

KURDISH STUDENT' SOCIETY  
IN EUROPE  
(K.S.S.E.)

Paper presented to the Overseas Students Conference  
October 1970

DEVELOPMENTS IN KURDISTAN

The strategic and economic importance of Kurdistan became apparent to the Imperialists soon after the 17th October revolution in Russia.

The subsequent division of Kurdistan between Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria and the ruthless oppression of Kurdish Nationalism, by the Colonialists and their local reactionaries, increased with the increasing tension between the Socialist and Capitalist camps for the latter, realising the utility of the area as a staging post against the Soviets and a buffer zone to contain if from the so-called expansion to warm waters and the fear that Kurdish Nationalism would be an aid to the Russians, have taken the Imperialists to painstaking efforts to manouvre the governments of the Middle East to sign many treaties and alliances, international and local, with the main objective of containing Kurdish Nationalism.

CENTO is one of such many Pacts between Turkey, Iran, Britain, Pakistan and Iraq (prior to the July 1958 Revolution). However the purpose of these plots in assimilating the Kurds was never fulfilled and Kurdish resistance emerged as an organised mass movement with a revolutionary context and as an inseparable limb in the chain of struggle of the peoples of the Third World against Imperialism and exploitation.

In Iraq after the defeat of the Ottomans and its occupation by British forces, the Southern part of Kurdistan was joined to the new state without consideration for the indigenous population which led to a violent struggle by the Kurds to assert their rights. The tribes under the leadership of Mahmoud Haffid expelled the British expeditionary force and declared an autonomous government in Sulamanya. This revolt was finally put down with the aid of the R.A.F. after a heavy and bloody war. Underground political organizations and societies flourished in the period between the two great wars and these attracted middle class intellectuals and young

army officers and these elements took a leading role in the Barzan revolt of 1943, led by General Barzani. The revolution demands for simple human rights were met by the devastation of Kurdistan by the Army and R.A.F. and after two years of struggle Barzani retreated to Iranian Kurdistan to play an important role in the formation of the Mahabad republic there.

The most recent revolution in Iraqi Kurdistan started on the 11th September 1961 three years after the successful July 14th revolution by the Iraqi army which toppled the reactionary monarchist regime and established the Republic of Iraq. However, the deviation of its leader, General Kassim, from the original aims and his ruthless treatment of opponents in general and Kurds in particular, and his policy of ignoring Kurdish areas and creating civil strife, finally sparked the revolution, which was led by the KURDISTAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY (K.D.P.) and so a new chapter in our history began. The old traditional and feudal elements were excluded from the leadership which went naturally to an organized and progressive party with a clear Socialist ideology and a set programme.

The revolution's manifesto declared its first aim as Democracy for Iraq and Autonomy for Kurdistan within Iraq, and although the emphasis was on the Country and peasants in the outset the K.D.P. realized in the early stages of the revolution that the involvement of the workers and intelligentsia in the towns and cities occupied by the enemy was vitally important and so, for the first time in the history of the Middle East, such stratagems as popular front coalitions took place where besides the K.D.P. the Command Council of the revolution contained elements from the major liberal and progressive forces in the country.

The skillful manoeuvring and its subsequent success, militarily and politically against fantastic odds is a proud achievement to the masses of Kurdistan and the World. Land reform and radical changes in the old traditional social structure and a fair system of government, justice and taxation in the liberated area were no simple achievements.

The collapse of the successive military corrupt government was a direct result of their oppression to the simplest human rights from the Iraqi people. Many Iraqis and Arabs joined in the "Pesh Merga" (the revolutionary army) and the Progressive Parties in the whole of Iraq supported the struggle and its first aim of Democracy for Iraq. The complete failure of the Imperialists and reactionaries to place a wedge between Arab and Kurdish Nationalism and inflame Chauvinistic tendencies failed. And so, after nine years of heroic resistance, the rights of the Kurds were finally recognized by the new Baathist regime and a peace agreement was concluded on the 11th March 1970, assesting the rights of the people of Kurdistan in Autonomy within Iraq, the improvement of social, educational welfare of the

people, the development of Kurdish areas and fair distribution of budget to the Kurds in accordance to their proportion of the population - and the release of political detainees.

Thus, seven months after the peace agreement, some of these points have been implemented but many more of them are still to be carried out.

The question of Democracy remains undecided. The 8th Conference of the K.D.P. stated that a united front of all the progressive forces would be the only solution for Iraq's numerous social and economic problems and a sure way to stop reactionary and imperialist forces from ever gaining control of the Country's destiny again.

The success of the Kurdish movement in Iraq naturally brought about repercussions for the Kurds in TURKEY; the escalation in the hysterical activity of the Turkish repressive apparatus has been noted - the large scale terrorization of wide areas of Turkish Kurdistan; discrimination and genocide, against the eight million Kurds of Turkey, are not a new occurrence. They have lasted for fifty years. In several uprisings the Kurds have tried to defend themselves (1925 in PIRAN, 1927 in ARRARAT and 1937 in DERSIM). Altogether the Chauvinistic Turkish governments massacred no less than one million Kurds, mostly civilians not participating in the revolts, in an effort to obliterate the Kurdish character, culturally and physically, from the country. The existence of the Kurds is denied officially and their language outlawed and, since the 2nd World War, hundreds of thousands of families have been forcibly exiled to remote parts of the country far from Kurdistan.

The economic pressures on the Kurdish provinces were increased regardless of the fact that they are the main producers of raw materials, petrol and agricultural products. The area is reduced to colonial status and starved out through price manipulation and investment policy. Primary and secondary education is non-existent in most of the area.

The new phase of aggression began after March 11th by the Turkish rural police and military commandos trained by U.S. Green Berets experts in anti-guerrilla warfare. On the pretext of disarming villagers they set upon many towns pillaging and murdering. On the 7th/8th April 1970 SILVAN was occupied and a feat of looting, rape and murder took place, such as had never before been witnessed. The death of 8 Kurds has since been confirmed and a several times higher number of women committed suicide after their humiliation. Similar incidents took place in DERK, MIDYAT, BISMIL, TUNCELI and many other places. A state of famine and terror was established in the area as confirmed by many eye-witnesses such as the research team of the Protestant Students Community in Germany who visited the area and later confirmed these events in their pamphlets.

The Demirel Government took the XIII conference of our Society in Berlin, in August 1969, as a pretext to launch their attacks claiming, through the press and radio, that it was a gathering of subversive elements planning havoc in Turkey and to separate the Kurdish areas into an independent state, although the Congress only demanded, in one of its resolutions, the natural and cultural rights for Kurds in Turkey.

The Turkish foreign ministry declared that it was paying the highest attention to the "Developments in Berlin" and would soon discover the conspirators and take stern action against them. All this hysteria over a normal Students' conference, was open to all, even "Turkish Intelligence Officers" posing as Journalists whose presence at the conference was known to all. The complete disregard of the previous twelve conferences and the concentration on the 13th convinced us that the corrupt government was planning a new campaign and needed some excuses.

This new phase of hostilities has three main objectives

1. A premature Kurdish revolt or several local uprisings provoked by the atrocious behaviour of the armed forces could easily be crushed by the American backed well-armed government forces, furnishing a welcome occasion for the liquidation of the already decimated Kurdish intelligentsia and organized political elements.
2. The growing unrest within the army against the civil government will get an outlet, ie; the Army's energy will be directed against the allegedly separatist Kurds instead of against the reactionary government.
3. Most important - to isolate the Kurdish movement from the dissident progressive forces and parties in the rest of Turkey, especially the T.L.P. (Turkish Labour Party) and to line them up in a patriotic front that naturally backs up the government against the so-called Kurdish Separatism, just as it uses the question of the Turkish minority in Cyprus to rally popular support whenever its opponents get active.

It is clear that a government which demands a separate state and full <sup>national</sup> ~~natural~~ rights for the Turks in Cyprus constituting less than one fifth of the total population and, at the same time, pursues a policy of genocide against  $\frac{1}{3}$  of its own subjects is only doing it to keep a handful of reactionary and profiteers, backed by U.S. bases, in power and to keep away the eventual revolution of the Kurdish and Turkish masses in a united and common front to rise the flag of dignity over Turkey and expel the Imperialists forever, as in IRAN, where the revisionist and reactionary government of the Shah entrenched in power with the aid of the Imperialist bases and Alliances and kept from collapse by spending half the Country's budget on its Army and Security while the Kurdish and Persian people suffer the worst sort of living standards in the Middle East.

The many revolts and uprisings by the Kurds in the early Century were dealt with severely by the Pehlavi regime and the Kurds suffered greatly from its repressive policies.

The unity of the political forces in Kurdistan in one single front, the "Komala" became a fact in 1942 and it later succeeded in establishing the first Kurdish republic in history. The republic of Mahabad, born in 1946, achieved many socio-economic changes in its short lived period and was a close ally of the Azerbaijan republic in the neighbouring province which was established by the Tendah party. The collapse of the republic after its small army, under General Barzani, put up a stiff resistance finally met defeat and retreated to the U.S.S.R. in a heroic march in the most difficult terrains and climates, fighting the forces of Iran, Iraq and Turkey which tried to cut their retreat. This was another bloody chapter and great epic in our history.

The leaders and prominent figures of the republic were hanged publicly and a wave of terror was initiated by the Army.

The start of the 11th September revolution in Iraqi Kurdistan brought severe punishment upon the Kurds of Iran, the border areas were declared prohibited and, although at odd ends with the successive Iraqi governments, they were united in their fight against the Kurds. Many Kurdish and Persian intellectuals and students were imprisoned and tortured to death in the dungeons of the dreaded "SAVAK" operating under the direction of the C.I.A. The murder of Ismael Sherifzadah, Sulaiman Mueni, Mala Awara and many others shocked the progressive elements in the country and strengthened their will to face up to this corrupt and incapable regime.

We ask the peoples of the world to stand by the struggle of the Kurdish and Persian peoples for their human rights and to protest against the Shah's policies dictated by CENTO and the Imperialists for the benefit of the ruling clique of Land lords and Generals.

The situation in SYRIA differs dramatically in that a so called progressive and socialist regime, while resisting the Imperialists and Zionist aggression and identifying itself with the Palestinian revolution and its rightful aims, pursues a policy of racial discrimination and sub human treatment of the half million Kurds living there and who from the times of SALADIN joined their Arab Bretheren against all aggressors and intruders and are united with them in a common destiny throughout history. The Baathist regime in Syria considers all the non Arab population in the country as refugees and second class citizens with no right of citizenship. Thus the Kurds are unable to practice their legitimate cultural rights, enter into higher education or the Army, are not allowed to buy land and possess Syrian passports (the previous Secretary of our Society, OMAR SHIEKMOOSE, a founder member of the Overseas Student Conference, has been deprived of citizenship and his passport withdrawn and is at present taking refuge in Sweden).

The governments land reform policy does not extend to the Kurdish areas. Reactionary Landlords are still in possession of huge proportions of the land and the exploitation of peasants and workers have actually increased. The official government "Arab Belt" policy plainly and openly states that restrictions on the non Arab population (Kurds) in the frontier areas (Kurdistan) are being carried out to Arabize the population and give it its true Arabic character.

We protest against the Syrian government and its racial policies and ask all the peace loving peoples to voice their protest against such policies which can only weaken and destroy the country making it an easy prey for Zionist and Imperialist ambitions. The realization by neighbouring Iraq that the peaceful settlement of the Kurdish question is the only way for a strong and prosperous country came after a decade of ruthless war by which the Kurds were never subdued and which caused so much suffering to the Iraqi people.

Does the Syrian government intend to ignore history and divert the masses from their true fight against Imperialism and exploitation?

Or doesn't it know that an existing nation cannot be obliterated - for history has proved that a thousand could be killed or a million...but a NATION?

**NEVER!**