurdistan (under leadership of Hiva party, but it divided into several parties including that of the movement of Mulla Mustafa Barzani). 3- In Iranian Kurdistan (with its centre being Mahabad).<sup>456</sup> Even before the Anglo-Soviet invasion in 1941, Mahabad was a significant centre of Kurdish nationalist activities.<sup>457</sup> The ideology of the modern

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<sup>454</sup> Sajadi 2005, 271.

<sup>455</sup> Eagleton 1963, 61.

<sup>456</sup> William Linn Westermann, 'Kurdish Independence and Russian Expansion', *Foreign Affairs* (Vol. 70, Iss. 3, June 1991), 50. This article was originally published in 1946 by the Foreign Affairs Department.

<sup>457</sup> Nader Entessar, *Kurdish Ethnonationalism* (Boulder, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992), 16.



Kurdish nationalism in Iran had been born in the period of the formation of the JK political party in 1942. Actually, the JK had laid the basic foundations of the Kurdish nationalist aspiration and progressed further in Iran by the KDP in early 1946.

Before exploring the event of the formal proclamation of the Republic of Kurdistan it is necessary to review and interpret some of the speech by Ghazi Mohammad, which was published in *Kurdistan*. The newspaper stated that in a public meeting in Mahabad on January 19, 1946, in the presence of about 20.000 people, tribal chieftains and the KDP leaders,<sup>458</sup> Ghazi Mohammad claimed that the geopolitical conditions of the Kurds in Kurdistan did not divide the Kurdish people. He explained that ‘Kurdistan had a specific geographic situation and without division by other ethnic groups, it was the national right of the Kurds to have ownership over their land.’ The Kurdish struggle for control of their territory had a long history and the ancient overtones of Kurdish nationalism were clearly evident in Ghazi Mohammad’s speech when he said, ‘the past historical struggle of the Kurds for obtaining our rights is our symbol and it should be observed that the Kurdish nation defended their motherland when attacked it was attacked.’ For Ghazi, the oppression of the Kurdish culture began during the period of the modern governments based on nation-building in Turkey and Iran. According to Ghazi, ‘after the First World War, two dictatorial figures came to power in Iran and Turkey and forced us to eschew the Kurdish language, rituals, religion and the specific elements of the Kurdish nation.’ Thus for him, the occupation of Iran by the Allied forces in 1941 was a golden opportunity for the liberation of the Kurds and towards the establishment of their political institutions. It also enabled the inculcation of Kurdish nationalist sentiments via schools administered in the Kurdish language, the formation of the KDP, unity between Kurds, a flourishing of Kurdish literatures and culture. Ghazi’s speech continued:

In order to acknowledge the Kurdish intellectual state and publish materials in Kurdish on literature and culture, a printing press in Mahabad has been set up and we are printing a journal and newspaper to disseminate our ideas and requests. We are also going to build a national force to defend our motherland. There were some obstacles towards realizing our goals, among which the foremost was the disagreement between the different tribes, but this phenomenon has been resolved and we are continuing with our activities to achieve Kurdish liberation and

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<sup>458</sup> *Kurdistan*, No. 10, 4 February 1946, 1.

independence. The remaining dangers emanating from the external and internal factors should disappear soon with our continued efforts, and victory shall be ours.<sup>459</sup>

Other Kurdish leaders from different parts of society also made their statements during this event, but the attention mostly fell on what the chieftains and the religious figures had to say. The following tribal leaders made formal statements: Emer Khan Shikak, Zêro Beg Harki, Ibrahim Agha Manguri, Mohammad FayzullaBegi, Mohammad Ghadir Mamash, Ahmed Agha Ilkhanizadeh Dehbokri and Hussein Khan Seif Ghazi (as representative of the Mukriyan territory). From the religious sector the following leaders made speeches: Mulla Hussein Majdi (opening of ceremony), Haji Baba Sheikh Siyadat, Sheikh Hassan Shamsi Burhan, Sayyid Abdullaziz Geyllani (son of Sayyid Abdullah Shamzini) and Sayyid Mohammad Tahazadeh. The spokespeople for the landed families included Ghani Khosrawi and Mohammad Amin Mo'ini and Mohammad Nanwazadeh. The intellectuals who also spoke at the event were Hêmin and Hadjar (Abddulrehman Sharafkandi, a famous Kurdish nationalist poet who was active during the Republic of Kurdistan). And finally, two women, Wilma Seyadyan, the head of a girl's school, and Khadija Majdi, a teacher, also gave speeches. The celebrations started on the 19<sup>th</sup> of January 1946 and continued to the day of proclamation of the Republic of Kurdistan on January 22, 1946.<sup>460</sup> The event included the glorification of Ghazi Mohammad, denunciations of the misery of the Kurdish people and the showering of fervent praise on Stalin and his Red Army in Iran. The poet Hadjar went on to say that for him that frigid liberation day in January was more significant than the most prominent Kurdish national holiday, *Newroz* (new day), or New Year's Day, which is celebrated on March 21. He argued in his verses:

*sad bihar nokari ew zistaneh\_\_nishtiman ewro koranit jidjni azadi daken*<sup>461</sup>

[A hundred springs become servant to this winter. Motherland, today your children celebrate liberation].

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<sup>459</sup> Ibid., 4; No. 11, 6 February 1946, 1. *Kurdistan* published Ghazi's speech in two issues, No. 10 and 11.

<sup>460</sup> For the speeches of chieftains and religious figures, see *Kurdistan*, No. 10-15. For Zêro Beg's speech, see *Kurdistan*, No. 24, 13 March 1946, 3.

<sup>461</sup> Ibid., No. 11, 6 February 1946, 4.

January 22, 1946 was the day of the formal proclamation of the Republic of Kurdistan. The newspaper *Kurdistan* published the assembly's agreement by stating that 'in a meeting in Mahabad on *Rêbandani* 2, 1324 [January 22, 1946], a resolution from the various northern parts of our land was accepted in the presence of 20.000 people.'<sup>462</sup> *Kurdistan* followed:

We know and believe that the members of the central committee of the Kurdistan Democratic Party can obtain victory by fulfilling their sacred duty. These are the representatives of all the Kurdish people in northern Kurdistan.<sup>463</sup>

For the celebration on January 23, 1946, an oath was conducted by Ghazi Mohammad who commanded the central committee of the KDP to swear on the holy Koran, the Kurdish map and the Kurdistan flag. The upholding of the alliance between the Kurdish government and Azerbaijan was one of the significant parts of Ghazi's oath. The *Kurdistan* reported the oath which went as:

I swear by God, to the great word of God [Koran], on the motherland, on the honour of the Kurdish nation and to Kurdistan's sacred flag. I swear to uphold the independence of Kurdistan and the continued presence of its flag until the last drop of blood in my body and my last bit of property. I swear to honour and obey Kurdistan's President and to be subservient and loyal to the unity of the Kurds and Azerbaijan.<sup>464</sup>

In order to celebrate the proclamation of the Republic of Kurdistan, the Kurdish people carried out festivities from January 19-24, 1946 across the entire Kurdish region and especially in Mahabad (as it was the capital of the Republic). *Kurdistan* printed the headline 'Celebration of the independence and the introduction of the great president of the Republic of Kurdistan.'<sup>465</sup> This provided an opportunity to formally claim the Kurdish government as the 'Republic of Kurdistan.' There was some disagreement between several authors about the formal name of the republic. In reality, the KDP and the Kurdish government occasionally used other terms in their official letters, such as the 'National Government of Kurdistan'<sup>466</sup>,

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<sup>462</sup> Ibid., No. 8, 28 January 1946, 3.

<sup>463</sup> Ibid., No. 14, 13 February 1946, 1.

<sup>464</sup> Ibid.

<sup>465</sup> Ibid., No. 15, 16 February 1946, 1.

<sup>466</sup> Farooqi 2008, 12.

‘Autonomous Republic of Kurdistan’<sup>467</sup>, and ‘Republic of Kurdistan of Mahabad’<sup>468</sup>. Many Kurdish authors opt for the first two names and most other authors use the name ‘the Republic of Kurdistan.’<sup>469</sup>

The ceremony was official concluded by Khosrawi, the mayor of Mahabad, but the celebration continued throughout the land and some of the other ethnic groups also participated including, notably, the Jewish community in Mahabad. *Kurdistan* reported, ‘on January 26<sup>th</sup> 1946, the Jewish community in Mahabad organized a event to honour the *Peshawa* [leader] of Kurdistan [Ghazi].’<sup>470</sup>

The Republic of Kurdistan was a de-facto government but national and international legal legitimacy of this Republic had not been formally recognised by either central government of Iran or by the international community. The using of the term ‘Republic’, see below document, by the Kurdish leaders to define their government raises questions as to the legitimacy of their entitlement to use the term as well as their understanding of the term. First of all, by the time the Republic of Kurdistan was declared Iran was a constitutional monarchy – and neither the constitutional nor monarchic aspects of Iran, however, could possibly accommodate a separate republic existing within its borders. Secondly, the term republic implies a sovereign country with clearly defined borders. Although the Kurdish government enjoyed a certain level of sovereignty within the geographical areas that it controlled, it was certainly not fully sovereign and it had border conflicts in the south and especially in the north and north-east with the Autonomous Government of Azerbaijan.<sup>471</sup>

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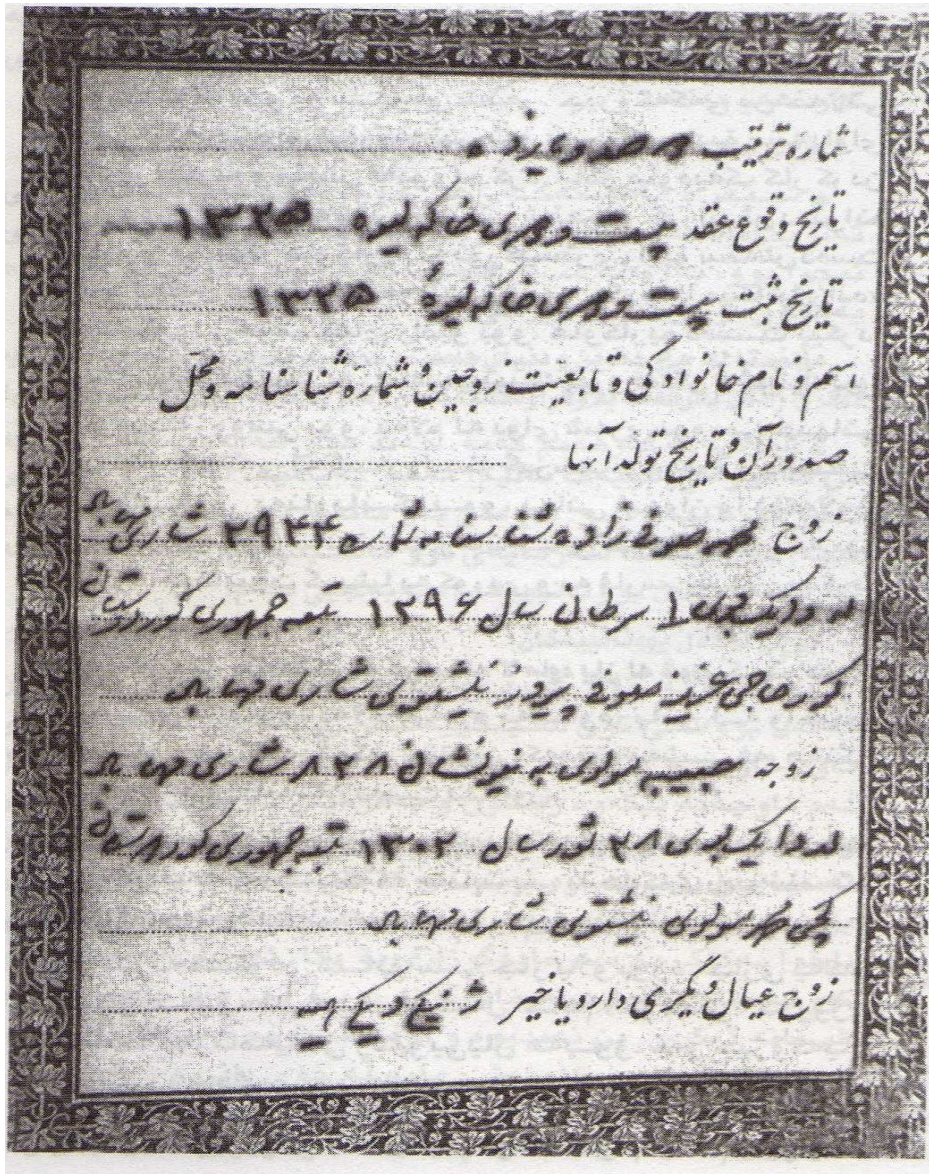
<sup>467</sup> Emin 2007, 147.

<sup>468</sup> See the title of Eagleton (1963) and Roosevelt (1947); Jwaideh 1960.

<sup>469</sup> In many issues of *Kurdistan*, the name used was either the ‘the Republic of Kurdistan’ or the ‘National Republic of Kurdistan.’ The title of Mulla Izzat’s book is ‘the Republic of Kurdistan’, Mulla Izzat 2003.

<sup>470</sup> Ibid., No. 22, 4 March 1946, 1. The establishment of Israel in 1948 had led to a mass migration of Jews from around the whole world to Israel. The Jewish community in Mahabad was also slowly moving to Israel. It should be noted that during my last visit to Mahabad in late August 2009, I found out that there were no more Jews living in Mahabad.

<sup>471</sup> One possible explanation of the Kurds’ use of the term ‘Republic’ could be found in the Kurds’ view of the Soviet Union and their aspirations for a democratic Iran. It is probable that Kurdish leaders were taking the Soviet Union as a model for the prospective federation in Iran, where they compared Kurdistan, Azerbaijan, and other parts of Iran with the republics of the Soviet Union, such as Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan. In either case, the use of the term ‘Republic’ by the Kurdish leaders is highly indicative of their ignorance regarding political science, diplomacy, and governance.



This document is a contract of a marriage in which the ‘Republic of Kurdistan’ twice is referred to, and the married couple are claimed to have ‘citizenship of the Republic of Kurdistan’. Hassan Ghazi’s website, <http://www.weneykk.blogspot.com>

Northern Iranian Kurdistan was under the control of the Republic, from Bukan (south Mahabad) or north Saqqiz to north Maku (on the Soviet border), which was populated by the Sunni Kurds. Southern Kurdistan, which ranged from Saqqiz, Baneh, Sardasht, Sanandaj and to south until Kermanshah and contained a mixed Sunni and Shi’ite population, did not fall under the Republic of Kurdistan. One of the major obstacles for the establishment of the Republic of Kurdistan was the question about the exact borders of the Republic. The Iranian government had separated south and north Kurdistan, by maintaining an Iranian military presence in Saqqiz-Baneh-Sardasht. Using this presence the Iranian military monitored the

Kurdish government and eventually mobilized to bring down the new nation. The creation of this north-south division also had a socio-political consequence on the Republic of Kurdistan since the southern Kurdistan could not participate in the so-called Republic. Meanwhile, a diplomatic crisis continued between the Republic of Kurdistan and the Autonomous Government of Azerbaijan about the borders between the two regions (see Chapter V).

#### **4.1. Who was who**

The selection of the members of the central committee of the KDP or for the first cabinet of the Republic of Kurdistan was not based on an electoral system, rather it was clear in advance who would be given which posts. Within a short time after January 22, the KDP formally selected their representatives, all of whom except for the Ministry of Justice (Mulla Hussein Majdi) were members of the central committee of the KDP. Most of these members selected for Ghazi Mohammad's cabinet were well-known figures from Mahabad. Although, according to Eagleton, their socio-educational background made them modernists by Kurdish standards,<sup>472</sup> they were dominated by the traditionalism dictated by the tribal chieftains. Ghazi Mohammad appointed three ministerial posts from Bukan to Haji Baba Sheikh, Abdulrahman Ilkhanizadeh and Ismail Ilkhanizadeh, in the hope of alleviating the alienation of his opponents, namely the Dehbokri tribe. Ghazi was the president of the Republic, leader of the KDP and had total control over the newly established Presidential National Assembly of Kurdistan (PNAK), the membership of which was determined by the central committee of the KDP.<sup>473</sup> This recently formed committee was actually the Association of Ministries but they called it PNAK. According to Emin, PNAK imitated the structure of the Azerbaijan government in order to demonstrate to the central government that they were not a separatist movement.<sup>474</sup> PNAK consisted of fourteen ministries<sup>475</sup> and its structure was as follows:

1. Haji Baba Sheikh: Prime Minister and Chief of PNAK (religiously he was a Sheikh of the Zanbil order, originating from nearby Bukan).
2. Mohammad Hussein Seif Ghazi: Minister of War and assistant of the President (he was also a cousin of Ghazi from Miyanduab).
3. Manaf Karimi: Minister of Education (he came from a reputable family in Mahabad).

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<sup>472</sup> Eagleton 1963, 70.

<sup>473</sup> Emin 2007, 147.

<sup>474</sup> Ibid., 148; Mulla Izzat 2003, 146-7.

<sup>475</sup> Some sources refer to thirteen ministries, see Eagleton 1963, 134; Farooqi 2008, 14-5.

4. Sayyid Mohammad Ayubian: Minister of Health (he was from an upper-class family in Mahabad).
5. Abdulrahman Ilkhanizadeh: Minister of Foreign Affairs (from the Bukan region).
6. Ismail Ilkhanizadeh: Minister of Roads (from Bukan and cousin of Abdulrahman).
7. Ahmad Ilahi: Minister of Economy (a merchant from Mahabad).
8. Khalil Khosrawi: Minister of Labour (from an old Mahabad family).
9. Karim Ahmadiyan: Minister of Post, Telegraph and Telephones (he was related to Ghazi Mohammad's spouse).
10. Haji Mustafa Dawudi: Minister of Commerce (a merchant from Mahabad).
11. Mohammad Amin Mo'ini: Minister of Interior (from Mahabad).
12. Mulla Hussein Majdi: Minister of Justice (a religious personality from Mahabad).
13. Mahmud Valizadeh: Minister of Agriculture (the youngest member of the cabinet from Mahabad).
14. Sadiq Haydari: Minister of Propaganda (from Mahabad).<sup>476</sup>

Mirza Mohammad Homam (Ghazi Mohammad) was born in 1900 in Mahabad. His father, Ghazi Ali, was the most famous religious leader in Mahabad and his mother, Gawhar Taj Khanom, was from a landed family from the Fayzullabeg's tribe.<sup>477</sup> Initially he learned to write and speak Persian from his father, but his main intellectual influences were his uncle Abulhassan Seifulghuzat Ghazi.<sup>478</sup> During 1923-25 he became the head of the office of charity and culture, but by 1931 his charismatic personality had gained him prominence within Mahabad as well as in neighbouring areas. According to Mohammad Reza Seif Ghazi, after the death of his father in 1931, Ghazi was officially recognized by the central government as the judge in Mahabad.<sup>479</sup> Ghazi Mohammad was a religious man, but at the same time felt the need as a politician to overcome difference in order to resolve issues between several tribes. In general, the relationship between Ghazi and his family and the central government was relatively stable. The peaceful activities of Ghazi were largely sanctioned by the government when he acted as mediator between rival tribes. For this purpose, he visited Tehran numerous times and negotiated tribal issues with the central

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<sup>476</sup> Mulla Izzat 2003, 1467; Emin 2007, 147.

<sup>477</sup> Mohammad Reza Seif Ghazi, *Nahinyekani Dadgayikerdni Ghazi Mohammad we Hawreyani* [the secret court of Ghazi Mohammad and his colleagues], tra. from Persian by Ali Akbar Majidi, (Suleymani: Shvan Publishers, 2008), 29.

<sup>478</sup> Ghazi, Khalil 2009, 90.

<sup>479</sup> Ghazi, Reza 2008, 30.

government.<sup>480</sup> Ghazi's nationalist reputation was cemented when he sponsored certain Kurdish publications, which were printed at the time between the two world wars in Iraqi Kurdistan. As Khalil Fettahi points out, due to its prominent religious background, Ghazi's family was well known in Iranian, Iraqi and Turkish Kurdistan. During the reign of Reza Shah, Ghazi Mohammad secretly received Kurdish journals, such as the *Zari Kurmanji* (Kurmanji dialect), *Gelawedj* (August), and *Hawar*, which were then published by the Kurdish liberation movements in Iraq, Turkey, and Syria. Ghazi himself had financially supported the above-mentioned journals.<sup>481</sup>

According to some Soviet diplomats in the Iranian Kurdish region, 'Ghazi Mohammad was a farsighted man and a scholar. Although he should not be trusted, Ghazi Mohammad was an intellectual leader of the Iranian Kurdish national movement.'<sup>482</sup> American authors refer to Ghazi Mohammad as someone who 'exhibited a stubborn and dictatorial quality.'<sup>483</sup> Ghazi Mohammad only had one younger brother, Abolghasim Sadr Ghazi, who in 1943 became the deputy of Mahabad in the Iranian parliament. He did not go to a modern school to become a scholar nor to the religious school to be a judge. The Soviet report asserted, 'Sadr Ghazi is more open and friendly than his brother. He has a cultural personality, he does not understand the political issues and he is improvident, but he thinks less about power than Ghazi.'<sup>484</sup> Mohammad Hussein Seif Ghazi was Minister of War and the cousin of Ghazi Mohammad. He was born in 1904 in Mahabad and had an intensive education and graduated from the Monarchical American College in Tabriz.<sup>485</sup> Seif Ghazi was a domineering man in Miyanduab and he and his family were extremely wealthy and owned land in many villages.<sup>486</sup> According to some sources, Seif Ghazi offered about two million tomans for the establishment of the Republic of Kurdistan.<sup>487</sup>

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<sup>480</sup> Ghazi, Khalil 2009, 91-2.

<sup>481</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>482</sup> Afrasio Hewrami, *Rodawekani Rojhalati Kurdistan le Balgenameyi Sovjet da: 1945-47* [the events of the Eastern Kurdistan in the documents of Soviet Union], (Suleymani: Binkai Zhin, 2007), 76.

<sup>483</sup> Eagleton 1963, 31; Roosevelt 1947, 253. For detailed notes on Ghazi Mohammad's character, see *Kurdistan*, No. 25, 17 March 1946, 1 and 4.

<sup>484</sup> Hewrami 2007, 76.

<sup>485</sup> Ghazi, Reza 2008, 37-8.

<sup>486</sup> Eagleton 1963, 32.

<sup>487</sup> Seif Ghazi, Reza 2008, 39.



A short biographical detour of another Kurdish Minister is pertinent since it sheds light on how pan-Islamism and nationalism came together in the formation of the Republic of Kurdistan. It is interesting to note that the Prime Minister and the chief of PNAK, Sheikh Abdulrahman Abdulkarim Zambily (Haji Baba Sheikh), was solely an adherent of pan-Islamism at the beginning of these events, but during the formation of the Republic of Kurdistan he increasingly mixed his religious affinity with the Kurdish nationalist ideology. Haji Baba Sheikh, together with several Kurdish Sheikhs including Byareh, Tawileh and Barzinji, cooperated in the First World War with the Ottoman Empire against the British and Russian forces. It was for the Kurdish leaders a holy war and they fought it with complete enthusiasm against the Allies.<sup>488</sup> According to Farooqi, the Ottoman officers entered from Iraq to the Mukriyan region (Iranian Kurdistan) with some Kurdish Sheikhs, such as Sheikh Mahmud, to create an anti-Allied front. In the beginning, the Ottomans hanged and otherwise executed some Kurdish leaders when the Ottomans had won a victory, but that this had led to alienation of Kurds from the Ottomans. At that time, Haji Baba Sheikh was a Kurdish commander and he and the other Kurdish leaders withdrew their forces.<sup>489</sup> Thus, up until the First World War, religious identity was more decisive than Kurdish identity. But, the formation of the new countries based on the principle of nation-state, as with Iran, Turkey, inspired the Kurds to build a self-ruled government. Baba Sheikh became a prominent Kurdish nationalist leader during the approximately one-year reign of the Republic of Kurdistan. The extent of Baba Sheikh's political duality and opportunism regarding the Republic of Kurdistan is questionable. Haji Baba Sheikh was in the service of the 'central Iranian government and he kept the Iranian regime informed about the relationship between the Kurds and the Soviets.'<sup>490</sup> Farooqi claimed that after the decline of the Republic of Kurdistan Baba Sheikh was suspiciously arrested for nine months by the Iranian government.<sup>491</sup> Hêmin claimed that Baba Sheikh's role among the commanding forces was weak and he had no military capability. The Kurdistan Army, as a formal army, listened only to its own commander and thus would not listen to a powerless civilian like the Prime

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<sup>488</sup> Farooqi 2008, 8-9.

<sup>489</sup> Ibid., 5-7.

<sup>490</sup> Jwaideh 1960, op. cit., 745.

<sup>491</sup> Farooqi 2008, 89.

Minister.<sup>492</sup> Actually, it was the Kurdish chieftains who mostly managed the forces, as shall be explained presently.

Different words were used for the idea 'Ministry' and this leads to a lack of clarity in the names of the several ministries of the Republic of Kurdistan. For example, many documents named Seif Ghazi as the 'Minister of War' and sometimes he was named as the 'Minister of the Kurdistan Forces' or the 'Minister of the Kurdistan Democratic Forces'.<sup>493</sup> The newspaper *Kurdistan* called some ministries as 'offices' and the Minister as the 'Chief of Office.' Alternatively it also used the following terms for several ministries: Chief of Kurdistan agriculture, Chief of Kurdistan Culture, Chief of Kurdistan Justice, while that for Post, Telegraph and Telephones was called the 'Minister.'<sup>494</sup> The above mentioned personalities were the leaders and members of the PNAK, but apart from this Chief of Committee, there were also other established Offices, such as: Chief of Income and Product under the leadership of Ahmed 'Almi, Kurdistan Charity under Mohammad Lahijani, Youths Office under Ali Khosrawi and police office under the leadership of Sayyid Pire.<sup>495</sup> In the case of the army, there were several military ranks in which four men had received General positions: (1) Mohammad Hussein Seif Ghazi, (2) Emer Khan Shikak, (3) Mulla Mustafa Barzani (from March onwards), and (4) Hama Rashid Khan Baneh.<sup>496</sup>

As mentioned above, the majority of the central committee members of the KDP and the members of the PNAK came from Mahabad, this city had a special role in the Kurdistan Republic. This northern town of Iranian Kurdistan located at the center of Mukriyan was an ancient cultural and economical center in the region. It had strong relations with Kurdish towns in Iraq, such as Suleymaniyeh and Arbil. In the beginning, this was a more cultural and economic connection, but after the First World War, political relations were also developed. The creation of the new Arab government by Britain in 1921 in Iraq encouraged the Kurds in Iraq to struggle for their own political rights, which was accepted at the Sèvres Conference one year before the formation of Iraq. Although the Iraqi government under the mandate of Britain made some provisions for the cultural rights of the Kurds, public dissatisfaction

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<sup>492</sup> Hêmin 2005, 77.

<sup>493</sup> Mahmud Mulla Izzat, *Dewlati Jemhori Kurdistan, Name u Document* [The Democratic Republic of Kurdistan, Correspondence & Documents], (2<sup>th</sup> ed., Vol. 1, Slemani: Tishk Publishing, 2003 b), 204-05 and many other documents in the same book.

<sup>494</sup> *Kurdistan*, No. 11-20.

<sup>495</sup> Mulla Izzat 2003, 148.

<sup>496</sup> *Ibid.*, 148-9.

continued to fuel the Kurdish fighters in their struggle for obtaining political privileges. These political movements, also in Turkey, were synchronized with the publishing of several Kurdish journals for the awakening and mobilizing of the Kurdish public opinion. The Kurdish political activities in Iraq, namely the Sheikh Mahmud movement and the Mulla Mustafa rebellion in 1932 and 1943-45, had been fomented as a direct consequence of the action of the Kurds in Iran, especially in the town of Mahabad. Mulla Izzat pointed out, the Kurdish magazines arrived from Iraqi Kurdistan to Mahabad.<sup>497</sup> In large part these political and cultural activities of the Iraqi Kurds stimulated the Kurds in Iran, particularly in Mahabad, to develop their own Kurdish nationalistic sentiments unlike the other half of Iranian Kurdistan, where the Kurdish nationalism was weak.

#### **4.2. Military or tribal forces**

During Reza Shah's almost twenty-year reign, the focus was more on the tribal policy, particularly among the Kurdish tribes. For almost two decades the Kurds were oppressed by Reza Shah and his officers. In some cases, the Shah attained victory against various tribal rebellions during the early phase of his consolidation of power in Iran. The Shah wanted to destroy the tribal organization and implement forced sedentarization. Cottam points out, 'no single aspect of the program of Reza Shah had more appeal for [Iranian] nationalists than his policy of disciplining the tribes.'<sup>498</sup> The settled and disarmed tribes would strengthen the central government's social, economic, and political organizations, which would in turn lead toward achieving the Shah's dream of building of a modern nation-state. However, with the entry of the Allies into Iran, the Shah was overthrown and most of his policies discontinued, such as the policies towards tribes. Disarmament of the Iranian military meant that in their place tribesmen became armed and resumed their state of former glory. Cottam observed that 'Iran's army evaporated, and the fleeing soldiers sold their arms to the eager tribesmen.'<sup>499</sup> Hêmin agreed by saying that 'before the Red Army reached Mahabad, the Iranian army discarded their weapons. They sold each of their weapons for one loaf of bread.'<sup>500</sup> In this way, a majority of the Kurds possessed a weapon, which they later used to fight for the Republic of Kurdistan.

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<sup>497</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>498</sup> Cottam 1978, 59.

<sup>499</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>500</sup> Hêmin 2005, 68.

The establishment of a modern and equipped army was a major goal of newly formed nation-states in the Middle East, as exemplified by the policies of Reza Shah of Iran and Atatürk of Turkey, since the army performed a crucial role in both the construction and the implementation of domestic and foreign policy. When the Kurds established the Republic, they took a necessary step to create a modern military to not only defend the Republic but also to maintain order within the Republic of Kurdistan. Ghazi Mohammad claimed, 'we have established a National Army to defend our motherland.'<sup>501</sup> Several elements were essential for Ghazi's forming of a 'National Army' (NA)<sup>502</sup>. Firstly, all eyes were directed on the withdrawal of the Allied military in Iran and the subsequent recapture of Kurdistan by Iranian soldiers. Ghazi observed, 'with the termination of war, the Allied forces will begin to recede their army and the Iranian government will once again control the Kurdish areas.'<sup>503</sup> From the Iranian government's perspective, the Republic of Kurdistan was illegitimate, thus to arm themselves in order to force recognition of their sovereignty was one of the prime national goals. For this reason, there were some military conflicts with the central government (see below). Secondly, the border issue affected the relations between the Kurdish and Azerbaijan governments, with Azerbaijan government claiming that Kurdistan was its territory.

The anxiousness and hostility of several of the large Kurdish tribal groups, for example the Manguri, Mamash and Dehbokri, against the Kurdish government and their affinity with the central government in Iran was the third reason for which the Republic of Kurdistan set up a NA. After the establishment of the NA, some of the leaders of these tribes and their families found it difficult to remain in Kurdistan and exiled themselves to Tehran. Seif Ghazi, the Minister of War, was referring to them when he made the following statement: 'Some Kurdish leaders were untrustworthy and they should be dead.'<sup>504</sup> Fourth, the existence of the Iraqi Kurds in Kurdistan, especially those who had been officers, was an important reason behind the thought to build a modern army. Hewezi pointed out that soon after the proclamation of the Republic of Kurdistan, 'I asked Mulla Mustafa to start a military training academy in Mahabad, and one hundred fifty trained Barzanis were the bodyguards of Ghazi

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<sup>501</sup> *Kurdistan*, No. 11, February 6, 1946, 1.

<sup>502</sup> In the *Documents* various names were used, such as: Ministry of Kurdistan Forces, Ministry of Kurdistan Democratic Forces, Kurdistan Peshmargeh Forces, see Mulla Izzat 2003b. Ghazi Mohammad called it the National Army and here after NA will be used in this text.

<sup>503</sup> Hewrami 2008a, 159.

<sup>504</sup> *Kurdistan*, No. 11, 6 February 1946, 4.

Mohammad.<sup>505</sup> The confidence of the Republic's troops depended for the greater part on the presence of Barzani and his forces. As Jwaideh pointed out, 'after the withdrawal of the latter [Barzani] to Naqadah, the Iranian government's army began to move in the direction of Mahabad.'<sup>506</sup> Barzani tried to bring the opponents of the Republic under control of the Republic of Kurdistan.

With the help of several Iraqi Kurdish officers under the leadership of Barzani, Ghazi Mohammad encouraged the construction of a military academy for the training of new soldiers. The only military barracks in Mahabad was destroyed by the people after 1941 and four years after the incident, Ghazi explained:

I had asked the people to watch this barracks, not annihilate its doors and windows. A day should come when will be able to use it again and that day is today and now we must reconstruct this barracks from our budget.<sup>507</sup>

After Ghazi's speech, the KDP representatives advertised in *Kurdistan* calling the youths to register with the NA. The following conditions for registration formed the basis of the establishment of the NA. New soldiers were required to be:

(A) as much as possible unmarried and young, (B) eighteen years and older (C) of good behaviour and in good form. The Kurdish government provides the following services: maintenance facilities, infantryman got fifteen tomans and cavalry got twenty-five tomans monthly and when chosen, after four months military training, for joining the forces at the front, he got more income.<sup>508</sup>

In a meeting of the NA commanders on February 22, 1946, which was published in the *Documents*<sup>509</sup>, it was concluded that it was necessary to organize an army of two thousand cavalryman and one thousand infantryman, and divide these forces over the whole territory

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<sup>505</sup> Hewezi 1993, 17-8.

<sup>506</sup> Jwaideh 1960, 761.

<sup>507</sup> *Kurdistan*, No. 31, 3 April 1946, 4.

<sup>508</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 55, 9 June 1946, 4; *Ibid.*, No. 32, 6 April 1946, 4.

<sup>509</sup> It is an interesting book based on collection of letters in the period of the Republic of Kurdistan, with most of these letters concerning the situation of the Iranian military, and particularly the Kurdish National Army (Mulla Izzat 2003b). The author of this dissertation would like to thank his brother Bakhtiyar Mulla Izzat, for providing the book.

under the control of the Republic of Kurdistan. Most of this army was concentrated in the Saqqiz-Bukan line, where an Iranian military was positioned.<sup>510</sup> In the same meeting, commandants argued about the symbols and the ranks of the Kurdistan military.<sup>511</sup> As *Kurdistan* declared, military exercises were sometimes held outside the city of Mahabad, ‘on July 11, 1946, the Peshmargers of the Kurdistan central forces departed for desert operations outside the town.’<sup>512</sup> It was the intention of The Republic of Kurdistan to build a modern military based on new symbols and principles. But to what extent was this modern military effective in a region where traditions played a decisive role, and more importantly, was this a modern military?

For the most part, the NA was composed of tribal forces. According to Borzowi, although, some of these tribal forces fought in clashes against the Iranian military,<sup>513</sup> Ghazi was still suspicious of these tribal elements on because they also had maintained connection with the central government. Thus responsibility the military was given mainly to Barzani and the newly formed NA in Mahabad. After the withdrawal of the Red Army from Iran, the tribal chieftains changed their policy. These tribal leaders forced Ghazi to negotiate with the central government and they hoped for a confrontation. This idea came to most tribal leaders after the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Iran.<sup>514</sup> To what degree could tribalism and tribal leaders exercise pressure on Ghazi and the young, newly formed Republic of Kurdistan? The detailed discussion about some important tribes and their chieftains who participated in the forming of the Republic of Kurdistan, which is presented below, is necessary to understand the socio-political circumstances of the Republic.

The Kurdish tribal attitude during the Republic of Kurdistan was mainly to protect their own individual interests. However, the Shikak tribe, in cooperation with the Harki tribe under the leadership of Zêro Beg Harki, represented the northern region of the Republic of Kurdistan and was, after Kalhur, the second largest tribe in Kurdistan. Because the Shikak tribe was so wide-spread and powerful, it was organized under several leaders, and was also divided into varying subsections. These differentiations, based on subsections or differences in leadership, led to competition and sometimes also conflict between the leaders. Concerning

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<sup>510</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>511</sup> For the several symbols and ranks of the NA, see *ibid.*, 37-40.

<sup>512</sup> *Kurdistan*, No. 68, 18 July 1946, 1.

<sup>513</sup> Borzowi 1999, 343.

<sup>514</sup> Ibid.

the several groups within the Shikak tribe, Iraj Afshari Sistani explained, 'The Shikak tribe had been divided into two major sections, Kardar and Avdoyi, and each group was also parted among other groups.'<sup>515</sup>

Traditionally, the Shikak tribe was led by the family of Simko. Simko came from the family of Avdoyi, and this family was often vied for power and dominance relative to the Kardar family. The assassination of Simko in 1930 by the Iranian army allowed Emer Khan from the Kardar section to revive his authority and power, according to Eagleton, and the Avdoyi section was led by Simko's son, Tahir Khan.<sup>516</sup> According to the Soviet Consul in Maku, Emer Khan was detained from his political activities for the Khoybun party for several years during the Reza Shah rule. Emer Khan was a rich businessman and his tribe was sufficiently mobilized.<sup>517</sup> The dominance of Emer Khan after 1941 in the Shikak tribe was strengthened. This was because he was associated with the JK party, he was a member of the central committee of the KDP and he obtained the military position of General during the time of the Republic of Kurdistan.

The third General of the Republic of Kurdistan was Mustafa Barzani. Barzan is a village in the mountains of north eastern Iraqi Kurdistan, in which the Greater *Zab* River was a boundary between the Sheikh of Barzan and the tribe's fierce rival, the Zebari tribe, the majority of whom cooperated with the Iraqi central government. Political and religious conditions are usually cited to explain the spread out of the Barzani tribe. The religious Naqshbendi-order character of the Mustafa Barzani families connected them to several other tribes other than the Barzani tribes, such as the Shirwani, Dolamari, Mizuri and Barodji. These tribes looked at the Sheikh of Barzan as their religious leader.<sup>518</sup> Politically, some of the tribes were linked to each other or organized as a strong and larger tribe to form a unity against their opponents. The political popularity of the Barzan Sheikhs had been renowned in the uprising in 1909-14 against the Ottomans of Sheikh Abdulsalam, an older brother of Mustafa Barzani who was hanged in 1914 in Mosul. Abdulsalam's seven demands<sup>519</sup> were

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<sup>515</sup> For information on the various groups within these two subsections, see Iraj Afshari Sistani, *Moqadameyi dar Shnakhte Ilha, Chadornshinan ve Tawayefi 'ashayere Iran* [an introduction to the knowledge of tribes, nomads and tribal clans in Iran], (2<sup>th</sup> ed., Tehran: Huma Publishing, 1987), 160; Fendy 1999, 32-3.

<sup>516</sup> Eagleton 1963, 17.

<sup>517</sup> Hewrami 2008b, 43.

<sup>518</sup> Eagleton 1963, 47-8.

<sup>519</sup> For these seven elements, see Olson 1989, 36-7.

considered by some Kurdish authors as the kernel of the Kurdish nationalist movement.<sup>520</sup> After the First World War, the Barzani tribe came under the leadership of two men, Sheikh Ahmed (an older brother of Mustafa Barzani), who was a religious leader, and Mustafa Barzani, the military and political leader. However, the old tribal structure gave way to the formation of a tribal confederation, which called itself the national front. The national front became prevalent throughout Iraqi Kurdistan after the September military campaign of 1961 against the Iraqi government and Mustafa Barzani became a national Kurdish leader while he directed the campaign.

After the proclamation of the Republic, the fourth General, Hama Rashid Khan Baneh, joined with Ghazi Mohammad and on February 15, 1946 entered into Mahabad from Iraqi Kurdistan. On the same day, in the presence of Hashimov and Seif Ghazi, he obtained the rank of General and he was also elected as a commander of the Bukan front, which consisted of roughly 3,500 forces.<sup>521</sup> Like Emer Khan, Hama Rashid also left the Republic on August 2, 1946 and went to Iraqi Kurdistan before the fall of the Republic.<sup>522</sup> The Republic's military control was left the hands of these four Generals: Seif Ghazi, a representative of Mukriyan tribes and the Minister of War; Emer Khan, the leader of the northern tribes of the Republic of Kurdistan; Hama Rashid, head of the southern tribes (Bukan Begzadeh) and finally, Mustafa Barzani, the leader of the Barzani tribe and of the Iraqi Kurdish officers. There is considerable debate about the exact number of soldiers the Republic had. According to Seif Ghazi, the NA had about 45,000 soldiers<sup>523</sup>, but the majority of the authors estimate the NA had around 10,000 and 15,000 soldiers, which can be further differentiated as follows:

Barzanis under Mulla Mustafa	1,200 infantry
Barzanis under Sheikh Ahmad (not at the front)	900 infantry
Jalalis and Milanis	400 cavalry
Shikaks under Emer Khan	800 cavalry
Shikaks under Tahir Khan	500 cavalry
Harkis under Rashid Beg and Begzadeh under Nuri Beg	1,000 cavalry
Harkis under Zêro Beg	700 infantry

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<sup>520</sup> Considering that Sheikh Abdulsalam's movement is a Kurdish nationalist movement, see Nerweyi A., 303-9.

<sup>521</sup> Anwer 2001, 138-9.

<sup>522</sup> Ibid., 184.

<sup>523</sup> *Kurdistan*, No. 68, 18 July 1946, 2.



Followers of Shaikh Abdullah Gilani's family under Sayyid Fahim	200 cavalry
Zarza tribesmen under Musa Khan	300 cavalry
Gharapapagh (Turki) under Pasha Khan and Khoshravi Khan	500 cavalry
Mamash of Kaka Abdullah Ghaderi faction	400 cavalry
Mamash under Kaka Hamza Nalos Amir al Ashari	500 cavalry
Piran under Mohammad Amin Agha and Gharani Agha	300 cavalry
Manguri under Abdullah Bayazidi	300 cavalry
Manguri under Salim Agha Ojaq	200 cavalry
Manguri under Ali Khan and Ibrahim Salari	400 cavalry
Sardasht Gawurk under Kak Ala	200 cavalry
Mahabad Gawurk under Ali Javanmardi, Mamand Agha, and Haji Ibrahim Agha	400 cavalry
Miscellaneous Sardasht tribes	500 cavalry
Suesni tribe	100 cavalry
Mahabad Dehbokri under Ja'far Karimi	400 cavalry
Bukan Dehbokri under the Ilkhanizadeh Aghas	500 cavalry
Fayzullabegis of Bukan and Saqqiz	800 cavalry
Saqqiz Bedaghi family	200 cavalry
Miscellaneous Mahabad and Shahindezh tribes	300 cavalry
Followers of Hama Rashid Khan Baneh	300 cavalry
Recruits from the Javanrud and Auroman areas south of the Republic	<u>150 cavalry</u> +
Total:	12,750 <sup>524</sup>

The dominance of tribal forces in the NA can be clearly noticed in the list. The majority of the forces in the list were cavalry-based, which according to Eagleton, 'could still terrify an ill-armed or badly organized force, but it could not prevail against trained infantry carrying automatic rifles and concealed by the rugged terrain of Kurdistan.'<sup>525</sup> Thus, it is clearly illustrated how much of the manpower was provided by tribes in Saqqiz-Baneh front. For

<sup>524</sup> Emin 2007, 183; Eagleton 1963, 91-2.

<sup>525</sup> Ibid, 91.

example, Barzani forces were divided in four different fronts<sup>526</sup> and Harki and Shikak tribes also had separate fronts. It should be noted that the Shikak tribe was in itself a confederation of several tribes. In a letter of General Hama Rashid, the tribal character of the Republic's military can be identified when he said that, 'it is necessary to send the forces of the Shikak, Mamash, Dehbokri and more Barzanis to the front.'<sup>527</sup> As Eagleton also explained, 'the Republic overcame the most disruptive factor in large-scale tribal movements.'<sup>528</sup> On the front of Saqqiz-Baneh, there was no military mixture of the tribes, but the troops were based on kinship. Although the Republic had sufficient forces, according to Ghassemlou, it also had several weak elements:

Republic forces had a total tribal character, the commanders were the tribal chieftains, there was no unity between the tribal leaders (individual interests were more important) and there was an inexperienced and undisciplined military training compared to the Barzanis forces.<sup>529</sup>

There were no fundamental norms within the NA, and for example, somebody could climb several military ranks without experience or investigation into their background. The competition between various tribal chieftains to obtain higher military ranks was an everyday problem. For example, Ghassemlou had an interesting story of the tribal leaders who asked Ghazi Mohammad to acquire for him another military rank, which when he returned to his village, would create more respect for him.<sup>530</sup>

The military confrontation between the Iranian government and the Republic exploded for the first time on April 29, 1946. At the time, Colonel Hewezi (formerly of the Iraqi military) was a commander of one of the fronts of the Barzani forces and reported that Iranian forces had attacked their base in Ghahrawa (a village near Saqqiz), which led to a dramatic defeat for the Iranian military. On the battlefield, the Iranian military left behind many dead and wounded and forty-two soldiers were captured.<sup>531</sup> The *Jabha* (front) newspaper, organ of the Iran Party, reported that, 'rebellion was armed with new weapons.'<sup>532</sup> Although short-

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<sup>526</sup> Mulla Izzat 2003, 148-9; Emin 2007, 188.

<sup>527</sup> Mulla Izzat 2003b, 59.

<sup>528</sup> Eagleton 1963, 92.

<sup>529</sup> Ghassemlou 1988, 98-9.

<sup>530</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>531</sup> Hewezi 1993, 46-9.

<sup>532</sup> *Jabha*, No. 419, April 1946, 1.

lived, the ambush was considered the first military victory for the Republic of Kurdistan. As the Iranian prisoners arrived in Mahabad, Eagleton claimed, 'they happened upon a public ceremony that turned into a celebration.'<sup>533</sup> These prisoners were delivered to the Azerbaijan government and newspaper *Azad Millet* (national freedom), organ of the national parliament of Azerbaijan, interviewed these prisoners.<sup>534</sup> *Kurdistan* also reported this battle and titled it 'the day of shame and disgrace for the Persian government.'<sup>535</sup> It encouraged the Kurds to mobilize and unite the different parts of Kurdish society to defend the Republic of Kurdistan.

After the withdrawal of the Red Army from Iran on May 1946, the second largest and the last Iranian offensive against the Republic's forces was in the battle of Mamashah a long the line connecting Saqqiz-Baneh-Sardasht. Because the Iranian military's transport of goods to garrisons in Baneh-Sardasht was blocked by the Kurdish troops, General Razmara came to Saqqiz to organize a plan for the Iranian military. Razmara first tried to find a way for bringing supplies to the Iranian military base in Baneh-Sardasht and then drew up a plan to attack the Republic's forces. *Kurdistan* reported that the Kurdish-Azerbaijan delegation and the Iranian military representatives in the region had signed an agreement on May 26, 1946. According to the conclusions reached in this meeting, both sides decided to discourage major attacks, promote withdrawals and allow each side to further equip their forces in the region and not to interfere with the traffic on the roads.<sup>536</sup> The result of the agreement was ultimately in the interests of the Iranian military. However, the Iranian opportunism could be seen in the words of actions of Hassan Arfa, Chief of Staff of the Iranian Army 1944-46. According to Arfa, Iranian officers wanted to gain time 'to create a strong defensive line in order to then start a general offensive in the direction of Mahabad.'<sup>537</sup> Between the meeting and its agreement on May 26 and until June 15, Razmara saw a great opportunity to gather troops for a massive and comprehensive southern attack against the Republic. As Arfa observed:

General Razmara ordered several battalions stationed at Hamadan to go to Saqqez. The Takab garrison was also reinforced as it was being threatened simultaneously from the east by the Azerbaijan Democrats and from the west by the Feyzollahbegi Kurds. The Iranian army forces in Kordestan consisted of eight infantry battalions, three of them being at Saqqez, some cavalry

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<sup>533</sup> Eagleton 1963, 86.

<sup>534</sup> For the details of the interview with the captured soldiers, see *Azad Millet*, No. 37, 13 May 1946, 1/4.

<sup>535</sup> *Kurdistan*, No. 44, 6 May 1946, 1.

<sup>536</sup> For detailed discussion on this meeting and the agreement's elements, see *ibid.*, No. 53, 4 June 1946, 1.

<sup>537</sup> Arfa 1966, 92.

and three mountain pack batteries, with five to six thousand men between all of them and half of them being stationed in the Saqqez area.<sup>538</sup>

On 15 June 1946 the communications between the Iranian army in Baneh-Sardasht was continually interrupted leading to the preparation and concentration of both sides near the Mamashah battlefield. According to Barzani, the Kurdish regiment at Mamashah was attacked by two Iranian battalions supported by artillery, tanks and aircraft.<sup>539</sup> Iranian military offensive had two purposes. One of them was to occupy the strategically positioned hills of Mamashah and the other was to stop the Kurdish forces from attacking Iranian supply vehicles. About this military confrontation, Ghazi Mohammad claimed:

This conflict was a result of misunderstanding because I instructed via telegraph to open the road of Miredeh-Baneh-Sardasht, through which the Iranian military got its supplies. I am not sure whether my telegraph managed to reach on time.<sup>540</sup>

The Iranian offensive did achieve a partial victory. As a result of the Kurdish military defeat, the Iranian military was able to seize the highland of Mamashah, where they erected military watchtowers and ensured a military presence in the area. The Kurds tried to recapture Mamashah but the Kurdish counter-attack was repelled, which led to a negotiation between Ghazi Mohammad and Razmara in the village of Sara near Saqqiz.<sup>541</sup> According to Sajadi, this agreement was composed of four points:

1. The Iranian army in Saqqiz had the possibility to send military clothing and food to the Iranian military in Miredeh-Baneh-Sardasht, which was besieged by the Kurdish forces.
2. The beleaguered region must not obtain weapons, military supplies, or exchange military forces unless somebody is ill or wounded.
3. The food and military dress convoy after being checked in by the Kurdish forces would be able to move to the besieged region with a Kurdish government representative.
4. Just like the above mentioned points for the Iranian army, the Kurds also had the right to block the road to the Miredeh-Baneh-Sardasht.<sup>542</sup>

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<sup>538</sup> Ibid., 92-3.

<sup>539</sup> Barzani 2003, 104.

<sup>540</sup> *Kurdistan*, No. 62, 27 June 1946, 1-2.

<sup>541</sup> Ibid., No. 60, 20 June 1946, 2.

<sup>542</sup> Sajadi 2005, 280-1.

Despite the proceedings of this agreement, both sides remained watchful to each other until December 1946.

### 4.3. Socioeconomic basis

Concerns regarding wartime and post-war economic crisis contributed to the growth of economic and social problems.<sup>543</sup> The economic problems included inflation, famine, and disruption of government finance. Further, according to Alias H. Tuma, Iran felt a lot of pressure on its infrastructure but had no concurrent investment to maintain it.<sup>544</sup> The increasing size of the Iranian population and the increased urbanization from 1941 until 1946 (see table 2 and 3),<sup>545</sup> and the increasing number and power of indigenous landowners affected the character of urban life in multiple ways. Social and economic problems, as indicated by Nikki R. Keddie, fuelled the growth of political organizations. Various political groups within the Iranian society competed for the allegiance of -- an unprecedented development.<sup>546</sup>

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<sup>543</sup> For Iranian economy during the Second World War, see Kamran M. Dadkhah, 'The Iranian Economy during the Second World War: The Development Controversy', *Middle East Studies* (Vol. 37, No. 2, April 2001), 181-98.

<sup>544</sup> Alias H. Tuma, 'The Economies of the Middle East', Gerner 2000, 218.

<sup>545</sup> From 1900 to the 1930s, the growth rate of urban and rural population in Iran remained relatively low. Between 1940 and 1956, however, the total urban population increased 10 percent, while the rural population showed a 10 percent decrease in the same period. A drastic change took place in terms of the total population as well. Although the Iranian population showed an increase of about 4.5 million in forty years, between 1900 and 1940, rising from 9.86 million to 14.55 million, respectively, numbers went up exponentially in the sixteen years that followed. Between 1940 and 1956, the total population increased by about 5.5 million. For the Iranian population growth statistics between 1900 and 1970, see Julian Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran 1900-1970* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 25-8.

<sup>546</sup> Keddie 1981, 118.

Year	Population	Table 2:
1941	14.76	The total population of Iran, 1941-1946 (in millions). Julian Bharier, <i>Economic Development in Iran 1900-1970</i> (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 27.
1942	14.98	
1943	15.21	
1944	15.43	
1945	15.66	
1946	15.93	

Year	Urban	Rural	Table 3:
1901	21	79	The percentage breakdown of the total urban and rural population for the four known years. Bharier 1971, 25.
1934	21	79	
1940	22	78	
1956	31	69	

While the socioeconomic situation of the central government worsened, the situation was certainly more dire in distant Kurdistan and its villages. In order to highlight just how impoverished the economic conditions were in Kurdistan, Ghassemlou pointed to a story from his own childhood. When he was eleven years old and his father went to Baku with a Kurdish delegation, their poverty was so dire that he had to bring back sugar with him, since at that time there was little sugar available in Kurdistan.<sup>547</sup> Figures in Table 4 indicate the sharp price increases of some basic food products from 1938 to 1943 as sold in Tabriz. It must be noted that Tabriz was a major commercial centre for Kurds as well as for the entire north-west region of Iran. At the time, prices of most commodities available in Tabriz and Mahabad were roughly the same. Table 5 indicates the prices of commodities listed in Table 4 for the year 1946 in Mahabad.

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<sup>547</sup> Ghassemlou 1988, 61. Here reference is made to the first visit to Baku in 1941.

Commodities (Per Kilo)	June 1938 (Rials)	June 1941 (Rials)	June 1942 (Rials)	June 1943 (Rials)	Table 4: Prices of some commodities in Tabriz, 1938-1943. Atabaki 1991, 131.
Wheat	0.59	1.65	1.11	13.0	
Bread	0.69	1.50	1.10	12.0	
Rice	3.00	3.50	6.00	32.0	
Sugar (moist)	4.00	5.95	7.50	100.0	
Sugar (loaf)	4.50	7.00	8.50	113.0	
Mutton	2.60	5.20	6.00	16.0	
Ghee	10.80	16.0	36.0	68.0	
Tea	44.0	70.0	120.0	180.0	

Commodities (Per Kilo)	April 1946 (Rials)	Table 5: Prices of some commodities in Mahabad, April 1946. <i>Kurdistan</i> , No. 34, 10 April 1946, 4.
Wheat	20.0	
Rice	19.0	
Sugar (moist)	145.0	
Sugar (loaf)	140.0	
Mutton	30.0	
Ghee	95.0	
Tea (moist)	360.0	

After the establishment of the Republic of Kurdistan on 22 January 1946 and the formation of its economic, social and political departments, two institutions played a pivotal role in the region under the control of the Republic: the Ministry of War and the Ministry of Propaganda. In general cooperation between the several offices of the new polity was not coordinated as they were merely formed in imitation of the Azerbaijan government structure. Ghazi Mohammad put little energy into ordering and improving of the Republic's affairs. During his administration there was no general constitutional law to order the functioning of the political, economic, social and academic associations of the new country.<sup>548</sup> Since the freedom of the Republic of Kurdistan depended on Tabriz and Tehran, the PNAK could not prepare the

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<sup>548</sup> Borzowi 1999, 330.

constitutional law.<sup>549</sup> The Ministry of War, which was responsible for the protection of the Republic, has already been discussed, thus, the following section will focus on the Ministry of Propaganda. This office was accountable for disseminating propaganda and publishing the policies of the Republic, which was at that time of paramount importance.

The Republic of Kurdistan most important goals were economic and social reform. These hindered not only by external elements but by some internal obstacles as well (for external elements of the Republic of Kurdistan, see chapter V). The relation between the landlords and peasants was one of the internal complications of Ghazi's reform plan. Principle no. 5 in the KDP's programme read as follows: 'by the passing of a general law, the grievances existing between the farmers and the landowners would be amended and their future positions defined'. This reform had never been implemented as it had been by the Azerbaijan government. Many of the settlements in the areas controlled by the Republic were populated by tribes and landlords and each measure of land reform would meet with some form of opposition from the competing interest groups.<sup>550</sup> Several Kurdish representatives, like Seif Ghazi, were the landlords in many villages. These powerful landlords not only exploited the tribal people and peasants, but also sought short-term profits at the expense of both the land and peasants.<sup>551</sup> According to Ghassemlou, 87 percent of the land was owned by the landlords while the peasants occupied a mere 8 percent.<sup>552</sup> It must be concluded that the majority of the population had no land and they had to serve the landlord's interests. The landlords were determined to manipulate the government's internal policy so as not to allow any drastic land reform which could harm their interests. On the other hand, the middle-class was first anticipating their own liberation from the tribal leaders in order to form the newly constituted bourgeois.<sup>553</sup> However, due to the region's strong tribal influences and the kinship relations within and between the tribes, land reform could not be implemented by Ghazi Mohammad.

The majority of the Kurdish peasants and villagers had obligations to the landlords, or Aghas, and they constantly depended upon and were indebted to them. Ghazi appreciated the power of the landlords and thus took precautions before adopting the reforms, no doubt a sign

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<sup>549</sup> Mirza Mohammad Amin Manguri, *Ba sar hati Siyasi Kurd: la 1914 we ta 1958* [the political story of the Kurds: from 1914 until 1958], (Svergie, Sweden, 1999), 137.

<sup>550</sup> *Ibid.*, 1999, 336.

<sup>551</sup> Keddie 1981, 125.

<sup>552</sup> Ghassemlou 1988, 16.

<sup>553</sup> Arfa 1966, 85.



of his political acumen. Besides this, needed to overcome the suspicion that his reform plan was the product of the atheist Soviet regime. In general, Kurds were practising Muslims and Ghazi needed to find a way to present the reform as being in line with Islamic norms.<sup>554</sup> In the past, the Kurds, the majority of whom were Muslims, proclaimed jihad against Soviet in the First World War. Concerning the landlords and farmers, *Kurdistan* published some requisites of the land registration office, which stated that ‘it distinguishes the situation and kind of relations between the farmer and the landlord.’<sup>555</sup> Ghazi also claimed that the ‘adjustment of the revenue of the landlords in order to alleviate the hostility between villagers and landlords was completely finalized.’<sup>556</sup> But still, land reform, which was supposed to define and distinguish the rights of the farmers and peasants, had not taken place.

Women’s rights also posed another dilemma for the reform plan of the Republic of Kurdistan. The Kurdish government actively endeavoured to promote some of the women’s interests in the Kurdish community, which at that time was a courageous plan but also an alienating proposal from the perspective of Kurdish traditions in general. *Kurdistan* published the following announcement in the name of Haji Baba Sheikh which stated that ‘it was forbidden for a man to make a girl or women elope and the punishment for such an act would be from three months up to three years of imprisonment.’<sup>557</sup> This prohibition was incompatible with the Kurdish norms and values because within the dominant traditional lifestyle, the elopement of a girl, particularly in tribal areas, was a normal action in Kurdish society in the period of the Republic. And in some cases, a man was considered as a hero when he managed to elope with a girl. The enforcement of this law, according to Mirza Mohammad Amin Manguri’s memoirs<sup>558</sup>, was incongruous with the traditions and customs of marriages in the region. Thus, most people would have found this proclamation of Haji Baba Sheikh as unacceptable since it was a hindrance to pledged lovers.<sup>559</sup>

The penal code of the Republic was not based on codified law but more on religious and common traditional laws.<sup>560</sup> According to Borzowi, the powerful Kurdish tribal chieftains did not formally recognize the Justice Office of the Republic. The local disputes between the

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<sup>554</sup> Borzowi 1999, 337.

<sup>555</sup> *Kurdistan*, No. 36, 17 April 1946, 4.

<sup>556</sup> Borzowi 1999, 337.

<sup>557</sup> *Kurdistan*, No. 16, 18 February 1946, 4.

<sup>558</sup> I would like to thank Hassan Ghazi, who scanned and sent me several pages of the book from this author.

<sup>559</sup> Manguri 1999, 137.

<sup>560</sup> *Ibid.*

tribes and farmers were resolved by decisions taken by the chiefs and the Justice Office was not yet strong enough to replace the traditional legal system.<sup>561</sup> However, there were three different courts in the Republic: military, national committee (which supervised all courts and was under the leadership of Ghazi Mohammad) and the civil courts. The last court was established by a committee consisting of three Mullahs (Mulla Hussein, Mulla Ibrahim and Mulla Mohammad) to judge and decide on the punishment and rights of the accused.<sup>562</sup> Because of the issue on the elopement of women, there were many prisoners in the prison of Police office of the Republic headed by Sayyid Pire Nizami. Amin Manguri was a prisoner of the Republic from August through September 1946 for sixteen days and claimed that the living conditions of these prisoners were appalling and they obtained one toman per day for food, clothes, etc., and they were treated like animals. The cases of thirty-eight prisoners, according to Amin Manguri, all had to do with the elopement issue and they spent about four or five months in prison without having been summoned by the court. For these detainees, Amin Manguri asserted that he wrote a petition against the charges to the civil court and fortunately, they were all set free. He added that they were not acquitted because of his intervention, but rather because of the complete lack of legitimacy of Baba Sheikh's 'elopement law'.<sup>563</sup>

Polygamy and endogamy were religious and cultural norms and often traditional laws regarding these practices were esteemed within Kurdish society, especially given the tribal traditions. In this way, people passed on their social position and status to their children so that the traditional social hierarchy was maintained. Exogamy, at the time of the Republic, was not popular or widespread and had not yet developed those facilitating contacts between different communities which in turn stimulate the spread of cultural elements. In the period of the Republic, if a man had several wives, he was expected to provide comparable privileges to all of them. If someone was convicted of being unfair to his wife, he faced economic sanctions or imprisonment. *Kurdistan* reported that Ahmad Babanzadeh, the head of the customs house in Khaneh (Lahijan), was dismissed from the bureau because he abused and abandoned his second wife.<sup>564</sup> The Central Committee of the KDP had published several laws

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<sup>561</sup> Borzowi 1999, 338.

<sup>562</sup> Manguri 1999, 143.

<sup>563</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>564</sup> *Kurdistan*, No. 54, 6 June 1946, 4.

under the title '*taswibi qanoni mojazat*' (approved penal code) in *Kurdistan* and a summary of these codes are presented below:

1- A successful espionage agent will be hanged and in case of special circumstances, the agent's wealth will be seized or the agent will be sent to jail. 2- Drunkenness can result in imprisonment ranging from one to ten months in prison accompanied by fifty until two hundred whippings. 3- Stealing or demolishing government property, depending on their crime, will be punished by hanging or submission of their property. 4- Those who oppress women will get one year in prison. 5- Opium smokers will be deprived of their civil rights. 6- Running away from the enemy and submission of his weapon to the enemy will be penalized by hanging till death. 7- Those who committed treason against their own country will be executed. 8- The violation of a women's honour will be punished by national committee following norms and regulations. 9- Corruption will have the same penal code as previous one [as by number 8].<sup>565</sup>

The laws mentioned above were only theoretical and it was not easy to practice these codes within the Kurdish community. One of the pivotal reasons was that the Kurdish leaders were desperate after the withdrawals of the Red Army. There was strong evidence for this claim as only one person was killed from the time of the proclamation of the Republic until the end. The second obvious reason was that the duration of the Republic was too short to enforce these regulations. It is necessary to describe and distinction between the following three important socioeconomic reforms of the Republic: prohibition of weapons for unauthorized use in civil areas, shelter for children without parents and the mourning period. As noted, after 1941 the acquiring and carrying a weapon was popular and customary in the Kurdistan. It was the traditional method Kurdish tribes employed to legitimize and enhance their power. The Republic of Kurdistan had tried to restrict the quantities of weapons via a registration code. *Kurdistan* published a declaration as follows:

It shall be noted for all the inhabitants that carrying a weapon in the cities without a licence is forbidden and if somebody fires a gun in the town, a firm line of action will be taken.<sup>566</sup>

Before proclamation of the Republic of Kurdistan, the KDP representatives had engaged in action for the support of unattended children in order to find regular guardians for them. On

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<sup>565</sup> Ibid., No. 40, 27 April 1946, 3; see also *ibid.*, No. 42, 4 May 1946, 3.

<sup>566</sup> Ibid., No. 2, 13 January 1946, 3.

January 1, 1946, Kurdistan Cultural Committee published in *Kurdistan* the following declaration:

It was decided to collect the orphans and accommodate them amongst the families in the town. The municipality gathered the children and they were sent to Galawedj school daily. The children were to have been between Six to fourteen years old.<sup>567</sup>

The requirements of those in mourning, the final issue of reform, were different for every region due different cultural traditions, though in general, the mourning period continued between one to three weeks. This was a heavy financial loss, particularly for the poor people. On January 24, 1946, Baba Sheikh acknowledged that the mourning period must be based on Islamic law and stated that:

Mourning has no business making people undertake the trouble and expenses that it generally does. The mourning gathering for men must be near mosques and entertainment for the condolence session is not allowed. As Islamic law claims, the mourning gathering should be limited to one day only and it applies to all towns and villages.<sup>568</sup>

Part of Reza Shah's efforts to modernize Iran was to industrialize the country with the construction of factories. While many factories were built in Iran during the reign of Reza Shah, only one factory was built in the Kurdish region. The KDP attempted to open factories in Kurdistan, according to article twenty of the KDP political program, which stressed the need for economic development in Kurdistan and opening factories in all Kurdish cities. But lack of any industrial centres in Kurdistan, save for a sugar factory in Miyanduab, meant that it lacked a working-class. The majority of the population was concentrated in the villages<sup>569</sup> and the products of this rural community were the important ones of the Republic. From the urban middle-class came the mainstream representatives of the Republic, which was supported by the traders, the richest and therefore the main taxpaying section of the Republic's population.

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<sup>567</sup> Ibid., No. 1, 11 January 1946, 2.

<sup>568</sup> Ibid., No. 16, 18 February 1946, 4.

<sup>569</sup> Borzowi 1999, 337.

On January 10, 1946, the KDP established a tax committee with fifteen members.<sup>570</sup> For national development and to increase prosperity, the tax committee issued a declaration and demanded that the people pay their taxes as obligated by the law. In this way, the KDP tried to raise awareness in *Kurdistan* for payment of taxes. *Kurdistan* reported:

According to the tax law, landlords, merchants and traders should pay taxes for the fiscal years of 1944 and 1945 and it must be remembered that the tax is the spirit of the nation and as long as the tax situation is unstable, the [government] administrations can not be developed.<sup>571</sup>

The new Republic's policy provided the inhabitants with a much freer society than before. As Eagleton points out, the people were could 'listen to radio broadcasts from all parts of the world, and they took advantage of this, something which was not experienced by the Azerbaijani Turks.'<sup>572</sup> The citizens were free to travel outside the Republic. Many of the people were traders and merchants, who utilized this opportunity to travel to Turkey and particularly to Iraq, and managed to smuggle goods and supplies and sell them in Kurdistan and even in the whole of Iran. The government tried to impose on those who brought goods illegally to Kurdistan,<sup>573</sup> but the smuggling was unstoppable. Smuggling of social, political, economic and military goods (newspapers, books, sugar, oil, wheat, clothing, weapons, aluminium and narcotic substances) between Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey became a popular trade and many people become rich, while others were killed or imprisoned after getting caught.<sup>574</sup>

The largest source of income of the republican government was based on sugar and tobacco. These products were manufactured and exported by the *Taraqi* (progress) company, which was established by the Ministry of Economy. The company took a leading role in managing commercial links with Azerbaijan, Iran, and the Soviet Union. It was estimated that the capital of this company was 'one million tomans'<sup>575</sup> and in several reports of *Kurdistan*, it

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<sup>570</sup> *Kurdistan*, No. 5, 20 January 1946, 4.

<sup>571</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 6, 21 January 1946, 3.

<sup>572</sup> Eagleton 1963, 101.

<sup>573</sup> *Kurdistan*, No. 26, 18 March 1946, 4.

<sup>574</sup> Smuggling of goods is still a popular activity in Kurdistan. I witnessed it in the summer 1989, when several times aluminium was brought to Turkey via horses, while oil and sugar was imported to Iran from Turkey.

<sup>575</sup> *Kurdistan*, No. 15, 16 February 1946, 4.

asked the farmers to sell their tobacco crop to the Taraqi company.<sup>576</sup> The farmers were compensated with ‘one quarter cash and two quarter deposit bill for tobacco products.’<sup>577</sup> Thus, the economic situation of the Republic was not so bad, but while its treasury was not empty, it still could not afford the salaries of its officials. The monthly income of Ghazi Mohammad, according to Eagleton, was 3,000 tomans or about \$700 and the cabinet ministers were each paid 280 Tomans or \$65.<sup>578</sup> Tobacco products were a fundamental source of the Republic’s income and this product was so important that Ghazi saw it necessary to clarify that:

The only way the enemy can attack us is through an assault on our economy and in this way they always tried to bring conflict within the people. For example, the tobacco issue was a way for the Iranian government to divide the Kurdish society. It is thus necessary to strengthen our economic structure. So, the *Taraqi* Company must be developed and commercial relations must be established in the whole of Kurdistan. Transformation of the farming culture is a priority for the Kurdish government together with the development and progress of the manufacturing sector.<sup>579</sup>

The Friendship and Alliance Treaty between the Kurdish and Azerbaijan governments, signed in April 1946, had been formed on seven important points. The third point referred to the economic relations between the two governments, *Kurdistan* published this agreement (see the following chapter for detailed discussion) and the third point went as follows, ‘a Joint Economic Committee will be formed between the two nations to deal with the related economic problems and the decisions of the Committee will be attended to by the heads of both states.’<sup>580</sup> Based on this agreement the Kurdish government borrowed 20,000 tomans (about \$4,400) from the Azerbaijan government and a few months later was able to repay its debt in the form of Kurdish sugar from the Miyanduab refinery.<sup>581</sup>

The Taraqi Company set the tone of the economic relations of the Kurdish government with the three governments of Azerbaijan, Iran and the Soviet Union. The establishment of

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<sup>576</sup> Ibid., No. 26, 18 March 1946, 4.

<sup>577</sup> Ibid., No. 15, 16 February 1946, 4.

<sup>578</sup> Eagleton 1963, 87.

<sup>579</sup> *Kurdistan*, No. 23, 6 March 1946, 1.

<sup>580</sup> Ibid., No. 45, 8 May 1946, 3; Eagleton 1963, 82.

<sup>581</sup> Eagleton 1963, 100.

the price of Kurdish tobacco was something that raised disagreements with the Iranian government. According to Borzowi, Ghazi Mohammad and Seif Ghazi always strove for an increase in the tobacco price. Sadr Ghazi, some Mahabad merchants and several Kurdish chieftains met in November 1944 with the Shah of Iran and a decision was taken to increase the price of Kurdish tobacco, but it was probably never implemented.<sup>582</sup> After signing a contract with Azerbaijan, Iranian government boycotted all Kurdish goods. With the withdrawal of the Red Army from Iran in May 1946, the Iranian government initiated a boycott of Kurdish products, which openly showed their feelings of resentment against the Republic's government. Taraqi, among others who were to export the products of the Republic, especially tobacco, and whose market largely depended on the Iranians, suffered serious financial losses when the boycott cut them off from the rest of Iran. Another difficulty suffered by the inhabitants within the Republic was that they had to share their already depleted food supplies with a large number of Barzanis.<sup>583</sup>

The Soviet Union was another economic collaborator of the Taraqi Company. One of the motivations for the formation of the Taraqi Company was the existence of the Soviet military in the Iranian Kurdish region. In March 1945, Ghazi stressed economic relations with Soviets as a requisite in a discussion with Qoliyov, the then Vice Soviet Consul in Tabriz. Ghazi asserted that 'in Tehran, I meet the Soviet Ambassador and I stated my four intentions', the third of which was for 'a strong relation with the Soviets in order to bring their industrial instruments to Mahabad to be sold there and likewise for selling Kurdish products in the Soviet Union.'<sup>584</sup> For the next months, the Soviets exported military and other goods to the Republic of Kurdistan and imported tobacco from the Republic regions. This trade relation continued until the withdrawal of the Soviet Red Army from the Iranian territory in May 1946.

It is also worthwhile to point out a major mistake that Eagleton commits in an argument on this topic, which many other authors have also made by following him. Eagleton writes that the 'Iranian government paid for 10 per cent of the tobacco to the Kurds but made no move towards completing the purchase.'<sup>585</sup> More importantly, Eagleton does not clarify that the Iranian government purchased thousands of kilos of tobacco from the Kurdish areas,

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<sup>582</sup> Borzowi 1999, 331-2.

<sup>583</sup> Roosevelt 1947, 265; Jwaideh 1960, 752.

<sup>584</sup> Hewrami 2008a, 157.

<sup>585</sup> Eagleton 1963, 87.

especially in the district of Mahabad. In the Iranian archives of the Muzakirati Majlis, the Eagleton's error can be demonstrated with the following historical account:

On December 13, 1945, Sadr Ghazi, the representative of Mahabad in the Iranian parliament demanded in a parliament session that the central government must refund the money for the tobacco purchase to the Mahabad farmers. The minister of economy answered to this by saying that the government had no money to do so.<sup>586</sup>

This reaction disappointed Kurds and was one of the reasons for the severance of economic relations with the Iranian government. After this event, Ghazi Mohammad saw another possible buyer of their tobacco, namely the Soviets. In the beginning of May 1946, trade between Soviets and the Republic reached relatively high levels. Kurdish tobacco was bought for the sum of approximately \$800,000, which was remunerated through the transaction of Soviet goods, such as sugar, cotton clothing and china glassware, but the price paid was lower than that fixed by the Iranian government.<sup>587</sup>

#### **4.4. Political stand**

During the period of the two Empires (Ottomans and Qajars), the Kurdish tribal chieftains, landlords, merchants, and religious leaders had the majority of the power and until the First World War Kurdish society was split, particularly along sectarian lines. The majority of the works of leading Kurdish authors, namely Sharaf Khan Shamsaddin Bidlisi, were about the history of the principle Kurdish leaders and thus, they were not about the Kurdish society as a whole. *Sharaf Nameh*, probably the first Kurdish history from an authentic Kurdish source, was completed in 1596 and had originally been written in Persian. This is because until the eighteenth century Persian literature was widespread in the Ottoman Empire. While there were some Kurdish writers (i.e. Haji Ghadir Koyi) who presented their work in Kurdish, this act of writing in one's own language only became popular in the first half of the twentieth century in the Middle East with the tide of the sentiment for self-determination based on one's own culture and language. During the reign of the Empires before the First World War, power was mostly disseminated to the different classes and regions (i.e. it was centripetal in nature). After the First World War, the collapse of the Empires led to the formation of governments

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<sup>586</sup> Muzakirati Majlis Iran [Iranian parliament records], session 14, meeting 172, December 13, 1945.

<sup>587</sup> Eagleton 1963, 88.



which based their policies on centrifuging power towards the centre consisting of a ruling class. Integration and assimilation of the ethnic minority groups, such as the Kurds, into the newly established governments, which were dominated by a majority ethnic group, was an important program of the new nationalist government's leaders. Reza Shah and Atatürk were such nationalist leaders who tried to shape Persia and Turkey respectively into 'one country, one nation'. Therefore, in both countries, the symbols of a separate Kurdish identity (language, clothing and literature) were systematically prohibited.

Constitutional laws made during the Constitutionalist Revolution (1905-09) proclaimed Persian as the standard language of Iran, but it was not forbidden to practice the local languages, such as Kurdish. However, during Reza Shah's reign, it was not only the local languages which were prohibited, but also several other cultural aspects of the ethnic minorities. Vali asserted that the main target of Reza Shah in attempting to forbid the local languages was to consolidate a national identity for the Iranian people, which was to be manifested in a European style that ignored the country's cultural and ethnic diversity.<sup>588</sup> This policy of Reza Shah prepared the background for the growth of Kurdish nationalism in Iran. It also gave the most significant reason for the Kurds to mobilize themselves within political organizations to gain self-rule and protect the Kurdish identity. The systematic and long standing politico-cultural suppression of a minority group is not a simple process that can be quickly reversed. The Republic of Kurdistan did endeavour to revive the Kurdish identity, but its reign of only one year was too brief to cause a thorough transformation. For example, the first issue of *Kurdistan* had many Persian characters in it, but this was steadily reduced to a state until later issues, which were purely in Kurdish. In most issues of *Kurdistan*, a list of suggestions for language reform was published, which included the replacement of Persian vocabulary with Kurdish equivalents.

Printing in the Kurdish language and eliminating influence from foreign languages, particularly from Persian, were key nationalist techniques for standardization of the Kurdish language, something close to the heart of Ghazi Mohammad. Zabihi and Ghazi asked the Soviet representatives in Kurdistan about procuring a printing machine for them. According to Shapasandi, the printing press eventually arrived in Mahabad in October 1945 and two Soviet engineers spent two busy weeks to install it.<sup>589</sup> This led the *Kurdistan* to print its first headline 'opening of *Kurdistan* newspaper office'. In celebration of this event Baba Sheikh

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<sup>588</sup> Abbas Vali, 'Desthelati Siyasi we Hakmiyet le Komari Kurdistan' *Gzing*, No. 13, autumn 1997, 31.

<sup>589</sup> Shapasandi 2007, 29. Shapasandi was also a member of *Kurdistan* Printing Press Office.

proclaimed that ‘the presence of this machine was a great opportunity to liberate the ship of Kurdistan from political tidal waves in order for it to safely arrive at the shore.’<sup>590</sup> Another printing facility was installed in Bukan. On February 13, 1946, *Kurdistan* reported that the *Bukan* Print House was established and it should be of national service.<sup>591</sup> These printing houses in Mahabad and Bukan published several magazines and one newspaper. The journal *Kurdistan* was firstly published in December 1945 and it probably ended with its thirteenth issue. The first issue of newspaper *Kurdistan* was published on January 11, 1946, and had 113 issues. The journal *Hawari Nishtiman* (Support the organ of the Kurdistan Democratic Youth Union) published five issues and the mouthpiece journal of the KDP’s branch in Bukan called *Halale* (tulip) published three issues, while the only children’s journal, *Garogali Mindalani Kurd* (voice of Kurdish children) published three issues.<sup>592</sup> With the presence of a printing press and the prominence of publishing in Kurdish, Ghazi Mohammad observed that the ‘printing press would broadcasted our ideas, opinions and demands to the world.’<sup>593</sup>

Print language is fundamental for the dissemination of nationalist ideology and according to Anderson, who enumerates three ways it becomes the basis for a national consciousness. Two of these ways are as follows: 1- Print language creates a united avenue for networking and communications. 2 – It gives the language a new solid form, which in the long run would take a central place in the subjective idea of the nation.<sup>594</sup> It should be noted that one of the Kurdish nationalist aspirations under the Kurdish liberal movements between the two world wars was to maintain, formalize and increase published material in Kurdish. Many magazines, journals, newspapers and pamphlets, were published in Kurdish (Kurmanji and Sorani) and distributed. The JK party and in particular the program of the KDP was very clear in stating that Kurdish was the official and approved language in the Kurdish territories. The second slogan of the KDP referred to endorsement of schools taught in the Kurdish and the administration of all affairs in Kurdish. This idea of the official government language being Kurdish was suggested by article nine of the KDP political program.

According to Bulourian, the population of Mahabad at the time of the Second World War was about twenty thousand, with only primary schools and only one girl school with an

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<sup>590</sup> *Kurdistan*, No. 3, 15 January 1946, 4.

<sup>591</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 14, 13 February 1946, 3.

<sup>592</sup> For contents of these journals, see Hoesên 2008, 475-898. For five numbers of *Hawari Nishtiman* see, Saleh, Rafiq 2007, 333-48.

<sup>593</sup> *Kurdistan*, No. 11, 6 February 1946, 1.

<sup>594</sup> Anderson 1991, 44-5.

education higher than the sixth grade. University diplomas were nonexistent and the majority of the teachers were from the Azerbaijani and Persian ethnic background. Bulourian claims that Reza Shah blocked all political activities in Kurdistan and due to this political awareness within Kurdish society was very low.<sup>595</sup> In these circumstances, a major challenge was faced by Ghazi Mohammad when he proclaimed the Republic of Kurdistan. The establishment of a modern education system based on the Kurdish language was one of the leading programs of Ghazi's policy. With regard to the establishment of schools and a proper education system, Ghazi answered a question from the *Rahbar* (guide) newspaper in Tehran by stating that 'development and establishment of schools, print-capital, publishing of newspapers and journals, training military and politic, etc. had been improved.'<sup>596</sup> The building and opening of the Galawedj School in some private houses and the opening of various other schools were all part of the policy of the Republic.<sup>597</sup>

Because of the lack of high schools, teachers and the absence of a university in the areas under the control of the Republic, the KDP leaders sent many students to Tabriz and Baku with the hope that they would soon graduate with a high level of education and return back for the service of the Republic. One of the major goals of the Kurdish leaders in the second visit to Baku was the access of Kurdish students to various universities in Baku. After the declaration of the Republic, KDP sent more than fifty Kurdish students to Baku. Bulourian was one of these students and on this topic he said that:

We [Kurds] consisted of fifty students in total, while the Azeris numbered to three hundred fifty and some Azeris were even allowed to follow pilot training, which was not the case for the Kurds. Thirty people were in one unit and three officers were selected to teach us military and weapons training, war strategy and political theory. All political officers were members of the Soviet Communist Party.<sup>598</sup>

Thus, modern education was for Ghazi Mohammad fundamental for building a Kurdish state. The Republic initiated stringent measures to make children actively participate in education

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<sup>595</sup> Bulourian 2000, 77. Ghassemlou also estimated the population of Mahabad between fifteen and twenty thousand, Ghassemlou 1988, 49.

<sup>596</sup> *Rahbar*, No. 762, 9 July 1946, 1.

<sup>597</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>598</sup> Bulourian 2000, 82-4.

within the domestic territories. It was compulsory for every child to register for school. *Kurdistan* published the following announcement:

With the order of Peshawa [leader, Ghazi] and according to the policy of the democrat party, the official school language in Kurdistan will be Kurdish and everybody must send their children to school and the failure to do so would be grounds for punishment.<sup>599</sup>

Women's participation in political activities during the Republic was another significant political goal of the Kurdistan Democratic Party. On February 6, 1946, Kurdish women, under the leadership of Ghazi Mohammad's wife Mina Khanum and the spouses of some members of the KDP central committee organized the first Kurdish women's conference at the Kurdish-Soviet Cultural Society in Mahabad. At this conference, Mina Khanum proclaimed that the progress of Soviet women must be a model for the women in Kurdistan and she indicated the importance of education for women.<sup>600</sup> Ghazi encouraged women to participate actively in the governmental institutions of the Republic of Kurdistan, and in particular, in political activities. He first encouraged his wife and daughters to set an example for the whole Kurdish community. Under the inspiration of Ghazi's wife and with the support of the KDP central committee, a women's organization was established on February 13, 1946.<sup>601</sup> The second conference was organized by Kurdish women in March 8, 1946 at the Kurdish-Soviet Cultural Society. The majority of the speeches at the conference claimed that women, like men, should contribute to political activities and the modern education was essential for humanity's progress. Mina Khanum said in her speech that nowadays she saw parents sending their sons and daughters to school with enthusiasm and she hoped that in the future, under the guidance of the Kurdish government, illiteracy will be eradicated from Kurdistan.<sup>602</sup>

Another section within the KDP was the Youth Union of Democratic Kurdistan. This organization even predated the formation of the KDP. With the encouragement of Soviet officers, Bulourian proclaimed the importance of the formation of the youth organization:

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<sup>599</sup> *Kurdistan*, No. 1, 11 January 1946, 4.

<sup>600</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 24, 13 March 1946, 7.

<sup>601</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 25, 17 March 1946, 3.

<sup>602</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 37, 20 April 1946, 4.

Throughout the whole of the world youth have their own organizations and in order to disseminate the voice of our nation and win Kurdish rights, it is necessary to establish such a youth organization.<sup>603</sup>

Eventually, they formed the Kurdish Youth Organization (KYO) by the end 1942. In 1944, KYO entered the political activities of the JK party and their name was changed to the JK Youth Society. With the dissolution of the JK party and the formation of the KDP, the youth organization again changed its name to the Youth Union of Democratic Kurdistan. Kurdish nationalist awareness was an important target of this organization, particularly between 1942 and 1946.<sup>604</sup>

As a political institution, the KDP was a modern phenomenon in the Iranian Kurdish movement. The Kurdish people, according to Ghassemlou, were not very comfortable with the idea of formal institutions in no small part because of the previous institutions' restrictions and obligations were the main ways for the state suppressed the Kurdish people. It was necessary to serve in the military and pay taxes for the maintenance of law and order and the growth of government institutions.<sup>605</sup> These two phenomena (taxes and military) could be clearly marked as two of the problematical issues during the Republic of Kurdistan. Although the Republic had ruled no more than one year, it established a tax committee. *Kurdistan* wrote that 'on 10 January 1946, the Kurdistan Democratic Party formatted a tax committee which would collect taxes first from the cities and then in the villages.'<sup>606</sup> Kurdish representatives published several statements in different issues of *Kurdistan* asking the people to pay taxes, but their calls fell on deaf ears. And military participation, the second point, was problematic because the army was more based on tribal allegiances since it was under the control of the tribal chieftains.

Clarification of an important point is necessary regarding the building of NA by the Republic of Kurdistan. The main goal of the formation of such an army was not to expand armed struggle for liberation of other part of Iranian Kurdistan or against the central government, but it was only for defending the Republic of Kurdistan. The KDP's principle goal was to obtain autonomy for the Kurds within the territorial sovereignty of Iran. In other words, to obtain Kurdish rights according to the Provincial Council Code in which self-rule

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<sup>603</sup> Bulourian 2000, 31.

<sup>604</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>605</sup> Ghassemlou 1988, 48.

<sup>606</sup> *Kurdistan*, No. 5, 20 January 1946, 4.

by the indigenous population was required and as it was also written in the third point of the KDP slogans. From 1944 onwards, demanding the implementation of the Provincial Council Code, particularly articles 90-3 which were related to the privileges of the provinces to have local assemblies, was a popular topic for most of the political organizations in Iran.<sup>607</sup> The JK party was also one of the political parties behind this cry for the implementation of the Provincial Code (only during the Second World War since after the end of the war, they proclaimed the independence of Kurdistan) and their goal was to obtain a peaceful solution to the Kurdish question in Iran without involving themselves in armed struggle.

The KDP, under the leadership of Ghazi Mohammad, followed this proposal of the JK, but it was not a supporter of the independence of Kurdistan. In contrast to independence, the KDP had a clear message, which was the autonomy for the Kurds within the boundaries of Iran (the first of eight slogans of the KDP). For this reason, Ghazi Mohammad preferred a peaceful political dialogue rather than armed conflict for reaching a solution to the Kurdish question. Independence of Greater Kurdistan or even for Iranian Kurdistan was an unspoken issue for Ghazi. In several of his speeches, it can be surmised that he was a supporter of autonomy for the Kurds in Iran. Ghazi Mohammad claimed, 'we ask the Iranian government to enforce the constitutional law and we will live in autonomy under the flag of Iran.'<sup>608</sup> Actually from a political perspective, since the beginning of the formation of the Republic of Kurdistan until its end, there were two different opinions on this, which divided the Kurdish leaders into two fervent groups. One side aimed for the expansion and liberation of other parts of Iranian Kurdistan, such as Hama Rashid Khan Baneh, while the other side, under the leadership of Ghazi, was for a nonviolent solution to the Kurdish question in Iran. This split between the Kurdish leaders was further exacerbated and exploited during and after the battle of Mamashah.

That battle in June 1946 poisoned the political atmosphere in the Republic of Kurdistan. In it could be said that this battle caused the beginning of the political decline of the Republic by discouraging both the people and some Kurdish leaders. But the Kurdish forces were ready for further expansion to other parts of Iranian Kurdistan, such as Saqqiz, Baneh and Sardasht. This message was clear in Ghazi's speech on May 21, 1946 when he said that 'Kurdish forces will go on to occupy as far as Kermanshah when they obtain permission

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<sup>607</sup> Touraj Atabaki, *Azerbaijan: Ethnicity and the Struggle for Power in Iran* (second edition, London: I.B. Tauris and Co Ltd, 2000), 95.

<sup>608</sup> *Kurdistan*, No. 1, 11 January 1946, 1/4.

from the national government.<sup>609</sup> But this expansion was not in the interests of the Soviet policy in the region. Hashimov observed that if the Kurdish forces occupied Saqqiz and Kermanshah, they would be entering to the regions under the British sphere of influence. And if there were a sabotage of the motorway to Iraq and British oil interests near Kermanshah, Britain might conclude that the Soviets were behind the Kurdish expansion and that they were seeking oil conquests in the south of Iran, which was against the treaty between the two Great Powers. Thus, Hashimov made it clear that if Kurdish forces spread out to the south of Iranian Kurdistan, they would no longer enjoy Soviet support should the Iranian army attack the Republic on some other front.<sup>610</sup> The Republic's leaders had three choices. First, accept the Soviet consul's proposal in Urumiyeh and give up all attempts intentions of offensive operations to liberate the other parts of Iranian Kurdistan, especially in the south. Second, refuse the proposition of Hashimov and attack Saqqiz-Baneh-Sardasht front. Third, look for a solution to the Kurdish question in Iran through diplomatic means with the central government.

Baba Sheikh, the Kurdish Prime Minister was ready to pursue the second option and spoke up in approval of the offensive.<sup>611</sup> Several Kurdish leaders, such as Hama Rashid Khan among others, also supported the proposal of Baba Sheikh. In a letter to Ghazi Mohammad, Hama Rashid explained that the Iranian army was gathering forces and preparing for a possible attack and that for this reason he had requested permission to get the Kurdish troops ready to remove the enemy from the region.<sup>612</sup> In large part, the Barzanis also approved of this proposal.<sup>613</sup> However, there were three obstacles, which were also that motivated Ghazi Mohammad and his alliances to choose the third option, that of diplomatic resolution. Among these reasons, the first was that the Azerbaijan government had negotiated with the central government and legally reunited Azerbaijan back with the Iranian nation. Second, the Soviet military left the Iranian territory without showing any support for dual government's future. Third, there were all the indications that some tribal leaders would withdraw their support and not assist with the Republic's affairs.<sup>614</sup> The end of the Second World War changed the atmosphere of international relations and political alliances between Great Powers. Soviet

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<sup>609</sup> Ibid., No. 50, 27 May 1946, 1.

<sup>610</sup> Eagleton 1963, 97.

<sup>611</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>612</sup> Mulla Izzat 2003a, 533.

<sup>613</sup> Ibid., 364.

<sup>614</sup> Eagleton 1963, 98.

soldiers under pressure from the UN, particularly the US and UK, departed from Iran and claimed it as a defeat for the Soviet policy in international, especially Iranian, affairs (see chapter V). Ghazi Mohammad realized that the Iranian central government was now allied with the victorious powers, US and UK, who in turn supported the central government. In a letter to Hama Rashid, Ghazi explained his stance by stating these reasons and cautioning that ‘every small action must be taken with regard to the contemporary international situation’,<sup>615</sup> which now dictates that the Kurdish question be resolved peacefully with the central government.’<sup>616</sup>

Adherence to democratic principles in Iran was one of the significant motivating factors for the KDP leaders. Article five of the KDP political program referred to this topic, ‘development of democracy based on the struggle for human rights is the goal of the party.’ A solution of Kurdish question in Iran based on democratic principles and guaranteeing rights regardless of religion and ethnicity was also one of the KDP’s fundamental goals. For the KDP leaders, the presence of a real democratic process in Iran would be a way to solve the problems of the various ethnic groups in the state, especially that of the Kurds. But this did not mean that the Republic of Kurdistan would separate from Iran. Ghazi claimed, ‘we have independence but we are proud to be a part of Iran and our struggle is against the dictatorial administration in Tehran.’<sup>617</sup> Ghazi recalled several examples of European democratic countries with different ethnic groups who live together within the territorial unity that accepts the norms and values of its ethnically diverse citizens. Ghazi’s belief in democratic values is clear when he said that ‘nothing about the Azerbaijan nation is comparable with us, but they also changed their target from that of a liberation movement towards accepting the principles of democracy.’ According to Ghazi, ‘both nations [Kurds and Azeris] could reach unity and live together with each other and set an example for the Iranian government to recognize the norms of democracy.’ Even if the Iranian government were not ready to accept the values of democracy, it was still not a reason for Ghazi to quarrel with central government. Rather, Ghazi observed that ‘we are all humans and have the right to live as human beings.’<sup>618</sup>

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<sup>615</sup> Mulla Izzat 2003a, 194; Anwer 2001, 163.

<sup>616</sup> *Kurdistan*, No. 47, 15 May 1946, 3.

<sup>617</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 51, 29 May 1946, 1.

<sup>618</sup> *Ibid.*



To what extent was the Iranian government was prepared to take serious steps to accept and implement Ghazi's proposal for a peaceful solution to the Kurdish question in Iran? If Ghazi claimed that the Iranian government was a despotic regime, in what manner was the central government ready to choose diplomatic channels for the solution of the Kurdish issue? On May 29, 1946, Ghazi proclaimed, 'the Kurdish and Azeris question is sabotaged by Ahmad Ghavam os-Saltaneh (Iranian Prime Minster), which must be solved by a peaceful dialogue.'<sup>619</sup> In the letters of several Kurdish officers on the Saqqiz-Baneh front, they explained that the Iranian government was not ready to support Ghazi's proposal because Iranian military was increasing their forces on Saqqiz front on a daily basis<sup>620</sup> in preparation for an offensive attack against the Republic forces. However, several signs pointed to the apathy, weakness and disunity of the central government, which kept the Iranian government from paying attention to the Republic. First, the Azerbaijan government was in a strong partnership with Kurdish government and the decline of Azerbaijan would mean that the conquest and control of the whole of Iran by the central government was inevitable. Second, some tribes in southern Iran, Bakhtiyari and Qashqayi, were in an uprising against Iranian government. Third, disarray and division of the ruling political parties within Iranian government was also an important weakness. According to Hewrami, the first steps taken in Iran after the departure of the Soviet army were the elimination of the governing coalitions of different political parties of Ghavam between early August to 17 October 1946. In the third new cabinet of Ghavam, which was established on October 19, the representatives of the Tudeh and several parties were not in government. Expulsion and dismantling of the three Tudeh's ministries also provide an opportunity for the southern tribes to feel themselves prepared to accommodate the Iranian government. On October 1946, Ghavam returned the political balance and could now send the military to Azerbaijan, who wanted to separate from Iran.<sup>621</sup>

If Ghazi wanted a military offensive in the period from June to October (period of weakness of the Iranian government), particularly in the southern Iranian Kurdistan, it was a promising time. According to Hewrami, if the Kurdish government put pressure on the central government by moving from a defensive position to an offensive stance for the liberation of other parts of Kurdistan, in particular Saqqiz-Baneh-Sardasht, it would also have been a basis

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<sup>619</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>620</sup> Mulla Izzat 2003a.

<sup>621</sup> Hewrami 2003b, 209.

for the liberation of other parts of Iranian Kurdistan. Hewrami states that the following factors would be in favour of the Kurdish authorities if they wanted to fight against the Iranian military along the Saqqiz-Baneh-Sardasht line:

(A) the Iranian military offensive from the southern line against Kurdish government would be eliminated; (b) it would be a response to the Iranian government against their failure to resolve the Kurdish issue through dialogue; (c) it would show to the US, UK and Iranian government, that the Kurds were determined to get their rights and the withdrawal of Soviet military had no effect on the Kurdish government; (d) Kurdish troops would gain access to weapons and ammunitions which were not possible to be received from the Soviets; (e) Kurdish forces would capture strategic areas to build a future military base; and, (f) Kurdish troops would increase in maturity and grow in number with the preparation and implementation of this offensive.<sup>622</sup>

Frankly though, the Kurds had no strategic plan for an offensive and the Kurdish military plan was dictated in large part by the Soviets. As Eagleton pointed out, 'Russians were content with influencing major policy decisions along lines favourable to their larger tactical and strategic interests.'<sup>623</sup>

The majority of the subjects and articles in the newspaper *Kurdistan* praised the Soviet government, Stalin and the socialist bloc. After the withdrawal of the Soviet military from Iran, such praiseworthy statements were drastically reduced and it seemed that the Kurds were disappointed, which was obvious in a long speech by Ghazi on May 29. With the absence of the Soviet support, there remained two possibilities to strengthen the political position of the Republic of Kurdistan: the formation of an alliance with the government of Azerbaijan and the establishment of coalitions with various democratic parties in Iran, which was already too late as well. Ghazi declared through a telegraph, 'the Kurdistan Democratic Party is pleased to announce the formation of a coalition with democrat movements in Iran (the Democratic Party, under the leadership of Ghavam, the Iranian Tudeh and Azerbaijan Democratic Party).'<sup>624</sup> Thus, the successful diplomatic policy of Ghavam satisfied Ghazi Mohammad and hindered him from a possible Kurdish military offensive. However, it would have been impossible for Ghavam to alienate all the plots of central government simultaneously. Ghavam's first step was to pacify the southern rebels and establish political unity for the

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<sup>622</sup> Ibid., 302-3.

<sup>623</sup> Eagleton 1963, 104.

<sup>624</sup> *Kurdistan*, No. 85, 12 September 1946, 4.

ruling government. When the execution of the so-called steps of Ghavam was frustrated, the leader focused all his attention on Azerbaijan. Without help of the Azerbaijan government in the face of military offensive by central government, the failure of the alliance between Azerbaijan and Republic of Kurdistan in December 1946 was fast becoming a reality.

## **5 The fall of the Republic of Kurdistan**

The collapse of the Republic hinged on several internal and external elements, with the former getting more attention in this section. Rivalry between Kurdish leaders and different tribal chieftains and, who were the important for planning and implementing of policy within the Republic lead to an unbalanced policy among Kurdish towns and villages. These imbalances are the key elements leading to the collapse of the Republic, to be discussed in this section. The essential research agenda is to find answers to the following question: which dominant internal factors lead to the collapse of the Republic of Kurdistan?

### **5.1. Opponents of the Republic of Kurdistan within the Kurdish community**

The Republic of Kurdistan, during its short reign, remained mostly a city-based administrative institution, which was mostly concentrated in Mahabad. According to Vali, the Republic could not implement its power outside the cities and it was also rather incapable of spreading the nationalist message to all parts of the society, including the farmers.<sup>625</sup> Landlords were an important component of the policy formulation class within the Republic and in many cases, they were also the ones in charge of the villagers, particularly in matters of tax collection. Vali asserted that inhabitants outside the cities did not donate and support the administration, because the farmers still continued to pay their taxes to the landlords.<sup>626</sup> Some of the landlords, such as Seif Ghazi and Ghazi Mohammad, channelled funds to the Republic, but it was purely based on their own self interests. Although the Republic established a tax collection system, called the Tax Committee, it was inefficient. This was due in part, according to Vali, to the institution (Republic) not taking steps to force the landed class to adhere to its directives. The government feared theresistance and friction such measures might cause since its very existence depended on the political and military support of this class.<sup>627</sup> Landlords controlled not only the social, political and especially economic aspects of the

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<sup>625</sup> Vali, 'Desthelati Siyasi ', *Gzing*, No. 13, 1997, 34.

<sup>626</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>627</sup> *Ibid.*

villages, but they also contributed greatly to the political environment of their communities, with the majority of the landlords maintaining city-based lifestyles. Tribal chieftains, some of whom were also landlords, were also another constituency that sometimes competed with landlords for political power since they were largely concentrated in the countryside.

During the occupation of Iran by the Allies from 1941 until 1946, the political consensus between several Kurdish chieftains for the leadership of the Kurdish society was a hot topic. Ghazi Mohammad from the Mukriyan district, Amir Asad of the Dehbokri, Mamash and Zarza tribal chieftains in the Naqadeh and Ushnawiyeh areas, Zêro Beg Harki and Emer Khan Shikak were the significant leaders of the Kurds at that time. They did not cooperate with each other as their own individual political interests were more important. Soviet political agents wanted to appoint a strong Kurdish leader for the protection of Soviet political interests (and there were no powerful leaders in Iranian Kurdistan at that time). Obviously, the Soviets sought a Kurdish leader who would be the most favorable to the Soviet perspective. According to Roosevelt, the most acceptable candidates were Gharani Agha, chief of the Mamash tribe who originated from the Naqadeh region and was eminently qualified, and Emer Khan Shikak. Amir Asad Dehbokri was another suitable person for the Soviets as he was, in Roosevelt's judgment, a conservative and honorary chief of the municipality, a position to which he had been appointed by the Iranian government in order to maintain the security of the area. Eventually, the Soviets chose Ghazi Mohammad, a religious man coming from a respected family in the Mukriyan region.<sup>628</sup>

Ghazi Mohammad's leadership was for some chieftains unacceptable due to a traditional rivalry of some of the chieftains with Ghazi's family. Fettahi Ghazi points out, Mohammad Agha of the Dehbokri tribe and major parts of the Manguri tribe had strong enmity with Ghazi's family.<sup>629</sup> Before the proclamation of the Republic, this hostility between tribal chieftains was not attended to by Ghazi Mohammad. Several important tribal chieftains of Dehbokri, Manguri and Mamash were openly in the service of the central government. Marzban, the Iranian governor in Tabriz, told Maksimov that 'it's straightforward to remove them [Ghazi Mohammad and their family] by Gharani Agha Mamash or by Ali Agha and Abdullah Agha Manguri.'<sup>630</sup> According to Fahimi, an emissary of central government to Mahabad prior to the Republic, 'Gharani Agha informed me weekly via letters about the

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<sup>628</sup> Roosevelt 1947, 253.

<sup>629</sup> Ghazi, Fettahi 2009, 63.

<sup>630</sup> Hewrami 2008a, 94-5.

events in Kurdistan.’<sup>631</sup> With regard to open hostility between several chieftains of Manguri, and of Mamash and Dehbokri against the Republic, *Kurdistan* published a speech by Seif Ghazi, Minister of War, who said that the ‘treachery of some Mamash, Manguri and Dehbokri chieftains should be scrutinized in this democratic atmosphere of the Kurdish society and their stratagem must be publicized.’<sup>632</sup> However, antagonism of these chieftains against the Republic continued until the Republic’s fall. When Ghazi surrendered himself to the Iranian military, it was even one of his conditions that these chieftains be declared inadmissible in Mahabad, so that they do not plunder the city in the name of revenge.<sup>633</sup>

Political and ideological divisions among tribal chieftains significantly weakened the political power of the Republic. The KDP leaders were unable to unite themselves in the service of the Kurdish nationalist aspiration. The political and personal polarization of the Kurdish leaders grew in various directions. From an ideological perspective, some Kurdish leaders had been attaching themselves to British-American interests, while the majority opted for the Soviets. The public mouthpiece of both the Republic and the KDP, *Kurdistan*, published many praiseworthy messages and photographs of the Soviet leaders. Ghazi Mohammad was optimistic and had faith in the Soviet Union, whose communist representatives, he thought, would liberate the small nation of Kurdistan. This argument has been illustrated in the following poem:

*reyi nacatman pana bu Ithadi Shorawi\_\_reyi (Stalin) beji bu lagri mazlomekan*<sup>634</sup>

[shelter with Soviet Union is our road to liberation. Stalin’s way is supporting the suppressors].

The withdrawal of the Red Army, the essential factor behind the fall of the Republic, devastated Kurdish leaders and left the Kurdish people to face the offensive of the Iranian military alone.

The Republic’s support of the Soviet communist ideology had two negative effects on some tribal leaders. Their individual interests and, more importantly, their power over the proletariat farmer class was bound to be reduced if the communist ideology gained a foothold.

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<sup>631</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>632</sup> *Kurdistan*, No. 11, 6 February 1946, 1/4.

<sup>633</sup> Hewrami 2008b, 296.

<sup>634</sup> *Kurdistan*, No. 1, 11 January 1946, 3.

Ghassemlou claimed that the development of democracy and friendly relations with Soviet Union would put the interests of chieftains and landlords at risk. Thus, they only outwardly supported the Republic due to their fear of its Soviet ally. However, their secret contacts and relationships with the central government were never broken, even when they were supposedly pledged in the service of the Kurdish movement.<sup>635</sup> Another view of many Kurds who opposed the Soviets was the fear that under communist leadership an atheist regime would be implemented, which would be abhorrent to the devout and practicing Kurdish Muslim community. Ghassemlou stated that Rashid Beg told his father that although it was right to exploit Soviets support to the Kurds, it would indeed be bad for the Kurds if in the future Kurdish society turned into something akin to that of the Soviet society.<sup>636</sup>

Employment of Emer Khan as the General forces of the Republic, as per the American intelligence service's directions, was another manifestation of division of the Kurdish leadership during the Republic. The double spy nature of Emer Khan rescued him from life imprisonment, exile or even death by hanging when the Iranian military crushed the Republic of Kurdistan. Britain claimed that Emer Khan was in the service of the US. In a letter to Consul General in Tabriz, the then British Ambassador in Tehran claimed that 'Arram [Emer] Khan, head of the Shikkak Kurds, is a friend of the Americans.'<sup>637</sup> As Jwaideh also pointed out, Emer Khan appeared to have been close with George Allen, US Ambassador in Iran.<sup>638</sup> When Emer Khan remarked that the fall of the Republic was only a matter of time, his political and individual opportunism was obvious. He had, Roosevelt asserted, withdrawn his support from the Republic in anticipation of forthcoming developments.<sup>639</sup> Emer Khan's individual interest for joining the Republic became clearer a few years later after the fall of the Republic when he claimed that he 'had done so in order to save his neck.'<sup>640</sup>

The Kurdish leaders' focus their individual interests and the weakness of their nationalist sentiments can be concluded from the following report of the Soviet representatives in Iranian Kurdistan. The membership of tribal chiefs in the JK, according to the Soviet report in Urumiyeh, could be divided in three categories. First, some became

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<sup>635</sup> Ghassemlou 1988, 50-1.

<sup>636</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>637</sup> FO 371/68759, 'Persia, File No. 12877', 27 September 1948.

<sup>638</sup> Jwaideh 1960, 745. Ghassemlou is also consented that Emer Khan had relation with the American Embassy, Ghassemlou 1988, 153.

<sup>639</sup> Roosevelt 1947, 265.

<sup>640</sup> Jwaideh 1960, 744.

members only for their own economic interests. Second, several famous Kurdish leaders obtained membership of the JK to show support its Soviet allies of whom they were afraid. For this reason, the JK's political ambition for the independence of Kurdistan rested on the assistance of the Soviets. And third, a few Kurdish leaders entered the JK for their nationalist feeling as they wanted to liberate their nation.<sup>641</sup>

Inexperience in running governmental institutions within the Kurdish society was in general a substantial defect for support of the Kurdish nationalist project. That much was clear in the governmental institutions of the Republic. Ghassemlou claimed that the Republic of Kurdistan inexperience in comparison to the central government was one of the causes of the fall of the Republic.<sup>642</sup> One of the reasons behind the incapacity of Kurds to manage their own affairs was the central government's longstanding policy towards the ethnic group. As previously noted, Turkey, Iraq and Reza Shah of Iran obstructed the advancement of basic human rights for the Kurds, which is the proximate cause of a lack of schools in Kurdistan (or a complete absence of schools in some areas, especially in villages), the absolute prohibition on the creation of political parties, and the prohibition of Kurdish language. Dictation errors and the dominance of Persian words in the reports and writings of the newspaper *Kurdistan* not only illustrated the undeveloped state of the Kurdish language, but the newspaper also confirms the political inexperience of the authorized officials and Kurdish successors, since its political messaging was also very weak. Ghassemlou stated the leaders of the Kurdistan Democratic Party generally had no experience in politics, and were equally ignorant in matters of establishing and administering a civil government.<sup>643</sup>

Regardless, one year was too short a time to properly build a functioning public administration for the Republic. Strengthening and enhancing the formation of political parties and government is a lengthy process. Time is needed for polity to set roots into a society. But the KDP was not allowed that time, because it ruled only briefly. The KDP had but a few political and educational cadres, which are the necessary building blocks for functioning political parties. Within the one-year reign of the Republic, it was also impossible to build strong confederate government institutions. According to Ghassemlou, the tragedy of the Republic of Kurdistan might have been averted had it been given more time, but that was

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<sup>641</sup> Hewrami 2008a, 134-5.

<sup>642</sup> Ghassemlou 1988, 135-6.

<sup>643</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

not possible due to other elements contributing to its fall.<sup>644</sup> Thus, lack of time can be viewed as a key factor in explaining the weakness of the Republic, which was really little more than a political party attempting to be a government. The KDP managed the Republic, but the division of responsibility among the officials was not clear. The Central Committee sometimes supervised functions of the government institutions and at other times, the government officials played important roles within party. In some cases, there were figures who interfered with both government and party activities, while holding no official post at all.<sup>645</sup>

As mentioned above, the lack of support among Kurdish leaders for an offensive to liberate the southern part of Iranian Kurdistan was the main reason for the fall of the Republic. According to Ghassemlou, Kurdish interests pointed to liberating and defending the Saqqiz front, which was an Iranian military stronghold.<sup>646</sup> Even the Republic's representatives were unaware of the significance of problems in the northern parts of the Republic's Kurmanji territory. In several reports of Muradiyan, the Soviet Consul in Maku, he concluded that 'Mahabad leaders had not realized the requests of the local committee [of the KDP] many times.'<sup>647</sup> Although, Ghazi Mohammad visited Kurdish districts in Maku in August 1946 to examine and bring unity between several conflicting Kurdish chieftains, and especially those between Kurds and Azeris, it seemed that he was unsuccessful. As Muradiyan explained, Ghazi Mohammad visited Maku and Khoy from August 1 - 6 of 1946 to find a solution for some of these important issues, such as disagreement between the Kurds, cooperation between local committees, but this was not fruitful either.<sup>648</sup> Because of the mixed population of Azeris and Kurds in the region of Maku, Khoy and Salmas, which were the boundaries of these districts, these disputed regions became a crucial point of disagreement between Kurdish and Azerbaijan governments (see following chapter).

Ghazi Mohammad's surrender to the Iranian military was also pivotal for the decline of the Republic. According to several authors, Ghazi's meeting with the Iranian officer, Major-General Fazlullah Homayuni, the Commander of Iranian Kurdistan's Fourth Army, in Hamamiyan near Bukan was an historical mistake. It would have been more appropriate and

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<sup>644</sup> Ibid., 143.

<sup>645</sup> Ibid.

<sup>646</sup> Ibid., 144-5.

<sup>647</sup> Hewrami 2008a, 182.

<sup>648</sup> Ibid., 187-8.



logical to send one of his own men from a military rank to negotiate with the Iranians rather than going himself.<sup>649</sup> However, the downfall of Azerbaijan also suggested a definitive collapse of the Republic of Kurdistan. Hêmin brought the message of the collapse of Azerbaijan to Ghazi by saying that ‘Tehran’s radio read the victorious telegraph of Dr. Jawid, Azerbaijan Minister of Interior, who accepted the return of Shah’s military [to Tabriz].’<sup>650</sup> After the surrendering of Azerbaijan government in December 11, 1946, Kurdish leaders of the Republic, under the leadership of Ghazi Mohammad, made their historical decision. Hêmin explained this as follows:

The Kurdistan Democratic Party’s leaders gathered in the house of Ghazi that night and the everyone’s morale was good. The War Council, presided by Baba Sheikh, planned and signed the first chapter of the outcome of the meeting, which decided to defend [the Republic]. But, the following day, one of members in the meeting ran away and they no longer defended the decision. They instructed Peshmargeh to withdrawal [from Saqqiz front] and this opened the way for the Iranian military.<sup>651</sup>

In another public meeting at the Abbas Agha Mosque, according to Mulla Izzat, they were deciding to establish a Defence Council to resist against the Iranian army.<sup>652</sup> Kurds attempted to find a common solution despite the large divisions of opinions present in the meeting. Several Kurdish leaders, such as Mirza Rahmat Shaf’i, Sheikh Hassan Shamsi Burhan, Ali Amir el-ashair, and others urged reconciliation with the Iranian government. Others, such as Mulla Abdulla Mudarresi and Mulla Hussein, declared that resistance to the Iranian army would be useless.<sup>653</sup> Ghazi himself saw no other option than to surrender to Iranian soldiers. A day before the departure of Asadov, the Soviet Trade ambassador in Mahabad, on December 16, 1946, Ghazi Mohammad, Seif Ghazi and Baba Sheikh went to Hamamiyan to surrender themselves to Homayuni.<sup>654</sup> Homayuni instructed Ghazi to return to Mahabad,

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<sup>649</sup> Hewrami 2008b, 297-9.

<sup>650</sup> Hêmin 2005, 82.

<sup>651</sup> Ibid., 83-4.

<sup>652</sup> Mulla Izzat 2003, 311.

<sup>653</sup> Ibid.

<sup>654</sup> Ibid., 312-4; Emin 2007, 278.

which would pacify not only the general Kurdish population but also the Barzanis and other tribes who had not yet surrendered to Iranian military.<sup>655</sup>

When Ghazi returned to Mahabad, Mulla Mustafa Barzani reached him and tried desperately to overturn Ghazi's decision to surrender to the Iranian government. The discussion between Ghazi and Barzani, according to Fettahi Ghazi, whom was present there himself, went as follows:

Barzani repeatedly asked Ghazi to not surrender as he thought he would regret it later on. Barzani wanted Ghazi to go with them and they would always care for him. Ghazi's presence with the Barzanis under the shadow of Kurdistan flag would thus continue the liberation movement. And, if Ghazi stayed there, he would be killed.<sup>656</sup>

Ghazi answered by saying that 'the best for me is to be martyred in my motherland and not to leave my people alone in these dire conditions.' After Ghazi's determinate decision to stay in Mahabad, Fettahi explained that:

Ghazi gave important and honest counsel to Barzani, and he gave him some books, the map [of Kurdistan], the special flag of the leadership of Kurdistan Republic and a picture of Salahaddin Eyyobi. Ghazi also told Barzani that he should not let this national flag fall low and he should keep it for use in the future.<sup>657</sup>

After one day of this last meeting between the two leaders, on December 17, 1946, Iranian troops captured the capital of the Republic of Kurdistan and officially brought an end to the story of the Republic.

Barzani's troops had not surrendered themselves or handed over their weapons to the Iranian military. Their responsibility was to protect the Barzani families, mostly women and children, and they gathered all the Barzani kin, distributed throughout Iranian Kurdistan, at Ushnawiyeh and Naqadeh. Barzani had three possible options. First, he could flee to the Soviet Union and ask for asylum. Second, he could accept the proposal of Shah of Iran to settle in the region of Hamadan or leave the Iranian territory immediately. Third, he could

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<sup>655</sup> Mulla Izzat 2003, 313.

<sup>656</sup> Ghazi, Fettahi 2009, 150-1.

<sup>657</sup> Ibid., 151.

return to his country of origin, Iraq.<sup>658</sup> Barzani wanted to chose the first option, but it was too dangerous (the road from Ushnawiyeh to the Soviet border), as can be seen from his statement that ‘Tahir Khan, Simko’s son, stressed that they (the chiefs of the Harki, Begzadeh, Shikak) would betray him because they were in touch with the Iranian government.’<sup>659</sup> The second option was equally impossible for Barzani so he demanded that the Iranian government allow more time that winter in order that he and his people might safely cross the Iraqi border. But, Iranian government refused the proposal of Barzani and began a violent military conflict against his faction.<sup>660</sup>

From February until April of 1947, the military confrontation continued in west Urumiyeh between the Barzani forces and the Iranian military. Murtaza Zarakht said that in several of these confrontations, the Barzani forces won large victories by capturing many soldiers and some officers.<sup>661</sup> In April 1947, when the snow melted and roads to Iraq opened up, all Barzanis crossed the border to Iraq. However, Ali Hijazi, the director general of the Iraqi police, was waiting on the Iraqi side of the Gader River.<sup>662</sup> The Iraqi government evacuated the Barzani families to the several cities and four Iraqi Kurdish officers, Izzat Abdul Aziz, Mustafa Khoshnaw, Khairullah Abdul Karim and Mohammad Mahmud Ghudsi, who were the leaders of the Barzanis forces on the Saqqiz front, were hung on June 19, 1947. Barzani anticipated his execution in Iraq and to avoid it, he chose another historic escape towards the Soviet border. On April 15, 1947, Barzani along with more than five hundred elite fighters passed through the Turkey and Iranian borders toward the Soviet border. Finally, after some confrontations with the Iranian military, the Barzani fighters, in June 1947, crossed Aras River and surrendered to the Soviet Army.<sup>663</sup> Later, Barzani and his colleagues returned to Iraq for the coup d’* te* of Abdul Karim Ghasim in 1958.

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<sup>658</sup> Barzani 2003, 115-6.

<sup>659</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>660</sup> Ibid., 116-7.

<sup>661</sup> Murtaza Zarakht, *Az Kurdistan Iraq ta Ansoye Rode Aras: Rahpaymayi Mulla Mustafa Barzani, 1326* [From Iraq Kurdistan to the other side of Aras River: The historical walk of Mulla Mustafa Barzani, 1947], (2<sup>th</sup> ed., Tehran: Nashr & Pajohesh Shiraz, 1377 [1998]), 21-5. Zarakht was a runaway Iranian officer in the service of the Azerbaijan government. For a mission he went to the Saqqiz front to join the Kurdish forces, but when Azerbaijan collapsed, he joined the Barzani forces and then sought refuge in Iraq with the Barzanis families.

<sup>662</sup> Barzani 2003, 125.

<sup>663</sup> Zarakht 1998, 27-62.

## 5.2. Imprisonment, trial and hanging of Ghazi Mohammad

The Iranian government's plan was to control and occupy Kurdish areas without taking violent military confrontation. A couple of days after the Iranian military's entry into Mahabad, the government engaged a pacification policy meant not only to prevent a possible insurrection by the Kurdish people, but also to prolong the humiliating surrender of its chieftains, such as that Zêro Beg, to the Iranian army. This pacification policy clearly worked as no Kurdish uprising was forthcoming and some important figures like Zêro Beg fled to Iraq. Nevertheless, this pacification policy was soon replaced by a policy that was especially harsh on the previous Kurdish leadership. Several authors claimed that when Ghazi Mohammad accompanied Homyuni in Hamamiyan, he was promised that his life and the lives of his colleagues were vouchsafed.<sup>664</sup> On December 21, 1946, according to Ghassemlou, Homyuni captured twenty eight representatives of the Republic of Kurdistan, including Ghazi Mohammad and Seif Ghazi.<sup>665</sup> Sadr Ghazi, the Kurdish deputy in parliament, with assurance from Ghavam, returned from Tehran to Mahabad. Mohammad Reza Seif Ghazi pointed out that Ghavam told Sadr Ghazi that 'Kurdistan Democratic Party will become a part of our Democratic Party and I guarantee that after a court process, the three Ghazis will be banished to 'Kashan' city. So, you have to first go back to Mahabad to finish the court process.'<sup>666</sup> After Seif Ghazi's arrival in Mahabad, the Iranian military imprisoned him, where he met some of his supporters who were also waiting for their court proceedings.

In early January 1947, a special military court, called 'Court Martial', sat in Mahabad and began to consider Ghazi's case.<sup>667</sup> Under the leadership of Colonel Parsi Tabar, prosecutor-General Colonel Fiuzi and several Iranian officers, the court process began. The court was a totally secret process and nobody had the right to be informed about what went on inside there. Ghazi also had no right to choose an attorney.<sup>668</sup> Ghazi tried to bring two lawyers from Tehran to defend his case, but the judge refused and told Ghazi that he could only accept a lawyer from the current council. Finally, Ghazi elected Captain Mohammad Sharifi of the garrison Mahabad as his lawyer.<sup>669</sup> On 9 January, Ghazi addressed a long speech in his own defence and criticized the court on the following grounds:

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<sup>664</sup> Mulla Izzat 2003, 314-5; Emin 2007, 280.

<sup>665</sup> Ghassemlou 1988, 117.

<sup>666</sup> Ghazi, Reza Seif 2008, 46. This a translation of Rahim Ghazi's work by Reza Seif Ghazi.

<sup>667</sup> Eagleton 1963, 122. For a special name for this court see, Emin 2007, 280.

<sup>668</sup> Ghassemlou 1988, 118.

<sup>669</sup> Eagleton 1963, 122.

I object to the proceedings on the grounds that the special court-martial in Mahabad was not competent to deal with my case since as a civilian, I should appear before a civil court, and not before a military court in Tehran. Further, the court had not given me sufficient time to choose a lawyer.<sup>670</sup>

The requests of Ghazi were rejected by the court and prosecution cited an indictment that was summarized in twenty-two points. Two key factors were essential to bring a charge against Ghazi: trampling of the Iranian constitution and the engagement in which Iranian lives had been lost during the reign of the Republic. The first indictment referred to the establishment of the Republic of Kurdistan, attempts to secede and fracture Iranian territorial integrity, the formation of the NA and award military ranks, to bring down the flag of Iranian government and replace it with the Kurdish flag, relations with outsiders (Soviets) and the visit to Baku. The second accusation was related to the attack on the Mahabad police post in 1943, where five policemen were killed and occupation of Mahabad municipality in 1945, Ghahrawa and Mamashah battlefields. Until today, there is no complete version or original indictment report, but several elements of this condemnation had been published in 1952 by the journal *Itala'at*.<sup>671</sup> Some of the answers of Ghazi Mohammad have been summarized as follows:

In our place you should be apprehended and tried. You denounce us now but it was you who attacked and imprisoned us in our own homes and now, have imprisoned us. The source of all these disputes lies in the political despotism of your government, which does not even allow the people to choose their own representatives for the parliament. If the government says all Kurds are traitors, then you should leave these areas. And if you believe in patriotism, accept the right of indigenes self-rule.<sup>672</sup>

Ghazi Mohammad defended himself against the accusation of the military court and criticized the political and administrative apparatus of central government, which he claimed 'had conquered our country and attacked us.'<sup>673</sup> When Ghazi was asked whether he was helped by foreign countries to organize a rebellion, he replied that:

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<sup>670</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>671</sup> Ghazi, Reza Seif 2008, 47.

<sup>672</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>673</sup> Ibid.

You do not want to understand the reality. I was the founder of the democratic movement in Kurdistan and no foreign power forced me to do so. I am the leader of this movement and I did it for the love of my nation and country. Even if you execute me without due process, the cause of my nation will not be lost.<sup>674</sup>

The accusations applied to all three Ghazis. A specific indictment was made against Seif Ghazi for wearing a general's uniform and participating in the fighting. Kurdish resistance against the Iranian military was an important reason for charging Sadr Ghazi.<sup>675</sup> Eventually, the special court council sentenced the three to death on January 23, 1947.

Although, all three of them had their cases sent to a 'review court', it seemed that the Iranian government had already made its decision. Indeed, under command of the Shah and according to article 114 of the Iranian military code, an appeal was not possible.<sup>676</sup> One of the important reasons the Shah of Iran and several high ranking Iranian officers wanted to have Ghazi Mohammad hanged was the content of a letter of Ghazi to General Razmara during the Mamashah battle. In the letter Ghazi had referred to the famous couplet by Abul-Ghasim Firdawsi Tusi:

*Hama sar be sar tan bekoshtan dehim\_\_Az an beh keh keshvar be doshman dehim*  
(We would much rather die one by one. Than give our country to the enemy).<sup>677</sup>

Ghazi claimed in the letter to the officers of the Iranian army, who were at that time fighting and risking their lives for the country? To take to their heels and traduced the following great lines of Firdawsi's poetry, Ghazi claimed:

*Hama sar be sar posht be doshman konim\_\_Az an beh keh khodra be koshtan dehim*  
(We turn our backs to the enemy one by one. Rather than die for our country).<sup>678</sup>

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<sup>674</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>675</sup> Eagleton 1963, 123-4.

<sup>676</sup> Hewrami 2008b, 219.

<sup>677</sup> Eagleton 1963, 125.

<sup>678</sup> Ibid.

After the fall of the Republic, the Shah of Iran proclaimed an amnesty but it was not for everybody and certainly not for Ghazi and his two companions.<sup>679</sup> On March 31, 1947, the three of them, Ghazi Mohammad, Seif Ghazi and Sadr Ghazi, were hanged on three separate gibbets at the Chwar Chira circle. According to Eagleton, it happened in the middle of the night (3 a.m.) and in the same place here fourteen months earlier the Republic of Kurdistan had been proclaimed.<sup>680</sup> Ghazi's execution was also synchronized with the hangings of several other Kurdish leaders and chieftains who had engaged in planning the political activities for the Republic.<sup>681</sup> According to Ghassemlou, the decision to suspend Ghazi's execution for more than two months from January 23 to March 31, could be due to many obstacles faced by the Iranian government in implementing the death-sentence. Ghazi was a popular personality within Kurdish community and it was not so simple for Iranian government to hang him. Therefore, he was executed in the middle of the night and then in the early next morning the Iranian military besieged the whole of Mahabad. Thus, not only was Ghazi's court process kept secret, but also his execution was also implemented covertly. Another important factor was the conflict between the Iranian military and the Barzani troops.<sup>682</sup> Between February and late March, the Barzani fighters had some successful military victories, but in late March and early April, they were slowly returning to Iraq. So ensuring military order and stability in Kurdish areas was a high priority for the Iranian government before they could safely execute the Republic's leaders per the Shah's orders. The execution of Ghazi and his colleagues did not end the Kurdish nationalist movement in Iran, but as Eagleton claims, the stream of Kurdish nationalist thought that arose in Iran between 1943 and 1946 continues to exist in today's Kurdistan in some form or another.<sup>683</sup>

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<sup>679</sup> Emin 2007, 281.

<sup>680</sup> Eagleton 1963, 122.

<sup>681</sup> Sajadi 2005, 306.

<sup>682</sup> Ghassemlou 1988, 121.

<sup>683</sup> Eagleton 1963, 126.

## 6 Conclusion

The conquest of Iran by Allied Forces in August 1941 not only ended the rule of Reza Shah but it also made the modernization process for the most part unsuccessful. Numerous tribes, nomadic families and especially chieftains, were forced to return back to their original regions. 1941-46 saw the rise of political parties in Iran. During this period, two major political parties, the JK party and the KDP, were founded in Iranian Kurdistan. Although the first two years of the JK's political activity was done in secret, because they distrusted the Aghas, chieftains and Iranian officials who were still in Mahabad, it was a successful political party. The popularity of the JK under the leadership of the central committee grew among a majority of the ordinary urban population of the city of Mahabad. The fundamental principle of the JK party, which was independence for Kurdistan, had an imperialist (English) character for the Soviets and this was a reason for the Soviets to suppress the JK, eventually fusing its elements into the Soviet-approved KDP, which was established in 1945. The political program of the KDP was very clear compared to that of the JK, which had never published a complete and clear agenda. The JK journal, Nishtiman, and other official statements referred to some basic principles, but the KDP was much more open and comprehensive. Elites and tribal leaders were the central figures within the KDP, with a figurative religious leadership, namely that of Ghazi Mohammad. But, Ghazi's religiosity did not clash with his work as a politician.

The establishment of the Republic of Kurdistan was a political and nationalist project under the leadership of the KDP. Although the Republic of Kurdistan lasted only a brief period, it had tremendous success insofar as establishing Kurdish schools, developing the Kurdish language, improving the status of women and youths, socio-political and economic reform, etc. The Republic had a nationalist urban elite movement, which could not bring all layers of Kurdish society under its umbrella. The tribal aspect of Kurdistan dominated everything and even the decisions of the security council of the Republic and its forces were made by tribal chieftains. During the reign of the Republic there were no bureaucratic and inefficient officials of the central government and there were no authoritative institutions as those of Pahlavi's to forcefully collect taxes. All administrators belonged to the indigenous Kurdish population and they had total freedom to choose own political agenda, which in the majority of cases was in tune with their cultural, political, social aspirations. In general, the Kurds were proud of the achievements of the Republic and as Roosevelt points out, 'Mahabad itself, from a typically drab Persian provincial town, had become picturesque and colourful,



its streets thronging with Kurds in national costume, free for the moment from the hated Iranian soldiers and gendarmes.<sup>684</sup>

But, the Republic ended dramatically. In the second half of the reign of the Republic, it began to disappoint several Kurdish leaders, especially after the withdrawal of the Soviet Army, and the divisions between Kurdish leaders were exploited with devastating effect after the battle of Mamashah. Ghazi Mohammad tried through political negotiations to solve the Kurdish question with the central government, while other leaders wanted a military offensive to liberate other parts of Iranian Kurdistan. This division led to the withdrawal of two of the Republic's generals, with Hama Rashid Khan Baneh going to Iraq and Emer Khan going back to his homeland. However, it was Ghavam's diplomatic efforts that actually brought an end to the Republic of Kurdistan. This along with the extirpation of the southern insurgency movements, led to the decline of Azerbaijan government and eventually, the capturing of Mahabad, the capital of the Republic, by the Iranian troops without any military resistance in December 17, 1946. It was a dramatic historical event for many Kurds, especially because Kurdish president and several leaders of the Republic were executed. The Kurds continue to commemorate the proclamation of the Republic every year on January 22.

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<sup>684</sup> Roosevelt 1947, 261.

## **CHAPTER V. THE INFLUENCE OF THE IRANIAN CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, AND AUTONOMOUS GOVERNMENT OF AZERBAIJAN, AND THE GOVERNMENTS OF IRAQ AND TURKEY, AND THE GREAT POWERS ON THE REPUBLIC OF KURDISTAN**

For the purpose of the discussion in this chapter, the factors influencing the Republic of Kurdistan are divided into three general categories: 1. The situation within Iran (Iranian government and Autonomous Government of Azerbaijan). 2. The role of neighbouring countries, Turkey and Iraq. 3. Presence of the Great Powers in Iran (the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and the United States).

The relationship between the governments of Azerbaijan and Kurdistan warrants deeper consideration as they both challenged Iranian territorial integrity. And because of this challenge, relations between the Republic of Kurdistan and the Iranian central government must be examined. While exploring these relations, answers to key questions will be sought, such as: What were the most important friction points between the central government and the Republic of Kurdistan? Did the Iranian government and Autonomous Government of Azerbaijan ever take the Republic of Kurdistan seriously? What led to the disagreements between the Azerbaijan and the Kurdish governments?

The positions of Turkish and Iraqi governments vis-à-vis the Republic of Kurdistan are discussed in light of the obstacles that these governments attempted to raise in front of the fledging nation-state.

The presence of the Great Powers in the region is examined in terms of their influence on the Kurds from the emergence of the Kurdish nationalist movement in Iran to the collapse of the Republic of Kurdistan. Moreover, the beginnings of the Cold War shall be reviewed here from the perspective of the conflict of interests in the region among the Great Powers. What were the policies of Great Powers, especially those of Soviet Union's, towards the Republic of Kurdistan?

# 1 Situation within Iran

## 1.1. Iranian Government

Although the door leading to democracy was cracked open with the presence of Allies in Iran, for the Iranian intellectuals, political parties, religious figures, and the Iranian society in general, the issue was not the advent of democracy itself. Rather, it was about dealing with the beginning of a transition toward democracy. One reality was the fact that the Iranian parliamentary government, which was resumed in 1941, was still unstable (Although the Iranian parliament was originally established during the Iranian Constitutional Revolution of 1905-9, it had, practically disappeared until the Allies occupied Iran in 1941). From August 1941 until December 1946, Iran's ruling governments changed eleven times. So many changes in government can be interpreted positively or negatively. On the positive side, without a violent confrontation the government was able to change hands eleven times. On the other hand, eleven times within five years is not the sign of a healthy democracy – in general, the optimal period of parliamentary elections is once every four years. The shah of Iran complained that Iranians would need another forty years before they could get used to democracy.<sup>685</sup> It is also no wonder that Fakhreddin Azimi has chosen to give his book the title, *Iran: the crisis of democracy from 1941 to 1953*. For the purpose of discussion in this section, of the eleven ruling governments in Iran that took place between 1941 and 1946, there are only two that are significant for this study: The first is the government of Ibrahim Hakimi from October 1945 until January 1946 and the second is the Ghavam government, which stayed in power from January to December of 1946. During these two periods, Kurds founded two important political institutions in the Kurdish region, the KDP and the Republic of Kurdistan. No study of Iranian Kurdistan would be complete without considering them in depth.

Before the proclamation of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, the demands of some Kurdish representatives on the Iranian government mainly focused on development and improvements in the areas of education and health in the Kurdish region. In October 1944, Ghazi Mohammad visited Tehran for about four months, meeting with the Iranian representatives, including the Shah and Mohammad Sa'id, Iranian Prime Minister. In these meetings, Ghazi pointed out that 'the Iranian government paid insufficient attention to the

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<sup>685</sup> Abrahamian 1982, 215.

education and health issues in Kurdistan.’<sup>686</sup> Ghazi Mohammad’s agenda gained a more political perspective after he entered the JK party. As mentioned before, the normalization of the Kurdish language was an important political agenda item for the JK. This can be illustrated by three of four formal requests presented by the JK to Fahimi, an advisor to the Iranian Prime Minister, when he had visited the Kurdish areas. These three requests were centred on the recognition of Kurdish as the official language in Kurdistan and the necessary steps to elevate Kurdish language up to an official standard. Meanwhile, in 1945 the language issue was one of the most important topics of debate in the Iranian parliament, defining lines of division among the parliament members. According to Abrahamian, for some members the democracy of Switzerland with its four official languages demonstrated that language by itself did not necessarily create a separate national identity.<sup>687</sup> But for many Iranian parliamentarians and intellectuals, the standardization and formal recognition of some languages in Iran, such as Kurdish and Azeris, as languages to be used in education, was a sign of the division of the country.

Many central government representatives were convinced that Kurds, led by the JK party, were preparing for the establishment of an independent Kurdistan. Both Shah and Sa’id were in the opinion that the Kurds were organizing a secessionist movement.<sup>688</sup> Fahimi, however, described the situation differently. On 28 January 1945, after his visit to the Kurdish region, he presented a report to the parliament, stating that Razmara, while he was the Army Chief of Staff, made mistakes and presented exaggerated information about the incidents in Kurdistan and certain Kurdish personalities, such as Ghazi Mohammad, in his reports to the governmental council.<sup>689</sup> The intention of Razmara’s proposal was a military expedition to the Kurdish area, composed of units that were not controlled by the Allies. Furthermore, Fahimi accused some high ranking Iranian military officers of being responsible for the dissemination of incorrect information about Kurds and Kurdistan. Fahimi claimed that the Army Chief of Staff, the Defence Minister, and Hoshmand Afshar, the Brigadier General Commander of Kordestan Province, were disseminators of unfavourable statements about Kurdistan.<sup>690</sup> Fahimi’s speech at the parliament not only contained comments about the military approach

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<sup>686</sup> Hewrami 2007, 13.

<sup>687</sup> Abrahamian 1982, 219.

<sup>688</sup> Hewrami 2007, 13-20.

<sup>689</sup> Khosro Panah, ‘Hezbe Tudeye Iran ve Tahawolate Kurdistan’, *Goft-o-gu*, No. 53, 109.

<sup>690</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

to Kurdistan but also about the socio-cultural situation in the region. He described the Kurdish region as poor, without adequate educational and health-care services and facilities.<sup>691</sup> The Mahabad deputy, Sadr Ghazi, also presented several reports in 1945 to the Iranian parliament that blamed Iranian newspapers for spreading incorrect and slanderous news and reports about Kurds and thus causing provocations between the central government and Kurds.<sup>692</sup>

Even after having raised the Kurdish flag at the Mahabad municipality building on December 17, 1945, Ghazi Mohammad still underlined the importance of national unity and solidarity with the Iranian people. Ghazi rejected the rumours spread by the Iranian media that Kurds were trying to secede from Iran. He claimed, Kurds desire to remain under the Iranian territorial integrity and under the flag of Iran.<sup>693</sup> For Ghazi, Kurdistan had autonomy, a status that emerged since the occupation of Iran by the Allied forces. He claimed, 'it has been four years that we have had internal autonomy.'<sup>694</sup> In fact, the administration of this internal autonomy had been formed in an election in Mahabad, sometime in 1943, when nine members, led by Ghazi Mohammad, were elected to head the government.<sup>695</sup> In the meantime, through negotiations with the central government, Ghazi was striving to enlarge the Kurdish autonomous government's territorial power. As mentioned earlier, the Iranian military bases were centred along the line of Saqqiz-Baneh-Sardasht and Ghazi's aim was to get Iran to withdraw its army from these regions. Referring to a discussion that took place among Ghazi, Sarchikov, the Soviet Ambassador in Iran, and Muzaffar Firuz, a political advisor to the Prime Minister, Firuz noted that Ghazi was demanding that Saqqiz and Baneh belong to Mahabad. On the other hand, again according to Firuz, in its attempt to solve the Kurdish question, the Iranian government's proposal was to divide Kurdistan into three separate governorates: Sanandaj, Mahabad and Saqqiz-Baneh.<sup>696</sup>

Overall, three major political problems played roles in the 1945 - 46 Iranian Crisis:

1- The movement for reviving Constitutionalism in Iran (supported by some conservatives headed by Premier Ghavam, by the progressive sections of middle classes led by Mossadeq, and by the labour movement led by the Tudeh Party).

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<sup>691</sup> Ibid.

<sup>692</sup> Muzakirati Majlis Iran, session 14, meeting 162, November 21, 1945.

<sup>693</sup> Hewrami 2007, 35.

<sup>694</sup> *Kurdistan*, No. 1, 11 January 1946, 4.

<sup>695</sup> Ibid.

<sup>696</sup> Hewrami 2007, 42.

- 2- The occupation of Iran by the Great Powers: national independence became a high priority when Iran was occupied by the Soviet Union and Great Britain.
- 3- Ethnic conflicts: especially with the presence of the Great Powers in the region, certain ethnic groups such as Azeris and Kurds made attempts at autonomy.<sup>697</sup>

The last point was a national and international hot topic in the Iranian political agenda, which had to be dealt with by Hakimi as the prime minister. Hakimi's second term in office, which lasted from October 1945 to January 1946, was marked by the beginning of the Iranian Crisis. According to many Iranian authors, it was a crisis of Iranian territorial integrity.<sup>698</sup> The crisis led to new political developments in the north and northwest of Iran, namely the proclamation of the Azerbaijan government and the Republic of Kurdistan. Initially these two governments launched themselves as reformist movements, aiming at provincial autonomy and respecting the Iranian territorial integrity.<sup>699</sup>

Iranian constitutionalism and constitutional laws were a moral principle for the Republic of Kurdistan's leaders, they engaged their political affiliation with the constitutional laws. In their perspective, solving the Kurdish issue within the constitutional codes presented moral principle and a rational method. In December 1945, for example, Ghazi Mohammad stated that the establishment of constitutional law and democracy are the Kurdish demands, as well as the protection of autonomy 'that we currently maintain.'<sup>700</sup> On a similar line, Seif Ghazi praised the constitutional revolution in Iran on the occasion of its forty-first anniversary as a reasonable framework to address the Kurds' demands. He pointed out that all Iranians, including Kurds, are equal before the constitutional law and that the Constitution's Code on the establishment of Provincial Council afforded Kurds the same civil rights as Persians, the dominant group in Iran.<sup>701</sup> The KDP programme also affirmed the importance of the Provincial Council. As the third article of the KDP programme states, 'members of the Kurdistan Provincial Council are immediately elected in accordance with the Constitutional

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<sup>697</sup> Abrahamian 1982, 219-23.

<sup>698</sup> According to Borzowi, the two governments were going to separate from Iran, see Borzowi 1999; the Iranian ruling elites regarded them as separatist movements, undermining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iran, see Fakhreddin Azimi, *Iran: The Crisis of Democracy 1941-1953* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd Publishers, 1989), 136.

<sup>699</sup> Azimi 1989, 136.

<sup>700</sup> Hewrami 2007, 35.

<sup>701</sup> *Kurdistan*, No. 75, 11 August 1946, 1-2/4.

Laws.’ The decentralization of policy-making was an important aspect of the Constitution, which indicated that indigenous people are entitled to govern themselves through regional administration. In fact, the Republic of Kurdistan never came up with its own set of formal constitutional laws, mostly accepting implicitly the general Iranian constitutional laws as fundamental laws for the Republic of Kurdistan. Seif Ghazi pointed out, ‘Iranian constitutional law is our most fundamental law, the changing of which is unacceptable. Even parliament, government and shah can not change an article.’<sup>702</sup>

Several statements by Ghazi Mohammad, as well as views expressed by a number of tribal chieftains and members of the KDP Central Committee, confirm that most Kurdish leaders insisted on autonomy from the proclamation of the Republic of Kurdistan on 22 January 1946, until the withdrawal of the Soviet military from Iran in May 1946 (afterward they downgraded their demand to maintaining a provincial council instead). At the ceremony for the proclamation of the Republic, for example, some leading participants went further with their enthusiasm for the new situation and claimed that Kurdistan was now independent.<sup>703</sup> Ghazi’s sentiment for Kurdish autonomy was largely due to the presence of the Soviets in Kurdistan and to the signing of Friendship Treaty and Alliance with Azerbaijan government in April 1946. Cooperation with the Azerbaijan government was vital for the Republic of Kurdistan, as it stood as a buffer against a possible Iranian military offensive against the Republic of Kurdistan. *Kurdistan* published numerous reports about the friendly relations with and in respect of Azeris and the Azerbaijan government. Ghazi observed:

The Iranian government thinks that with the withdrawal of the Soviet Union troops from Iran, the Kurdish government will fail to maintain its friendly attitude towards Azerbaijan. This is a wrong assessment. The unity between the Kurdish and Azeri nations is strong.<sup>704</sup>

Soon after the withdrawal of the Soviets, Ghazi’s optimism lost its footing as the relations between Azerbaijan and the Republic of Kurdistan gradually deteriorated. One of the sources of the friction between the two governments was Azerbaijan’s unilateral political negotiations with the central government. This was in violation of the Azeri – Kurdish agreement not to hold unilateral negotiations with the central government. According to this agreement any

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<sup>702</sup> Ibid., 1-2.

<sup>703</sup> Speech of Ghazi see, *Kurdistan*, No. 10-11, 4/6 February 1946.

<sup>704</sup> Ibid., No. 47, 15 May 1946, 3.

negotiations held with the central government would be mutual and both the Azeri and Kurdish and autonomous governments were to be kept informed of any proceedings. The fifth article of the Alliance Treaty between the Kurdish and Azerbaijan governments specifically related to the dealings with the Iranian government, ‘any negotiations conducted with the Iranian government should be carried out with the approval of Azerbaijan National Government and Kurdistan.’<sup>705</sup> The implementation of the agreement, however, as well as the general cooperation between both governments depended on several factors that challenged each of them (see the following section). In the meantime, this political discord between Azerbaijan and Kurdish governments presented an ideal opportunity for the Iranian central government to formalize and implement of their own political agenda. The disagreements which deepened their problems and ultimately the weakened of Azerbaijan and Kurdish governments, meant more favourable conditions for the supremacy of the central government over both local governments.

Actually, the supremacy of central government over both local governments was clear when an agreement has been signed on April 4, 1946 between Ghavam and Sadchikov. They agreed on three points and summarized as follow: Firstly, the withdrawal of the Red Army would be completed in May. Secondly, their agreement on a joint Irano-Soviet oil company would be presented to the Fifteenth Majlis for ratification, no later than seven months after March 24. Thirdly, that the Azerbaijan’s government question is an internal matter of Iran.<sup>706</sup> According to Atabaki, this agreement opened the way for the Iranian government to deal with the Azerbaijan question and an oil concession to the Soviets ratified by yet non-existent Fifteenth Majlis. In return for this, both sides accepted that the Azerbaijan question is an ‘internal Iranian matter’. Atabaki observed that Soviet offered Ghavam ‘exactly what he needed to accomplish his “Long March” on the road to Azerbaijan.’<sup>707</sup>

The first formal meeting between the central government and both local governments took place in Tehran on April 28, 1946 and was headed by Pishvari.<sup>708</sup> According to Ghazi, Kurds were represented by Seif Ghazi and Sadr Ghazi.<sup>709</sup> The Iranian government presented seven points that related to the Iranian Constitutional Codes, none of which, by the way, had

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<sup>705</sup> Ibid., No. 45, 8 May 1946, 3.

<sup>706</sup> For the complete three points, see newspaper *Iran-e Ma*, No. 499, 7 April 1946, 1-2; Atabaki 2000, 145.

<sup>707</sup> Atabaki 2000, 145.

<sup>708</sup> *Iran-e Ma*, No. 517, 28 April 1946, 1.

<sup>709</sup> *Kurdistan*, No. 44, 6 May 1946, 2.



anything directly to do with the Kurdish question. All points were narrowly focused on the Azerbaijan government and refer to certain cultural rights.<sup>710</sup> The Azeri and Kurdish delegates' requests were formulated in thirty three points, which did not clearly mention any claim to Kurdish aspirations, either. The meeting ended inconclusively.<sup>711</sup>

It is possible that the Iranian government solely focused on the issues related to Azerbaijan with the aim of inflaming division between the Kurdish and Azerbaijan governments. The Friendly Alliance Agreement between Kurds and Azeris meant cooperation between them and that posed a grave threat to the Iranian government. Moreover, the central government viewed the agreement as illegal, as such an agreement could take place only between sovereign states. For the Iranian central government both Azerbaijan and the Republic of Kurdistan were integral parts of the Iranian territorial. Therefore, putting distance and discord between Azeris and Kurds was a priority in Ghavam's political agenda. According to Mulla Izzat, Ghavam took immediate actions in line with his agenda. He exploited, for example, points of friction between Azeris and Kurds, such as border disputes. On the other hand, he tempted each provincial government with the promise to hold separate meetings, which led to an agreement in Tabriz that took place between the central government and Azerbaijan government, without the presence of representatives from the Republic of Kurdistan.<sup>712</sup>

In difference by the Iranian government towards the Kurdish question compelled Ghazi to declare, 'the Kurds' enemies [Iranian government] have concluded that the Kurdish government does not exist.'<sup>713</sup> Referring to the homecoming of disappointed and humiliated Kurdish delegate, Ghazi also stated that the Iranian government has not taken the Kurds seriously, 'our representatives returned with disappointment.'<sup>714</sup> At about the same time as this frustrating experience for the Kurdish delegation in Tehran, the Red Army was withdrawing from Iran. Afterward, a pessimistic mood dominated Ghazi's political activities. Clearly incensed by the situation, Ghazi asked the following questions in one of his speeches:

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<sup>710</sup> For these seven points, see Atabaki 2000, 145-6.

<sup>711</sup> Seif Ghazi, who participated in this delegation, reported the proceedings of this negotiation, see *Kurdistan*, No. 50, 27 May 1946, 1-2.

<sup>712</sup> Mulla Izzat 2003, 301.

<sup>713</sup> *Kurdistan*, No. 47, 15 May 1946, 3.

<sup>714</sup> *Ibid.*

What are we to do presently? What advice is [there] for the nation? Is it not our right to tell Tehran enough with your palaces built on our properties? I am asking you, the Kurdish leaders, commanders, farmers, and toilers, what can we do? What suggestions do you have?<sup>715</sup>

On June 11, 1946, Firuz met with the government of Azerbaijan representatives in Tabriz. Without consulting with the authorities of the Kurdish government, they came up with a decision to allow Kurds in Azerbaijan to be educated in Kurdish until the fifth grade, the end of primary school. This decision officially put Kurds within the same category as other ethnic minority groups in Azerbaijan, such as the Assyrians.<sup>716</sup> In other words, they were categorizing Kurds as a minority within the Iranian territorial unity and specifically belonging to the Autonomous Government of Azerbaijan. It is interesting to note that Ghazi was actually delighted with this decision. On June 21, 1946, at Mosque *Soor* (red), Ghazi explained:

Article thirteen of the agreement states that the [Iranian] government acknowledges that Kurds living in Azerbaijan should enjoy the benefits of this agreement, as well. And according to the article three, [Kurds] are allowed to continue education in their own language until the fifth grade of primary school.<sup>717</sup>

Ghazi saw the inclusion of these articles in the agreement as an improvement of the situation for the Kurds in Azerbaijan and was hopeful that it might have positive implications for the entire Iranian Kurdistan. He expressed his approval and hope with the following words:

In this article, the [Iranian government] confessed to our legitimacy and existence and of course we would like to see that all of Kurdistan enjoys such rights and freedom.<sup>718</sup>

According to Sadchikov, Soviet Ambassador in Tehran, the agreement between Iran and Azerbaijan induced Kurds to deal with the Iranian government as a separate party rather than as a partner with Azerbaijan.<sup>719</sup> After the humiliation of the Tehran negotiations, when Kurds

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<sup>715</sup> Ibid., No. 50, 27 May 1946. 1/3.

<sup>716</sup> Ibid., No. 60, 20 June 1946, 1/4.

<sup>717</sup> Ibid., No. 62, 27 June 1946, 1. For the whole treaty between Pischevari and Muzaffar Firuz, see *Kurdistan*, No. 64, 2 July 1946, 1-2.

<sup>718</sup> Ibid., No. 62, 27 June 1946, 1.

<sup>719</sup> Hewrami 2008b, 79.

were simply ignored, Ghazi lost trust in the Azerbaijan leaders and the relationship with Azerbaijan began to cool. As Roosevelt pointed out the Kurds reacted unfavourably to the agreement and they 'felt that their wishes had been largely ignored.'<sup>720</sup> Kurdish leaders made new attempts to seek a solution to their questions by dealing with the central government directly. Roosevelt noted that Ghazi Mohammad 'went to Tehran to voice his disapproval to Premier Ghavam.'<sup>721</sup> On June 26, 1946, Ghazi Mohammad went to Tehran with a delegation and began separate negotiations with the representatives of the central government.<sup>722</sup> Iran-e Ma reported also that Ghazi entered Tehran in June 27, 1946.<sup>723</sup>

Regarding this visit, Iran-e Ma published a report and recommended that the Iranian government not obstruct Ghazi's visit to Tehran for negotiations. The newspaper report argued that direct negotiations with Iranian authorities will remove misunderstandings between Kurds and the central government. The report further suggested that some reliable government representatives negotiate with Ghazi<sup>724</sup> Iran-e Ma's report summarizes Ghazi's intentions as follow:

The Kurdish society believes that in essence the Kurdish leader [Ghazi] aspires for agreement and peace. The meaning of holy democracy is to advance towards sacred peace. Ghazi himself is optimistic that solving the Kurdish question peacefully will be a benefit to all of Iran, as well as the Kurdish people and the progress of liberation and democracy.<sup>725</sup>

However, Ghazi's attempt to directly negotiate with the central government did not produce any satisfactory outcome either. *Rahbar*, an Iranian newspaper that conducted an interview with Ghazi about the negotiations, relayed Ghazi's summary of the affair:

I negotiated several times with Muzaffar Firuz, Ghavam (the Prime Minister) and Razmara, the Chief of Staff. Ghavam has good intentions but unfortunately he became sick and postponed our negotiation.<sup>726</sup>

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<sup>720</sup> Roosevelt 1947, 259.

<sup>721</sup> Ibid.

<sup>722</sup> *Kurdistan*, No. 65, 5 July 1946, 1.

<sup>723</sup> *Iran-e Ma*, No. 567, 27 June 1946, 1/4.

<sup>724</sup> Ibid., No. 577, 11 July 1946, 1.

<sup>725</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>726</sup> *Rahbar*, No. 762, 9 July 1946, 6.

Postponing the meetings and provoking hostility and polarization between Azerbaijan and Kurdish governments were a part of Ghavam's policy towards Azeris and Kurds a policy that in fact proved effective. Due to several ongoing internal and external problems, Ghavam was not yet ready to declare a clear position with respect to Kurdistan. There were growing disturbances in the south of Iran, Azerbaijan was a still a major issue, and the Soviets kept pressing Iran for a possible oil treaty. These were among the issues that posed serious challenges to the Ghavam administration. Rahbar asked Ghazi whether he was worried about the progress of the negotiations. Ghazi answered, 'I am hopeful for a good future and that the central government will succeed in spreading democracy throughout the whole of Iran.'<sup>727</sup> Ghazi's optimism was partly due to the fact that Ghavam was making efforts to establish a democratic movement, namely through his newly established Democratic Party (DP). On this note, Ghazi pointed out:

Ghavam said to me that we are now democrats and founded the Iranian Democratic Party. It is necessary to change the name of the Kurdistan Democratic Party and call it the Iranian Democrat Party.<sup>728</sup>

Ghavam had established the DP in the summer of 1946,<sup>729</sup> in order to, according to Mo'tazed, counter the attempts of separatist movements in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan as well as the growth of the Tudeh Party.<sup>730</sup> Ghavam identified his movement as a democratic one, indicating that he was a supporter of democracy in Iran. It was a calculated move to delegitimize both democratic parties in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan. He introduced a progressive party program that included eleven articles to capture the public's attention. Two of these articles especially underline several characteristics of the democratic movement in Iran, which at that time was not under the direct control of the central government. Article one refers to the 'respect of the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Iran.'<sup>731</sup> This article was also the first article of the Tripartite Treaty of Alliance that was signed in January 1942 by the Allied Forces with the Iranian government. National unity was an important

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<sup>727</sup> Ibid.

<sup>728</sup> Ibid.

<sup>729</sup> *Iran-e Ma*, No. 568, 30 June 1946, 1/4.

<sup>730</sup> Mo'tazed 2001, 757.

<sup>731</sup> For complete DP program, see *ibid.*, 757-64.

political priority for Ghavam. Iranian territorial integrity and sovereignty were going through fragile times during the period of the Iranian crisis in 1945 and 1946.

The second article refers to securing the principles of democracy. According to this article, the socio-political and economic issues of the Iranian people could be solved within the parameters of provincial councils. This article was composed of two clauses. The first clause was about treason and dealing with traitors. The later trial and hanging of Ghazi Mohammad and several Kurdish leaders of the Republic exemplified the implementation of this clause by the Ghavam administration. The second article of the Ghavam's political party's programme is as follows:

Politically, economically, and judicially secure the independence of Iran by dissemination of freedom and stabilization of the principles of democracy.<sup>732</sup>

Two of the clauses of this article were:

A) Gradually break off relations with traitors and eventually bring them before the court. B) Consignment of provincial and district affairs to the inhabitants by the establishment of Provincial and District Councils.<sup>733</sup>

During the Hakimi administration, relations of both the KDP and *Azerbaijan Demokrat Ferqehsi* (Azerbaijan Democratic Party, ADP) with the central government were thorny. Hakimi, convinced that they meant to break away from Iran, considered both parties illegal, labelling them 'anarchists', and refused to negotiate with them.<sup>734</sup> Answering a question asked by a journalist working for *Rahbar* about the state of relations between the KDP and the central government, Ghavam replied that he does not have any of the optimism that he harboured during the Ghavam administration as the current Hakimi administration makes it impossible to go further with the negotiations.<sup>735</sup> Hakimi considered the Kurds as a part of the Iranian family group. In his eyes, special attention to the Kurdish question was superfluous.

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<sup>732</sup> Ibid.

<sup>733</sup> Ibid.

<sup>734</sup> Abrahamian 1982, 221.

<sup>735</sup> *Rahbar*, No. 762, 9 July 1946, 6.

As Abrahamian noted, Hakimi claimed that ‘the Kurds had no genuine grievances because they were members of the Iranian race.’<sup>736</sup>

Ghavam’s ambition to form a Democrat Party that was united across Iran, encompassing other democrat parties established in several provinces, was achieved in early August of 1946, after Ghazi’s visit to Tabriz. *Kurdistan* reported that Ghazi Mohammad returned to Mahabad on August 10, 1946 after his eight-day visit to Tabriz.<sup>737</sup> In the same issue, *Kurdistan* published a formal declaration by Ghazi, which had been sent also to Ghavam via a telegraph. According to the telegraph, the KDP and some other democrat parties, such as the ADP, had announced a readiness to join the Progressive Front composed of Ghavam’s DP.<sup>738</sup> By October Ghavam formed a strong new cabinet. Ghavam’s intention was to solve the Kurdish question within the bounds of a provincial council and appoint Ghazi as the governor. This proposal, for the most part, was acceptable to Ghazi, as it allowed a special status for the Kurdish region under one governorate with Ghazi as the leading figure. The boundaries of this governorate were, according to Roosevelt, a territory that would stretch from the ‘Russian border to a point half way between Kermanshah and Sanandaj.’<sup>739</sup> However, Ghavam had three conditions for Ghazi for the implementation of his proposal:

- 1- The Governor must be under the control of the central government.
- 2- Forces from the Iranian Army must be based within the governorship, especially along the borders with Turkey, Iraq and the Soviet Union.
- 3- The consent of the Governor of Azerbaijan, Dr. Javid of the ADP, must be obtained.<sup>740</sup>

Ghavam included the last condition most probably knowing that Dr. Javid would not endorse the proposal of the Kurdish governorship – a situation that would amplify the tensions between the Azerbaijan and Kurdish leaders.<sup>741</sup> As Eagleton acutely observed, Ghavam was a master in diplomatic negotiation and had perhaps foreseen that his proposal would fail to win the acceptance of all parties concerned.<sup>742</sup> In his new cabinet in early August, Ghavam sought

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<sup>736</sup> Abrahamian 1982, 221.

<sup>737</sup> *Kurdistan*, No. 85, 12 September 1946, 1.

<sup>738</sup> Formal declaration of this Telegraph, see *ibid.*, 4.

<sup>739</sup> Roosevelt 1947, 259.

<sup>740</sup> Eagleton 1963, 106; Roosevelt 1947, 259-60.

<sup>741</sup> *Ibid.*, 259.

<sup>742</sup> Eagleton 1963, 106.

the approval of the Soviets by offering three ministries for the Tudeh Party in his cabinet. Accordingly, the Tudeh Party appointed Iraj Iskandari for the Ministry of Commerce, Mortiza Yazdi for the Ministry of Health, and Firaydun Kishavarz for the Ministry of Education.<sup>743</sup> The new government, however, provoked a political crisis in Iran. The Allies of Iran, England and America, were discontented by the idea of a pro-Soviet government. In the meantime, the southern tribal confederations, Bakhtiyari and especially Qashqayi, were staunchly anti-Tudeh, and began a rebellion against Ghavam's government. As the situation reached critical levels, the Shah called on Ghavam to resign. Ghavam proposed to form a new cabinet but this time without any ministers from the Tudeh Party and he promised to restore the Iranian central authority in Azerbaijan, Kurdistan and in other Iranian regions that were insubordinate to the Iranian government.

Ghavam eventually removed the ministers that were Tudeh members and went on dealing with the rebellions in the south. He pacified them mainly by offering the rebel leaders posts in his new cabinet. As Ghavam did not receive any overwhelming reaction from the Soviets after the removal of Tudeh members from the government, he would gain some space to deal with Kurdistan and Azerbaijan as he planned without much interference from the Soviet Union. In the first half of October 1946, Ghavam ordered the military to enter Azerbaijan and Kurdistan under the pretext of maintaining law and security during the fifteenth round of parliamentary elections. Internal security on Iranian territory was an article (article 3 section a) of the Tripartite Treaty. According to this article, the Iranian Government could send armed forces to the whole Iranian regions (including Azeri and Kurdish regions) without opposition from the Great Powers. Relying on this background, Ghavam sent a telegraph to both local governments towards the end of November 1946 informing them that military units are being sent for the maintenance of order and security during the parliamentary elections.<sup>744</sup> Although Ghazi attempted to make clear that Kurdistan possessed enough security forces of its own, Ghavam paid no heed to his objections.<sup>745</sup> Ghavam was set on his objective to remove both governments and restore the Iranian territorial integrity. Ultimately, Ghavam succeeded in bringing the two governments down by mid-December 1946 and put his signature under a huge diplomatic and political victory. He owed a good deal of his success to being able to plant unsolvable discord between the Azerbaijan and Kurdish

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<sup>743</sup> Azimi 1989, 155.

<sup>744</sup> Hewrami 2008a, 193.

<sup>745</sup> For Ghazi's answer to Ghavam regarding the presence of Iranian military in the Republic, see *ibid.*, 193-4.

governments. The following section shall delve deeper into the issues between the Republic of Kurdistan and Autonomous Government of Azerbaijan.

## **1.2. Autonomous Government of Azerbaijan**

The Iranian Azerbaijan issue during the Iranian crisis of 1945 and 1946 was the center of attention in both national and international agendas. In comparison, the Kurdish issue received much less notice. By 1945, Eastern Azerbaijan, with Tabriz as its capital, was rapidly building towards autonomy. The Iranian government considered the autonomist inclination of Azerbaijan a serious threat to its territorial integrity and sovereignty. Similarly, the Allied Powers in Iran (Great Britain and the United States) were putting their efforts into maintaining the territorial integrity of Iran, as well. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, was supportive of Azerbaijan's autonomist tendency and was trying to keep the Red Army in Iran as long as possible. The Soviets' support for an autonomous Azerbaijan and their insistence on remaining in Iran, despite the fifth article of the Tripartite Treaty of the Allied Powers, which required the withdrawal of military forces in no later than six months after the war's end, was exacerbating the already fragile situation and pushing it towards an international crisis. Thus Azerbaijan, having developed an ethnic nationalism, challenging the Iranian government to take serious steps to defend its territorial integrity, as well as posing a challenge to the Great Powers in Iran in terms of protecting their interests in the region, saw itself at the centre of national and international crisis in Iran

The establishment of the Azerbaijan Democratic Party (ADP) was proclaimed on 03 September 1945. Three months later, the ADP formally opened the *Azerbaijan Milli Majlisi* (the National Assembly of Azerbaijan). The following step was the formation of the structure of the executive power, *Azerbaijan Milli Hükumati* (the National Government of Azerbaijan).<sup>746</sup> It is very likely that this series of developments in Azerbaijan influenced the Kurds to follow the same policies. In other words, it could be claimed that the institutions launched within the Republic of Kurdistan were a hasty imitation of what had taken place in Azerbaijan. According to Ghassemloo, preparations for the establishment of the Republic of Kurdistan were not yet mature. It was not the culmination of the natural transformations and historical plans of the long Kurdish struggle. According to this perspective, the KDP's rush to proclaim the Republic of Kurdistan was a not-thoroughly-thought-out reaction to the

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<sup>746</sup> Atabaki 2000, 102, 129-30.



circumstances surrounding it in Iran and in the international arena, especially the formation of the National Government of Azerbaijan.<sup>747</sup>

The formal declaration of the establishment of the KDP took place in October 1945 at the first conference of the party, only about a month after the establishment of the ADP. In December 1945, the National Government of Azerbaijan was founded and one month later the Kurds proclaimed the Republic of Kurdistan on 22 January 1946. This chain of events in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan suggests that the developments in the latter largely depended upon the socio-political developments in the former. One justification for such a reaction by the Kurds can be traced back to the attempt by the Azerbaijan and Iranian governments to solve the Kurdish issue within the parameters of Azerbaijan. The Azerbaijan government claimed that the Mahabad region was a part of Azerbaijan. Pishevari, the Prime Minister of Azerbaijan, was ready to accept a cultural autonomy for the Kurdish population in both East and West Azerbaijan – a position confirmed by what he had said to the US Consul in Tabriz, Robert A. Rossow:

I do not believe that Kurds can have their own government. We advise to establish their Majlis, namely only provincial council under control of Azerbaijan Government.<sup>748</sup>

By the time the Azerbaijan government was established, the relations between the KDP and the ADP had already deteriorated. Nevertheless, in the beginning of the Azerbaijan Majlis, five Kurdish representatives also had participated. Shortly afterward, however, they were disappointed with the ADP policy towards the Kurds and they returned to Mahabad. According to Derk Kinnane, the Azerbaijan government tried to negate the political power of the Kurds.<sup>749</sup> As retaliation, the KDP leaders dismissed the Azeri officials in the Kurdish region, especially in Mahabad, and refused to sell tobacco to the Azerbaijan government. Similarly, the Kurds blocked the transport of Miyanduab's sugar to market in Tabriz.<sup>750</sup> Soon after the proclamation of the Republic of Kurdistan, relations between both sides deteriorated

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<sup>747</sup> Ghassemlou 1988, 134.

<sup>748</sup> Richard A. Mobley, *A study of Relations between the Mahabad Republic and Azerbaijan Democratic Republic: The Turbulent Alliance and its Impact upon the Mahabad Republic of 1946*, (Washington D.C., 1979), tran. From English to Kurdish by Hessen Ghazi, *Pêwendiyekani Komarî Kurdistan u Komarî Azerbbaycan* [relations between Republic of Kurdistan and Azerbaijan Republic], (Sweden: Apec Förlag, ?), 71.

<sup>749</sup> Derk Kinnane, *The Kurds and Kurdistan* (London: Oxford U.P., 1970), 36.

<sup>750</sup> Borzowi 1999, 324.

even further. By mid-February 1946, a crisis erupted in some areas that had a mixed population of Kurds and Azeris. Events rapidly escalated towards a possible large-scale armed conflict. Through the Soviet mediation, however, both sides accepted to seek a peaceful solution to their issues through negotiation.<sup>751</sup>

From the proclamation of the Republic of Kurdistan until April 1946 newspaper of *Azerbaijan*, organ of the Azerbaijan Democratic Party, mentioned no issue about the Kurds and the Kurdish government. On April 23, 1946, after a series of negotiations, high-ranking representatives from both sides signed a treaty of seven articles in Tabriz, which was called the Treaty of Friendship and Alliance. Under the pressure of Soviet Consul in Urumiyeh, both parties agreed to ‘strengthen their friendship.’<sup>752</sup> The question relating to the ethnic Kurdish and Azeri minorities in both territories was dealt with in articles 1, 2 and 6. Article 6, for example, stated that the Azerbaijan government ‘will take steps to contribute to the cultural and linguistic progress of the Kurds living in its territory, and vice versa.’<sup>753</sup>

One of the ambitions of this treaty was to form a bilateral delegation to undertake future negotiations with the central government.<sup>754</sup> Soon after the signing of the treaty, on April 28, 1946, a delegation composed of representatives from both parties arrived in Tehran. But, Azerbaijan government saw Kurdish delegate as the representatives of the Azerbaijan government. *Azerbaijan*, organ of the ADP, published, ‘Azerbaijan representatives were included: Pischevari, Padgan, Ibrahimi and Seif Ghazi.’<sup>755</sup> On the eve of the sending of this delegate to Tehran, newspaper *Azad Millet* published a speech of Ghazi Mohammad, it went as follows:

I cannot speak well of the Azeris and I hope that Pischevari can solve Kurdish and Azerbaijani question with the Iranian government. We shall entrust Pischevari to accompany these delegation.<sup>756</sup>

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<sup>751</sup> Eagleton 1963, 77.

<sup>752</sup> *Kurdistan*, No. 45, 8 May 1946, 3.

<sup>753</sup> For the Friendship Treaty and Alliance between Azeri and Kurdish governments, see *Azerbaijan*, No. 190, 5 May 1946, 1/4; *Iran-e Ma*, No. 522, 5 May 1946, 1-2; *Kurdistan*, No. 45, 8 May 1946, 3.

<sup>754</sup> Cited in Atabaki 2000, 154.

<sup>755</sup> *Azerbaijan*, No. 187, 1 May 1946, 4.

<sup>756</sup> *Azad Millet*, No. 29, 29 April 1946, 1.

As mentioned earlier, the Iranian government had proposed its seven-point solution while the delegation arrived with a proposal that included thirty-three demands. Besides the fact that these demands were rejected by the Iranian government, it is interesting to note that the thirty-three points had almost exclusively to do with the relation between Iranian and Azerbaijan governments, disregarding almost entirely the Kurds' presence in the equation. In all of thirty-three demands, there is no specific reference to Kurds and Kurdistan. Only the twelfth point mentions something about the rights of Kurds as a minority.<sup>757</sup> As the second demand suggested, Azerbaijan government in fact considered the Kurdish geography in question to be a part of Iranian Azerbaijan.<sup>758</sup> As for the Friendship Treaty between Kurdish and Azerbaijan governments, Pischevari divulged a secret when explained to Rossow that the 'purpose of the friendship with the Kurds is to ensure that the central government could not use them against Azerbaijan.'<sup>759</sup> However, ADP leaders were not entirely hostile to the idea of a possible semi-autonomy for Kurds within Azerbaijan.<sup>760</sup>

Autonomy for the Kurds within Azerbaijan was inspired by the Soviet Azeri representatives in Iranian Azerbaijan. Hassan Hassanov, a Soviet Azeri politician in Iranian Azerbaijan, relayed on 13 February 1945 to Baqirov, the president of Soviet Azerbaijan, the following message, 'after solving the Azerbaijan question, comes the question of granting autonomy to the Kurds.'<sup>761</sup> At the second visit of the Kurdish representatives to Baku, in 1945, Baqirov advised the Kurds to form a democratic party and work together with the Azerbaijan Democrat Party. Cooperation between both parties probably did make their demands on the Iranian government somewhat stronger, but in the eyes of Baqirov and Pischevari, the Republic of Kurdistan was a part of Azerbaijan Government. Baqirov clearly proclaimed to the Kurds that Kurdish areas belong to the National Democratic Government of Azerbaijan.<sup>762</sup> For Baqirov, the national identity of Iranian Azerbaijan as the same as Soviet

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<sup>757</sup> For the whole agreement and thirty three points, see Atabaki 2000, 16-24; *Iran-e Ma*, No. 540, 26 May 1946, 1/4.

<sup>758</sup> *Iran-e Ma*, No. 540, 26 May 1946, 4.

<sup>759</sup> Mobley 1979, 71.

<sup>760</sup> Eagleton 1963, 76.

<sup>761</sup> Jamil Hasanli, *Faraz ve Frod Ferqyeh Dimocrate Azerbaijan be Riwayite Asnade Mahremaneye Arshifhaye Ithade Jamahir Shorawi* [The ups and downs of Azerbaijan Democratic Party according to the classified documents of the Soviet Union's archives], tra. From Soviet Azerbaijani to Persian by Mansur Homami, (Tehran: Ghazali Publishing, 2004), 45.

<sup>762</sup> Farooqi 2008, 37.

Azerbaijan. He viewed them as a nation that several decades earlier had been divided between to empires (Qajars and Russian Tsarists). Baqirov explained that ‘south Azerbaijan [Iranian Azerbaijan] is a territory of our original people.’<sup>763</sup>

Strategically, Iranian Azerbaijan had special importance for Baqirov and for the Soviet Union. Since the first presence of the Soviet military in the north of Iran, Baqirov had far reaching political plans for Iranian Azerbaijan. Baqirov’s grand ambition was to remove the boundaries between the Soviet Azerbaijan and Iranian Azerbaijan, and build a Greater Azerbaijan. In several of his speeches, Baqirov claimed that the Iranian Azerbaijan is the southern part of this larger Azerbaijan’s nation. Responding to Stalin’s question, ‘what do you want?’, Baqirov answered, ‘we want to help our brothers who live in South Azerbaijan [Iranian Azerbaijan].’<sup>764</sup> For the Soviet Union, Iranian Azerbaijan had geo-political and economical significance. Geo-politically, the Iranian Azerbaijan offered a path towards the warm water ports as well as blockade before the British expansion towards the north. Economically, the area north of Iran and south of Caspian Sea, abundant in gas and oil reserves and other natural resources, had exceptional attractiveness for the Great Powers in Iran. Again, due to the above-mentioned reasons, matters relating to the Republic of Kurdistan were of much less importance to the political agendas of Baqirov and the Soviet Union.

Baqirov offered support to the Azerbaijan government, which further strengthened the position of this newly formed government. Besides Baqirov’s active support of the Azerbaijan government in Iran, there were also many other factors that put Azerbaijan in a more favourable position compared to that of the Republic of Kurdistan. Azerbaijan had played an important role during the period of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution. The Council of Tabriz (*Anjomane Tabriz*) had helped from the idea of the Provincial Council in Iran.<sup>765</sup> After about fourteen years of struggle, Sheikh Mohammad Khiyabani led an uprising against the central government in April 1920 in Tabriz. Although, it was not a separatist movement, it supported the demands for the role of the Provincial Council.<sup>766</sup> The uprising also laid the groundwork in terms of experience and perspective for the upcoming Azerbaijan government.

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<sup>763</sup> Hasanli 2004, 19.

<sup>764</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>765</sup> Atabaki 2000, 29.

<sup>766</sup> For more detailed information about the revolt of Khiyabani, see Homa Katouzian, ‘Ahmad Kasravi on the Revolt of Sheikh Mohammad Khiyabani’, in Atabaki 2006, 95-119.

Pishevari, the leader of the Azerbaijan government, was a veteran communist and his political activities between the two world wars gained him a considerable reputation. He was a leading figure in the Gilan movement in 1921. Another important corroborating factor behind Azerbaijan's more favourable position was nationalism. The Azeris' deep-rooted nationalism and their ethnic identification were more widespread and developed than those of the Kurds in Iranian Kurdistan. Tribalism and ethno-tribal loyalties were the predominant norms in Kurdistan. As Rossow reported to the US Foreign Affairs, the manifestation of national awareness among Kurds had not yet developed. Loyalties were invested in chieftains and aghas and their loyalties in return were to the national Iranian government.<sup>767</sup>

The fact that Azeri and Kurdish communities were ethnically and culturally dissimilar did not help the situation either. Azeris and Kurds belong to different ethnic-family groups. The Azeri language belongs to the Turkic family of languages, while Kurdish is an Indo-European language. The majority of Azeri are Shi'ites whereas the Kurds in this region are Sunni Muslims. Religious differences were a source of friction for centuries, especially in areas where both communities lived in close proximity to each other, as was the case in the Urumiyeh Province. According to Mobley, had the Azeris more comparable elements of ethnicity with Kurds, then the conflict between both would have been reduced. Although Pishevari was warm to the idea of cultural rights for Kurds, in practice these rights were arbitrarily manipulated by the Azerbaijan government.<sup>768</sup> Additionally, socio-economic differences and unclear boundaries between the both regions were also causing tensions.

The Azerbaijan government had achieved considerable economic transformation through a series of reforms. One notable example was the land reform, which distributed among small farmers large swaths of lands formerly belonging to landlords. Azerbaijan's regime had distributed, according to Soviet representatives in Maku, more than 1,500 till of land pieces among farmers and people who had no till land previously.<sup>769</sup> The Republic's government, on the other hand, had planned but never implemented a similar land reform. Economically, Azerbaijan was immensely better off than Kurdistan as it harboured abundant reserves of natural resources. Azerbaijan produced much of the grain that was consumed

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<sup>767</sup> Kaveh Bayat, *Kurdha ve Firgih Dimocrate Azerbaijan: Gozarishhayi az Consolgariye America dar Tabriz Dey 1323- Esfand 1325* [the Kurds and Azerbaijan Democratic Party: reports from US Council in Tabriz January 1945- March 1947], (Tehran Publisher, 2010), 38.

<sup>768</sup> Mobley 1979, 51.

<sup>769</sup> Hewrami 2008b, 76-7.

throughout Iran. As Mobley notes, the Azerbaijan region under the control of the ADP was home to 35 percent of the tobacco, 25 percent of the grain, 20 percent of the sugar, and 22 percent of all the sheep and goats produced in whole of Iran.<sup>770</sup> Azerbaijan was an important economic partner not only for the other regions in Iran but also for Iranian Kurdistan.

For similar reasons, the Iranian government paid more attention to the ADP's region than to the KDP's region. Strategically, the north-western Iranian territory, where the Azeri population was predominant, was like a defensive wall against the attacks of traditional enemies from the north and the northwest, Russians and Turks respectively. Because of its importance as a conduit between the Iranian central government and its aforementioned neighbours, Azerbaijan became a commercial hub, an important centre of industrial and agricultural production. As a vibrant international gateway, the economy and commerce in Azerbaijan were dramatically more developed in comparison with the other Iranian provinces. Accordingly, the participation of the Azerbaijani middle-class in the Iranian government during the reign of Reza Shah was larger than that of other Iranian provinces.<sup>771</sup> In contrast to the Azerbaijan region, the Kurdish area was under-developed in many respects.

As mentioned earlier, one of the most contentious points between the governments of Azerbaijan and Kurdistan was the issue of territorial boundaries. The importance of this issue was clearly pointed out in several reports by the representatives of the Great Powers in Tabriz, especially in those of the US and the Soviet Union. Rossow reported that differences between Kurds and Azeris were heightened when 'Kurds claimed authority on the entire border region [between both sides] from Mahabad to Maku, such as Miyanduab, Rezaiyeh and Khoy,'<sup>772</sup> which were a part of the Urumiyeh province. In 1930s, as part of Reza Shah's reconfiguration of provincial administration throughout Iran, Urumiyeh was assigned as part of West Azerbaijan with the city of Urumiyeh as its capital – beforehand Urumiyeh was a gray area in terms of dominance between the Azeri and Kurdish population. Kurdish leaders laid heavy emphasis on the inclusion of Urumiyeh within the Republic of Kurdistan for symbolic reasons as well as for economic and geo-strategic reasons. Urumiyeh was a vibrant regional commercial centre and rested on an important throughway between Iran and Turkey. The US Consul noted that Kurds have in mind to choose Rezaiyeh in place of Mahabad for their

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<sup>770</sup> Mobley 1979, 52.

<sup>771</sup> Cottam 1979, 119.

<sup>772</sup> Bayat 2010, 41.

capital.<sup>773</sup> The most contentious areas were the northern and western regions of Lake Urumiyeh: Salmas, Khoy and Urumiyeh. In February 1946, Ghazi Mohammad and Pishvari met to reach a solution for the issue of boundaries. According to Rossow, the meeting ended inconclusively and the border conflict continued.<sup>774</sup> Reports by the Soviet representatives were more or less along a similar line as those of the US representatives. The tensions finally gave way to an armed confrontation on September 20, 1946 in Salmas. The Soviet Consul in Maku reported that Kurdish fighters tried to capture the city Shapor (Salmas) but after armed confrontation with local inhabitants and with the arrival of Azerbaijan government's forces from Tabriz, the Kurdish fighters under the command of Taher Khan Shikak were forced to retreat from the region.<sup>775</sup> However, disputes regarding territorial boundaries continued between both parties without any clear conclusions.

Mamadov, a Tas newspaper correspondent in Tabriz, reported on the crisis between both governments and Pishvari's policy toward the Republic of Kurdistan. During the early days of its establishment, the Azerbaijan Democratic Party concentrated only on their own interests, without taking the cooperation with the Tudeh Party and Mahabad into consideration. Pishvari had no serious plans for uniting with the Kurds. It was only near the end of both their governments that Pishvari broached the possibility of more cooperation with the Kurds. But by then it was too late for any decisive resistance, as the Iranian military forces entered Azerbaijan in December 1946. According to Mamadov, Pishvari's government, lacking any significant support from democrats in Iran, was vanquished and the Iranian central government gained the control of Azerbaijan.<sup>776</sup>

## **2 Role of neighbouring countries**

Clearly, a formally established and recognized the Republic of Kurdistan would have been a source of inspiration in many regards for the Kurds living within the countries neighbouring Iran. Realizing that the establishment of a Kurdish autonomy or independence would be dangerous to their national security, Turkey and Iraq in particular took diplomatic steps against the establishment of a Kurdish government in Iran. Below is a more detailed account of these countries' policies in this regard.

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<sup>773</sup> Ibid., 43-4.

<sup>774</sup> Ibid., 47-8.

<sup>775</sup> Hewrami 2008b, 60.

<sup>776</sup> Ibid., 129.

## 2.1. Turkey

From the very outset of the Kemalist regime in the Republic of Turkey, a hard-line policy was pursued against the Kurds. This policy considered Kurds 'Mountain Turks' and sought to militarily crush any move to assert ethnic or national rights. Similarly, the regime was more than willing to support and cooperate with any neighbouring country in order to eliminate all Kurdish activity in the region. Turkey was one of the signatories of the Treaty of Sa'dabad (Reza Shah's summer residence in the northern suburbs of Tehran), which was signed on July 8, 1937, by four Muslim countries: Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan. Border disputes were the central concern in this treaty.<sup>777</sup>

The occupation of Iran by the Allied Powers in 1941 had caused considerable anxiety to the regime in Turkey. As the political crisis in Iran gave way to the bold ethnic and nationalist movements, Iranian Kurds living along the eastern border of Turkey, were no longer contained as they had been during the reign of Reza Shah. In fact, by August 1941, Ghazi Mohammad was proclaiming Kurdish liberation.<sup>778</sup> Calculating that any improvement in the national liberation movement of Kurds in Iran would mean trouble for them as well, the Turkish government was anxious to take precautions. As the British political officers in Iran reported, Kurdish success in Iran in liberating themselves from the Iranian government has 'influence on the Kurdish movements in Iraq and Turkey.'<sup>779</sup>

Kurdish political activities from 1941 to 1946 were closely observed by the Turkish representatives in Iran. Exaggerating even the slightest events to the point of making an international issue, the Turkish government went to great lengths to stop or at least limit the scale of these political activities and to a large extent it succeeded in securing its interests in the region. It was the Turkish consul in Urumiyeh, for example, who informed the British and the Americans about the Kurdish leaders' visit to Baku in 1941. The Kurds' first trip to Baku in November 1941 became an international political issue. As British Foreign Office noted, 'there is a real danger least these developments should lead to an estrangement between the Russians and the Turks.'<sup>780</sup> The Turkish government showed, according to British Foreign

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<sup>777</sup> For the complete Sa'dabad Treaty, see Hurewitz 1956, 214-6.

<sup>778</sup> *Kurdistan*, No. 10 and 11, 4 and 6 February 1946.

<sup>779</sup> FO 371/27245, 'Persia, 1941', File No. 5068, 18 December 1941.

<sup>780</sup> *Ibid.*



Office, ‘increasing anxiety regarding developments in Persian Kurdistan.’<sup>781</sup> Turkish government officials worried that the Soviets would be supportive of the possible formation of a Kurdish state. Subsequently, the Turkish government pressed the British government (at the time Great Britain and the Soviet Union were still allies) for a clarification of the Kurds’ visit to Baku, which was organized by Baqirov.<sup>782</sup> As it was important for the British to draw Turkey into the Alliance, the British government sought to assuage the Turkish government. Bullard explained:

I urged him [the Turkish consul in Tabriz] to do everything in his power to ensure that nothing shall be done in Kurdish areas which might arouse the suspicion of the Turkish government whose friendship is [of] importance.<sup>783</sup>

The Kurds’ visit to Baku prompted the Turkish government to seek a guarantee from the British government that the Allied Forces in Iran would not support the Kurdish movement in Iran, or better still, extract a promise that the British would publicly oppose it. The British responded positively to the Turks’ requests and made it clear to the Kurds in Iran that they should not count on any support from the British government. Moreover, the British pressed the Soviet government for a clarification of the meaning of the visit by the Kurdish leaders to Baku.<sup>784</sup> Although, the Soviet ambassador in Iran claimed that the trip was organized for cultural purposes, the Turkish regime was convinced that the trip had a political aim as well, namely the eventual the establishment of an independent Kurdish state. On December 2, 1941 the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs claimed that the Kurdish movement was aiming at the ‘establishment of an independent Kurdish state’ and ‘were alleged to have been encouraged and materially helped by “the occupying forces in Persia”.’<sup>785</sup> Eventually, the anxiety of Turkish government was replaced by reassurance. The British reported, ‘we [Britain] have had to urge the Soviet government not to encourage a separatist movement in Persia.’<sup>786</sup> And the Soviets gave the following explanation in terms of their stance vis-à-vis Kurds and the Kurds’ visit to Baku:

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<sup>781</sup> Ibid.

<sup>782</sup> Ibid., 20 December 1941.

<sup>783</sup> Ibid., 1 December 1941.

<sup>784</sup> Ibid., 18 December 1941.

<sup>785</sup> Ibid.

<sup>786</sup> Ibid.

The Soviet Army in Iran was not only against the supporting of the Kurds but it also actively put effort into disarming Kurds. The region where Kurds were armed did not belong to our sphere of influence. As for some notable Kurds visiting Baku, the trip was a solely cultural affair and had no political meaning.<sup>787</sup>

It is interesting to note that the news of the formal declaration of the Republic of Kurdistan did not reach the US consul in Tabriz for several weeks, until they received a message from the Turkish consul in Urumiyeh. Rossow noted that Turkish consul in Urumiyeh reported that the Republic of Kurdistan 'three weeks ago was established, though the news of the formal proclamation was never disseminated in Tabriz.'<sup>788</sup> In March 1946, the Turkish General Chief of Staff reported that the news of the institutional establishment of the Kurdish government had been circulating and that indeed the Kurds did proclaim their government. The report further informed that Turks still had the control of the borders.<sup>789</sup> With the following note, the British political officers in Iran confirmed the Turkish Ministry's opinion:

The Turko-Iranian frontier is very strongly guarded. The Turko-Iraqi frontier is strongly guarded as well, with the close collaboration of the Iraqi frontier authorities with the Turkish authorities.<sup>790</sup>

The Turkish government implemented stricter policies throughout the Kurdish areas that fell within its borders and tried to tightly survey any Kurdish movements, particularly at the borders with Iran. The Turkish government's reaction to the establishment of the Republic is described in a long report by Finogradov, the Soviet Ambassador in Turkey. According to Finogradov, the Turkish government took certain measures in order to prevent any spread of the Kurdish nationalist movement either from Iranian Kurdistan or from Iraqi Kurdistan, especially from Mustafa Barzani's struggle against the Iraqi government.<sup>791</sup> One of the greatest fears of the Turkish regime was the cooperation and participation of the Iraqi, Turkish and Syrian Kurds in the Republic of Kurdistan. Although not at a massive scale, there

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<sup>787</sup> Hewrami 2008a, 12-4.

<sup>788</sup> Bayat 2010, 46.

<sup>789</sup> Ibid., 48-9.

<sup>790</sup> FO 195/2595, 'Kurds and Kurdistan (Soviet propaganda in Eastern Turkey)', No. 14, 24 January 1946.

<sup>791</sup> Hewrami 2002, 91.

were Kurds from other parts of Kurdistan that did participate in the Republic of Kurdistan. Kadri Beg, for example, grandson of Jamil Pasha, head of the elite Kurdish family in Diyarbakir, was actively assisting.<sup>792</sup> On July 16, 1946 the US general consul in Tabriz visited Mahabad and reported, 'I became acquainted with some Iraqi and Iranian Kurds who speak English or Kurds from Syria that could understand French.'<sup>793</sup>

On April 5, 1946 Finogradov reported the Turkish newspapers' assertion that the establishment of the Kurdish government in Iran could cause anxiety for countries such as Turkey, Iraq and Syria.<sup>794</sup> Following the developments in Iranian Kurdistan, in November 1945 the Turkish government came up with a Provincial Law especially for the Kurdish region in Turkey. According to this law, a Turkish army general became the governor of the region with special authorities. As Finogradov noted, 'this officer had exclusive authority, especially over political matters in the Kurdish region.'<sup>795</sup>

In 1945 and 1946, the Kurdish question was one of the major discussion topics for the countries among which the Kurdish populace was divided. According to Finogradov, for example, the Kurdish issue was one of the major agenda items during the recent negotiations between the Iraqi and Turkish governments. They signed a treaty for cooperation toward security and peace.<sup>796</sup> Another agenda item for the Turkish government was the presence of Barzani's forces in Iranian Kurdistan. Turkey requested that the Iraqi government press the British for the return of Iraqi Kurds from Iran to Iraq, hoping that it would fatally weaken the Republic of Kurdistan as Barzani's troops composed the backbone of the Republic's forces. Barzani's uprising during 1943-45 against the Iraqi government had ended with many fighters taking refuge in the neighbouring countries, particularly in Iran. Turkish and Iraqi governments decided to exchange Kurdish deserters, as they claimed, between both sides.<sup>797</sup> This protocol was also a part of the Sa'dabad Treaty, which was to be extended every five years or reviewed as made necessary by any developments in the Middle East region. If the national security of the signatory parties of the Sa'dabad Treaty stood in danger, then they were directed to convene in order to assess matters of the implementation of the Treaty. Both

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<sup>792</sup> Eagleton 1963, 47.

<sup>793</sup> Bayat 2010, 113-4.

<sup>794</sup> Hewrami 2002, 91.

<sup>795</sup> Ibid., 91-2.

<sup>796</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>797</sup> Ibid.

the Iraqi and Turkish governments tried to guarantee the security of the border between both sides.<sup>798</sup>

## **2.2. Iraq**

Shortly before the British invasion of Iran in August 1941, the Iraqi government that was established in 1921 by the direct involvement of the British had collapsed due to a military coup led by Rashid Ali al-Gilani. Aiming to strengthen its hold on Iraq before venturing into Iran, the British removed al-Gilani from power and established a new Iraqi government that was more tightly controlled by the British forces. Iraq, after Egypt, became an important British military base for the preparation of the Second World War in the Middle East. The British troops entered into Iranian territory from Iraq in August 1941. The southern part of Iranian Kurdistan fell under the sphere of Great Britain. In Iranian Kurdistan, British representatives followed the same policy as they had with the Iraqi Kurds, which respected the territorial integrity of the countries where the Kurds inhabited and considered the Kurdish question as an internal issue.

As mentioned earlier, Barzani and his fighters were an important part of the Republic of Kurdistan's military force. Expelling Barzani's troops or returning them to Iraq would have meant the end of the Republic. For this reason, the Iraqi government, through British representatives in Iran, tried to extradite Barzani's troops to Iraq.

By the time Barzani's uprising started in 1943, Iraq was under the political control of Great Britain. Eventually repelling Barzani's forces and forcing them to retreat into Iran took the active support of the British politicians and military. At the time, the JK was a significant nationalist Kurdish political party in Iranian Kurdistan and had developed several plans for cooperation and solidarity with other parts of Kurdistan, especially with the insurrection of Barzani in Iraq. The JK's letter to Barzani, for example, as discussed earlier, fell into the hands of the Iraqi government and it led to a series of efforts by the Iraqi government to cut ties between the two sides. After having studied the letter, the Iraqi Ministry of Interior asked the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs to bring the JK's political activities to the attention of the Iranian government and urge it exert more government control over Mahabad.<sup>799</sup> Similarly, after the full staff of the Kurdish flag at the municipal building of Mahabad, the

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<sup>798</sup> Hurewitz 1956, 214-6.

<sup>799</sup> FO 624/71, 'political situation in Kurdistan, No. 272, part eleven (311-350)', British Embassy in Baghdad, 15th October, 1945.

Iraqi government expressed their dissatisfaction about the development in the region. In 1945 Hamid Pachachi, the Iraqi Prime Minister, stated, 'Iraq was worried about the events in Iranian Kurdistan.'<sup>800</sup> Iraqi government feared that, especially with the presence of Barzani's forces there, Iranian Kurdistan might develop into a political and military base also against the Iraqi central government. As mentioned earlier, Barzani had presented a proposal to the Soviet representatives in Iranian Kurdistan, where he requested from the Soviets not obstruct their struggle against the Iraqi government. Although, the Soviet officers did not respond positively to Barzani's request, Barzani nevertheless went on with efforts to further develop his movement. While in Iranian Kurdistan, Barzani sent representatives to Iraqi Kurdistan to organize political activities. The formal proclamation of the KDP in Iraq is an illustration of such activities.

The governments of Iran and Iraq pressed the Soviet government to take serious actions against Barzani and his followers in Iran. Both governments wanted to see the leading figures of Barzani's forces returned to Iraq. The answer of the Soviet government was simple and clear. Zatisv, the Soviet Ambassador to Iraq, explained that the issue of denying entry for Barzani into Iranian territory is a domestic issue of Iran and Iraq. In accordance with the principle of not interfering in matters of domestic affairs of sovereign states, the government of the Soviet Union can not instruct its army to disarm and discharge Iraqi Kurds in Iranian territory.<sup>801</sup> By this principle, Zatisv was referring to the article two of the section seven of the UN Charter, which was signed, with the Soviet Union among the signatories, in San Francisco in 1945. The concerned article stated:

Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state.<sup>802</sup>

The presence of Barzani's forces in the Republic of Kurdistan clearly was a factor that strengthened the standing of the Republic. It was also a factor that facilitated a quicker and stronger institutionalization of the Kurdish political activities. In a letter dated 17 November 1945, the Iranian Foreign Minister informed the Soviet government of the existence of the units of Barzani fighters, along with other uprisings in province four, Urumiyeh and Mahabad

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<sup>800</sup> Hewrami 2002, 55.

<sup>801</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>802</sup> For the complete UN Charter, see the UN website: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/index.shtml>

region, will cause instability.<sup>803</sup> If the Great Powers had not been present in the region then it would have been simpler for signatory parties of the Sa'dabad Treaty to cooperate against the Kurdish movements. Referring to this matter, the Iraqi ambassador to his Iranian colleague on August 15, 1946, explained that:

According to a treaty between Iraq and Iran the entering Iraqi Kurds, especially Mustafa Barzani, whose hanging is waiting for him in Iraq, must be arrested by the Iranian government and returned to the Iraqi government. But Barzani and other fugitives are under the sphere of control of the Soviets and can not be captured.<sup>804</sup>

When the Republic of Kurdistan collapsed, Barzani and his troops did not surrender themselves to the Iranian government. Barzani sent a protocol to the Soviet consul in Urumiyeh requesting of them to be mediators between Barzani and the governments of Iraq and Iran. According to this protocol, in a general on January 15, 1947 Kurdish representatives, led by Sheikh Ahmad and Mustafa Barzani, relayed the following conditions to the Iranian and Iraqi governments. 1 – Amnesty for everybody that participated in the Barzan uprising (1943-45) and for every fighter that fought for freedom and liberation in Iraq and Iran. 2- Compensation from the Iraqi regime for the damages sustained by the Barzanis. 3- Autonomy for Kurdistan and freedom for all political movements. 4- Permission for the Barzanis to keep their weapons.<sup>805</sup> This protocol was left without answer and archived by the Soviet government.

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<sup>803</sup> Hewrami 2002, 55.

<sup>804</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>805</sup> Ibid., 69-70.

### **3 Presence of the Great Powers in Iran**

Many books and articles have been published about the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, and especially its origins in Eastern Europe and especially in Poland. However, less interest has been shown to the conflict between the US and the Soviet Union in the Middle East, particularly with regard to the Iranian crisis (1945 – 1946). This crisis revealed a historical background of rivalry between the Great Powers in the Middle East. This section will discuss the nature of the traditional rivalry in the Middle East, which existed between Russia and Britain, with US playing the role of a new Great Power. Special attention will also be given to the period of the Second World War in Iran. The discussion in this section will be based on the questions that were posed in the introduction of chapter V, which is mostly related to the Republic of Kurdistan. Before analyzing the international rivalry of the Great Powers in Iran, it is fitting to evaluate some important theories on international relations, which could be helpful to understanding the Great Powers' 'practised' political agenda. International relations theories are statements which explain the associations of variables relating them as causes and effects, as stated by Kenneth N. Waltz, one of the important realist scholars. These theories depict how a domain or system is organized and how its parts are connected, indicating the factors which are more important than others.<sup>806</sup>

#### **3.1. International Relations Theory**

The Cold War and the conflict between the two superpowers after the Second World War were central to the study of the theory of International Relations. While from the second half of the 1950s, an increasing interest of the great powers in the problems of the Third World countries can be seen, the conflict of interests between these great powers in Iran started a bit earlier, dating back to 1945. After the Second World War, the theories of international relations shaped the context of the cold war between 1945 and 1991 and it is necessary to study the different phases of the battle by using various international relations theories. In this study, the various schools offering interpretations of international relations can be categorized into three general phases: (1) competition between (neo)realism vs. (2) (neo)idealism/liberalism, and (3) structuralism after the Second World War. The first two phases should be discussed with regard to several important elements, because these two schools, especially realism, were dominant during the Second World War.

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<sup>806</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York, Columbia University: Waveland Press, 1979), 1-10.

In general, two important elements within (neo)realism and (neo)idealism will be discussed, which are directly or indirectly relate to the events in the Middle East, particularly in Iran during the period of the Second World War. Also, due attention will be given to the political environments and the political policy of the Great Powers during this time. The two elements within (neo)realism and (neo)idealism are: (1) the concept of *Sovereignty* and *Non-intervention*, and (2) the *Balance of Power*. Eventually, the third phase, structuralism, will be described.

### 3.1.1. (Neo)realism vs. (neo)idealism/liberalism

Between the two world wars (1920-1940), a competition of schools of thought took place between realism and idealism. The debate between these two theories was generally constructed along the following question: how can the international order best be maintained? Making the world safer through the establishment of democratic regimes and dissemination and division of political power in the whole world with the creation of specific organizations were the main political demands of the idealist school. After the end of World War I and under the leadership of President Woodrow Wilson, these demands and the related principles were institutionalized into international organizations like the League of Nations, which was later replaced by the UN.<sup>807</sup> An establishment of collective security was the essential principle within the League of Nations as well as for the school of idealism. This also an essential principle within the UN, which tried to protect the coalition states against any state which committed aggression.<sup>808</sup> Another focal point within the League of Nations and for the school of idealism was the Permanent Court of International Justice. Idealism claimed that all international disputes could be resolved through the legal process of international law. The solution of the Mosul question (see chapter III) between Turkey and British-Iraqi governments in 1926 can be cited as an example of this resolution process.<sup>809</sup> However, the eruption of the Second World War led to the triumph of the realist school. Thus, it is

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<sup>807</sup> Cynthia Weber, *International Relations Theory* (2<sup>th</sup> ed., London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2005), 38.

<sup>808</sup> For details on the collective security aspect of the League of Nations and UN, see Lunn H. Miller, 'The Ideal and the Reality of Collective Security', *Global Governance* (No. 5, 1999), 303-32.

<sup>809</sup> The Mosul issue was solved in the satisfaction of England and not due to the wishes of the local population. The Italian-Ethiopian war of 1935-36, the outstanding Japanese-Chinese war over Manchuria in 1931-37, highlighted the complexity of these conflicts and the problems of applying the principle of collective security. More importantly, it showed how a League of Nations was Eurocentric.



interesting to examine some of the essential international relations' elements between the two world wars, which weakened the idealist school and tilted the scale towards the realist school.

The outcome of the First World War can be seen as the cause of the World War II. This relationship can be explained in three ways. First, the First World War was a strong nationalist war. More than ever before, soldiers had the strong gut feeling of being part of a nation that was superior to, or in any case, had to compete with other nations. The soldiers' extremely strong identification with their countries of origin was, in both the First and the Second World War, harnessed by their warring nations. Hitler understood the power of this feeling and his National Socialist policies were used to fully exploit it. A second link came from the fact that Germany suffered tremendous economic and infrastructural losses in the First World War. Germany was unable to bear these further losses after the long years of struggle in the trenches, and the immense destruction of its cities and horrific massacres of its people. Looking for scapegoats, they came to see the Jews, Socialists and Bolsheviks as the primary reason behind the great defeat of Germany. This intense dissatisfaction led Germany to see themselves as victims of the war. This is the emotion which Hitler used to gather support within the country for going into the Second World War.<sup>810</sup>

A third relationship between the two wars stemmed from the Treaty of Versailles after the First World War, which was signed between Germany and the Allies. This treaty was extremely punitive for Germany: its army was strongly constrained, large tracts of land were to be ceded and huge economic recovery payments had to be made. The treaty was aimed at immediately halting Germany's international conquest ambitions, rather than taking into account the possible long-term consequences. The treaty's measures did immense damage to the German economy and led to widespread unrest and discontent among the German population, which made the rise of the Nazi Party possible. At the same time, the Treaty of Versailles only had weak mechanisms for reprisal if Germany violated the rules. Thus, there was no obstacle in Germany's way once it moved to wartime footing.<sup>811</sup>

With regard to the Great Powers in Iran, the following question is important: how should the Great Powers behave towards one another and towards weaker states? The realists

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<sup>810</sup> For details on the causes of the Second World War, see Philip Michael Hett Bell, *The Origins of the Second World War in Europe* (London: Longman, 1987); Edward Hallett Carr, *International Relations between the two World Wars, 1919-1939* (London: Macmillan, 1990).

<sup>811</sup> For more information on the influence of the Treaty of Versailles on Germany, see W. M. Jordan, *Great Britain, France, and the German Problem, 1918-1939: A Study of Anglo-French Relations in the Making and Maintenance of the Versailles Settlement* (London: Oxford University Press, 1943).

believed that the best guarantee for peace lay in a balance of power between the Great Powers. Because the system of the League of Nations failed and then the Second World War broke out, the idealist school became discredited after the war and the realist's school prevailed.<sup>812</sup> The realist, or power politics school, was represented by E.H. Carr and Georg Schwarzenberger in Britain and by Reinhold Niebuhr and Hans Morgenthau in the US. The existence of the state system was for abovementioned scholars the main goal of arbitrage in political power, in which there was no common authority above the sovereign state, and where there was international anarchy in the sense of a lack of government at the international level.<sup>813</sup> Perhaps the most famous member of the realist school is Morgenthau, author of the classic called *Politics among Nations* (1960). The three major elements that typify Morgenthau's writings are the beliefs that nation-states are the most important actors in international relations, that there is a clear distinction between domestic and international politics, and that international relations is predominantly about the struggle for power and peace.<sup>814</sup> Morgenthau represented the first or rational approach, focusing on the rational assessment of interests and power resources to reach value-maximizing choices.<sup>815</sup> This Rational Actor Model remains useful as a quick approximation to predict choices by policy-makers in states such as the Soviet Union, where the detailed process of decision-making was hidden from public view.<sup>816</sup>

The national security of the boundaries of a state is one of the central themes of the realist school. In other words, safeguarding the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the state is an important task for the realist doctrine. This political theory, according to Staden, reached its highest point in the 1950s.<sup>817</sup> According to the realist school, the state is the highest political actor and dominates the population. Sovereignty of a state depends on whether and to what level it is weak or powerful, which in turn means that a weak state is less sovereign. The

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<sup>812</sup> For more on the debate between realism and idealism, see Herz, J.H., *Political Realism and Political Idealism* (Chicago, 1951).

<sup>813</sup> Clive Archer, *International Organizations* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., London/New York: Routledge, 1992), 78.

<sup>814</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>815</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (4<sup>th</sup> ed., New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), 3-4.

<sup>816</sup> For a more detailed discussion on decision and policy-making in world politics, see Charles J. Kegley, *World Politics: Trend and Transformation* (12<sup>th</sup> ed., USA: Wadsworth Publisher, 2009).

<sup>817</sup> R.B. Soetendorp and A. van Staden (red.), *Internationale Betrekkingen in Perspectief* [international relations in perspective], (Utrecht: Spectrum BV, 1987), 43.

sovereignty of states has been a solid principle since the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 and it spread from Europe to the whole world. This widely accepted concept of sovereignty led to the creation of the idea of a territorial state, which is one of the most important political landmarks of our times.<sup>818</sup> Despite all the violence of the First and Second World War, according to many authors, it created the apotheosis of the modern state, the modern state system and the related principles of sovereignty and non-intervention. This was especially the case in the non-Western world in the second half of the twentieth century.<sup>819</sup> Nevertheless, these new states were often dependent in many respects, and not sovereign, according to one of its definitions by Krasner, who operated within the realist theories.<sup>820</sup>

Daniel Philpott, a neoidealist supporter, attempted to explain that universally states respected each other's territorial sovereignty.<sup>821</sup> The importance of institutionalization of the states, that is when they are recognized jointly by the members of the international community, came to the attention of the (neo)idealist school. This was officially the founding principle of the United Nations. The member states were maintaining their credibility and demonstrating their mutual respect for sovereignty by adhering to mutual agreements, understandings and treaties. These included the prohibition to intervene in matters of other sovereign states, with states being accepted as a global norm.<sup>822</sup> This principle of sovereignty and non-intervention, was laid down in article 10 of the Covenant of the League of Nations and widely accepted by UN in article 2(4, 5 and 6) within the Charter of the United Nations.

The (neo)realist school is critical of this and believes that the sovereignty and non-intervention is not an unyielding principle, and there are many reasons that these principles could be violated, for the sake of humanitarian causes, for example. The most important conceptual notion of (neo)realism is its view of international politics as a system of sovereign states, in which each state's behavior principally results from its relationship to other states. However, as the title of his book, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy*, suggests, Krasner had a highly critical opinion about territorial sovereignty and its value in the current era. Krasner had a very realistic view of the political world, the principles of territorial sovereignty and

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<sup>818</sup> Ibid.

<sup>819</sup> Maarten Kuitenbrouwer, 'Van beschavingsmissie tot zelfbeschikkingsrecht: de evolutie van Europese soevereiniteit buiten Europa', in Hellema 2004, 37-56.

<sup>820</sup> According to Krasner, this definition refers to the formal organization and effectiveness of political authority within the state (Krasner 1999, 4). For detail information about four different sovereignties, see *ibid*, 3-42.

<sup>821</sup> Philpott 2001, 3-10.

<sup>822</sup> Ibid.

even the frequent violations thereof. To illustrate his point, Krasner gives the arbitrary interpretation of the principles of sovereignty and non-intervention by the European Great Powers, who acted by adapting these principles as per their interests.<sup>823</sup> The violation of the territorial integrity of Iraq in 1991 in the second Persian Gulf War and the establishment of a 'safe haven' for the Kurds is a potent example to describe the violation of sovereignty of a state.

The concept of the balance of power is the second aspect of contention within (neo)realist and (neo)idealist school and is defined by Waltz as what, 'explained the results of states' actions, under given conditions',<sup>824</sup> which can be either conflict leading to instability or that of cooperation leading to a stable balance of power. In order to maintain stability and balance, power was divided between the Great Powers to form an alliance. However, despite cooperation being the main slogan, competition for individual state interests continued to play a dominant role. This led to a state of events where there was a lack of political interest on part of the United States to maintain international order and enforce the Versailles Treaty. Concurrently, after the United States pulled out of the world political arena, the only remaining Great Powers were Britain and France. In the background, the US continued to play a vital role in international political decision-making, despite it not being a member of the League of Nations. The US could not remain silent in global political arena for long, however, because one of the key elements in the balance of power theory is the unilateral formation of more powerful states. As Waltz points out, they are unitary actors who, 'at a minimum, seek their own preservation and, at a maximum, drive for universal domination.'<sup>825</sup>

In the third decade of the twentieth century, for example, only a collective security pact of the League of Nations could achieve success in implementing effective sanctions, but this success would threaten the monopoly of the Great powers. For example, when Italy entered Ethiopia in 1935, the Council of the League of Nations claimed that Italy had violated the pact and the Assembly established a committee for the imposition of sanctions on Italy. These sanctions included an embargo on exports of war materials from Italy, prohibition on all Italian exports and the cancellation of all loans to Italy. The oil-embargo was not imposed out of fear of escalation of events in Europe, especially keeping in mind the growth of Nazi-

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<sup>823</sup> Krasner 1999, 85-6.

<sup>824</sup> Ibid., 118.

<sup>825</sup> Ibid.

Germany.<sup>826</sup> But instead was an example of ‘external efforts’ by the states constituting the League of Nations to weaken the power of Italy and thus maintain a balance of power within Europe. The category of ‘external efforts’ was defined by Waltz as the move to strengthen and enlarge one’s own alliance or to weaken and shrink an opposing one.<sup>827</sup> The invention of collective security through separate systems of the states can be cited as another example of ‘external efforts’. This separate system of Alliances was created not only to guarantee the French security, but also provide protection against the tyrannies of Nazism. On the other hand, another means for states to obtain a balance of power is through ‘internal efforts’, which Waltz describes as the ‘move to increase economic and military capability’ within one’s own state.<sup>828</sup>

Since 1945 there was an emphasis on international arbitration as a solution to international relations issues. The United Nations also saw this as an instrument for determining disputes between nations. For example, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1968 can be considered as a milestone in multilateral arms control, which was negotiated through the help of a UN body.<sup>829</sup> These agreements were intended to ensure peace and security. It could be achieved by the intervention of the UN, Inter-Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs), NGOs, IGOs and powerful governments. In the late twentieth century, some Third World countries showed resistance against the superpowers and maintained a non-aligned stance in international politics. The balance of power was primarily a product of the old regime in Europe and was a motivating power in nineteenth century’s diplomacy. Until 1945, the standard character of world political arena was multipolar, as it always consisted of five or more powers.<sup>830</sup> During the Cold War this changed to a state with just two world powers, symbolized by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact, with increasing tensions between the two blocks. As Waltz observed, ‘with only two great powers, a balance-of-power system is unstable.’<sup>831</sup> With the collapse of the

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<sup>826</sup> Armstrong 2004, 27-30.

<sup>827</sup> Ibid.

<sup>828</sup> Waltz 1979, 118.

<sup>829</sup> Jordan 2001, 51-6.

<sup>830</sup> Waltz 1979, 163.

<sup>831</sup> Ibid.

bipolar world in 1989 due to the fall of the Soviet Union, the concept of a balance of power dismantled hastily.<sup>832</sup>

### 3.1.2. Structuralism

After the Second World War, a third theory called structuralism was a major intellectual movement in France and also proved to be internationally influential. The common goal for this theory was to define different aspects of human culture (politics, habits, etc.), primarily ‘language’, and to draw a system based on the language theory. As S.F. Nadel pointed out, ‘ordinary language obscures a distinction that is important in theory.’<sup>833</sup> Structure is an abstraction and is not something we see. It is in the realm of grammar and syntax, not of the spoken word.<sup>834</sup> Structure must instead be defined by the ‘enumerating of the system’s parts and by the principle of that arrangement.’<sup>835</sup> Within the structuralist school, two important approaches were essential for the study of human behaviour: individualistic and holistic. The first examined an individual’s behaviour, which is an important part of structural theory and, according to Waltz, ‘is now a social-science favourite.’<sup>836</sup> An example of this approach is that many political and economic phenomena are due to individuals trying to maximize their surplus at the micro level, which is also a pivotal assumption of many social science theories. The second or holistic approach emphasizes on macro level phenomena with multiple individuals interacting, which leads to the emergence of a social system with some level of stable structure. The approach aims to explain the reasons for changing patterns of social, economic, political and cultural structures and also predict how these transformations would affect human behaviour. Since the changing of the social environment played a significant

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<sup>832</sup> For a contemporary in-depth discussion on the balance of power theory, see T.V. Pual, James J. Wirtz, Michel Fortmann, *Balance of Power: Theory and Practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2004); For a historical approach to the theory, especially in the twentieth century, see Martin Wight, ‘The Balance of Power’, in Herbert Butterfield and Martin Wight (eds.), *Diplomatic Investigations* (London, 1966); For a classical approach, which focuses on the struggle against Napoleon and the Congress of Vienna, see Edward V. Gulick, *Europe’s Classical Balance of Power* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1955).

<sup>833</sup> Cited in Waltz 1979, 80.

<sup>834</sup> Ibid.

<sup>835</sup> Waltz 1979, 80.

<sup>836</sup> Ibid., 73.

role on the human behaviour, the social environment was also studied along with individual characteristics in the structuralist system.<sup>837</sup>

Structuralism had been concerned with the division between societies such as between the rich and poor, both within countries and at the global scale. This led to an interest in transnational relations and inter-governmental links. According to this school, the structure of world politics was defined by economic factors and thus, (Neo-) Marxism-Leninism also belonged to this school. For structuralism the division of labour is crucial for the nature of social control and solidarity and thus it determined the manner in which individuals interacted. Structuralism not only attended to the economical relations between states and world politics, but it also concerned itself with the divisions within and between societies. Marxism, which is a part of the larger structuralist school, predicted that capitalist modes of production would ultimately lead to a classless society. This is another example of structuralism providing a direction about individual behaviour. Important topics of research within structuralism were the historical development of capitalism and the interdependence of the relations of the 'Third World' with respect to the 'First World'.<sup>838</sup>

### **3.2. Soviet-Union's policy towards Kurds in Iran**

Iran was a strategically important region for the Great Powers. Thus, Iran automatically became a part of international political strategies, with the Great Powers using the country as an instrument for their political and economic ambitions. This fact became more clearly particularly in the nineteenth century, when conflicts emerged between Britain and Russia in the Middle East. Russia's expansionist policies and their need for warm-water ports clashed with Britain's need to maintain their line of communication in the Eastern Mediterranean and their desire to protect a vast area, which stretched from the Persian Gulf to Tibet.<sup>839</sup> According to Kesrayi, the influence of the Great Powers in the Middle East from beginning of the nineteenth century began with the oppression of the Russian military and ended with the oppression of the British military.<sup>840</sup>

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<sup>837</sup> Soetendorp 1987, 243.

<sup>838</sup> Archer gave attention to the Marxist writers, and some Third World views - particularly those of the dependency school and the developmentalists - who have made a contribution quite separate from that of the Marxist tradition, Archer 1992, 106-23.

<sup>839</sup> Bruce Robellet Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 130-1.

<sup>840</sup> Kesrayi 2000, 236-7.

In the treaty of Gullistan in 1813, Iran renounced Derbent, Baku, Jerevan, Shaki, Karabakh and the surrounding areas to Russia, as well as any of its claims to Georgia, Dagestan and Mingrelie. Again outbreak of the Russo-Persian hostilities ended with the Treaty of Turkmenchai in 1828 and Iran surrendered the remaining part of Armenia to the Russians. The expansion of Russian to the south, especially in the first half of the nineteenth century, is related to the Kurdish question. Initially it was based on the military relationship between some Kurdish elites with Russian officers in order to form alliances against both the Ottoman and Persian empires. For this reason and because Kurds had obtained more freedom in the Tsarists region, many Kurdish families immigrated to the Caucasus.<sup>841</sup> With the conquest of Northern provinces of Iran, several Russian orientalists, particularly after the second half of the nineteenth century, focused on the study of the Kurdish literature, culture, politics and history. In this period Kurdish studies in Russia became popular and many books were published in different areas.<sup>842</sup>

The Russian advance in the Islamic world was under way and came at the expense of Turkey, Iran and the Central Asian states. However, Central Asia had undergone major economic changes since the Russians introduced cotton cultivation. The Russians kept their eye on the potential resources of Central Asia. When the American Civil War (1861-65) began, the Russians had a shortage of cotton fabrics,<sup>843</sup> which made the conquest of Central Asia rather necessary. The Russians and the British did not want a war with Iran and they mutually agreed that Iran was a buffer between their own areas of strategic importance. Russians, however, were concerned about the continued development and expansion of Great Britain in India. Atabaki and Versteeg suggest the following:

The British knew how to enforce the control of the Afghan foreign policy. This ended the Russian expansion. The *Great Game* between the two superpowers was sealed in 1895 with a treaty in which the boundaries and spheres of influence of the Russian and British empires were

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<sup>841</sup> Khaled Murad Chatoyov, *Mejoy Pewendyekani Russia u Kurd: Lekolineweh u Balgahnameh* [history of the Russian and Kurdish relations: investigation and documents], tra. from Arabic to Kurdish by Nacat Abdullah (Suleymaniyeh: Shvan Publishers, 2006), 22-8.

<sup>842</sup> *Ibid.*, 16-7.

<sup>843</sup> Hélèn Carrerr D'Encausse, 'Systematic Conquest, 1865 to 1884', in Edward Allworth (ed.), *Central Asia, 120 Years of Russian Rule* (London: Duke University Press, 1989), 131.



strictly defined. Afghanistan became a buffer state and got the finger-shaped strip up to Pamir, with Russia and Britain remaining on its two separate sides.<sup>844</sup>

Until post-World War I, Pan-Islamism was an important de-facto ideal within the Kurdish community and also for the majority of the Kurdish leaders. In contrast, Pan-Kurdism was a weak sentiment, but still some Kurdish nationalists, such as Kamil Badir Khan, were hopeful for and striving towards the prospective growth of Pan-Kurdism.<sup>845</sup> Russian policy towards Kurds in post-World War I is illustrated in declaration by the Russian Foreign Affairs Office made on April 18, 1923. According to this formal declaration, the Russian should not support the Kurdish movement against the Turkish government and also not support the Turkish government against the Kurds. Compassion must be showed to the Kurdish struggle as an instrument against Britain.<sup>846</sup> After the establishment of the modern nation-states in Turkey, Iran and Iraq, the Soviet government tried to strengthen its position by building connections with these new central governments, especially with the new Iranian government under the leadership of Reza Shah. After the negotiation of the Treaty of Friendship in 1921 between Russian and Iranian representatives,<sup>847</sup> according to Mo'tazed, the Iranian military was able to reconquer the north of Iran and end the movement of Jangali.<sup>848</sup>

As mentioned in chapter III, Reza Shah executed strict policy programs in Iran. According to these programs, the administration, education and legal system, among other infrastructure, were modernised. His goal was to design a centralised modern state based on a secular-oriented public administration. Kuniholm argues that Reza Shah turned his attention

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<sup>844</sup> Turaj Atabaki and Joris Versteeg, *Centraal Azië, mensen, politiek, economie en cultuur* [Central Asia: people, politic, economic and culture], (Amsterdam: Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen, NOVIB, 1994), 22. For details on the rivalry between Great Powers, see Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*, (London: Fontana Press, 1989).

<sup>845</sup> Kamil Badir Khan on September 29, 1917 sent a letter to the Russian representative in Caucasia about solving the Kurdish question and sought collaboration. For this letter, see Hewrami 2006, 9-23.

<sup>846</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>847</sup> Article 6 of this Treaty is interesting because it formed the basis for entry of the Allied forces into Iran in 1941. A summary of this article is as follows: 'If a third party [...] by means of armed intervention in Persia, or if such power should desire to use Persian territory as a base of operations against Russia, [...] and if the Persian Government should not be able to put a stop to such menace [...], Russia shall have the right to advance her troops into the Persian interior.' For the whole Treaty of Friendship between Russia and Persia, see Hurewitz 1956, 90-4.

<sup>848</sup> Mo'tazed 2001, 177.

to the realisation of three great objectives: a centralized government, modernisation, and freedom from foreign influence.<sup>849</sup> Since the economy of Iran, in particular the oil industry, was heavily dependent on the super powers, the dissatisfaction of the Iranian people with the Shah and the foreigners increased. In the meantime, the rivalry between the Great Powers also increased. In the Treaty of Petersburg in 1907, Iran was divided into three zones, putting north of Iran under Russian control, south and southwest under the Great Britain, and a kind of neutral zone in between. History repeated itself when the Allied Powers occupied Iran in August 1941. In order to guarantee military supplies for the Soviet Union's fight against Germany, Iran was divided again into three zones. This recurring division of Iran by the Great Powers was a sign of the continuous struggle for political and economic domination in Iran.<sup>850</sup>

Kurdish nationalists in Iran saw this as an opportunity to organize themselves within a political institution when the Allied entered Iran in August 1941. After formation of the JK, the leaders of this party approached the Allies and referred to the fourth article of the Atlantic Charter by saying that 'they [US and UK] respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live.' A few months following the occupation of Iran, the Allied Powers collaborated with Iran in January 1942 to create the Tripartite Treaty of Alliance (see appendix II), which strengthened the position of the Iranian central government towards ethnic groups who tried to obtain their autonomy. The treaty consisted of nine articles and three annexes, all of which were compatible with the principles of the Atlantic Charter (see appendix I). In this agreement Britain and Soviets agreed to defend Iran against aggression by Germany or any other power.<sup>851</sup> The treaty also promised respect for Iran's political independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty (article 1) and that Allied forces would be withdrawn from Iranian territory no more than six months after an armistice or peace between the Allied Powers, Germany and her associates, whichever came first (art. 5). According to article 1 and 7, Iran was to be provided with economic support by the Great Powers. These two articles were also repeated in the agreements coming out of the conference of Tehran, which lasted from November 28 to December 1 of 1943.<sup>852</sup>

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<sup>849</sup> Kuniholm 1980, 134.

<sup>850</sup> George Lenczowski, *The Middle East in World Affairs* (3<sup>th</sup> ed., Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1962), 32-6.

<sup>851</sup> George Lenczowski, *Russia and the West in Iran, 1918-1948: A study in Big-Power Rivalry* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1949), 175.

<sup>852</sup> Hassan Mofidi, *Asnade Konfranshaye Tehran, Yalta ve Potsdam* [document of the Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam Conferences], (Tehran: Antsharat Part, 1981), 65-6.

Subsequent to the Tripartite Treaty, Iran cooperated with the Allies and promised the free passage of the Allied forces and facilities. The Allies were permitted to maintain military forces in the territory of Iran. Iran was an important military base for the eventual victory of the Allied Powers and it was strategically important for the transportation of military goods to the Battle of Stalingrad. Kuniholm pointed out that more than 2,000,000 tons of supplies had been delivered to the Soviet Union, with 350,000 tons delivered through the Persian Corridor.<sup>853</sup> The Battle of Stalingrad, which lasted from August 1942 until February 1943, was one of the bloodiest conflicts in history. Despite the spotless record and overwhelming power of the German's Sixth Army prior to Stalingrad, the Soviet troops launched a counter-offensive program on November 19, 1942 and succeeded in breaking through German lines. Eventually, the German troops were surrounded by the Red Army. Thus began the Soviets' slow process waiting for the of the German's definitive decline.<sup>854</sup> With this defeat, the German military realised that they were not invincible and it was surely crushing for Hitler's confidence. The overthrow of the Germans troops in the Battle of Stalingrad enabled the following victories for Allied forces in Normandy in 1944 and Ardennes in early 1945, which brought an end to Hitler's dream of 'world domination'.

Before and during the Battle of Stalingrad, the Soviets had a clear policy towards Kurds: maintain security in the region and not encourage the Kurds to obtain any kind of autonomy. As Sir Bullard, British Ambassador in Tehran, suggested to the British Foreign Office:

I believe that it is not correct to say that the Soviet authorities are encouraging an autonomous Kurdish movement. I have even heard of instances where they assisted the Persian Government against the Kurds. For example they are sending some Red Army soldiers to reinforce the Persian gendarmerie at the Miandoab sugar factory, which Kurds are believed to be threatening to loot.<sup>855</sup>

A letter by Molotov, the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs, to Smirnov, the Soviet Ambassador in Tehran, dated August 31, 1942, clearly illustrated the updated policy of the Soviets towards the Kurds. According to this official letter, polarization intensified between

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<sup>853</sup> Kuniholm 1980, 146.

<sup>854</sup> For details about the Battle of the Stalingrad, see Edwin P. Hoyt, *199 Days: The Battle for Stalingrad* (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 1993).

<sup>855</sup> FO 371/27245, 'Persia, File No. 5068', December 8, 1941.

the two ethnic groups, the Kurds and the Azeris. The priority was given to the Azeris and the Kurds were considered unreliable and in the service of the British imperialism. According to Molotov:

On May 13, 1942 we had asked our ambassador and consulates in Iran not to cause obstruction to the Iranian military in the region. Iranian forces should be in control of the Rezaieyh area to protect people and Kurds must respect and listen to the Iranian government. Our consulate and military officers did not correctly understand our goal. Therefore, the Iranian government believes that we offered help to Kurds, which irritated many of our Azeri and Iranian friends. Kurds have rebelled against the Iranian authorities and they looted properties of innocent people. They are a cause of insecurity in Iran and terrorise the Azeri people. We [the Soviets] must prioritize help for the Azeris, as they are the majority in Azerbaijan and ethnographically and historically they have a strong relation with the Soviet Azerbaijan. This does not mean that we turn against the Kurds. We just need to provide more support to Azeris to promote our interests in northern Iran. There is no unity between Kurds. They are divided among backward tribes and in the service of the imperialists [British]. The Soviet Union refuses a sovereign state or autonomy for Kurdistan.<sup>856</sup>

Two factors could easily be identified as reasons behind the adoption of the abovementioned policy by the Soviets: (a) the Soviet Union was busy with a war against Germany in the Battle of Stalingrad, and (b) while this war raged, support by the Allies for the Soviet forces was necessary. That support as forthcoming, as can be seen in the Tripartite Treaty of Alliance, article 3 (section b), which states:

To secure to the Allied Powers, for the passage of troops or supplies from one Allied Powers to the other [...], the unrestricted right to use, maintain, guard and, in case of military necessity, control in any way that they may require all means of communication throughout Iran.<sup>857</sup>

Iran was an important route that had to be secured for the victory of the Allied forces in the Battle of Stalingrad. Accordingly, it was incumbent on the Soviets not to encourage the Kurds

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<sup>856</sup> For the complete letter of Molotov, see Hewrami 2008a, 53-8. Summarized translated from Kurdish into English by the author of this dissertation.

<sup>857</sup> Complete articles of this treaty see appendix II.

towards the fulfilment of any national ambitions but rather to do everything to bring about a peaceful coexistence between the Kurds and the Persian government.

After the distribution of Molotov's letter amongst the high ranking Soviet officers in Iran, Soviet representatives travelled to the areas of the northern Iranian Kurdistan to obtain guarantees from Kurdish leaders for maintaining peace and security in the region. Most tribal chieftains of the northern Iranian Kurdistan obeyed the Soviet policy to preserve security in the region. The organization by Kurdish leaders, who were mostly tribal leaders, of an inclusive political conference was one of the important events at that time. The wedding feast of a son of Gharani Agah, chieftain of Zerza in Ushnawiyeh, in September 1942 was a good occasion to hold a conference. Almost all Kurdish leaders, from Salmas to Saqqiz, were invited to this party.<sup>858</sup> As planned, the meeting took place after the wedding. The participants decided on the following key positions: (1) to remain loyal to the government of Soviet Union and to take no action against this country and their army in Iran and consent to no agreements between Kurds and other powers without support of the Soviet Union, (2) put an end to the plundering and come up with a solution against looters, and (3) to protect the Kurdish unity and abide by the principle of 'everybody for one and one for everybody'. The regional leaders were also elected in this meeting. Emer Khan Shikak was elected as leader of Khoy, Salmas of the region up to the Soviet border (Jalali's tribe), and west and south Urumiyeh was put under the leadership of Gharani Agah Mamash.<sup>859</sup>

The Soviets were not directly involved in the proceedings of this conference. As Maksimov, Soviet consular in Urumiyeh, notes, 'it is not true that we organized and participated in this meeting'.<sup>860</sup> However, they had an indirect role in this meeting. After the completion of the conference, for instance, according to Maksimov, some Kurds, under the leadership of 'Zêro Beg, went to the Soviet consulate in Urumiyeh to convey the results of the conference.'<sup>861</sup> This type of indirect control on the Kurdish activities was an example of the Soviet policy towards the Kurds. At that time, the leaders of the JK Party visited the Soviet representatives several times in Urumiyeh and Tabriz to seek support for their activities, but all of their attempts were met with silence. However, after the Soviet victory at Stalingrad,

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<sup>858</sup> According to Soviet reports, sixteen Kurdish tribal chieftains participated in this conference. For the names of these tribal leaders, see Hewrami 2008a, 72.

<sup>859</sup> Ibid., 71-3.

<sup>860</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>861</sup> Ibid., 73.

the matter of rights of ethnic groups and minorities became a major agenda item in the Soviet foreign policy.

In the period of the Battle of Stalingrad, the traditional conflict between Great Britain and Russia in Iran was less important, and it was more important for the two super powers to cooperate with each other to eliminate their mutual enemy. But as the war progressed, especially after the Allied victory in the Battle of Stalingrad, the historical conflict between Great Britain and Russia in Iran surged forth once again. Kuniholm wrote that their cooperation in Iran became less important. As the war moved west across the steppes of the Soviet Union, it became increasingly apparent that Allied actions in Iran were not in accordance with the terms of the Tripartite Treaty.<sup>862</sup> In this period, the British, and more so the Soviets, looked after their own interests and showed less respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence that Iran had been promised in the Tripartite Treaty. After the Battle of Stalingrad, Soviet policy was aimed at achieving its political and economic goals by helping ethnic groups to fight against the incumbent Iranian government. The concept of the 'right of nations to self-determination' marked the foreign policy of the Soviets and led to the strengthening of the identities of the ethnic groups under the slogan 'liberty for the Kurds and the Azeris from the oppression of the Persians.' Pressuring the Iranian Government to obtain economic compromises was high on the political agenda of Soviet Union.

After the triumph of Stalingrad, the Soviet position in world politics was strengthened. International influence and credibility of the Soviet military and policy was noted. And these were strengthened for furthering their economic and political interests, which included support for many governments and movements in the world political arena.<sup>863</sup> With regard to the Kurds in Iran, the Soviets had no long-term political plan. Gerald Dooher noted that the only option remaining for the Kurds was to join the movement that the Soviets had established in the form of a protégé Kurdish government under leadership of Ghazi Mohammad.<sup>864</sup> The Soviet support for the Kurds was limited and by no means was meant to give a green-light for the establishment of a Kurdish state or autonomy. To this day, no

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<sup>862</sup> Kuniholm 1980, 147-8.

<sup>863</sup> For the influence of the triumph of the Battle of Stalingrad on the Soviet policy, see Alexander Werth, *The year of Stalingrad: An Historical record and a Study of Russian Mentality, Methods and Policies* (New York : Knopf, 1947).

<sup>864</sup> *Goft-o-gu*, No. 53, 135. Borzowi 1999, and many Iranian researchers argue that the proclamation of the Republic of Mahabad was based on a green-light surreptitiously provided by the Soviets.

official Soviet document has surfaced to give evidence to any plans by the Soviets to establish an independent Kurdish state in Iran. When the Republic of Kurdistan was proclaimed, the Soviet representatives in Tabriz received the news with discomfort and disapproval. According to Eagleton, two prominent KDP leaders visited Dr. Samadov at the Russian Hospital in Tabriz to explain why the Kurds had proclaimed their independence and formed a government without first having obtained Soviet approval.<sup>865</sup>

The short-term political plan of the Soviets for support of the Kurds, which was mainly operative between 1944 and 1946, had the following goals: to prevent Iranian military offensive on the free-zone Kurdish area, form a Kurdish-Soviet Cultural Society, supply weapons to the Republic of Kurdistan, etc. In connection with this, Baqirov's opinion was relevant to the claim that the Soviet policy towards Kurds was not to establish a Kurdish state. Baqirov stated that the Soviet representatives in Iranian Kurdistan once again warned Ghazi Mohammad that 'he must keep to the instructions, which had been given to him before, and that he must not undertake any actions against Iranian troops.'<sup>866</sup> These short-term collaborations were meant to prevent the Iranian central government from reaching key economical goals, with an especial Soviet eye especially being on the creation of a lucrative northern Iranian oil treaty. By the end of 1944, the Soviets were disappointed when Iranian government refused to grant that oil concession. This was the reason for the first major conflict on Iranian oil between the Great Powers, which formed the basis of the Iranian crisis of 1945-46.

The United States' increased cooperation with Britain in Iranian affairs added a new and important dimension to the Iranian crisis of 1945-46. As the end of the Second World War gradually drew nearer, the influence of Britain diminished in the Middle East, particularly in Iran. The US took a dominant position as a third force to counterbalance the two major powers. The US concerned itself, especially after 1944, with Iranian issues but still cooperated with Britain to form a strong united front against the Soviet Union. However, an important test of Anglo-America cooperation was the enforcement of the fifth article of the Tripartite Treaty. The cornerstone of this article was that Allied forces would be withdrawn from Iranian territory no more than six months after an armistice or peace between the Allied

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<sup>865</sup> Eagleton 1963, 74.

<sup>866</sup> Natalia I. Yegorova, 'The "Iran Crisis" of 1945-46: A View from the Russian Archives', *Institute of Universal History Russian Academy of Sciences* (Working Paper No. 15, Washington: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, May 1996), 13.

Powers, Germany and her associates, whichever came first. This principle was an important point for the conflict between the Soviet Union and Anglo-America in Iran because withdrawal proved to be problematic for the Great Powers. The Soviet Union, in particular, showed every intention of establishing itself permanently in Iran. The issue of the withdrawal of Allied military forces from Iran and the Iranian crisis, which planted the seeds of the Cold War in Iran, are two essential aspects that will be described in following section.

### **3.3. Anglo-American policy towards Kurds in Iran**

The political and economic influence of the British government on the Middle East dates back much further than that of the United States, which had only become an international Power since World War I. The following were four significant elements of British foreign policy in the nineteenth century: (1) to protect the route to India, (2) to safeguard the communication lines between the metropolis and their empire, (3) to promote their trade, and (4) to guarantee respect for a minimum of humanitarian standards. These were important reasons for the defence of the independence and integrity of both the Ottoman and the Persian Empires against the threats of Tsarist Russia.<sup>867</sup> This policy continued after the First World War when the new states, which were formed by the dismantling of the two Empires, continued to oppose the new Soviet regime. Anglo-American policy supported the Iranian central government, especially when Britain maintained security in the oil fields in the south and south western regions of Iran. In contrast, the Soviets encouraged regionalist movements against the Iranian central regime to pressure the Iranian government into possible oil concessions. According to Mo'tazed, from the beginning of 1921 two obstacles were faced by the Iranian government to liberate themselves from the influence of outsiders. The first had to do with attempts of Soviet government to establish a secessionist communist regime in the Gilan province and the second was related to the British government. The monopoly on oil exploration concessions was maintained by the Anglo-Persian Oil Company<sup>868</sup> and due to the presence of oil fields, Iran was strategically an important country in the Middle East.

Since the discovery of oil fields in southern Iran in the early twentieth century, the major powers' aspirations in Iran heightened even further. As a result of Britain's special role in the oil industry, British influence in Iran was even greater than the considerable Russian influence. Oil was a factor in Anglo-Iranian relations from as early as 1901, when Iran

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<sup>867</sup> Lenczowski 1962, 653.

<sup>868</sup> Mo'tazed 2001, 175.



granted a concession to the Australian William D'Arcy. The shares of D'Arcy were sold to the British in 1908 and in 1909 and the Anglo-Persian (later Anglo-Iranian) Oil Company was founded. Indeed, diplomatic conflict between Britain and Persia was exacerbated because of this sale of shares from D'Arcy to the British government. In 1931, the Iranian government was highly dissatisfied due to the lower rates of profit it was receiving. In 1932 the Persian parliament declared the Convention of 1901 invalid. The British government answered this move with an ultimatum. Britain then brought the matter to the League of Nations in Geneva. Negotiations resumed in Tehran through the agency of the League of Nations, but they did not lead to any results.<sup>869</sup>

In the beginning of the twentieth century, especially in the period between the First and Second World Wars, Britain and the Soviet Union were actively trying to spread their influence in the Middle East. While the impact of the Great Powers was present after the First World War throughout the Middle East, the role of the US in Iran rose to that of an important power in the Second World War. Lenczowski divided the US relations with the Middle East into three distinct periods: (1) until 1941, (2) during the war period from 1941-45, and (3) after 1945.<sup>870</sup> The first phase included the beginnings of the American Protestant missionaries paying serious attention to the Middle East, particularly in the nineteenth century. For example, they established the American University in Beirut (as Syrian Protestant College in 1866), American University at Cairo, secondary schools, known as 'colleges' in Tehran and Baghdad. This thesis deals with the second phase of US foreign policy towards Iran in the Second World War. Because the influence of the Allied Powers in Iran increased between the two World Wars, the Shah of Iran sought a third power as a competitor to other Great Powers. Mohammad Reza Shah, Reza Shah's son and successor from 1941-79, formed a relationship with the US. This gave the US, after the weakening of Britain, a free hand in its struggles as the new Great Power against the Soviets.

After the Anglo-Soviet occupation of Iran, the Iranian government invited the American advisers to organise its disordered public and government finances. US civilian and military personnel assumed influential positions as advisers to the Iranian government and began to direct reforms in such key areas as financial administration, domestic security, and

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<sup>869</sup> Bahman Nirumand, *Persien, Modell eines Entwicklungslandes*, tra. To NL by Marre Dubbink, *Perzië, voorbeeld van een ontwikkelingsland* [Persia, an example of developing country], (Amsterdam: Kritiese Bibliotheek, 1969), 31-43.

<sup>870</sup> Lenczowski 1962, 669.

military organisation.<sup>871</sup> In the period of the Battle of Stalingrad, the American military arrived in the Persian Gulf as the Persian Gulf Command (PGC). Suddenly after the Battle of Stalingrad, according to K.S. Lambton, the British handed over the administration of the Iranian railway to American personnel, who were able to further increase quantity of carriage supplies.<sup>872</sup> An important American military base was stationed in the Persian Gulf from where the US troops patrolled and guarded not only the oil fields in Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, but also observed the Soviet expansion in the Middle East. Offner explained that the US sent two noncombat military missions of 5,000 men to advise Iran's army and the police.<sup>873</sup> The majority of the US Army that arrived in the Persian Gulf came between 1942 and 1943 and according to Lenczowski, it was composed of about 30,000 troops of non-combatant character.<sup>874</sup> The main purpose of these troops was to speed up the transportation of supplies to Russia and for the construction of military bases. Lenczowski points out that the US non-combatant troops were in charge of building and reorganizing the harbours on the Persian Gulf coast and Shatt-al-Arab, construction and reparation of highways, building of airports, and operation of the Trans-Iranian Railway.<sup>875</sup>

The first major conflict of Great Powers in Iran was in the period of the last quarter of the year 1944. This was termed the Iranian oil crisis and it formed the basis of the origins of the Cold War in the region. The Cold War (1945-1991) was the continuation of the political conflict between Western World states, with one side under the leadership of the United States, and the other being the Communist World, which was under the leadership of the Soviet Union. This political conflict was evident across various international domains, such as military tension, economic competition and domination in world politics. Although the military forces never officially clashed between the two blocs, they manifested the conflict through military coalitions, strategic conventional force deployments, extensive aid to states deemed vulnerable, propaganda dissemination and espionage.<sup>876</sup> With regard to the

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<sup>871</sup> Cleveland 2002, 188.

<sup>872</sup> K.S. Lambton, 'Some of the Problems Facing Persia', *International Affairs* (Vol. 22, No. 22, Mar., 1946), 255.

<sup>873</sup> Arnold A. Offner, *Another Such Victory: President Truman and the Cold War, 1945-1953* (Stanford/California: Stanford University Press, 2002), 113.

<sup>874</sup> Lenczowski 1949, 273.

<sup>875</sup> Ibid.

<sup>876</sup> For US and their Alliances against the Soviets and their states' satellites in the period of the origins of the Cold War in Europe, see John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War: 1941-1947*

intelligence operation of Soviet Union towards the capitalist bloc, Vasili Nikitich Mitrokhin divided the Cold War into three distinct phases. The first phase was of the Soviet intelligence operations in Britain from the 1930s until 1951. This period was popular as the *Golden Age*, during which the *Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Bezopastnosti* (KGB, the Soviet security and intelligence service) collected better intelligence than any other power. The second phase during the 1950s and 1960s was aptly called the *Silver Age*, during which substantial intelligence successes were still maintained. The third phase was from the 1970s until the 1980s and was known as the *Bronze Age*, marked by few major successes and, eventually, the fall of the Soviet Union.<sup>877</sup>

According to Paul Kennedy, there were four main political features of the Cold War after 1945. The first was the intensification of the split between the two blocs in Europe. The second was its steady lateral escalation and spread from Europe to the rest of the world. The third was the increasing arms race between the two blocs, along with the creation of supportive military alliances. The final element was the competition to find and create new partnership across the globe by both the Soviet and the Western alliances.<sup>878</sup> These four elements greatly affected international relations.

The region comprising the countries of Iran, Turkey and Afghanistan in the Middle East and its strategic location on the borders of the Soviet Union, made it an area of high interest for the United States defence planners and their allies during the Cold War. The second feature of the Cold War, as suggested by Kennedy, can be clearly seen during the period of the Iranian oil crisis in 1944 and also during the period of 1945-46. The conflicts of interest between the Anglo-American and Soviets became heated during this period. In one document, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) stated:

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(New York: Colombia University Press, 1972); for origins of the Cold War in the Middle East, see Kuniholm 1980; for the origins of the Cold War in Iran, see Estrange L. Fawcett, *Iran and the Cold War: The Azerbaijan Crisis of 1946* (Cambridge Middle East Library, Hardcover, 1992).

<sup>877</sup> Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin Archive: The KGB in Europe and the West* (Penguin Books Press, 2000), 518. Mitrokhin was a Soviet leader in the service of the KGB and this book is based on unprecedented and unrestricted access to the foreign intelligence arm of the KGB called the First Chief Directorate (FCD), one of the world's most secret and closely guarded archives.

<sup>878</sup> Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (London: Fontana Press, 1989), 482-509.

The Soviet Union views Iran not only as a possible base to attack the vital Caucus oil fields of the Russians, but also a Soviet base for political penetration and possible military operations against areas of vital importance to the security of the Western Powers.<sup>879</sup>

Through this document the CIA tried to understand the motive behind of Soviet troops in Iran and advised the US government to take action. As the CIA stated in the following paragraph:

If the USSR occupied or dominated Iran, it would: (a) gain control of the oil resources now exploited by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company; (b) threaten the oil fields in nearby Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain; (c) acquire additional bases for carrying on subversive activities or actual attacks against Turkey, Iraq, Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan; (d) control continental air routes to Iran, threaten those crossing Turkey, Iraq, the Arabian Peninsula, and the Persian Gulf, and menace shipping in the Persian Gulf; (e) undermine the will of all Middle Eastern countries to resist aggression; and (f) acquire a base 800 miles nearer than any held at present to potential British-US lines of defence in Africa and the Indian Ocean area.<sup>880</sup>

The rivalry between Anglo-Soviets guided the United States' growing interest in Iran. One of the important ideological figures of America's anti-imperialist mission was General Patrick J. Hurley.<sup>881</sup> Because of the conflict of interest that the British and Soviets had in Iran, he advised President Roosevelt to take action. For the monopoly over their oil resources, the British tried to stay in Iran while the Soviets wanted warm-water ports and northern oil concessions. Kuniholm, who viewed this conflict in terms of Britain's declining influence in the Middle East, suggested that the United States either play a strong independent role in Iran or coordinate its efforts with those of the British, but under American leadership.<sup>882</sup> General Donald Connolly explained that the State Department saw two US interests in Iran: the need to protect the Gulf in order to safeguard the oil fields in Saudi Arabia, and the desire to protect small nations' rights through the Atlantic Charter.<sup>883</sup> The Soviets, however, showed

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<sup>879</sup> CIA historical review program release in full, 'the Current Situation in Iran', (ORE 48, No. 3, 20 October 1947). [http://www.foia.cia.gov/browse\\_docs.asp?doc\\_no=0000256620](http://www.foia.cia.gov/browse_docs.asp?doc_no=0000256620)

<sup>880</sup> Ibid.

<sup>881</sup> Roosevelt's special emissary to Stalin in the winter of 1942. He was the first Allied representative to go to Stalingrad.

<sup>882</sup> Kuniholm 1980, 149.

<sup>883</sup> Cited in Barry Rubin, *The Great Powers in the Middle East 1941-1947: The Road to the Cold War* (London: Frank Cass, 1980), 87.

every intention of establishing themselves permanently in Iran. The Soviets had two strategies to attain this goal. First, they placed their men within the leadership of the Tudeh Party. Secondly, they encouraged both Kurdish and Azerbaijan governments, with the idea of separating the northern provinces from Iran and weakening the central government enough to place it at the mercy of the Tudeh Party.<sup>884</sup>

The existence of the Great Powers in Iran during the oil crisis in 1944, especially during the Iranian crisis of 1945-46, exacerbated not only the Iranian political, economic and social movements, but it also led to a conflict of interest between the Great Powers. As Fred Lawson explained:

From Washington's perspective, an American presence in Iran could provide a vital buffer zone between the USSR and the oil-producing regions along the southern Gulf littoral; from London's, continued control over Iranian oil and the air route to India represented primary components of British post-war planning; and from Moscow's, US attempts to promote 'open door' policies in the [Persian] Gulf provided little more than window-dressing for American imperialism and demanded firm countermeasures to prevent the spread of US hegemony into areas bordering the southern republics of the USSR.<sup>885</sup>

The Iranian crisis in 1945-46 probably began in the period of the Iranian oil crisis in 1944. On August 16, 1946, Lavrenty Beria, Deputy Chairman of the Council of the People's Soviet Commissars and a key figure behind the Kremlin's designs to obtain an oil concession in northern Iran, signed a report on the issue of the Anglo-American policy towards Iranian oil reserves and production. The report specifically referred to Anglo-American contradictions in the struggle for the northern Iranian oil fields.<sup>886</sup> In September 1944, an agreement between Anglo-Iran and Standard Oil was signed for joint exploration in Iran, which led the Soviets to take further steps. They made an official request for the creation of a mixed Soviet and Iranian company to look for and eventually exploit deposits in the northern region of the country. Two weeks later, the Soviet Vice Commissar of Foreign Affairs, Sergei Ivanovich

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<sup>884</sup> Andre Fontaine, *History of the Cold War: From the October Revolution to the Korean War, 1917-1950*, tra. From the French by D.D. Page, (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), 281-82.

<sup>885</sup> Fred H. Lawson. 'The Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946 and the Spiral Model of International Conflict', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, (Vol. 21, No. 3, Aug., 1989), 307.

<sup>886</sup> Yegorova 1996, 3.

Kavtaradze, asked the Shah for oil exploration rights in an area of northern Iran.<sup>887</sup> Such a proposal could only alarm the western oil companies and the Shah decided it was necessary to consider the proposal of Kavtaradze with the advice of the American and British. When the Iranian Prime Minister Sa'id asked the American oil expert Herbert Hoover for a model petroleum contract with the Soviet Union, he saw no objection to such a concession.<sup>888</sup> But in reality the US Oil Companies began to pressure the Iranian government for oil concessions for the US. Britain had little difficulty in persuading the authorities in Iran to refuse the request of Soviet. The Iranians had gained enough experience with the Russians to know that such a pact would mean a complete Soviet takeover of the oil region. Therefore, Iran was in no rush for an oil concession with the Soviets. Kavtaradze returned to Moscow disheartened and empty handed. This situation around the issue of granting oil concessions revealed a new tendency in Iranian foreign policy and illustrated the conflict of interests between the Great Powers in Iran.

Thus on the December 2, the parliament almost unanimously passed a law forbidding the granting of a concession to a foreign country for the duration of the occupation without a prior agreement. The author of the law was Dr. Mohammad Mossadeq, who a few years later would become famous as the head of the Iranian government that nationalised the Iranian oil fields. This law surprised everyone and especially angered the Soviets.<sup>889</sup> After the Iranian decision to terminate all negotiations over oil concessions with the Soviets, the Russians went against the Iranian government in three ways. First, Soviet soldiers stopped all commercial rail shipments northward from Tehran and all grain shipments to Tehran from the north.<sup>890</sup> Second, through the Tudeh party, which was an important instrument of the Soviet policy in Iran, according to Kuniholm, the Soviets kept pressuring the Iranian government for the possibility of an oil concession.<sup>891</sup> The supporters of the Tudeh Party organized demonstrations against the central government in almost every major Iranian city and also took over factories in Tehran, Isfahan and other major cities.<sup>892</sup> And in northern Iranian

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<sup>887</sup> Kuniholm 1980, 195.

<sup>888</sup> Ibid.

<sup>889</sup> For the details of the law Mossadeq's submitted to the Majlis, see Lambton K.S., 'Some of the Problems Facing Persia', 1946, 264.

<sup>890</sup> Rubin 1980, 97.

<sup>891</sup> Kuniholm 1980, 154.

<sup>892</sup> Fred H. Lawson, 'The Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946 and the Spiral Model of International Conflict', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (Vol. 21, No. 3 (Aug., 1989), 315.

Kurdistan, the JK party proclaimed an official declaration for granting the northern Iranian oil concession to the Soviet Union.<sup>893</sup> The third way was fracturing Iranian territorial integrity, and this was realized with the formation of the Azerbaijan government in 1945 and the Republic of Kurdistan in January 22, 1946.

Gradually the US became concerned with these events. Charles Bohlen, Chief of the State Department's Division of East European Affairs, warned that it was necessary to pay 'close attention' to Soviet-Iranian relations in the north.<sup>894</sup> Kuniholm asserted the US had no intentions of using force to maintain Iranian independence, the real question was whether the United States intended to back the Atlantic Charter in more than just theory.<sup>895</sup> Roosevelt still respected the principles of the Atlantic Charter and the Allied Powers respected the Iranian territorial integrity and political independence. Further, the Charter increased the protection of America's interests in Iran. Because of these interests in Iran, particularly in the Persian Gulf, some diplomats, including George Kennan, US Ambassador in Moscow, and Secretary of State Edward Stettinius, asked Roosevelt to take a harder line with the Soviets. When Harry Truman became the American president, after the death of President Roosevelt in April 1945, he took an increasingly harder stance against the Soviets all around the globe. Under Truman's direction the State Department began to pursue a more active policy regarding Iran.<sup>896</sup>

Step-by-step the period of the Iranian oil crisis ended and the Iranian crisis of 1945-46 began and led to the intensification of the diplomatic conflict between the Anglo-Americans and the Soviets. By the beginning of 1945, the Soviet intervention in the north of Iran was increased to protect its allied ethnic groups. For example, the Red Army blocked Iranian army operations against Kurdish dissidents, supported the other ethnic minority groups such as the Azeris, Armenians and the Orthodox Church increased their political influence. Soviet pressure on the Iranian government to grant oil concessions was heightened in 1945, when the Politbureau of the Central Communist of Soviet Communist Party ordered Baqirov to take further steps towards building an autonomous government in Iranian Azerbaijan. The formal document focussed mostly on the Azerbaijan issue, with only one of the thirteen points related to the issue of northern Iranian Kurdistan, and the essence of the document was to:

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<sup>893</sup> For the JK declaration, see Hewrami 2008a, 114-6.

<sup>894</sup> Ibid.; Kuniholm 1980, 197.

<sup>895</sup> Kuniholm 1980, 199.

<sup>896</sup> For a discussion on Truman and his relation to the Cold War from 1945-53, see Offner 2002.

Take necessary action that the inhabitants of the northern Iranian Kurdish region be adscribed into an autonomy movement that would lead to the establishment of a Kurdish national autonomous state.<sup>897</sup>

The aim of the Soviets was not to establish a Kurdish state, but was to use the threat as a leverage to obtain its economic ambitions, such as winning an oil concession, in Iran. The Soviets saw the solution of the northern Iranian Kurdish question within that of the larger issues pertaining to the breakaway Azerbaijan government, and Baqirov especially claimed this to be the main purpose. Actually, this was a short-term political plan, which became evident when the Soviets agreed with Ghavam on a possible oil agreement and the Azeris/Kurdish question was then pushed to the background. The withdrawal of the Allied military from Iran, which was an important element of the Iranian crisis of 1945-46, should be thoroughly discussed and for this it is necessary to refer to some important issues from the Yalta (February 4 to 11, 1945), Potsdam (July 17 to August 2, 1945), London (September 1945) and Moscow (December 16 to 26, 1945) Conferences, which were treated the policies of the Great Powers towards Iran.

The increasing intensity of the political interests of the Allied Powers became manifest after the end of World War II on May 1945, resulting in increasing enthusiasm for Iranian political, economic and social movements. The Iranian population was being split between pro-British, pro-American and pro-Soviet groups. The Soviets were supporting the leftist, socialist and working-class elements of the population, and the British were supporting the conservative and landowning elements.<sup>898</sup> The US government tried utmost to maintain the central government in Iran. This political polarisation not only brought Iran into a crisis, but it was also an important factor in the origins of the Cold War. Truman, Churchill, and Clement Attlee, during the Potsdam Conference, had not only sanctioned against the Soviet domination of Poland, but the question of the removal of foreign troops from Iran became more urgent. Before the Potsdam Conference and shortly after the end of World War II, the Iranian king Mohammad Reza Shah requested that the British and Soviet governments evacuate their troops. The Iranian government reminded the Allied Powers of the Tripartite Treaty of 1942,

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<sup>897</sup> Monidjeh Sadr and Rahim Nikbakht, *Peydayesh Firqiyih Dimocrate Azerbaijan: Be Riwayat Asnad ve Khatirat Montashir Nashodih* [the rise of the Azerbaijan Democratic Party: according to unpublished documents and memoirs], (Tehran: Nazar Publishers, 1981), 224.

<sup>898</sup> Rubin 1980, 163.



which promised the Iranian government that the Allied forces would withdraw their troops within six months of the ending of the war.

At the Yalta Conference, the Allied Powers had agreed to meet following the surrender of Nazi-Germany to determine the post-war borders in Europe. Germany surrendered on May 8, 1945, and the Allied Powers agreed to meet over the summer at Potsdam to continue the discussions that began at Yalta. Although the Allies remained committed to fighting a joint war in the Pacific, the lack of a common enemy in Europe led to difficulties reaching a consensus concerning post-war reconstruction on the European continent. The Iranian government was just as disappointed with the results of Potsdam Conference as of the Yalta Conference. The Iranians thought that the option to withdraw the foreign troops from Iran was on the agenda at the Yalta Conference, but this did not come up for discussion. This was however the most important subject at the Potsdam Conference. American troops were already being withdrawn and the US Persian Gulf Command terminated its mission on June 23, 1945.<sup>899</sup> At Potsdam, the British urged the Soviets to agree to an accelerated timetable for mutual withdrawal of the troops from Iran. Truman supported the British proposal and said that he expected US troops to leave Iran within sixty days.<sup>900</sup>

Stalin did not show any interest in this subject. He believed that World War II was not over in May 1945, as it still continued against Japan. Stalin claimed that the Allied troops should be withdrawn from Iran after the war against Japan ended, but he promised the Iranian government that he would withdraw his troops from Tehran. After the Anglo-Americans pressed for a stronger commitment from the Soviet leader, Stalin agreed that the foreign powers had six months to withdraw their troops after the end of the war with Japan. Evacuation of the troops from the capital of Iran was clearly agreed on at the Potsdam Conference, but a withdrawal of the Allied Powers' troops from the whole country was due to be discussed further at the foreign ministers meeting in the London Conference.

After the termination of the Second World War, the Iranian government tried everything to ensure that the Allies would withdraw their troops from Iran. Iran saw the presence of foreign troops, particularly that of the Soviets, as a danger to their sovereignty. Meanwhile, on September 6, four days after Japan's surrender, Anushiravan Sipahbodi, Iran's Foreign Minister, made a formal statement to the effect that Iran was responsible for its own internal security and was being prevented from accomplishing this task. He stressed that the

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<sup>899</sup> Ibid., 164.

<sup>900</sup> Offner 2002, 113.

end of the war had removed the need for special authorisation to assume this responsibility and evacuation within six months was now certain.<sup>901</sup> The Iranian government asked the American government if Iran could be represented at the London Conference. At the London meeting the Americans quickly agreed that all foreign troops would be evacuated by March 2, 1946 at the latest, but one may well wonder if Molotov had any intention of honouring that agreement. Between the time of the London and Moscow Conferences, the Soviets in northern Iran were actively helping some ethnic groups struggle against the central government of Iran. Lawson claimed that the Soviet activities in the north of Iran were followed as:

On the one hand, Soviet actions in northern Iran have generally been seen as part of a larger program of expansionism. [Russian] support for the autonomous government in northern Iran in the face of stiff American opposition, expressed in the firm US demands that the United Nations censure the USSR for its policies in the region. On the other hand, Soviet actions in Iran's northern provinces in 1945-1946 can also be viewed as a reaction to American initiatives throughout the Middle East in general, and along the southern [Persian] Gulf littoral in particular.<sup>902</sup>

The Moscow Conference coincided with Iran's attempts to solve its two major problems with the Soviet Union: the events in Azerbaijan and northern Iranian Kurdistan, and the determination on part of the Soviets not to withdraw their military and thereby strengthen their position in Iran. Approximately one week before the Moscow Conference, the Iranian Ambassador to the United States, Hussein 'Ala, sent a message to the US, which recommended that the questions related to Iran be on the agenda at the Moscow Conference.<sup>903</sup> The Iranian question was an essential topic at the Moscow Conference in the following two regards: the withdrawal of Allied forces from Iranian territory and the formation of Provincial Councils in Iran. Anglo-American representatives, Bevin and Harriman, discussed with Stalin on December 19, 1945, the possible withdrawal of military forces from Iran. Stalin's reaction included the following concerns:

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<sup>901</sup> Kuniholm 1980, 275.

<sup>902</sup> Lawson, 'The Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946', 321.

<sup>903</sup> Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *Iran's Foreign Policy 1941-1973: A Study of Foreign Policy in Modernizing Nations* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1975), 124.

The first concern was about the hostility of the Iranian government towards the Soviets. Second, this hostility caused sabotage of the Baku oil fields. Third, the Soviet-Persian Treaty of Friendship of 1921 should be honoured, especially article 6. Fourth, the Soviets would later consider whether it would withdraw their troops under the Tripartite Treaty or keep them there under the 1921 treaty. Fifth, Soviet military was not interfering in Azerbaijan. Sixth, the Iranian government was trying to stir up trouble between Russia and the Anglo-Saxon powers.<sup>904</sup>

The first issue was discussed without a formal conclusion and it was decided to continue the topic of the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Iran at the informal level during the subsequent sessions.<sup>905</sup> But the Anglo-American-Soviet representatives established a commission to further investigate the Iranian issues, amongst which the withdrawal of the Allied troops from Iran was the first of eleven points being on the commission's agenda.<sup>906</sup>

The establishment of Provincial Councils was also an important issue at the Moscow Conference. Article 4, 6 and 11 of the commission's agenda referred to this issue and it also formed a significant focus of the Allied Commission in Iran. According to article 4:

The commission should try to bring a solution to the problems between the central government and the regions with which it has a problem. [The commission] should help the Iranian government for the establishment of Provincial Councils based on Iranian constitutional law.<sup>907</sup>

Article 11 states that, 'the first provincial election must be under observation of the commission.'<sup>908</sup> The commission of the Allied forces in Iran also investigated and supported the issue of the linguistic rights of the ethnic minorities in Iran, which was the third factor that was discussed at the Moscow Conference. Educational-linguistic rights for ethnic minorities in Iran were accepted by the Allied Commission in article 7, which stated that the 'ethnic minorities, including Arabs, Turks and Kurds, must be able to use their language for education and other purposes.'<sup>909</sup> But, to what extent was this commission successful?

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<sup>904</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>905</sup> Yegorova 1996, 15.

<sup>906</sup> For these eleven points of the commission, see Hewrami 2008a, 290-91.

<sup>907</sup> Ibid., 290.

<sup>908</sup> Ibid., 291.

<sup>909</sup> Hewrami 2008a, 291.

On the one hand, it was unsuccessful because the Soviets were not interested in this commission. According to Molotov, Anglo-Americans formed the commission illegitimately without the presence of the Iranian government, and so it could not do anything.<sup>910</sup> The Soviets, however, had not yet achieved any northern Iranian oil concessions and were concerned with the Anglo-American presence in Iran and the Persian Gulf. Therefore, in the last quarter of 1945 and the first quarter of 1946, the Soviet Union tried to strengthen its presence in northern Iran to maintain the buffer zone as protection against attacks from the south. Fearing expansion from the south, Soviets saw the presence of the American military in the Persian Gulf as a threat, which might have been one of the leading causes for the Soviets' attempt to retain its troops in northern Iran. Thus by helping two governments, Azerbaijan and Kurdish, the Soviets were intent on strengthening its position in northern Iran.<sup>911</sup> Another reason that the Allied Commission's proposal was unsuccessful was because the Iranian parliament eventually refused it. An important Iranian politician in the Majlis was Muhammad Mossadeq, who rejected the proposal of the commission, and ultimately Hakimi, the Prime Minister, also refused the proposal of the Allied Commission towards Iran.<sup>912</sup>

The final element of Paul Kennedy's features of the Cold War after 1945 was the competition to find new partners after the the Second World War. The Soviet recognition of Syria and Lebanon, the promotion of the Communist parties in Iraq and Syria, support for the Armenians, Iranian Azeris, Tudeh Party and the Kurds of Iraq and Iran, were examples of the active Soviet policy towards the Middle East, particularly in Iran. According to Rubin, the success of these Soviet activities would largely depend on how well Great Britain would be able to maintain its traditional position in the Middle East, particularly in Iran, and how much the US would undertake to support Britain.<sup>913</sup> From 1946 there is an indication that the US and England began to cooperate for their own interests, namely by blocking the expansion of the Soviets to the south and protecting the oil fields in the region of the Persian Gulf. Their cooperation not only strengthened the hand of the Anglo-Americans, but it also strengthened the political position of the Iranian government against the Soviet Union with regard to withdrawing their troops from Iran.

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<sup>910</sup> Ibid., 297; Yegorova 1996, 16.

<sup>911</sup> For more on the Great Powers' conflict on Iranian crisis, see Louise L Estrange Fawcett, *Iran and the Cold War: The Azerbaijan Crisis of 1946* (Cambridge Middle East Library, Hardcover, 1992).

<sup>912</sup> Ramazani 1975, 125-6.

<sup>913</sup> Rubin 1980, 158.

After Stalin's hard hitting and critical election speech on February 9, 1946 against capitalism<sup>914</sup>, Churchill visited Truman to work together against the Soviet expansion around the world.<sup>915</sup> Approximately two weeks after Stalin's election speech, George Kennan, US Ambassador in Moscow and an important ideological figure of America's anti-communist mission, sent a long telegram to the State Department. It was concerning the Soviets' behaviour and it advised the Truman administration to take a hard line against the Soviet Union. Kennan alerted the 'congressional committees to the dangers of the Communist conspiracy.'<sup>916</sup> Kuniholm concluded that:

The Truman administration eventually came to the conclusion that bilateral diplomacy between the Soviet Union and Iran was not a desirable method of solving the Iranian question. Even when sanctioned by the United Nations, bilateral diplomacy created too many opportunities for coercion. Such a course made it difficult to uphold the principles of the United Nations and threatened the security interests of the United States.<sup>917</sup>

Via the United Nations, the Iranian government together with the US and British governments pressured the Soviet Union to withdraw their troops from Iran. Eventually on March 22, 1946, Stalin released a statement to an American press agency expressing his faith in the UN. On March 26, his ambassador to Tehran informed Ghavam that Russian troops would evacuate the whole country by May 9 if he would agree to a joint oil company, with 51 percent of the stakes for the Soviet Union and 49 percent for Iran, and if he would reach an understanding with the leaders of Azerbaijan. The Prime Minister gave his consent with the one condition that it would have to be ratified by a parliament that was to be elected within seven months following the end of foreign occupation.<sup>918</sup> After withdrawal of the Soviet troops from northern Iran, the Iranian government dissolved the two autonomous governments of Azerbaijan and Kurdistan. The Iranian parliament that was elected in July 1947 promptly

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<sup>914</sup> Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 'Stalin's election speech, February 1946', (Cold War Files Documents, February 1946). See WWICS website:

<http://www.wilsoncenter.org/coldwarfiles/index.cfm?thisunit=0&fuseaction=documents.list>

<sup>915</sup> Ibid., 'Churchill's Iron Curtain Speech, March 1946'.

<sup>916</sup> George F. Kennan, *Memoirs: 1925-1950* (US: Bantam Book, 1967), 309. For Kennan's long telegram to the US State Department, see *ibid.*, 285-313.

<sup>917</sup> Kuniholm 1980, 303.

<sup>918</sup> Fontaine 1968, 284.

refused to ratify the oil pact with Soviet. The Soviets, who had been roundly beaten, did not even attempt to intervene because Truman's administration took a hard line against them. On March 12, 1947, Truman issued, according to Abdulreza Hoshang Mahdawi, an important declaration against the expansion of communism in the international arena and called for the protection the small nations, such as Turkey and Greece, against the dangers of communism. This policy of the Truman administration played a significant role during the period of the Cold War and built a strong defensive dam against the communism expansion worldwide.<sup>919</sup>

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<sup>919</sup> Abdulreza Hoshang Mahdawi, *Tarikhe Rawabte Kharji Iran: Az Abtedaye Safaviyah ta Payan Jange Dowome Jahani* [history of foreign relation of Iran: from the beginning of Safawid until the end of the Second World War], (Tehran: Amir Kabir Publishers, 2007), 437.

## CHAPTER VI. FINAL CONCLUSION

The sociological nationalist discourse in the case of the Kurdish nationalist movements of the twentieth century did not transform the broad outline of the Kurdish question. It did not enable the Kurdish nationalist movement to integrate all of its ethno-religious (Sunnis, Shi'ites, Yezidis, etc.) and ethno-linguistic (Kurmanji, Sorani, Zazaki, Hewrami, etc.) groups or form a unitary community across state borders.<sup>920</sup> Before World War I, cultural and religious aspects were the most important components of Kurdish identity and the precise boundaries of Kurdistan were not a subjective issue. But this drastically changed after the First World War when the new modern nation-states were established throughout the Middle East. These new polities particularly Turkey, Iran and Iraq, had influenced the Kurdish nationalist movements to look forward to their own self-rule government in two ways. First, the modern nation-state was formed according to the identity of the dominant group and this inspired the Kurds, particularly the nationalists, to locate a Kurdish political identity to be realized through their own nation-state or autonomy. Second, integration and assimilation within the dominant group and more importantly, denial of the Kurdish identity, was a significant policy of these new modern nation-states in the Middle East. Therefore, the Kurds struggled to protect their own identity and eventually this struggle organized a political party which rooted itself within the Kurdish society. Abbas Vali rightly argued that 'Kurdish national identity is unmistakably modern.'<sup>921</sup>

During the World War I, Kurdistan was a battlefield and with the formation of the new states in place of the Ottoman Empire, one might well have expected that the Qajars would also disintegrate into a number of smaller states. But, the Iranian government's territorial integrity and sovereignty was unharmed, especially when Reza Shah came to power and built a centralist and strong modern state. The main factor behind the social mobilization of the Kurds after 1941 lay in Reza Shah's policy towards Kurds between the two world wars. During the twenty years of Reza Shah's reign, modernization was an important policy to build a modern nation-state in Iran. For this reason, Reza Shah radically transformed the socio-political and economic situation of the traditional lifestyle of the Iranian inhabitants, where tribalism had been dominant. Forced migration and sedentarization of nomads and tribes in

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<sup>920</sup> Bozarslan, 'Some Remarks on Kurdish Historiographical Discourse in Turkey (1919-1980)', in Vali 2003, 38.

<sup>921</sup> Vali 2003, 104.

the Iranian plateau, especially of the Kurds, was an important policy of Reza Shah, through which many families became alienated from their original environment and the tribal leaders were exiled, imprisoned or killed. Establishment of modern education, reform and standardization in Persian language, prohibitions on the use of local languages, such as Kurdish, at schools throughout the country, and curtailment on the cultural rights, such as traditional dress, were implemented as parts of the main goal of Reza Shah's modernization policy. In other words, the foundation of a modern state was accomplished at the cost of suppressing political development and all manifestations of democratic aspirations. In short, this policy forced the national Kurdish identity to be integrated and assimilated in the dominant identity which was Persian. But, World War II had ruptured the process of modernization via the authoritarian policies of Reza Shah.

The intervention of the Allied Powers in Iran in August 1941 was seen by many Iranian Kurds as not only an opportunity to accomplish some measure of autonomy for Kurdistan, but after the exile of Reza Shah, it was also seen as way for the restoration of political, cultural, economic and units of the Kurdish tribes. The presence of the Great Powers in Iran changed the socio-political atmosphere. A part of Iranian Kurdistan, the territory from Mahabad to Saqqiz, was located between the territories controlled by the two Great Powers, Britain and the Soviet, and in this region the Kurdish cultural and especially political institutions were established. The JK party, which had a leftist ideology, is often considered to be the first Kurdish nationalist political party in the modern history of Iran. The JK party strived for the national independence of Greater Kurdistan. Unity among Kurds, more political power for the middle-class and the right to Kurdish education based on the Kurdish language were the major political demands of the JK party, which was the base for the establishment of the KDP and the Republic of Kurdistan.

Independence for Greater Kurdistan or just for Iranian Kurdistan was not the political ambition of the nationalists at the outset, when they strived for autonomy within Iranian territory. But it seemed that in the second half of its existence, the Republic of Kurdistan gave up the cause of autonomy and fight for it in the provincial councils. This demand was also problematic for the Kurdish leaders because Mahabad, the capital of the Republic, itself was not a province, but a part of the West Azerbaijan Province. Therefore, the Iranian and particularly Azerbaijan governments did not take the formation of the Republic seriously and considered it as a part of the Azerbaijan government. For this reason, although the negotiations between Azerbaijan and Iranian government representatives were on a formal level, the Iranian government did not seriously consider the demands of the Republic of



Kurdistan's leaders, when they visited Tehran for similar negotiations. Ghavam invited the Republic's leaders separately to Tehran, which was merely for provocative political purposes as it would increase the distrust and division between the Azerbaijan and Kurdish governments; Ghavam never had any serious intentions to discuss the Kurdish question.

Although the majority of the Kurdish community, including intellectuals and writers, considered the Republic of Kurdistan of 1946 as a nationalist project with a national character, it was a form of nationalism that was limited in its scope. Moreover Kurdish nationalism was not widespread and was more regional in its outlook. In 1946 it could not be defined using the generalized concept of nationalism. The maturity and development of nationalism depended on the existence of an increasingly industrial society. Agricultural transformation to the industrial society is, for Gellner, necessary for the development of nationalism, which spread its roots in the second half of the nineteenth century throughout Europe. To what extent was the Kurdish society in 1946 industrial? There was only one factory in all of Iranian Kurdistan -- it was predominantly an agricultural society during the period of the Republic of Kurdistan. The majority, more than 90%, of the Kurdish society in 1946 was illiterate, which is another reason that the Kurdish society in 1946 cannot be properly called a nationalist movement. Although the Republic printed a newspaper and several journals, it still failed to influence the tribal and agricultural nature of Kurdish society due to this high rate of illiteracy.

For Smith, three fundamental elements agitated the ideological movement of nationalism: national autonomy, national unity and national identity. The first two aspects are problematic with regard to the ideology of the Kurdish nationalism in 1946. The resoluteness of self-government, which is the substance of national autonomy was absent from the Republic's leadership. National unity could be interpreted in two ways: geographically only one third of Iranian Kurdish territory was under the control of the Republic of Kurdistan and more importantly, politically there was no unity within the Kurdish leadership. Military and political decision-making was managed mainly by the tribal chieftains and for the individual interests of those tribal leaders, rather than on behalf of a national agenda. In short, there was neither national unity among the Kurdish leaders nor collaboration between several Offices or Ministries of the Republic. The political identity of the Republic of Kurdistan was a product of modernity and it was created by distinguishing Kurdish identity from the emergent Turkish, Persian and Arab identities in the region. In other words, the separation of 'us' (Kurdish) from 'them' (i.e. Turkish) was necessary for the formation of the Kurdish political identity after the First World War.

This dissertation has argued that an important reason for the establishment of the Republic of Kurdistan was a 'reaction of the self' in response to the 'action of the other'. The formation of the Autonomous Government of Azerbaijan affected the northern Iranian Kurds both politically and psychologically causing them to hastily proclaim the Republic of Kurdistan. The first political influence had to do with the relationship between 'self' and 'other'. When a neighbouring ethnic group managed to prepare themselves and eventually declare their own government, it encouraged the Kurds to concentrate on their own state building efforts. On the other hand, the rapid proclamation of the Republic, only a few weeks after proclamation of the Azerbaijan government, was a clear message to the Azerbaijan leaders that the Kurds are prepared to cooperate and have a friendly relationship with them but would not accept their leadership in Kurdistan. Yet another important reason for the swift formation of the Republic was that of fear. The establishment of the Azerbaijan government had caused serious political anxiety among the Kurds when they realized that not only would the Kurdish region come under the control of the Azerbaijan leaders, but the autonomy they enjoyed from 1941 onwards would also disappear.

All testimonials and resources related to this event provide evidence that the system of the Republic of Kurdistan, in comparison with the Azerbaijan government, enjoyed the support of the mass population. The Azerbaijan government was popular among needy section of the population, but due to its radical land reform measures it alienated the landowners. The Republic was popular amongst the Kurdish inhabitants and also protected the rights of other ethnic groups, such as Jews, Azeris, and Armenians. The Republic of Kurdistan was not a revolutionary movement meant to transform economic and social principles. Unlike Azerbaijan, it made no serious moves towards land reform, had neither Marxist indoctrination nor Soviet-trained military and political cadres. But its foremost aspiration was to secure the Kurdish nationalists' aim to eventually establish an autonomous government. The Republic was not only less experienced, less organized, and had a less sophisticated administration, but it also was founded in a society which still respected the tribal affiliations, kinships, family ties and religious brotherhood of elder times. The Kurdish society in 1946 was deeply influenced by tribalism and tribal relationships.

During the short reign of the Republic of Kurdistan some changes within Kurdish society were brought about. A central aspect of nationalism is language and this was an important part of one of the main political goals for the Republic. The Kurdish leaders of the Republic started several new Kurdish schools which taught in the Kurdish language. The Republic's leaders also attempted to increase the participation of women in political activities.

The first women's organization, which was supported by Ghazi Mohammad's wife, encouraged many women to take part in socio-political events of the Republic, particularly in the areas of education. Economic and social reform was the most important program of the Republic of Kurdistan, but in both of these aspects, the Republic fell short of its goals. In terms of development, the Republic was not very successful. This is to be expected, however, since it was the case that the economic situation of the central Iranian government worsened in the wartime and post-war periods, causing even harder times in Kurdistan and its surrounding regions. Although there were some cases of social reform, such as the Republic's establishment of a different civil court system, in general, their plan of social reform failed, especially with respect to the relations between peasants and landlords, since chieftains and landlords were the key policy-makers of the Republic. The Republic of Kurdistan also spent quite some effort on the formation of the national army. Although the leaders of the Republic tried to construct a modern Kurdish army, right until the end of the Republic their military retained its tribal character. In its short existence, the Republic did succeed in the field of communications by promoting Kurdish culture and language, by publishing and producing a range of materials, such as newspaper, journals, radio, cinema and theatre. These publications were undoubtedly made possible with the support of the Soviet government.

The increasing demand of the Republic's leaders for democracy, one of the most important principles of modernity, did not lead to the formation of the Republic of Kurdistan. Before, during and after the Second World War, the Iranian government never formally accepted the political or even the cultural rights of the ethnic Kurds in Iran. As a solution to the Kurdish question in 1946, Ghazi Mohammad demanded democracy from the central government, but the Iranian government did not pay heed to this. However, one of the significant factors that did lead to the formation of the Republic of Kurdistan was the events of World War II in Iran. The Republic was a product of hasty reactions to the larger events enveloping it, such as the presence of Great Powers in Iran. Thus, the existence of the Great Powers in Iran was another cause for the formation of the Republic of Kurdistan. Because of the collapse of the totalitarian regime of Reza Shah and the disarming of the military government in northern Iranian Kurdistan, there arose a possibility for the majority of the indigenous people to choose and determine their own fate by establishing their own government.

The Anglo-American policy towards Kurds in Iran was clear. From the beginning of the occupation of Iran in 1941, they did not support or encourage Kurdish political ambitions. The central policy of the Anglo-Americans was based on its relationship with the Iranian

central government whom they supported and advised. In contrast to this, the Soviet Union supported the regional powers against the Iranian government. One of these regional powers in Iran was the Kurds and the Kurdish government. The Soviets had not developed and were not planning to develop a long-term policy for Kurds and Kurdistan. Soviet politicians realized that the possible formation of a Kurdish state was not desirable for the Soviet policy in the region. The Soviets in fact saw the stabilization of a Kurdish government as more worrying, because for a long time after the First World War, the Soviets thought that the formation of a Kurdish state was the political project of British imperialists and they wanted to halt the British expansion. Therefore, Soviets had not only rejected a possible formation of a Kurdish state but also opposed any kind of autonomy. In 1945 and 1946, the Soviet's created a short-term policy for Kurds in Iran, which was mainly to provide them with printing press services, military facilities to the Republic of Kurdistan, maintain economic relations with the Republic, etc. The Soviet government intention was to use the Kurdish government as an instrument against the Iranian government for realization of their political and economic targets. These two antagonistic policies, which illustrate the conflicting of interests of the Great Powers, with the Anglo-American support of the Iranian government on the one hand and the Soviets supporting the regional movements on the other, especially the Azerbaijan government, lead to the post-war 'Iranian Crisis'. In the international context, this was known as the origins of the Cold War in the Middle East.

Traditionally, Russia tried to annex the lands accessing the southern open sea. In the nineteenth century, with the conquest of Central Asia and some northern provinces of Iran, the warm-water ports were coming closer for the Russians. Across this plausible expansion to the south, England was a strong power defending the route to India. For the British and Russians, oil was the economically and strategically vital commodity in the beginning of the twentieth century and there was plenty of oil in Iran. During World War II, the growing importance of Middle Eastern oil largely caused the 'conflict of interests' between the Soviet and the British governments. As World War II ended and weakened the British role in the Middle East, Britain's military presence in the eastern Mediterranean and Middle East, which were quickly losing force, existed purely to protect essential British imperial interests. Besides, whatever pretensions Britain still had of being a powerful state, the brutal truth was that the war-crippled British economy could not bear the cost of the global projection of its will. In reaction to Soviet actions in Iran, England found it necessary to cooperate with the United States against the Soviet Union to protect its oil interests in the Middle East. Britain continued to act as major player in the protection of 'The West', essentially of American

interests, in parts of the Middle East, even during the Truman administration. This time marked a crucial phenomenon in the twentieth century, when the US took Britain's place as the most dominant Great Power.

Most historians claim that political and economic interests motivated the presence of Soviet troops in northern Iran: the political case being Russia's pursuit for Iran as a buffer for its weak southern border, and the economical case being its interests in oil production in the Northern provinces. The national interests of the Great Powers were clearly on the agenda in the period of the Iranian crisis of 1945-46: the Americans appealed to Atlantic Charter's principles (see appendix I), the British protected their traditional empire, and the Soviets went as far south as possible. The Iranian crisis illustrated the conflict of interests of the Great Powers and thus marked the beginning of the origins of the Cold War in the Middle East. In the case of the Iranian crisis, the Anglo-American coordination against the Soviet Union required the Soviets to withdraw their troops from Iran. When Soviet troops were pulled back, it was mainly due to the fact that Soviet political strategies towards the Iranian crisis had failed. Yet, there are probably four more important factors that can explain the failure of Soviet policy during the Iranian crisis. First, the United Nations was an instrument for arbitration of disputes between nations. Second, from 1945 onwards, the US became an increasingly powerful counterforce against the Soviet presence in the Middle East. Third, the Soviets thought that the creation of two autonomous governments, Kurdish and Azerbaijan, had been enough to reach its goal of getting concessions of oil, but this plan had failed. And finally, the bilateral negotiations proved more effective than using open confrontation or unilateral action.

The development of the US policy towards Iran was to become the Western powers' 'front line' against the Soviet penetration into the Middle East. The whole question of Soviet-American relations is greatly confused by 'ideological baggage'. The Soviet Union is thought to be the aggressor throughout: obstinate, intransigent and expansionist. In describing American diplomacy towards Iran, Kuniholm highlighted the importance of local nationalisms. At the end of the First World War, nationalism in the Middle East represented little more than an inconvenient irritant to the great powers. By the end of World War II, it had become a major factor in policy-making. Powerfully reinforced by the development of the oil industry, it has since become a crucial constraint on the freedom of action of the super powers.

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## Appendix I

### Atlantic Charter, August 14, 1941

The President of the United States of America and the Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill, representing His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, being met together, deem it right to make known certain common principles in the national policies of their respective countries on which they base their hopes for a better future for the world.

**First**, their countries seek no aggrandizement, territorial or other;

**Second**, they desire to see no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned;

**Third**, they respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them;

**Fourth**, they will endeavour, with due respect for their existing obligations, to further the enjoyment by all States, great or small, victor or vanquished, of access, on equal terms, to the trade and to the raw materials of the world which are needed for their economic prosperity;

**Fifth**, they desire to bring about the fullest collaboration between all nations in the economic field with the object of securing, for all, improved labour standards, economic advancement and social security;

**Sixth**, after the final destruction of the Nazi tyranny, they hope to see established a peace which will afford to all nations the means of dwelling in safety within their own boundaries, and which will afford assurance that all the men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want;

**Seventh**, such a peace should enable all men to traverse the high seas and oceans without hindrance;

**Eighth**, they believe that all of the nations of the world, for realistic as well as spiritual reasons must come to the abandonment of the use of force. Since no future peace can be maintained if land, sea or air armaments continue to be employed by nations which threaten, or may threaten, aggression outside of their frontiers, they believe, pending the establishment of a wider and permanent system of general security, that the disarmament of such nations is essential. They will likewise aid and encourage all other practicable measures which will lighten for peace-loving peoples the crushing burden of armaments.

Signed by: Franklin D. Roosevelt & Winston S. Churchill

## **Appendix II**

### **Tripartite Treaty of Alliance between the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union and Iran, Signed at Teheran, January 29, 1942**

His Majesty The King of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, on the one hand, and His Imperial Majesty The Shahinshah of Iran, on the other.

Having in view the principles of the Atlantic Charter jointly agreed upon and announced to the world by the President of the United States of America and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom on the 14<sup>th</sup> August, 1941, and endorsed by the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the 24<sup>th</sup> September, 1941, with which His Imperial Majesty The Shahinshah declares his complete agreement and from which he wishes to benefit on an equal basis with other nations of the world; and being anxious to strengthen the bonds of friendship and mutual understanding between them; and considering that these objects will best be achieved by the conclusion of a Treaty of Alliance; having agreed to conclude a treaty for this purpose and have appointed as their plenipotentiaries; His Majesty The King of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India,

For the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland,

His Excellency Sir Reader William Bullard, K.C.M.G., C.I.E.,

His Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in Iran.

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics,

His Excellency M. Andre Andreewich Smirnov, Ambassador Extraordinary and  
Minister Plenipotentiary of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in Iran.

His Imperial Majesty The Shahinshah of Iran,

His Excellency M. Ali Soheily, Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Who, having communicated their full powers, found in good and due form, have agreed as follows:

#### **Article 1**

His Majesty The King of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (hereinafter referred to as the

Allied Powers) jointly and severally undertake to respect the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Iran.

#### **Article 2**

An alliance is established between the Allied Powers on the one hand and His Imperial Majesty The Shahinshah of Iran on the other.

#### **Article 3**

- (i) The Allied Powers jointly and severally undertake to defend Iran by all means at their command from all aggression on the part of Germany or any other Power.
- (ii) His Imperial Majesty The Shahinshah undertakes-
  - (a) To co-operate with the Allied Powers with all the means at his command and in every way possible, in other that they may be able to fulfil the above undertaking. The assistance of the Iranian forces shall, however, be limited to the maintenance of internal security on Iranian territory;
  - (b) To secure to the Allied Powers, for the passage of troops or supplies from one Allied Powers to the other or for other similar purposes, the unrestricted right to use, maintain, guard and, in case of military necessity, control in any way that they may require all means of communication throughout Iran, including railways, road, rivers. Aerodromes, ports, pipelines and telephone, telegraph and wireless installations;
  - (c) To furnish all possible assistance and facilities in obtaining material and recruiting labour for the purpose of the maintenance and improvement of the means of communication referred to in paragraph (b).
  - (d) To establish and maintain, in collaboration with the Allied Powers, such measures of censorship control as they may require for all the means of communication referred to in paragraph (b).
- (iii) It is clearly understated that in the application of paragraph (ii) (b), (c) and (d) of the present article the Allied Powers will give full consideration to the essential needs of Iran.

#### **Article 4**

- (i) The Allied Powers may maintain in Iranian territory land, sea and air forces in such number as they consider necessary. The location of such forces shall be decided in agreement with the Iranian Government the relations between the forces situation allows. All questions concerning the relations between the forces of the Allied Powers and the Iranian authorities in such a way as to safeguard the security of the said forces. It is



understood that the presence of these forces on Iranian territory does not constitute a military occupation and will disturb as little as possible the administration and the security forces of Iran, the economic life of the country, the normal movements, of the population and the application of Iranian laws and regulations.

(ii) A separate agreement or agreements shall be concluded as soon as possible after the entry into force of the present Treaty regarding any financial obligations to be borne by the Allied Powers under the provisions of the present article and of paragraphs (ii) (b), (c) and (d) of Article 3 above in such matters as local purchases, the hiring of buildings and plant, the employment of labour, transport charge, etc. A special agreement shall be concluded between the Allied Governments and the Iranian Government defining the conditions for any transfers to the Iranian Government after the war the of building and other improvements effected by the Allied Powers on Iranian territory. These agreements shall also settle the immunities to be enjoyed by the forces of the Allied Powers in Iran.

#### **Article 5**

The forces of the Allied Powers shall be withdrawn from Iranian territory no later than six months after hostilities between the Allied Powers and Germany and her associates have been suspended by the conclusion of an armistice or armistices, or on the conclusion of peace between them, whichever date is the earlier. The expression 'associates' of Germany means all other Powers which have engaged or may in the future engage in hostilities against either of the Allied Powers.

#### **Article 6**

(i) The Allied Powers undertake in their relations with foreign countries not to adopt an attitude which is prejudicial to the territorial integrity, sovereignty or political independence of Iran, nor to conclude treaties inconsistent with the provisions of the present Treaty. They undertake to consult the Government of His Imperial Majesty The Shahinshah in all matters affecting the direct interests of Iran.

(ii) His Imperial Majesty The Shahinshah undertake not to adopt in his relations with foreign countries an attitude which is inconsistent with the alliance, nor to conclude treaties inconsistent with the provisions of the present Treaty.

#### **Article 7**

The Allied Powers jointly undertake to use their best endeavours to safeguard the economic existence of the Iranian people against the privations and difficulties arising as result of the present war. On the entry into force of the present Treaty, discussions shall be

opened between the Government of Iran and the Governments of the Allied Powers as to the best possible methods of carrying out the above undertaking.

**Article 8**

The provisions of the present Treaty are equally binding as bilateral obligations between His Imperial Majesty The Shahinshah and each of the two other High Contracting Parties.

**Article 9**

The present Treaty shall come into force on signature and shall remain in force until the date fixed for the withdrawal of the forces of the Allied Powers from Iranian territory in accordance with article 5.

In witness whereof, the above-named plenipotentiaries have signed the present Treaty and have affixed thereto their seals.

Done at Teheran in triplicate in English, Russian and Persian, all being equally authentic.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> day of January, 1942.

(L.S.) R.W. Bullard

(L.S.) A.A. Smirnov

(L.S.) Ali Soheily





## **Nederlandse samenvatting (Summary in Dutch)**

De sociologische discussie aangaande nationale eenwording heeft in het geval van de Koerdische nationalistische bewegingen van de twintigste eeuw niet tot een positief resultaat van politieke transformatie geleid. Het is de Koerdische nationalistische bewegingen niet gelukt om alle etnisch-religieuze (Soennieten, Shi'ieten, Yezidi's, enz.) en etnisch-linguïstische (Kurmanji, Sorani, Zazai, Hewrami, etc.) groeperingen te integreren en daarmee de vorming van een eenheidsstaat binnen eigen territoriale staatsgrenzen te bewerkstelligen.<sup>922</sup>

Vóór de Eerste Wereldoorlog waren deze culturele en religieuze aspecten belangrijke zaken in Koerdistan en de etnische grenzen waren geen subjectieve aangelegenheid. Maar dit alles is na de Eerste Wereldoorlog drastisch veranderd in een strijd van politieke verschillen, toen de nieuwe natiestaten in het Midden-Oosten werden gesticht. Deze nieuwe natiestaten, voornamelijk Turkije, Iran en Irak, hadden op twee manieren invloed op de Koerdische nationalistische bewegingen wat betreft hun strijd voor zelfbeschikking met een eigen regering. Ten eerste was de natiestaat gevormd naar de identiteit van de dan dominante groep. Deze nieuwe identiteit zonder Koerdische trekken heeft invloed gehad op de gevoelens in de Koerdische gemeenschap en vooral op het Koerdische nationalisme. Met het oog op de Koerdische politieke identiteit, te realiseren door middel van de stabilisatie van een eigen natiestaat of door autonomie, liet deze druk zich gelden. Ten tweede was integratie en assimilatie binnen de aanwezige dominante groep en, nog belangrijker, de ontkenning van de Koerdische identiteit, een kenmerkende politiek van deze nieuwe natiestaten in het Midden-Oosten. Als gevolg daarvan werd het belang van de Koerdische strijd om de eigen Koerdische identiteit te beschermen dominant. Uiteindelijk heeft deze strijd geleid tot oprichting van politieke partijen binnen de Koerdische gemeenschap. Abbas Vali heeft terecht verklaard dat de Koerdische nationale identiteit onmiskenbaar een moderne is.<sup>923</sup>

Gedurende de Eerste Wereldoorlog was Koerdistan een slagveld. Met de vorming van nieuwe staten die in de plaats kwamen van het uiteengevallen Ottomaanse Rijk, was er de verwachting dat misschien de dynastie Qajars ook uiteen zou vallen in een aantal kleinere staten. Maar de territoriale integriteit en de soevereiniteit van de Iraanse regering bleek ongedeerd gebleven. Zeker toen Reza Shah aan de macht kwam en bouwde aan een sterke,

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<sup>922</sup> Bozarlan, 'Some Remarks on Kurdish Historiographical Discourse in Turkey (1919-1980)', in Vali 2003, 38.

<sup>923</sup> Vali 2003, 104.

centralistisch bestuurde moderne staat. De belangrijkste drijfveer achter de sociale mobilisatie van de Koerden na 1941 lag in het gevoerde beleid van Reza Shah in de periode tussen de twee wereldoorlogen. Gedurende de twintig jaar van het bewind van Reza Shah was modernisering een belangrijk beleidsinstrument om een moderne natiestaat in Iran op te bouwen. Ter effectuering van dit beleid heeft Reza Shah grondige veranderingen aangebracht in de sociaal-politieke en economische situatie van de traditioneel levende Iraanse bevolking. Gedwongen migratie en toegewezen vestiging van de nomaden en stammen, in het bijzonder van Koerden, werd een belangrijk beleidsinstrument van Reza Shah. Vele gezinnen werden door dit beleid vervreemd van hun oorspronkelijke omgeving, en hun tribale leiders werden gevangen gezet, verbannen en in het ergste geval gedood. Inrichting van modern onderwijs, de hervorming en standaardisatie van de Perzische taal, het verbod op het gebruik van lokale talen zoals het Koerdisch op scholen door het hele land, en de inperking van de culturele rechten zoals streekgebonden folkloristische klederdracht enz., werden geïmplementeerd. Dit alles als onderdeel om Reza Shahs moderniseringsbeleid te doen slagen. Anders gezegd, de totstandkoming van een moderne staat onder Reza Shah werd bereikt door het onderdrukken van en dus ten koste van de politieke ontwikkeling en alle andere manifestaties van democratische aspiraties van de volkeren binnen de nieuwe modern staatsgrenzen. Kortom, dit beleid beoogde door dwang de nationale Koerdische identiteit te integreren en te assimileren met de gewenste dominante identiteit, namelijk de Perzische. Door de Tweede Wereldoorlog werd dit moderniseringsproces van Reza Shah echter getemperd en beëindigd.

De fysieke interventie van de geallieerden in Iran in augustus 1941 werd door vele Iraanse Koerden gezien als een voorbode om een zekere mate van autonomie voor Koerdistan te kunnen bereiken. Na de verbanning van Reza Shah werd deze omstandigheid ook gezien als een middel voor het hernieuwd herstellen van de macht van de Koerdische stammen. De aanwezigheid van de militaire grootmachten in Iran veranderde de sociaal-politieke atmosfeer. Een deel van het Iraanse Koerdistan, van Mahabad tot Saqqiz, was gelegen tussen de invloedssferen van de grootmachten Engeland en de Sovjet-Unie. Vanuit deze regio maakten de Koerdische culturele en vooral politieke instituties opgang. De JK-partij, gebaseerd op een linkse ideologie, was een van de politieke instituties die kan worden beschouwd als de eerste Koerdische nationalistische politieke partij in de Iraanse geschiedenis. De JK-partij streefde naar de nationale onafhankelijkheid van het Groot-Koerdistan. De eenheid van de Koerden, politieke macht voor de middenklasse en het recht op Koerdisch onderwijs gegeven in de Koerdische taal, werden de belangrijkste politieke

eisen van de JK-partij. Het werd mede de basis voor de oprichting van de KDP en de Republiek van Koerdistan.

Onafhankelijkheid van een Groot-Koerdistan of zelfs van een Iraans Koerdistan was niet de eerste politieke ambitie van de Republiek van Koerdistan. Vanaf het begin van haar oprichting werd gestreefd naar autonomie binnen de Iraanse territoriale eenheid. Het leek erop alsof in de tweede helft van haar bestaan de Republiek haar autonomie op zou geven door te streven naar de instelling van Provinciale Raden. Dit streven bleek echter ook problematisch voor de Koerdische leiders, omdat de stadsregio Mahabad zelf niet de status had van een provincie, maar deel uitmaakte van de West-Azerbeidzjan-provincie. Daarom namen de Iraanse en zeker de Azerbeidzjaanse regeringen de mogelijke oprichting van deze Republiek niet serieus en beschouwden zij Mahabad als deel van het Azerbeidzjaanse territorium. Om deze reden heeft, omdat de onderhandelingen tussen de Azerbeidzjaanse en de Iraanse vertegenwoordigers op een formeel hoog niveau werden gevoerd, de Iraanse regering de leiders van de Koerdische Republiek niet serieus bejegend toen zij Teheran bezochten voor soortgelijke onderhandelingen. De onderhandelaar Ghavam nodigde de leiders van de Republiek afzonderlijk uit naar Teheran te komen. Hij deed dit om te provoceren en om de verdeeldheid tussen de Azerbeidzjaanse en de Koerdische regering aan te wakkeren. Ghavam had kennelijk geen enkele serieuze bedoeling om de Koerdische kwestie te agenderen.

Hoewel de meerderheid van de Koerdische gemeenschap, met inbegrip van intellectuelen en schrijvers, de Republiek van Koerdistan als een nationalistische beweging beschouwden, bleek deze vorm van nationalisme beperkt in zijn mogelijkheden. Het was niet de 'nationale' vorm van Iraans-Koerdisch nationalisme. Het kan eerder worden beschouwd als een vorm van gelokaliseerd nationalisme. Deze vorm van gelokaliseerd Koerdisch nationalisme in 1946 is ingewikkeld en kan niet worden gedefinieerd met behulp van het algemene concept van nationalisme. De ontwikkeling en de volwassenheid van het nationalisme hingen samen met het stimuleren van de industrialisatie. De agrarische transformatie ten gunste van de industriële samenleving is voor Gellner de voorwaarde voor de ontwikkeling van het nationalisme. Het was dit nationalisme dat wortelschoot in de tweede helft van de negentiende eeuw in Europa. In welke mate was de Koerdische gemeenschap in 1946 een industriële? Welnu, er was slechts een suikerfabriek in Iraans Koerdistan, de agrarische samenleving was de dominante in de periode van de Republiek van Koerdistan. De meerderheid van de Koerdische bevolking, meer dan 90%, was in 1946 nog analfabeet. Hoewel de Republiek een gedrukte krant en enkele tijdschriften voortbracht, bleef het

analfabetisme voortbestaan. De Republiek slaagde er niet in om het tribale en agrarische karakter van de Koerdische maatschappij te beïnvloeden en te veranderen.

Voor Smith bewerkstelligen drie fundamentele elementen de ideologische beweging van het nationalisme, te weten: de nationale autonomie, de nationale eenheid en de nationale identiteit. De eerste twee aspecten blijken problematisch met betrekking tot de ideologie van het Koerdische nationalisme in 1946. Het vastberaden streven naar zelfbeschikking vormt de kern van de nationale autonomie. Dit was niet het streven van de toenmalige en latere leiders van de Republiek. Ging het om streven naar onafhankelijkheid, streven naar autonomie of de vorming van provinciale raden? Dit aspect kan als volgt worden uitgelegd. Een derde van het Iraans-Koerdische gebied was onder de controle van de Republiek van Koerdistan, waarin bij de Koerdische leiders geen eensgezindheid bestond over het toekomstige beleid. Militaire en politieke besluitvorming werd voornamelijk beheerst door de persoonlijke mening van de stamhoofden. Individuele belangen van deze tribale leiders speelden een dominante rol in het bepalen van de beleidsdoelen, en niet de zoektocht naar de voorwaarden voor het bereiken van een nationaal streven. Kortom, er was geen nationale en gedeelde visie bij de Koerdische leiders en ook geen vruchtbare samenwerking tussen verschillende gouvernementele kantoren en ministeries van de Republiek. De politieke identiteit van de Republiek van Koerdistan was een product van de heersende Koerdische leiders en was voortgekomen uit de tegenstelling tussen de Koerdische identiteit en de opkomende Turkse, Perzische en Arabische identiteiten in dezelfde regio. Anders gezegd, de scheiding tussen het 'mij' en 'jij' en het 'wij' (Koerdisch) en 'zij' (Turks) was de voedingsbodem voor de vorming van de Koerdische politieke identiteit na de Eerste Wereldoorlog.

Dit proefschrift betoogt dat een belangrijke reden voor de oprichting van de Republiek van Koerdistan een 'reactie van het zelf' is als respons op de 'actie van de ander'. Aldus heeft de vorming van de Autonome Regering van Azerbeidzjan, de noordelijke Iraanse Koerden zowel in politieke als in psychologische zin aangezet tot een overhaaste afkondiging van de Republiek van Koerdistan. Een eerste politieke reden lag in het scheppen van de tegenstelling tussen 'wij' en de 'anderen'. Toen een naburige andere etnische groep erin slaagde zich voor te bereiden op zelfstandigheid en overging tot het proclameren van een eigen regering, moedigde dit de Koerden aan om zich te richten op de vorming van ook een eigen staat. Als tweede politieke statement maakte de snelle afkondiging van de Republiek, enkele weken na de eerdere afkondiging van de Azerbeidzjaanse regering, duidelijk dat de Koerden het door de Azerbeidzjaanse leiders geclaimde leiderschap in Koerdistan niet zouden accepteren. Een geheel andere maar ook belangrijke reden voor de snelle vorming van de Republiek was die



werd ingegeven door 'angst'. Een angst die ontstond uit het besef dat door de oprichting van de Azerbeidzjaanse regering niet alleen de Koerdische regio onder de controle van de Azeri-leiders zou komen te staan, maar ook dat de autonomie die Koerden genoten vanaf 1941 hiermee zou verdwijnen.

Alle getuigenissen en vastgelegde meningen in verband met deze gebeurtenis duiden erop dat het bestaan van de Republiek van Koerdistan, in tegenstelling tot die van Azerbeidzjan, de grote steun genoot van de meerderheid van de bevolking. De Republiek was populair onder de Koerdische bevolking en zij beschermde ook de rechten van andere etnische groepen, zoals die van de joden, de Azeri's, de Armeniërs, etc. De regering van de Republiek was geen revolutionaire beweging om de economische en sociale principes om te gooien, geen serieuze stap in de richting van de herverdeling van land onder de boeren en had geen marxistische ideologie. Men beoogde niet een systeem van bijvoorbeeld Russische getrainde militaire of politieke kaders. Het voornaamste nationale doel was daarentegen de Koerdische nationalistische doelen veiligstellen en uiteindelijk het stabiliseren van een zelfbeschikkende nationale overheid. De Republiek was niet alleen minder politiek ervaren, los georganiseerd en minder bestuurlijk georganiseerd, ze was ook onderdeel van een samenleving die nog steeds de tribale voorkeuren respecteerde in verwantschap, familiebanden en religieuze broederschap. Onomstotelijk feit is dat de Koerdische gemeenschap in 1946 sterk werd beïnvloed door eeuwenlang ontwikkeld tribalisme en tribale verhoudingen.

Tijdens de korte regeerperiode van de Republiek van Koerdistan vonden een aantal veranderingen in de Koerdische gemeenschap plaats. Een belangrijk aspect van het nationalisme is het gebruik van de eigen taal, en dit was een van de voornaamste politieke doelstellingen van de Republiek. De Koerdische leiders van de Republiek stimuleerden Koerdische scholen tot het geven van onderwijs in de Koerdische taal. Het vergroten van de deelname van het aantal vrouwen aan politieke activiteiten was ook een speerpunt van de leiders van de Republiek. De oprichting van een vrouwenorganisatie, met medewerking van de vrouw van Ghazi Mohammad, in het bijzonder met als doel onderwijs te faciliteren, steunde veel vrouwen en moedigde hen aan om deel te nemen aan sociaal-politieke manifestaties van de Republiek. Economische en sociale hervormingen waren de belangrijkste kwesties van de Republiek van Koerdistan. Op geen van beide gebieden kon de Republiek echter genoeg resultaten bereiken. In termen van economische verworvenheden bleek de Republiek niet erg succesvol. Toen de economische situatie van de centrale Iraanse regering verslechterde in oorlogstijd en in latere naoorlogse periodes, bleek de economische

ontwikkeling in Koerdistan en de omliggende regio's nog zorgwekkender. In sommige gevallen werd als onderdeel van sociale hervormingen door de Republiek een burgerlijk rechtssysteem ingevoerd, maar de uitvoering van het grote plan van sociale hervorming mislukte. De relatie tussen boeren en hun landheren werd niet verbeterd, stamhoofden en grootgrondbezitters bleven de belangrijkste actoren voor het verzegelen van het beleid van de Republiek. De Republiek van Koerdistan gaf ook veel aandacht aan de vorming van het nationale leger, waarbij de leiders van de Republiek een modern Koerdische leger probeerden op te bouwen. Aan het einde van de Republiek bleef ondanks deze inspanning het tribale karakter in deze krijgsmacht de boventoon voeren. In haar korte bestaan heeft de Republiek wel overwinningen geboekt op het gebied van communicatie, cultuur en taal. Er werd een scala aan middelen geproduceerd, zoals kranten, tijdschriften, radiovoorzieningen, bioscoopinfrastructuur, enz. Deze media werden alleen mogelijk gemaakt door de financiële steun door de Sovjetregering.

De democratie als een van de belangrijke principes van de moderniteit heeft vóór, tijdens en na de Tweede Wereldoorlog in dit geval niet geleid tot de vorming van de Republiek van Koerdistan. De Iraanse regering heeft nooit officieel ingestemd met de eerbiediging van de politieke of zelfs de culturele rechten van de etnische Koerden in Iran. De oplossing van de Koerdische kwestie in 1946 door meer gedelegeerde democratie vanuit de centrale overheid was een belangrijke eis van Ghazi Mohammad. De Iraanse regering heeft geen rekening gehouden met deze verlangens. De gebeurtenissen als gevolg van de Tweede Wereldoorlog in Iran waren echter wel belangrijke redenen voor de vorming van de Republiek van Koerdistan. Het ontstaan van de Republiek bleek een product van overhaaste reacties op de grotere gebeurtenissen eromheen, zeker door de aanwezigheid van de legers van de grote mogendheden in Iran. Aldus heeft deze nabije aanwezigheid van de grote mogendheden in Iran mede geleid tot de vorming van de Republiek van Koerdistan. Immers als gevolg van de ineenstorting van het totalitaire regime van Reza Shah en de ontwapening van de militaire regering in het noorden van Iraans Koerdistan, kreeg de meerderheid van de inheemse Koerdische bevolking de kans het lot in eigen hand te nemen door het grondvesten van hun eigen regering.

Het Anglo-Amerikaanse beleid ten aanzien van de Koerden in Iran is duidelijk. Vanaf het begin van de bezetting van Iran in 1941 hebben de betreffende staten geen ondersteuning of stimulering aangeboden aan de Koerdische leiders voor het in stand houden van het Koerdische streven. Het centrale beleid van de Anglo-Amerikaanse macht was gericht op een goede relatie met de Iraanse centrale overheid en men ondersteunde en adviseerde het Iraanse

regime. In tegenstelling hiermee steunde de Sovjet-Unie de regionale machten die tegen de Iraanse regering waren. Een van deze regionale machten in Iran waren de Koerden en de Koerdische beweging. De Sovjets waren echter niet van plan om een langetermijnbeleid voor de Koerden en Koerdistan te ontwikkelen. Sovjetpolitici beseften dat de mogelijke vorming van een Koerdische staat geen wenselijke politieke ontwikkeling voor de Sovjetpolitiek in de regio zou zijn. De Sovjets zagen de stabilisering van een Koerdische regering als des te verontrustender omdat zij zelfs tot lang na de Eerste Wereldoorlog dachten dat de vorming van een Koerdische staat een politiek project van het Britse imperialisme was. De Sovjets wilden met hun buitenlandse politiek de Britse imperialistische expansie tegenhouden. Daarom hadden de Sovjets niet alleen een mogelijke vorming van een Koerdische staat geweigerd en tegengewerkt, zij waren tegen elke vorm van autonomie. In 1945 en 1946 voerde de Sovjet-Unie een kortetermijnpolitiek ten aanzien van de Koerden in Iran. Zij voorzagen in drukpersfaciliteiten en militaire faciliteiten voor de Republiek en onderhielden goede economische betrekkingen. Voor de realisatie van hun politieke en economische doelen gebruikte de Sovjetregering de Koerdische beweging in Iran als instrument tegen de Iraanse regering. Dit gaf twee operationele antagonistische beleidsdoeleinden binnen het conflict van belangen van de grote mogendheden: de Anglo-Amerikaanse steun aan de Iraanse regering en Sovjetondersteuning aan de regionale bewegingen, vooral de Azerbeidzjaanse regering. Deze tegenstelling leidde tot de naoorlogse 'Iraanse Crisis'. In de internationale context werd deze bekend als oorsprong van de Koude Oorlog in het Midden-Oosten.

Al gedurende zijn gehele bestaan tracht Rusland over land de toegang tot de zuidelijke open zee te annexeren. In de negentiende eeuw, met de verovering van Centraal-Azië en sommige noordelijke provincies van Iran, kwam voor de Russen dit doel dichterbij. Deze waarschijnlijke wens tot uitbreiden naar het zuiden werd tegengewerkt door een sterke macht die zijn zeeroute naar India verdedigde: Groot-Brittannië. Voor zowel Britten als Russen was het in het begin van de twintigste eeuw economisch en strategisch belangrijk grondstoffen te verkrijgen en er was volop olie beschikbaar in Iran. In de periode van de Tweede Wereldoorlog gaf deze noodzakelijke olie een 'belangenconflict' in het Midden-Oosten tussen de Russische en de Britse regeringen. Als de Tweede Wereldoorlog eindigt, verzwakt de Britse rol in het Midden-Oosten en wordt de militaire aanwezigheid van Groot-Brittannië in het oostelijke Middellandse Zeegebied en in het Midden-Oosten teruggebracht tot louter essentiële Britse en imperialistische belangen. Hoewel Groot-Brittannië nog steeds de pretenties van een machtige staat had, was de harde waarheid dat de oorlog de Britse economie kreupel had gemaakt en dat het land niet meer de kosten van de internationale

politiek kon dragen. In reactie op de Sovjetacties in Iran moest Engeland uit noodzaak gaan samenwerken met de Verenigde Staten om zich tegen de Sovjetoliebelangen in het Midden-Oosten te beschermen. Groot-Brittannië bleef als belangrijke macht handelen in het belang van de bescherming van westerse waarden. In wezen echter ten gunste van de Amerikaanse belangen in delen van het Midden-Oosten, en dit zelfs tijdens Trumanregering. Deze regering markeert het omslagpunt in de twintigste eeuw vanaf waar Amerika de plaats van Groot-Brittannië overneemt als overheersende grootmacht.

De meeste historici beweren dat de aanwezigheid van Sovjettroepen in het noorden van Iran politieke en economische motieven had. Politiek, want Rusland streeft ernaar dat Iran een buffer voor zijn zwakke zuidelijke grens wordt. Economisch, want Rusland beschermt zijn belangen in de olieproductie in de noordelijke Iraanse provincies. De nationale belangen van de grootmachten stonden duidelijk op de agenda in de periode van de Iraanse crisis van 1945-1946: de Amerikanen deden een beroep op Atlantic Charter principes (zie appendix I), de Britten beschermden hun traditionele imperium en de Sovjet-Unie ging zelfs zo ver zuidelijk als mogelijk. De Iraanse crisis illustreerde het conflict van belangen van de grootmachten en markeerde aldus het begin van het ontstaan van de Koude Oorlog in het Midden-Oosten. In het geval van de Iraanse crisis richtte de Anglo-Amerikaanse samenwerking zich tegen de Sovjet-Unie om de Sovjets te dwingen hun troepen terug te trekken uit Iran. Dat de Sovjettroepen terug werden getrokken was voornamelijk toe te schrijven aan het feit dat de Sovjetpolitieke strategieën voor de Iraanse crisis hadden gefaald. Waarschijnlijk zijn er vier belangrijke factoren die het mislukte beleid van de Sovjet-Unie in de Iraanse crisis verklaren. Ten eerste: de Verenigde Naties waren het instrument voor het beslechten van geschillen tussen naties, en zij handelden aldus. Ten tweede traden de VS vanaf 1945 steeds krachtiger op tegen de Sovjetaanwezigheid in het Midden-Oosten. Ten derde dachten de Sovjets dat de oprichting van twee autonome regeringen, Koerdistan en Azerbeidzjan, genoeg was om hun doel van het krijgen van olieconcessies te bereiken; dit plan had echter gefaald. Ten slotte werd de voorkeur gegeven aan bilaterale onderhandelingen boven gewapende confrontatie of eenzijdige gewapende actie.

De ontwikkeling van het Amerikaanse beleid ten aanzien van Iran was om de Westerse mogendheden een 'frontlinie' tegen de Sovjetpenetratie in het Midden-Oosten te verschaffen. De hele kwestie van de Sovjet-Amerikaanse betrekkingen wordt sterk vertroebeld door een 'ideologische bagage'. Van daaruit wordt de Sovjet-Unie gezien als alleen een agressor: koppig, onverzettelijk en expansionistisch. Bij de beschrijving van de Amerikaanse diplomatie ten aanzien van Iran heeft Kuniholm gewezen op het belang van het

lokale nationalisme. Aan het einde van de Eerste Wereldoorlog vertegenwoordigt het nationalisme in het Midden-Oosten weinig meer dan een ongemakkelijke en irritante omstandigheid voor de grote mogendheden. Tegen het einde van de Tweede Wereldoorlog was het nationalisme een belangrijke factor in de beleidsvorming. Het werd krachtig versterkt door de ontwikkeling van de olie-industrie en is sindsdien uitgegroeid tot een cruciale belemmering voor de vrijheid van handelen van de grootmachten.

## **Curriculum Vitae**

Hawar Khalil Taher Nerwi (1970) was born in Beruman, a village in Duhok province in Iraqi Kurdistan near the border with Turkey. After years as an itinerant student in Iraq and Iran, he managed to find a safe haven to pursue his college studies in the Netherlands. After becoming certified for Dutch, NT2 II, and English, as well as fulfilling some other academic requirements, Nerwi began his formal academic career by majoring in Middle Eastern Studies at Utrecht University in 2001. There he earned his Master's degree in Islam in the Modern World in 2006. Then, at the same university, he went on to complete his Master's courses in the International Relations in 2009. Since 2008, he has been enrolled as Ph.D. student at Leiden University.