

KURDISTAN REPORT



BULLETIN OF THE KURDISH STUDENTS SOCIETY IN EUROPE UNITED KINGDOM BRANCH

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EDITORIAL

With the passing of every year, our Society is forging ahead with more determination to fulfill its prime objectives. The driving force behind such resolution has been the devotion and commitment of its members to the Society's principles of being an independent, progressive and democratic mass organisation, defending the rights and interests of its members from all parts of Kurdistan.

To fulfil its objectives the Society, since its foundation in 1956, has rendered a great service to the Kurdish national liberation movement, in terms of publicising the Kurdish cause and mobilising the student and intellectual sections of Kurdistan in Europe, in their people struggle for national recognition and democracy.

It has acted in fact as an "unofficial" ambassador of Kurdistan, voicing and informing the continental public opinion about the plight and immense suffering of the Kurds. Being a centre of discussion and debates on the prevailing conditions in Kurdistan, the society has always surfaced constructive ideas and arguments concerning the course of the Kurdish liberation movement.

In doing so the Society has strictly observed over the past years its independence and neutrality, with persistent revitalisation of the internal democracy within the society.

By independence we do not mean isolation or avoidance of what is happening in Kurdistan and the area, since there is a reciprocal effect between the society's work and events in Kurdistan. In effect, the society has a general political orientation characterised by the uncompromising advance of the Kurdish struggle on the basis of an anti-imperialist, democratic and progressive platform.

Our society, through its manifold activities, alliances and the commitment of its members has reflected the genuine path of the Kurdish liberation movement, thus truly becoming an extension of the movement in Europe.

The entrenched position which the society enjoys among the various progressive and democratic organisations, together with its international role within the International Union of Students (I.U.S.), are all concrete evidences of the society's sound policies and the influential role it is performing for the advance of the Kurdish cause.

However, it remains to be said that in order to strengthen the society's structure, cultivate its inner democracy and magnify its activities, the need arises for more participation and contribution from the Kurdish students, intellectual and emigrants, so that we can wholly translate its total objectives into a visible reality



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News from Iraqi Kurdistan

Kurdish guerrillas -Peshmerga-who have been waging a protracted war against the Ba'athist regime, have stepped up their attacks in view of the regimes' pre-occupation with its aggressive war efforts and the partially reduced number of troops in Iraqi Kurdistan .

Army positions and convoys and Ba'athist centres are frequently ambushed and attacked, in the country side, districts and towns of Sulimania, Erbil and Dahouk. Heavy casualties are reported to have been inflicted on the enemy.



Since the proclamation of its aggressive war against the revolution of the Iranian peoples, the hated Ba'ath regime has been internally employing deliberate and sinister methods to fragment and demoralize the growing opposition of Arab and Kurdish peoples to its rule. Now in a calculated attempt the regime is sending Kurdish youth in the Armed Forces to the battle-front in the Southern sector, and sending the elite among the Muslim Arab Shi'ites to Iraqi Kurdistan to fight the Kurdish people there.

The economic consequences of the ongoing and destructive war which the regime has launched, are deeply felt in Iraqi Kurdistan cities and districts. Due to disruption and shortage, the prices of basic food stuffs have tripled, namely flower, sugar meat and fruits.

The chauvinist Iraqi regime is planning to bring thousands of Moroccan families into Iraq to settle and work in farming projects in Kurdistan, namely in Kirkuk province. It is worth mentioning that the Kurdish populated province has been administratively dismantled, and its national character deliberately changed. This has taken the form of mass eviction of its original Kurdish population and replacing them with pro-government Arab tribes, and deporting the local Kurdish workers and employees to other parts of the country.

cont. p 5

THE KSSE -UK BRANCH IS HOLDING ITS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ON SAT. 21 MARCH. IT WILL BE FOLLOWED IN THE EVENING BY NAWROZ KURDISH NEW YEAR - CELEBRATION . DO'NT MISS IT BE THERE !

Iraq-Iran War

The dramatic escalation of the protracted hostilities between Iraq and Iran, was a deliberate aggression by the unpopular Ba'ath regime of Iraq with the connivance of US imperialism and regional reactionary regimes. Under the guise of regaining Arab territorial waters and lands, the self-proclaimed vanguard of the Arab Nation has implemented the imperialist will and designs against the Iranian Revolution and the peoples of the region. The irony of this claim is that, it is the very Saddam Al-Tikrity who relinquished the disputed territory to the Shah in 1975.

The correlation of forces emerging from the area indicates clearly where the Ba'athist regime stands. US imperialism and its western allies plus Israel are all delighted to see the Iranian anti-imperialist Revolution undermined and swept away, since its consolidation poses a grave threat to their vital economic and strategic interests. Also, Arab reactionary regimes are supporting the Ba'athist in their adventurist endeavour, including the Kings of Jordan, Morocco, Saudi Arabia.

Internally the Iraqi dictatorial regime is undergoing an acute crisis manifested in its total isolation from the people, and in the increasing mass opposition it is facing from all the deprived sections of the Iraqi society, particularly the Kurdish people and their revolutionary movement, who have withstood all racial and devious efforts by the regime to dilute their national character and to rob them from their just national and democratic rights. Today the regime is opposed by all political parties whose inspirations have been revived by the success of the Iranian Revolution against imperialist domination and despotic rule.

The fascist regime waged this war on the friendly Iranian peoples to distract attention from mounting political opposition internally and to undermine the Arab Front of Steadfastness and Confrontation against the Imperialist-Zionist-Sadat unholy alliance. Most importantly the regime wants to prove to imperialist powers that it is capable of defending and maintaining their interests in the region . It is significant that the patriotic Iraqi forces condemn the Ba'athist initiated aggression and hope it will culminate in the downfall of the Iraqi regime.

Unfortunately, the Iranian government's refusal to grant democratic and national rights to its various peoples, especially the struggling Kurdish people, has paved the way for the Iraqi regime to strike and contaminate the internal front. Something which it would not have dared to do otherwise.

The KSSE-UK Branch condemns the Iraqi regime as the aggressor and the executor of US imperialist plots against the interests of the peoples with the connivance of regional reactionary regimes and to the delight of the Zionists.

KSSE Activities

Between 7-11 May 1980 a delegation from the General Executive Committee of the KSSE was invited to the International Forum organised by the International Union of Students(IUS) in Damascus. A member of the delegation delivered a speech and participated in the subsequent discussions. The delegation also collected a petition signed by (36) student organisation bodies, declaring their support and solidarity with the struggle of the Kurdish people for democratic and national rights and against imperialism and reaction. The undersigned progressive organisations also condemned all forms of national and cultural oppression imposed upon the Kurdish people all over Kurdistan.

Organisation	Country
1 - GUSIR	Iraq
2 - SALS	Saudi Arabia
3 - NUJS	Jordan
4 - SSCY	North Yemen
5 - YD.Youth	North Yemen
6 - ODYSI	Iran
7 - E.S.O	Ethiopia
8 - NUOS	Oman
9 - DFFS	Sudan
10- NUZS	Zambia
11- SYL	Namibia
12- GUS.SPLAJ	Libya
13- AISF	India
14- Nus	Sierra Leon
15- UED	Senegal
16- NNPS	Nepal
17- DYCP	Philippines
18- CPFUCH	Chile
19- FEUU	Uruguay
20- UNE	Bnasia
21- CUB	Bolivia
22- FEUCR	Costa Rica
23- CSC	PDRY/ S.Yemen
24- UNJA-CNE	Algeria
25- DYOA	Afghanistan
26- NUGA	Ghana
27- RASD	Ugesario
28- FEP	Panama
29- BSU	Bangladesh
30- AGEUS	El Salvador
31- OSC	Lebanon
32- G.U.P.S	Palestine
33- UNEUL	Lebanon
34- UDEY	Egypt
35- CE.deLa JRR	Burundi
36- AEU	Guatemala .

resolution

At the Annual General Meeting of Liberation on 28 June 1980, our society proposed a Resolution on the Kurdish rights which was overwhelmingly adopted. The Resolution demanded an end to all forms of discrimination and national oppression used against the Kurdish people by the regimes of Turkey, Iran Iraq and Syria. It also called upon those regimes to recognise genuinely the national and democratic rights of the people of Kurdistan.

Letters were sent to the Embassies of the four countries in accordance with the content of the Resolution by the Central Council of Liberation .

((Liberation is a progressive organisation, formerly the Movement for Colonial Freedom. It has a membership of 15 Trade Unions with 3 million members, 225 local organisation and associations, 203 M's, 12 Lords and many individual democrats and Trade Unionists)).

celebration

To mark the 22 anniversary of the popular 14 July 1958 Revolution in Iraq, our society the KSSE and the Iraqi Students Society-GUSIR- held a joint and crowded celebration on 14 July 1980 in London.

Solidarity speeches and messages were addressed to the meeting by many progressive and democratic organisations and individuals. They all expressed support and solidarity with the struggle of the Iraqi people -Arabs, Kurds and national minorities- against the Ba'athist terror and repression, and for genuine autonomy for Kurdistan and democracy for Iraq. Folk music and dance were performed by members of our two fraternal societies.

Picket

On 16th August our society organised a picket in front of the Iraqi Cultural Centre with the participation of Turkish progressives and other friends of the society. The picket was in protest to the involvement of Iraqi " diplomats " in two separate acts of terrorism in Vienna and West Berlin. On 1st August two Iraqi "diplomats" were charged by the West Berlin police with unlawful possession of explosives and attempted bomb attack on a public place, where a meeting of Kurdish students was being held. A leaflet was distributed, and despite the Ba'athist provocation and threats, the picket well reflected the condemnation of our society to such terrorist methods employed by the fascist Iraqi regime to silence its multiplying critics and opponents .

Seminar

On 4 Nov 1980, a seminar on the Iraq-Iran war was organised by the Kurdish, Iraqi and Iranian Societies at Birmingham University. A speaker from the KSSE presented the Kurdish issue and position in view of the war. cont. p 5



salute to the heroic Peshmerga

The Coup and Turkish Kurdistan

On 12 September 1980 the pro-American and pro NATO generals staged yet another coup in Turkey. The Junta has dissolved parliament, closed down all political parties, abolished the constitution and the democratic rights and monopolised all powers. Thus terminating the bourgeois parliamentary system and replacing it with overt military dictatorship. The military junta assumed power during the NATO exercises. The Commander of the Air Force-Sahinkaya- returned from Washington one day before the military coup. On the same day a commander of NATO South-East flank arrived in Ankara. It was the US State Department which first announced the news of the coup.

The sharp end of the attack is directed against the working class and its organisations, the democratic and progressive forces and the Kurdish national movement. The anti-democratic measures taken by the junta have resulted in the imprisonment and arbitrary arrest of over 50,000 people. Torture is being widely used and Martial Law has been extended. A number of executions have taken place since the takeover. Censorship is strictly imposed upon the media and publications. These facts run contrary to the generals' claims of restoring and strengthening the Turkish democratic system. The junta claims they will accomplish what previous governments failed to do. Yet they contradict themselves, since they emphasise the fact that they will continue to implement the economic programme prepared by the ousted government which they claim has failed. That programme has brought the workers and the toiling people nothing but high prices, ruin, unemployment, massacres and fascist initiated terrorism. The junta also claims to be in favour of peace in the world. It is again lying. Evren the head of the junta, states that they will remain loyal to NATO, which is an aggressive imperialist alliance.

more repression

One of the Turkish Military dictatorship's top priority is to accelerate the oppression of the 8-10 millions Kurds of Turkey and prevent the rising Kurdish national movement from making any significant impact. The Turkish states' fear of the politicising Kurdish masses and toilers and their militant assertion of their just national and democratic demands, is reflected in the junta's first Communique on 12 Sep. "the destructive and secessionist sources- the generals favourite term to describe the Kurdish national movement- have increased their activities to the utmost". The junta claims also that their hated coup aims "to maintain the integrity of the country, ensure national unity and togetherness."

But the Kurdish language may not be taught in schools, Kurdish literature only circulated clandestinely and the singing of some Kurdish folksongs has been used as the basis of a prosecution. One Kurdish province recently had only one doctor to deal with 215,000 people. The rate of illiteracy in south-East-Kurdistan- is 71.5 per cent compared with a national average of 38. Infant mortality rates are also far above the national average, as is unemployment.

The economic neglect and the premediated policy of the Turkish bourgeoisie and the state of keeping Turkish Kurdistan underdeveloped through preserving and encouraging retarded forms of social organisation, run contrary to the aspirations of the Kurdish masses. Turkish Kurdistan has long been a feudal area with land holdings largely unchanged since the fall of the Ottomans and with the land distribution system described by the 'World Bank' as one of the most inequitable in the world. But recently the Kurdish clan chiefs who have relied on the support of the state to maintain their power and privileges have found their hold under threat from the rising Kurdish progressive movement.

Since the coup the repression in Kurdistan has reached extraordinary dimensions. Mass arrest are being carried out in Turkish Kurdistan. Around 10,000 Kurdish patriots have been so far arrested and detained in Diyarbakir, Urfa, Mardin, Siirt, Van, Hakari. Many Kurdish cities, districts and villages have been besieged by special commando armoured units. The house of every progressive Kurdish democrat is being searched. Only on 22 Sep over 500 Kurdish youths and students were arrested in Diyarbakir, following a protest march against the Turkish armed forces. Reports indicate that women and men are tortured nakedly in front of their husbands and wives.

All these facts and realities are hidden from the world public opinion through the strong censorship on the media and through the Western press, who distastefully defending the coup, in order to win time and to create support for the junta.

This imperialist inspired coup requires from the peace and freedom loving people to expose the true face of the junta and to enhance solidarity with the masses of Turkey. It also demands the unity of the unity of the anti-imperialist and anti-fascist Turkish and Kurdish forces to oppose and resist the military dictatorship.



KSSE activities continued**Participation**

The Society participated in the Annual Conference of the National Union of Students (NUS) held in Margat on 5-8 Dec 1980. Throughout the Conference, the Society had a stall for distributing and exhibiting literature and posters, and held several meetings with home and overseas students organisations.

Being one of the sponsors of the Committee Against Repression and for Democratic Rights in Iraq (CARDRI), members of our Society participated in the meeting held in the House of Commons on 8 Dec. 1980. Several papers concerning the escalation of repression inside Iraq and outside, the Iraqi Trade Union movement and the political and historical development of the Iraqi state, were presented by CARDRI affiliates, followed by a discussion. News of Ba'athist repression in Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan was updated. The Committee's work was reviewed together with exploring new avenues for enhancing solidarity with the Iraqi people-Arab, Kurds, national minorities- against the Ba'athist dictatorship.

Members of our Society took part in the meeting called by the newly formed Committee for the Defence of Iranian Revolution in City University on 20 Dec 1980. A KSSE representative delivered a speech supporting the work of the Committee and giving solidarity to the anti-imperialist Iranian Revolution. Meanwhile emphasising the urgency to solve the Kurdish problem peacefully and democratically on the basis of autonomy within a democratic Iran.

assistance & leaflets

As part of our commitment to our primary goals, the society has provided guidance and assistance to a number of Kurdish students to help them overcome their academic and adaptation problems in Britain.

The Society has issued a substantial number of leaflets and statements, concerning major Kurdish events, the Kurdish struggle in Iran and Iraqi Ba'ath repression and terror both inside and outside the country. Some of these statements were jointly issued with the Iraqi Students Society-GUSIRI. Also in order to fulfill our international duties and solidarity, the Society has participated in a variety of conferences, meetings and demonstrations called by other friendly, home and overseas, progressive organisations.

telegram

The Society sent a telegram of appreciation to HE Colonel Moamer Gaddafi, for positively speaking out for the Kurdish national rights and endorsing their struggle, in December 1980.

cont. p6

News... continued

In July 1980 death sentences were passed on (20) Kurdish patriots following brief in camera trials by a military special court. Amnesty International issued an Urgent Action appeal on their behalf on 11 July. Confirmed reports indicate that they have already been executed in Mosul prison.



In early December 1980, (19) Kurdish strugglers had been executed in Mosul; and (61) others had been sentenced to death.

Recent reports from Iraqi Kurdistan confirm that the Ba'athist regime has embarked upon a widespread campaign of arrest and execution of Kurdish politicians. Ironically some of them were granted amnesty by the fascist regime and returned to Iraq from their exile, abandoning the Kurdish opposition movement after 1975 Algeris Agreement. We have learned that these people refused an offer by the regime to take up arms and recruit Kurds to fight the Pesh Merga- Kurdish guerrillas and check their increasing penetration and activities

opposition forces unite

In Nov.1980 the Iraqi opposition forces formed an alliance in order to fight effectively the ruling Ba'athist dictatorship, with the aim of overthrowing it and providing a revolutionary and democratic alternative to the present fascist regime. Not surprisingly they are drawn from a wide spectrum of the Iraqi society, including Kurdish and Arab progressive nationalist and communist parties as well as independent individuals. They are united under the "Iraqi Patriotic and Democratic Front" and the "Iraqi Patriotic, National and Democratic Front".

Our Society salute and welcome these alliances, and believe that there is now an objective reality and an ample opportunity to put an end to the dictatorial and chauvinist regime, through coordinated efforts and intensified struggle to realise democracy for Iraq and genuine autonomy for Kurdistan.

Iranian Kurdistan

The victory of the Iranian revolution over the repressive and puppet regime of the Shah, has raised the hopes of all freedom-loving people Iranians to live together in peace and harmony, in a free, united and democratic Iran, where the national rights of each people are fully granted.

The revolution has liberated Iran from direct imperialist exploitation and domination. Undoubtedly the imperialist and their allies will spare no effort to recover its losses in order to install a reactionary puppet regime similar to those in Egypt, Pakistan, Turkey, Iraq etc., which is willing to oppress and subjugate its own working people to serve the interests of a small parasitic, reactionary class, in collaboration with foreign capital and its imperialist masters.

One of the problems confronted the Iranian leadership after the historical success of the Feb. 1978 uprising, was the issue of the various nationalities, including the Kurdish people who have a long history of struggle for their national, within a democratic Iran.

However, the denial of the Kurdish people legitimate demands for autonomy "the right of governing internal and local-level matters along with the abolition of cultural, economic and political discrimination of any kind..", within a united and democratic Iran, and the consequent barbaric military campaigns, have disappointed all the freedom-loving people all over the world.

This undemocratic attitude towards a peaceful solution for Iranian Kurdistan has led to a serious setback to the revolution and has done a great harm to the unity of the Iranian peoples. Such an attitude has also paved the way for the reactionary and counter-revolutionary elements both within the leadership of some Kurdish groups as well as the Iranian central government, to contaminate the internal front of the revolution in the face of imperialist aggression. They also aim at pushing the country into a civil war which can only benefit the enemies of the Kurdish people and the Iranians as a whole.

Past experience have shown that the Kurdish liberation struggle all over Kurdistan, should jointly fight for their rights with the rest of disaffected people and their democratic and progressive movement within each individual country. Such a strategy must also be based on a policy of self-reliance and on a progressive and revolutionary platform.

We believe that in order to strengthen and deepen the revolutionary gains won by the Iranian masses, and to preserve the unity of the Iranians people and the integrity of the country, together with stimulating the confrontation with the imperialist and foreign aggression, there is an imperative need for meeting the just demands of the Kurdish people in autonomy and democracy within Iran. This will in fact consolidate the Iranian revolution rather than weaken it.

**NAWROZ CELEBRATION
SAT 21 MARCH**

British MPs visit Iraqi Kurdistan

Four British MPs visited Iraq at the end of July 1980, as guests of the Iraqi government. Bob Litherland MP, a member of the parliamentary delegation, provided CANDRI with an exclusive report of his observation. The report was published Iraq Solidarity Voice-No.5 Sep 1980-Below is an excerpts of the report on Iraqi Kurdistan .

" Our mission took us to Kurdistan where one was immediately aware of an increased tension which was epitomised in our armed escort totting sub-machine guns throughout our entire albeit short visit to the area. They even escorted us to an open-air night club and removed any person who come to sit within talking distance to us. We requested to see a new Kurdish village where the Kurds, a proud and independent race of people, had been taken from their natural habitat in the mountains and transplanted in purpose built breeze-block housing and given a coloured television plus military surveillance. We were informed the Kurds welcomed the new housing and it was repeatedly emphasised that the colour TV was a present from the President himself.

This prompted the question of what happened to the Kurds who wished to remain in their homeland, and why military presence was needed in the new village. Our hosts insisted that the policy of eradicating illiteracy was for the well being of the Kurds. But their assurance, in answer to our questions, that the Kurdish language and culture were being taught in the schools, carried a hollow ring. The same can be said of the summer camp leader in charge of youngsters in uniform who paraded saluted and formed guards of honour, when he assured us that the training had no military or political connections whatsoever, but were for purely educational purposes.

However, the little one could perceive by observing and enquiring was given substance by the odd incident. For instance when an English-speaking youth felt obliged to sidle up to me and inform me there were two languages spoken in Iraq and only one taught in the Kurdish schools, that one being Arabic. In another part of Kurdistan a person in a responsible position was leaving his post because, as he put it, "the careers are in their hands"! The Baghdad Observer described the revolution as National Socialist and this was the conclusion I had reached before the end of our fact-finding mission .

KSSE activities continued

A representative of our society took part in the Round-table meeting of overseas students organisation, called by the NUS Executive on 14 January 1981. The meeting was attended by 7 overseas student bodies and aimed at discussing and exchanging views about the problems facing overseas students in Britain. A review of the KSSE activities and campaigns together with the difficulties encountered by Kurdish students, was presented in the meeting.

IRAQI BA'ATH REGIME...

Persecution of the Kurdish people...

Campaign of terror against the Iraqi patriots...

Disregard of human rights

THE TIMES MONDAY JANUARY 5 1981

Prisoners of conscience



Turkey: Ismail Besikci

By Caroline Moorehead

Ismail Besikci, a sociologist, is serving a three-year sentence in Adapazari prison, Istanbul, for offending the memory of Kemal Ataturk, the founder of modern Turkey, and for stating his belief in the Kurds as a separate ethnic group.

Though not a Kurd himself, Mr Besikci wrote to the Minister of Justice that: "the policies of governments towards the Kurdish people cannot be reconciled with the concepts of human rights and supremacy of law."

The use of the Kurdish language is banned under Turkish law and it is an offence to publish anything in Kurdish.

This is not Mr Besikci's first sentence. In 1971 he spent a brief period in jail, and a year later he was given a 13-year sentence for being involved in propaganda on behalf of Kurds and communists. After serving three years, he was released in a general amnesty.

His present sentence, which dates from September, 1979, hinges on the publication of a book in which he is highly critical of official Kemalist ideology, and on various writings dealing with the Kurds.

Recent reports state that Mr Besikci has been tortured in jail.



Kurds fighting on...

THE TIMES FRIDAY AUGUST 1 1980

Austria expels two Iraqi diplomats after blast

From New Matterman Vienna, July 31 Austria has ordered Mr Sami Hanna Azzam, the first secretary, and Mr Hamed Tawad, a member of the Iraqi embassy in Vienna, to leave the country within 24 hours. Their expulsion followed a bomb blast in which a man was killed and a woman injured.

THE GUARDIAN Saturday August 2 1980

Iraqis held in Berlin 'bomb plot'

From Stuttgart Nachrichten in Frankfurt West Germany. Two Iraqi diplomats were held in West Berlin when a bomb exploded in the West Berlin district of Wedding last Wednesday. The explosion, which killed a woman and injured several others, was attributed to a plot by Iraqi agents to blow up the West Berlin district of Wedding last Wednesday.

DEBATE CHAOS

In Aoxington, Iraqi students from Blackburn Technical College, awarded September's UHIST, Manchester College and Blackburn Technical College have banned NUIS from their premises as a protest against the NUIS area chapter. The NUIS area chapter, which had been intended to be a debate on the NUIS area, was disrupted by a group of students from Blackburn Technical College, Cardiff, who had been invited to give a paper on the NUIS area. The NUIS area chapter, which had been intended to be a debate on the NUIS area, was disrupted by a group of students from Blackburn Technical College, Cardiff, who had been invited to give a paper on the NUIS area.

IRAQ SOLIDARITY VOICE

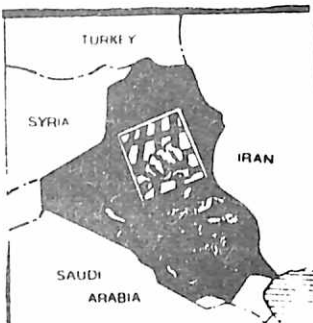
Committee Against Repression & For Democratic Rights in IRAQ - (CARDRI) Kurdistan

In early August sixteen Kurds were executed despite international calls for clemency. They were members of either the Kurdish Democratic Party or the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan or communists and were taken from more than a hundred Kurds awaiting execution in Mosul prison. The regime has been buying helicopters, armoured cars and machine-guns for use in Kurdistan and is preparing for a full-scale genocidal war against the Kurdish people.

IRAQIS IN NEW CLASHES

by JANE NOLLAND

Violent clashes between overseas students in Britain have received a new impetus with the Gulf War. The National Union of Iraqi Students, banned by the NUIS and by many loyal student unions, is believed to be behind a series of attacks on Iranian students, particularly in North West England. NUIS is an official organisation of the Ba'athist regime in Iraq. Violent attacks by the Turkish right-wing National Action Party (NAP) on left-wing Nationalist students have subsided but tension still exists between the two groups. One of the most disturbing incidents recently was caused by NUIS students about to go on an anti-imperialist demonstration in London who were attacked by Gareth Caley, president of the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology student union, with an iron bar and in arrival at hospital he needed five stitches.



Review

People Without a Country : the Kurds and Kurdistan.

Edited by Gerard Chaliand
Zed Press, hardback £14.95, paperback £3.95

Three years ago it was published in French under the title "Les Kurdes et le Kurdistan". The new title chosen for the English edition is paradoxical.

Dr Chaliand is a writer on anti-colonial liberation movements and other Third World problems.

The book opens with a preface by Maxime Rodinson, the distinguished French Marxist scholar whose major interest lies in the Islamic formations. He is well known as a supporter of the Arab cause, who makes the elementary but necessary point that supporting one people's revolt against oppression does not imply support for its rights to oppress another people in its turn. Then, after a short introduction by the editor it plunges into the heart of the subject: an account of the Kurds' history and of their present situation, written by Kurds who are committed nationalists.

The first two chapters are written by a writer from the Turkish Kurdistan "Kendal", dealing with the Kurds' experience under the Ottoman empire and then under the Turkish republic. It is there that the largest number of Kurds (8-10 million) Kurds live, but their problems there are not well known to the outside world, largely because the all round oppression exercised upon them by the Kemalist state and the subsequent regimes, denying them even their own existence as an ethnically distinguished nationality.

The chapter on Iranian Kurdistan, shorter and more schematic, was written before the Iranian Revolution by A.R. Qassemlou, but has been supplemented in the English edition by a postscript contributed by the editor early last year, as well as an account of the short-lived 1946 Mahabad Republic written by the American military attaché at the time.

The chapter on Iraqi Kurdistan is written by Ismet Sheriff Vanly who provides an interesting account of the major Kurdish uprising in Iraq from 1961 to 1975. He also analyses the causes and consequences of the 6 March 1975 Algeria Agreement.

Short but useful chapters on Syrian Kurdistan and on the Kurdish community in the Soviet Union concludes the book, which as a whole must be considered a most useful introduction to the subject.

While recognising the value of such work, particularly at this period where the Kurdish national movement is hightening and developing in all parts of Kurdistan, we feel that the work is not immune from some critical comments.

The collection of articles contained in the book are presented in a rather descriptive manner lacking the analytical power, which one would expect to see when encountering a complex social formation like Kurdistan. All the contributors are politically motivated and emphasise the political aspects of the Kurds narrating its historical development.

They fail to tackle sufficiently the dynamics of the Kurdish social formation within which the political aspect is situated and reflected. Consequently such an approach leads to divorce the political component from the rest/socio-economic forms. Generally speaking, Kurdistan society is inhabited by a mixture of pre-capitalist social forms-tribalism, pastoralism, isolated agricultural units etc. these forms are entrenched and preserved by the ruling classes who exploit the Kurdish peasants and toilers as an effective way of control and domination.

Besides the existence of such retarded forms, capitalist patterns are emerging and penetrating the Kurdish economic enclaves transforming them, yet not completely subordinating them. The introduction of the latter forms are occurring through the increasing role of the state and the extension of the market. The coexistence of the two modes of production and their mutual effect create corresponding political and ideological forms which are complicated to analyse independently.

Unless these forms are examined within the totality of the Kurdish social formation it would eventually lead the analyst to commit cynical value-judgment about the Kurdish national movement, whichever parts of Kurdistan it may be located. This is not to belittle the significance of the work under consideration, but such issues have been neglected and should have been adequately incorporated in the work.

The editor

PEOPLE WITHOUT A COUNTRY THE KURDS AND KURDISTAN

