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**Author:** Nerwiy, Hawar Khalil Taher  
**Title:** The Republic of Kurdistan, 1946  
**Issue Date:** 2012-03-13

## **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 Atatürk 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 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 original 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 Pischevari, 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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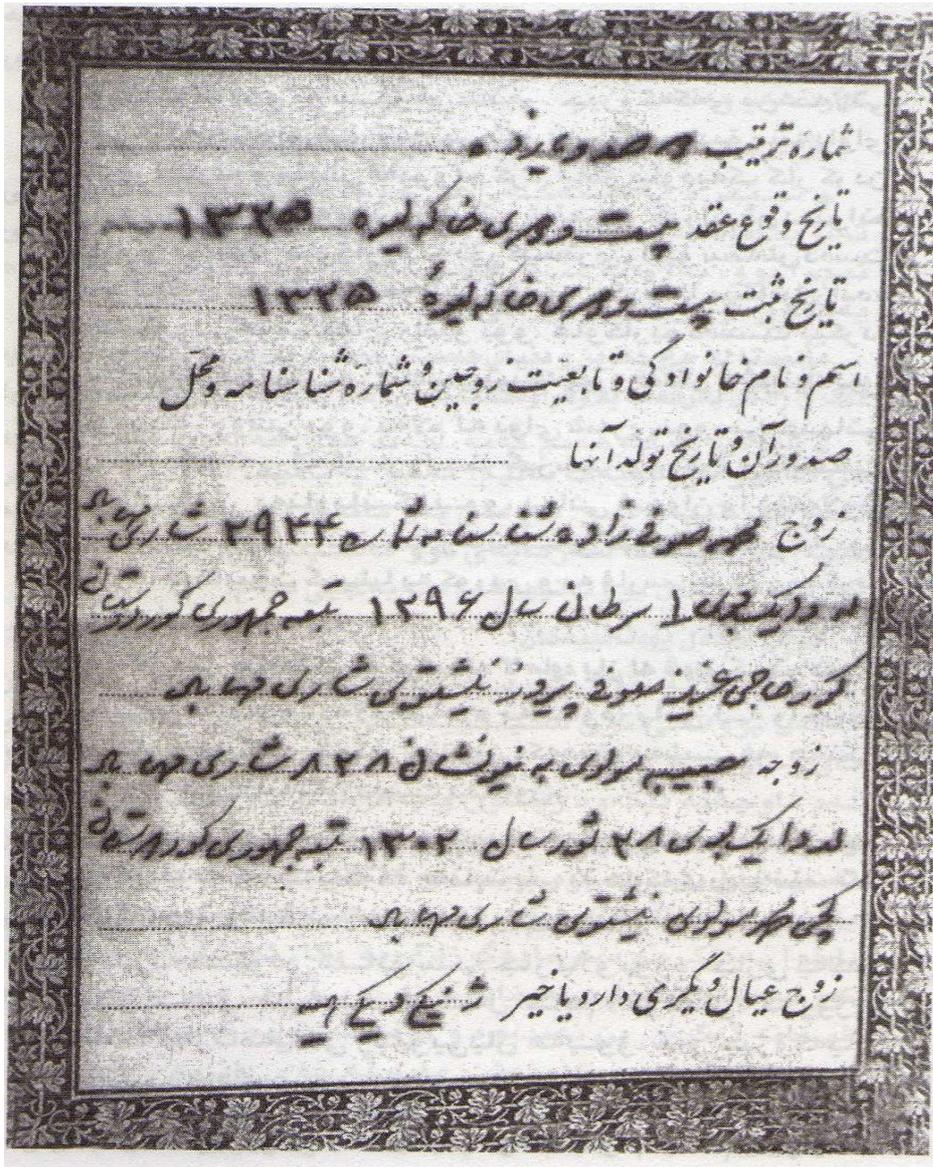
<sup>467</sup> Emin 2007, 147.

<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 Barzanis 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.