

Statement

OF THE
IRAQI COMMUNIST
PARTY

ON

" THE POLICY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY ON
THE KURDISH QUESTION AND ITS STAND
WITH REGARD TO THE CURRENT TALKS
INTENDED TO SOLVE IT "

THE FIRST HALF OF JULY

1966

Lately Al-Bazzaz broadcast the Government proposal for the settlement of the Kurdish Question. Before that, the Government had made contacts with the leadership of the Kurdish revolution. This had resulted in what was described as encouraging results. Fighting even ceased in some places. Signs and responses emerged pointing to the possibility of reaching a peaceful agreement.

These new events, which may have important and serious consequences, make it imperative for the Communist Party to define its attitude, starting from its principled policy with regard to the Kurdish Question:

First: The Communist Party confirmed, as a point of principle, the right of self-determination of the Kurdish nation. It formulated its practical policy towards the Kurdish question in Iraq on the basis of the objective conditions of the national liberation movement of the divided Kurdish nation and in connection with the interests of the general liberation and democratic struggle in Iraq and in the region. The Party has embodied this policy in the following slogans and principles :

a- The common struggle against imperialism and reaction, for a liberated democratic Iraq for both Arabs and Kurds -- "Long live Arab-Kurdish Brotherhood!"

b- The Kurdish people in Iraq are a distinct nation. They live in their own homeland (Iraqi Kurdistan), they have their own language, culture, history, national characteristics, traditions and distinguishing features. They are not an immigrating national minority demanding equality, but a people having their own legitimate national rights.

c- The practical embodiment of these rights is "The Autonomous rule for Iraqi Kurdistan within the Iraqi Republic".

Second: This policy has proved itself correct and useful for both the Arab and Kurdish peoples; it was adopted by the popular masses and some progressive circles; it has also been the policy of the Kurdish insurgents, which they have adhered to even under the most cruel conditions and bloody suppression. This policy has withstood numerous trials and tribulations. The Kurdish liberation movement has been an integral part of the democratic movement in Iraq and a loyal ally of the Arab liberation movement in its great battles against imperialism. Around the slogan of common struggle, the Iraqi people -- Arabs and Kurds -- have for decades waged decisive liberation struggles which concluded with a great victo-

ry on July 14th 1958. Subsequent struggles were waged to defend the July Republic and the gains of the two fraternal peoples. The will and feelings of the Arabs and Kurds have been crystallised in the flame of common struggle. Millions of our people cheered "Long live Arab-Kurdish Brotherhood" and "The imperialist and reactionary conspiracies are crushed by the rock of Arab-Kurdish brotherhood".

Third: While the Kurds blessed the resurrection of Arab national movement and supported the efforts of the Arabs to achieve their national aspirations for a federation or unity, they consider it their right, as a separate nation, to enjoy "autonomous rule" which would assure their national rights within a framework of fraternal coexistence and militant cooperation with their brothers, the Arabs of Iraq. The progressive and nationalists Kurds, whether in their struggle for their national rights or in the course of their participation in the general struggle, have always called for a free and democratic Iraqi Republic for Arabs and Kurds alike. The so-called "separation" has not been in any time an aim of the Kurdish liberation movement. Similarly, the demand for autonomous rule has not included any implication of separation or a tendency toward separation,

particularly it has always emphasised that this rule must be realised within the framework of a unified Iraqi Republic.

Fourth: The call for autonomous rule -- which has frightened the chauvinist rulers and many nationalist groups in Iraq and in some Arab countries -- is the principle practised in all socialist countries having many nationalities coexisting in fraternity and solidarity within the framework of a single state. Such a situation also exists in some capitalist countries, without affecting the political entity of the state or consequently implying separation from this entity. On the contrary, the democratic application of this principle is the guaranteed means of consolidating national unity and warding off separatist or narrow nationalist tendencies which may appear, under national oppression.

The true significance of autonomous rule implies above all the establishment of a distinct political-administrative entity including an elected legislative chamber and executive administrative, judicial, and cultural institutions. These should have a local national character and assure the free practice of national rights in the framework of the central state. But the chauvinist rulers and their supporters do not want to understand this democratic demand which the

Kurdish revolution fought for and which, in its essence, means that the Kurdish people have chosen the path of fraternity with their brothers, the Arab people in Iraq, on the basis of the enjoyment of autonomous rule within the framework of a single state.

Fifth: The repeated experiences of aggression against Kurdistan have shown -- particularly after the fascist February coup and the seizure of power by the chauvinist clique -- that the Arab national movement (whether in Iraq or in other Arab countries) is still suffering from dangerous chauvinist tendencies and that it includes prominent racist elements and currents as well. This is a bad phenomenon which has caused, and will cause, much damage to the anti-imperialist Arab liberation movement. It has degraded the movement and its prestige. This dangerous phenomenon, if it continues and becomes aggravated, will lead to the isolation of the Arab liberation movement from its natural ally in the region, i.e. The Kurdish liberation movement. All progressive nationalists must fight persistently, with all progressive forces in Iraq and the Arab world, against these currents and tendencies which are harmful to the character and fate of any progressive liberation movement. The Arab people, who struggle against imperia-

lism, oppression and injustice, must recognise the legitimate national aspirations and rights of its ally in this struggle -- the Kurdish people. "A nation that oppresses another nation cannot be free".

The Iraqi Communist Party has called as a principle and firmly for a democratic peaceful settlement of the Kurdish question which would assure the national rights of the Kurdish people and consolidate Arab - Kurdish brotherhood and the common struggle for liberation, democracy and social progress. It has always condemned the armed aggression against Kurdistan and all police oppressive measures intended to suppress the Kurdish liberation movement. It has considered it a democratic and a national liberation movement and hence has supported it. When the adventurist rulers resorted to armed aggression against Kurdistan after the February coup, the Party was not satisfied to merely condemn it or unmask its organisers and executors, but it supported the Kurdish revolution. The Party participated in consolidating it considering that this is a liberation revolution waging a defensive just war and striving to realise the legitimate aspirations of an oppressed people.

While it stands wholly on the side of the

Kurdish revolution, the Party considers that the civil war which was started by the chauvinist rulers, accompanied by fratricidal fighting, blood-shed, devastation and sufferings, is the work of those rulers who chose the road of oppression and aggression against the militant Kurdish people.

The ending of aggression and the accepting of the legitimate national demands of the Kurdish people are the ways to achieve the national unity which was stabbed and distorted by those rulers who are now shedding tears over it. These are the ways to consolidate the Arab-Kurdish brotherhood which the rulers demagogically proclaim.

Those progressive forces and the Arab Governments which are concerned with the destinies and freedom of the Arab people must examine their stands with a spirit of consciousness and responsibility. They must realise the necessity and importance of the alliance between the Arab liberation movement and the Kurdish liberation movement in the great and dangerous battles which it is expected will be imposed by the hostile forces on the Arab world or on Iraq, on its Arabs and Kurds.

As regards the Government proposals to settle the Kurdish question and the first responses to them, The Communist Party considers it its duty to present some opinions and reservations deriving from its responsibility towards the cause of the Kurdish people and their liberation movement :

- 1 - The Kurdish question is an important and organic part of the general democratic problem of the country, the regime, its character, its policy and its attitude towards the liberties and democratic rights of the people. It is not accidental that the aggravation of the Kurdish problem is associated with the deterioration of all other problems from which the people are suffering under this regime; the fact that the Kurdish problem is in the forefront is due to the fact that it embodies the most chauvinist, reactionary and criminal aspects of this regime. The Kurdish insurgents - with our Party and other progressive forces in the country - start from a correct evaluation and experience when they connect the democratic solution of the Kurdish question and seek its actual guarantees in the establishment of a democratic regime for Iraq as a whole. Despite its seriousness and importance with regard to the entire situation in the country - the Kurdish problem is but one of the various grave problems arising from the despotic reactionary policy of the ruling clique. The basic aspect

of the situation, i.e. the fundamental problem from which all other problems derive, above all the Kurdish one - is the problem of the regime and democracy. Our Party, in accordance with its principled stand regarding solving the Kurdish question peacefully and democratically, cannot miss any real, peaceful possibility which would help to reach this solution or to seriously pave the way for it. But at the same time, our Party emphasises - in spite of the retreat of the Government and its talks with the leadership of the revolution aimed at finding a certain settlement for the Kurdish question - that a solid and guaranteed democratic solution to this question can be realised only in intimate connection with the solution of the other fundamental problems of the country, and under a democratic regime established on the ruins of the despotic dictatorship and the reactionary chauvinist policy of the existing regime.

- 2 - The nature of this regime, in addition to its policy and practical stands, does not indicate that it has any understanding of the principles of democracy and justice - especially as concerns the legality of the national rights of the Kurdish people. Furthermore, the group which is calling for a peaceful understanding is

of almost the same breed and mentality as that which organised the aggression whether during the time of "Aref the First" or "Aref the Second - Al-Bazzaz". To this must be added the fact that many of the leaders of the regime have infamous records in intrigues, the breaking of promises, the lack of honesty and of good intentions. This is especially true since the Government's peaceful proposals are associated with suspicious efforts to divide the Kurdish national movement and deepen the differences in its ranks. All that must be taken into consideration prior to dealing with the circumstances and situations which have compelled the rulers to seek peaceful ways out of the impasse of the war in Kurdistan, in preparation for tackling their grave crisis. In that crisis the aggression against the Kurdish people has played a serious role by deepening to its utmost. Aspects of the crisis are the following :

- In its military measures and following its organised aggressive expeditions, the Government have suffered extremely heavy defeats, especially in the recent battle of Hindren.
- The aggression has exhausted the Government's military and financial resources and has brought on an acute crisis.
- The anger of the people and the army is increasing because of this aggressive war and

its destructive consequences.

- The prestige of the regime has declined in the Arab and world progressive circles.
- The regime is attempting to overcome its complete isolation from the people and to repair its deteriorating prestige internally and externally, thus paving the way for settling down in office and getting assistance from friendly states.
- Al-Bazzaz is striving, in connection with a suspicious imperialist scheme, to achieve "stability" for the reactionary dictatorship behind a false "constitutional-parliamentary" facade and then to turn his attention to the signing of oil and sulphur deals with foreign monopolies
- Attempts are being made to utilise the differences within the Kurdish national movement to weaken its militant potential with the hope of weakening the revolutionary democratic movement in the country, of which the Kurdish revolution is one of its principal and most active forces.

Because of all this it is imperative to emphasise certain essential facts :

First: The utmost vigilance and precaution are very necessary on the part of the Kurdish revolution and its leadership which has had enough bitter experiences with the intrigues and tricks of that ruling racist clique.

Second: The Kurdish people have made great sacrifices and have heroically endured the burden of the bloody tragedy imposed on them arbitrarily as a result of their struggle to realise their legitimate national rights. A situation like this cannot permit the making of a bad bargain which would waste the sacrifices of this courageous people and cause them to lose their rights.

Third: The Kurdish revolution has practised the art of struggle and has gained exceptional experience; it has passed the bloody ordeals successfully. It occupies now positions which are better and stronger than those held at any previous time. The fact that it has passed from the defensive to the offensive and the stage of counter-attacks, and that it has fortified positions, high morale among its forces and heavy weapons captured during its successful battles etc. makes the revolution capable of imposing a peaceful settlement which would assure, in an acceptable manner, the national rights of the Kurdish people.

Fourth: Experience has shown that the ruling cliques break their promises and resort to aggression again after they have dealt with their crises and restored their forces. This has confronted the Kurdish revolution with the task of becoming securely and consciously prepared against probable future intrigues. The Kurdish insurgents, in their efforts to reach a just peaceful agreement that

will assure their national rights, are required to retain their weapons until the establishment of a democratic regime in the country which will implement these rights completely and prevent the possibility of a renewal of aggression. Before this guarantee is fulfilled, it is of great importance that the main partisan units together with their weapons be preserved as the sole guarantee which the revolution possesses at present for preventing the renewal of aggression.

Fifth: In order to uproot the probable conspiracies and foil the Government's efforts to utilise the differences inside the Kurdish national movement for the purpose of weakening the revolution and its leadership, it is imperative to implement the necessary measures of solidarity and unity among all forces concerned with the interests of the Kurdish people and the future of its revolution. It is necessary to enable all loyal revolutionary groups and elements to carry on their activities in Kurdistan, to exclude the suspicious reactionary and rightist elements and to devote attention to the demands of the peasants. Cooperation with the revolution's actual leadership, the unification of all revolutionary forces in Kurdistan, and the implementation of the principle of consultation and accord among the forces participating in the revolution in order to oppose the Government with one solid front

are extremely important issues. Any tearing, splitting and nonadhering to the leadership of the revolution constitute a strengthening of the Government manouvers to drive a wedge into the Kurdish revolution. Understanding and tolerance are required from all sides in order to serve the revolution and consolidate its positions, and to impose an honest just settlement which will ensure the national rights of the Kurdish people.

Sixth: The first measures which the Government must realise if it wants to actually work for a peaceful settlement and not to merely gain "a truce" or "a recuperation interval" after which it would resume its aggression are the immediate withdrawal of its army units to the positions they held before the aggression, the dissolution of the "Al-Fursan" mercenary units, lifting of the economic blockade against the Kurdish region, the reconstruction of the region and compensation of the victims, general amnesty for the patriotic prisoners in Iraq, the ending of the policy of oppression and suppression and the establishment of democratic liberties, including freedom of political activity for all patriotic and democratic parties and forces in the country. These positions can be the starting point, realising that these conditions can pave the way for the success of the revolution in achieving its

fundamental demands for which it has been waged, subsequently they can assure the elimination of the results of aggression and the realisation of the other secondary demands which are mentioned in the Government project.

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The revolution has embodied the national demands of the Kurdish people in the slogan: "Autonomous rule within the framework of the Iraqi Republic". The Government project does not include anything connected with this demand or which might lead to it. Even the idea of the "governorship" and "decentralised" administration has excluded the possibility of establishing a "Wilayat or Governorship of Kurdistan" to distinguish it from the other governorships which are inhabited by the Arabs. The Government proposal is void of any concrete serious content as concerns national rights. Furthermore, every one of its points includes an elastic formulation or suspicious amendment.

On examining the 12 points of the Government's proposal, one finds them void of any reference to what can be considered of the fundamental national rights for which the revolution has been waged. The proposal discusses mainly the issues and situations which the rulers have created and which came about as a result of their aggression. Or else it deals with the partial primary rights that the

Kurds have enjoyed since the monarchy period and then in an even better manner:

- General amnesty for those who participated in violent actions in the North... "when violent actions end"!
- Returning civil servants and employees to their posts and workers to their jobs .. "as far as possible"!
- Returning of police-men and army regulars to their units .. "with their weapons ... to be treated with leniency"!
- Construction of the region .. "they who have destroyed it" ... care for widows, orphans and disabled men... "because of national and humane considerations"!
- The effort to resettle those who were forced to leave their regions... "provided that the State has the right to control the areas it requires"!!
- Recognition of Kurdish as an official language.. "with Arabic in regions where the majority of the population are Kurds". This has been the situation since the time of the monarchy.
- Education in Kurdish.. "together with Arabic" but "within the limits fixed by law"!
- The representation of the Kurds in the next national assembly... their participation in the cabinet and governmental posts .. "without jeopardising the principle of efficiency"! Since when has it been otherwise!?
- Local civil servants from among the Kurds. A

promise to open a university branch in the North. The establishment of some political organisations (a revised fascimile of the Socialist Union)!

- The press in Kurdish and Arabic...!! Has not there been a Kurdish press in Kurdistan since the monarchy period?!
- The most serious issue is the attempt of the Government to control the partisan forces and disarm the revolution. The Government's proposal includes only a vague and conditional promise to dissolve the "Al-Fursan" mercenary units. It does not promise to totally end the aggression on all fronts or to withdraw the army to its original positions, or at least to the centres of the provinces.
- The Government proposal is void of any binding guarantees, except for "Al-Bazzaz promises" and it states that, "The Government recognised the Kurdish nation categorically in the provisional Constitution!" Yet, at the same time it was waging a barbarous bloody war against the Kurdish people despite this "categorical recognition" on a piece of paper known as "The provisional Constitution" or the promise to clarify this content in "the permanent Constitution"!!

It must be emphasised that if malicious intentions are what guide the rulers in their efforts to deal with their crisis by means of a temporary

cease-fire, or to gain a breathing space - with their insistence on denying the national rights of the Kurdish people - then the fate of these intrigues and their designers will be only frustration and defeat as was the fate of the armed aggression itself. The people, Arabs and Kurds, will not spare more sacrifices, they will continue to strengthen their struggle to defeat such conspiracies and destroy their organisers.

These rulers - after all the calamities and catastrophes they have caused the country - must grant the Kurdish people their just national rights. They must admit that there exists in Iraq a fraternal people loyal to the Arab people: This is the Kurdish people who live in their own homeland (Kurdistan). Like the fraternal Arab people, they have their own national elements and rights which they must be allowed to enjoy and practise in peace and fraternal partnership within a single homeland.

Any agreement signed to guarantee peace must lay a solid foundation for the coming struggle of the Kurdish people and must mark a new stage in the development of their liberation movement for the achievement of all their aims and just national aspirations.

The fact that the Government is seeking peace and a way out of the impasse of the war in Kurdi-

stan after the failure of its military measures, is a victory for the Kurdish revolution and for the democratic national movement in Iraq. At the same time it is also a defeat for the aggressive chauvinist policy. It is the task of all patriotic forces in the country to intensify their struggle for democratic and radical solutions for the country's problems, through a firm struggle to overthrow the reactionary dictatorship which has led the country into destructive crises.

The association of the peaceful settlement of the Kurdish question with a guaranteed, solid democratic solution, and the realisation of autonomous rule will, in the final analysis, be conditioned by the establishment of a patriotic coalition government which will place the country on the path toward a just democratic regime which will embody the will of the people.

THE IRAQI COMMUNIST PARTY

First half of July 1966