

A PAPER ON THE KURDISH PROBLEM IN IRAQ

PRESENTED TO THE DELEGATES OF
THE UNITED NATIONS SIMINAR ON
THE RIGHTS OF NATIONAL, ETHNIC
AND OTHER MINORITIES HELD IN OHRID-
JUGOSLAVIA FROM 25th JUNE - 8th JULY
1974.

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Friends,

In the name of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, we would like to convey our fraternal greetings to you, participants of this Seminar.

As the terms of reference of the Seminar do not allow for representatives of national minorities other than those from member states to take part, we deemed it appropriate to address your meeting in this manner.

As you are well aware the Kurdish Question in Iraq is of direct relevance to the topic of your seminar. There are three million Kurds out of 10.5 million total population of Iraq, constituting an indigenous ethnic region with an area of 72,000 sq.km. out of 451,000 sq.km. of Iraq which has been known as Kurdistan.

According to the treaty of Sevre, 1920, the Kurdish people were given the right of self-determination on an equal basis with the other peoples of the Ottoman Empire, but unfortunately the treaty was never implemented. Consequently, in 1925, the Mosul Wilayat (Kurdistan-Iraq) was annexed to the newly created state of Iraq under British mandate. Britain specifically pledged to the League of Nations that it would ensure that the Kurds must enjoy their national rights, this

having been made a condition of the annexion, which was carried out without the consent of the inhabitants of the region concerned.

Ever since, the people of Kurdistan-Iraq have struggled to secure their national rights in the form of an autonomous Kurdistan within a democratic state of Iraq. But this struggle has met with many obstacles, namely these created by elements whose *raison d'être* is to continue a policy of national oppression and exploitation against the Kurdish people in Iraq. Thus the Kurdish citizen in Iraq is not merely treated as a second class citizen, but has been positively discriminated against in all aspects of life.

The following are some facets of this policy:

1. Citizenship

- a - Tens of thousands of Kurdish individuals have been deprived of their Iraqi citizenship since 1961, and have been summarily expelled with all their possessions confiscated by the Iraqi authorities, many of these affected have done their national service in the Iraqi Army.
- b - The law regulating the affairs of aliens in Iraq (Law No. 36, 1961 and its recent amendments) excludes all Arabs from any parts of the world from the category of aliens whereas Kurds who have been living permanently in Iraq since before the creation of the state of Iraq in 1922 are considered aliens. Thousands of families were forced to abandon their dwellings, hundreds of villages in Kurdistan have been evacuated by force from

their inhabitants and replaced with Arab tribesmen from the South in order to change the ethnic composition of the region.

- c - According to a law passed by RCC, No Iraqi who marries a foreigner can be employed in the public sectors of the country (which in Iraq constitute 90% of public employment), but if that foreigner happens to be an Arab, he or she is not considered as a foreigner regardless of the country of origin. However, Kurds from neighbouring countries are considered to be aliens.

2. Education

Within the following Kurdish provinces of Sulaimaniya, Duhok and Arbil, the percentage of students attending school is the lowest of all Iraq.

For the last ten years no Kurds have been accepted in the Air Force College.

Number of Kurds accepted in the Military and Police Colleges is between 2 - 5% (with the last figure being true only for 1970 following the March Agreement).

Rarely any Kurd is accepted at the Military Staff College.

Since 1961 the percentage of Kurds receiving scholarships has not exceeded 3 - 4%.

There is no permanent or specific budget for education in Kurdistan and the allocation of funds is left to the discretion of the Ministry

of Education in Baghdad.

Even when Kurdish schools exist in such provinces as Nineveh, Diyaleh and Kirkuk, Kurdish children are discouraged from and even threatened against enrolling in such schools.

Due to the low standard and quality of education provided rarely Kurdish students are accepted at the College of Medicine, Engineering and Dentistry.

Obvious discrimination is practised in the case of Sulaimaniye University through the procedure of centralised registration which is controlled from Baghdad. This procedure was put into force after the creation of the Sulaimaniya University, and this has led to the sending of fewer Kurds while more and more Ba'thist students attend this institution. Furthermore, Kurdish professors are often discouraged from joining the faculty of this University.

3 - Government

The only decision-making body (political, economic, administrative, etc.) is the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) whose decisions carry the power of law. The RCC membership is not to exceed 12 and qualifications for membership are that one must be a member of the Regional Command of the Ba'th Party and hence a definite obstacle in the way of any Kurd into the RCC. Furthermore, the Regional Command of the Ba'th is treated as the sole political leader in Iraq and it thus undermines the political and the recognised leadership of the

Kurds in Iraq.

a - Ministry of Defence

Of all the top staff of the Ministry including commanders of divisions, battalions, etc. there are only two Kurds.

b - Foreign Affairs

There are no Kurds even at the level of Head of Section or Director-General. Out of about 80 ambassadors there is only one Kurd. Out of 500 diplomats there are only 10 Kurds.

c - Ministry of Oil

Although 70% of Iraqi oil comes from Kurdistan there are no Kurdish Director-Generals either in the Ministry, the Iraqi National Oil Company (INOC), or at Kirkuk. There were some Kurds among the staff of the IPC but recently 560 of them have been expelled.

d - The Cabinet

Out of 23 cabinet posts there are only 2 so-called Kurdish ministers and 3 Ministers of State who have no power at all. Out of 23 Deputy Ministers there are only 3 Kurds. Out of 250 Director-Generals there are only 15 Kurds.

In general no Kurds are accepted within the security and intelligence branches of the Iraqi Government.

All of this constitutes a violation of Article 2 of the March 11, 1970 Agreement which states that "The participation of our Kurdish brothers

in the Government without discrimination between Kurds and non-Kurds in appointments to public posts, including important and key posts in the State such as Cabinet Ministers, Army Commands, and other such posts, had been and still is one of the important points which the Revolution Government aims to achieve. While approving of this principle the Revolution Government reiterates the need for work to apply it in just proportion, taking into consideration qualifications, population proportion and the deprivation of which our Kurdish brothers have suffered in the past".

4. - The Economy

While Kurdistan is the richest area of Iraq (endowed with oil, minerals, tourism, adequate rainfall, favourable conditions for agriculture) budgetary allocations for the development of the area, even during the last four years of peace and agreement, have remained at the low and fluctuating rate of 7 - 12%.

- In 1970 a decision was made to build an oil refinery, and even though Kirkuk is the oil-producing area, the refinery project was moved to Hamman 'Alil and this led to a cost increase of 20%. This was done simply to deprive Kurdistan of the benefits from the existence of this project.

- While raw materials for iron and steel industry come from Kurdistan (iron ore from Sulaimaniya and gas from Kirkuk) the Government has arbitrarily moved these projects to Basra in the south.

- During the last four years many road-building projects were approved for Kurdistan; however all these have been stopped including those which were already in progress. For the next two 5-year economic plans for Iraq there are provisions for only two roads in Kurdistan: One from Kirkuk-Mosul-Makhumur bypassing Arbil and it is built mainly to facilitate the Arabization policy; the other is Mosul-Zakho which is being built for military reasons.

- In general there seems to exist a decision for not building roads which will lead to the establishment of a network of communication for Kurdistan. For example, to go from Galala to Qala Diza (a mere distance of 50 km), one is forced to travel close to 400 km.

- Out of 150 industrial projects in Iraq there are only 4 in Kurdistan.

- Out of 25 members on the Economic Planning Board there is only one Kurd.

- Tobacco constitutes a major cash crop in Kurdistan. As a monopoly of the Government, the examination of the crop and its final purchase is used as a means of economic pressure on Kurdistan through arbitrary and discriminatory methods of purchase, lack of adequate subsidies, timing and quantity of the product purchased.

- Although Kurdistan is the main source of water for Iraq, the general design is to take this water and build irrigation projects in the south. For example, the Kirkuk irrigation

project which costs nearly 200 million dollars is designed to irrigate areas south and southwest of Kirkuk where Arab tribes are brought in and settled. During negotiations for the final implementation of autonomy for Kurdistan the Government remained adamant in refusing to give Kurdistan any power concerning irrigation planning.

5. - Policy of Terror

During the last two years, 83 members of KDP and others were arbitrarily arrested and have been killed without the benefit of a trial or investigation. Among those who died under torture were Police Col. Hussain Shirwani and Majeed Haji Qadir.

- An assassination attempt was made on the life of General Barzani on September 29, 1971. A second attempt was made on Barzani's life on July 16, 1972. An attempt was made on the life of Abdul Wahab Atrushi in Spring 1972 and while he was serving as Governor of Arbil.

- An attempt was made on the life of Idris Barzani in December 1970 while he was in Baghdad to congratulate President Bakr on the occasion of the Muslim Feast.

- An attack was carried out against the KDP Headquarters in Mosul on April 14, 1970.

- In October 1971 the Kurdish citizen Mustafa Jamil was arrested and asked to provide information about some Kurdish leaders. Under torture he lost his toes and was forced to walk on broken glass.

- It was obvious that some of the 11 Kurds who were recently executed had been severely tortured. Some had their limbs torn out and others their eyes gouged.

6. Genocide

- On June 9, 1963 (while the Ba'th were in power) and in the city of Sulaimaniya 128 persons were rounded up at night and transferred to the outskirts of the city where they were executed en masse and dumped into a mass grave.

- Around the end of June 1963 and in the Kurdish town of Key Sanjeq six people were tied to telephone poles and executed.

- In July 1963, Taha al-Shakarchi (who in February 1974 was appointed Commander of the 8th Division in Arbil) was commanding officer of an Iraqi Army unit near Key Sanjaq. Near the village of Chinarck he rounded up the 15 Kurdish NCOs in his unit, forced them into a tea house and using his tanks he demolished the house over them. Six months later and after the collapse of the Ba'th regime, the bodies of the NCOs were discovered.

- In Spring of 1966 at the village of Saruchawa close to the town of Raniya, and while an Iraqi Army unit was approaching, the village elders led by the village Mulla (religious priest) holding out a Koran appealed for mercy on behalf of the village community. In response they were all mowed down by machine guns and buried in a mass grave.

- On August 19, 1969, the village of Dakan within the Shaikhan district (Mosul province) fell into the hands of an Iraqi Army unit. The children and women of the village had already taken refuge in a close by cave. Under direct order and supervision of the Commander of the Fourth Division and the Commander of the Shaikhan district, the Iraqi Army surrounded the cave and burned alive the 67 women and children trapped inside the cave. On October 9, 1969, a Kurdish representative met the President of the UN General Assembly at New York where he presented a memorandum supported by documents and photographs condemning the Ba' th Government's dastardly act at the village of Dakan.

- On April 26, 1974, the town of Qala Diza, about 100 km north of Sulaimaniya, was heavily bombed with napalm. One hundred and thirty civilians were killed, most of them children attending school.

- On 30th April the Iraqi Army entered the town of Zakho and set fire to the town.

Friends,

The rights of national, ethnic and other minorities are an integral constituent of a just and peaceful world. We are of the opinion that international organisations, such as the United Nation and its Agencies can play a vital role in bringing about appropriate solutions to these problems.

With best wishes for a constructive and successful seminar,

KURDISTAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY

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