

Knyaz Mirzoyev

# The Kurds







KNYAZ MIRZOYEV

**THE KURDS:  
ESSAYS ON HISTORY  
AND CULTURE**

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This book by the Academician of the International Academy of the Higher school, Doctor of Philology, Professor K.I. Mirzoyev is devoted to the history, culture, language, literature, traditions and customs, folklore and written monuments of one of the most ancient nations of the Eastern world.

“The Kurds. Essays on History and Culture” is a popular scientific publication intended for philologists, sociologists, historians, culturologists, and also for a wide range of readers, wishing to learn as much as possible about the Kurds, a people of many millions, who nowadays inhabit the territory of Syria, Iraq, Iran, Turkey, the countries of the former Soviet Union and other regions.

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*To the memory of my mother Balahanum,  
my father Ibrahim and my brother Jakub, who fully  
experienced all the sufferings of our native people.*

### **Author's Foreword**

All my activities as a philologist-orientalist are connected with the literature of the Middle East, Central Asia, Transcaucasia, and of course with the native Kurdish culture. It is natural, that the majority of my research is devoted to this fascinating theme.

Recently there were some tragic events that have drawn the attention of the whole world to Kurdistan. Everyone remembers the populous demonstrations in front of the embassies of the USA, Israel, Greece, Turkey, Russia, the protest meetings, the hunger-strikes, the cases of self-immolation, caused by the aspiration once again to draw the attention of the world community to the efforts of the Kurds who have had enough civil courage to take these desperate steps in order to support against malevolent forces their charismatic leader Abdullah Ocalan. All this has stirred up a profound interest in the Kurdish people, their history, their religion and their culture both in Europe and the rest of the world.

To satisfy this common public interest I have made up my mind to write the present book "The Kurds: Essays on History and Culture". This book is a tribute of gratitude to the outstanding sons, prominent political figures and the great thinkers of my people, who have glorified the name of the "Kurds" among other nations and to those who have sacrificed themselves for the sake of Kurdistan. The present monograph is a sign of gratitude to the people of Kazakhstan, who has sheltered the Kurds, as well as many other nations that have been subjected to repression.

I also express intimate gratitude to all of my friends, who morally and financially supported the idea of writing and publishing this book.

## FROM THE EDITOR

Knyaz Ibraghimovich Mirzoyev, the Academician of the International Academy of Sciences of the Higher School (IAS HS), Doctor of Philology, Professor, a writer and a journalist, had already had numerous merits and achievements when he moved from Armenia to the Republic of Kazakhstan.

His life was developing in three main directions: as a scientist-orientalist, a member of staff of the higher school and a public figure. In 1995 K.I. Mirzoyev headed the Kazakhstan Union of Kurdish Intelligentsia, and he gave all his competence and creative energy to the studying of the Kurdish history, literature and art and to the preserving of the treasures of our national culture.

The prominent researcher and educationalist, Knyaz Mirzoyev is the author of many works on comparative literary criticism.

The monograph "Kurds," written by the Academician and published in 2001, has become a notable event in political and literary life of the numerous Kurdish ethnoses and this title has a very capacious specification "Essays on History and Culture". In his Introduction the author writes: "This book is a tribute of gratitude to the outstanding sons, prominent political figures and the great thinkers of my people, who have glorified the name of the "Kurds" among other nations and to those who have sacrificed themselves for the sake of Kurdistan".

I shall add that as a popular scientific edition this book by K.I. Mirzoyev has become a kind of a textbook for the Kurds; the scientist's contribution to the preservation of our national memory, and, which is also very important to the education of new generations of the ancient Kurdish people, to the formation of their fidelity to our Fatherland and its history.

K.I. Mirzoyev's favourite genre is the literary portrait. In this book you will find the most prominent names of Kurdish writers, scientists, politicians, businessmen, simple workers, and they are described as uncommon, attractive people due to artistry of style of the author, richness and figurativeness of his language and his attention to the originality of a person's soul.



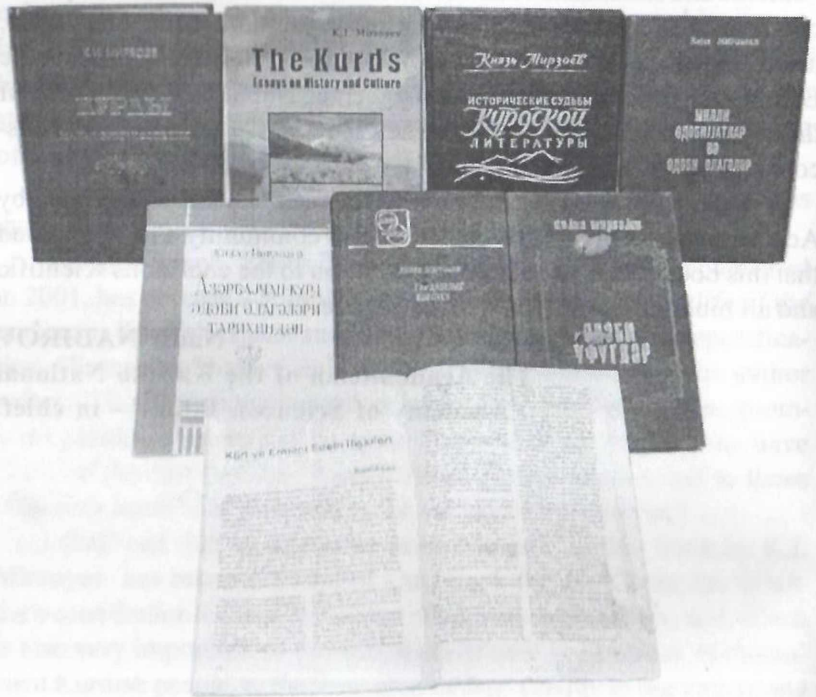
I want to underline that the value of the monograph "The Kurds. Essays on History and Culture" is in upholding historical justice with respect to the distressful Kurdish people, who managed to keep their unity during millennia. In particular, the Academician pays great attention to spiritual values of our ethnos, that is, to culture, literary monuments and folklore.

Knyaz Mirzoyev is a member of the Union of Writers of the USSR, Armenia and Kazakhstan and the Union of Journalists of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Having wide experience in journalism and leadership, he propagandizes the original Kurdish culture and literature, being the Editor - in - Chief of the periodic magazine "Nubar". He is also one of the regular authors of Kazakhstan newspaper "Kurde zane" and Moscow edition of "Kurdistana Azad" ("Free Kurdistan").

I consider it an honour to present this new edition of the book by Academician K. I. Mirzoyev to the world community. And I am glad that this book will be a notable contribution to the enormous scientific and art bibliography devoted to our people.

**Nadir NADIROV**  
**The Academician of the Kazakh National**  
**Academy of Sciences. Editor - in chief.**

## Basic works of the author about the Kurds





## LEGENDS ABOUT KURDISTAN

Once King Solomon called 500 young genies and ordered them to fly where the sun sets, and not to come back until they had found 500 of the finest maidens from faraway Europe. The genies searched for a long time, deciding carefully and assiduously, and, at last, they managed to choose 500 beauties whiter than the Moon and sweeter than a May night. But by the time the genies together with the maidens had flown back to the imperial palace, King Solomon had already died. The genies were in love with the beauties and married them, and the maidens gave birth to many fine children. And those children had even more children... And so this beautiful legend explains the origin of the Kurds.

According to an Armenian legend the Kurds apparently appeared only in the 10<sup>th</sup> century B.C. "When (in the 10<sup>th</sup> c.) Arabian sovereignty began to change and, the Scythians, namely the Turks, from the other side of the Caspian Sea, rushed in multitudes to Persia and Media, and seized many areas, and were converted to their beliefs and became a part of them (that is the Persians and the Medians) by religion and language. Many of them, having collaborated with the Median princes, invaded Armenia, to the territories belonging to the Karduhis and the Moks, occupying those countries and settling in them. It is these people who are now called the Kurds. Some of them moved to Armenian and Syrian Mesopotamia, where they settled. Later many of Christians have gradually mixed with them, and were converted to their beliefs."

In the foreword to the Kurdish historical work "Shereff-nameh", written in 1596 in the Persian language by emir Shereff - khan Bidlisi, we find a legend about tyrant Zokhhak, who succeeded Dzhemshid on the throne of the Pishdadids and became the fifth king of this dynasty. Zokhhak suffered from a strange illness: on each of his shoulders there was a tumour, which was like a snake. The most skillful doctors could not manage to cure Zokhhak. To get rid of the illness the devil advised him to treat himself with the brains of the young men. Every day two youths were sacrificed to Zokhhak. Meanwhile the man, who carried out these daily executions, was a kind man who pitied his victims. In-

stead of two people he killed only one, and replaced the brain of the second young man with the brains of ram. Those who were rescued in this way, had to disappear to a wild and inaccessible mountainous area. In the course of time their number increased and it was from these men that the Kurdish people originated and began to engage in agriculture and cattle breeding. They were famous for their fearless, bravery which caused some Arabian authors to name them "alakrad taifatun min al-geanies," the "tribe of malicious spirits". Annually August 31 in Demavend is celebrated as the day of ridding Iran of the tyrant and is connected with the end of Zokhhak's rule. This holiday is called anid-i-kurdi', meaning "Kurdish holiday".

## THE KURDS

*To live in the world  
means to live in  
peace.*

*A Russian proverb.*

### **The historical and literary theories of the origin of the Kurds**

History gives us certain names, which can be philologically linked to the modern name "Kurds." This enables experts to put forward various interpretations. Archeologists and historians consider the Kurdish tribes to be among the most ancient nations of the world. The area of their settlement is believed to be inaccessible mountainous areas of modern Kurdistan. Primordial Kurdish hunters shot down wild rams and goats in the epoch of Mustye (60,000-30,000 B.C.). And the first shepherds on the Earth were the descendants of Mustye hunters. The beginning of domestic cattle breeding and the development of agriculture dates from the epoch of mesolite (11,000.-9,000 B.C.) Archeological finds in the cave of Shanidar, dated from the 11<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> centuries



B.C., forms more clear evidence of the most ancient origin of the Kurdish people.

The Kurds themselves consider the Medians as their ancestors. The territory of ancient Media almost coincides with modern Kurdistan. In the national Kurdish anthem a "Median trace" is clearly audible. For a long time historians and linguists have recognized that ethnic origin of the Kurds occurred not without indispensable participation of the Medians. The latter under the name of the "Medians" are repeatedly mentioned in the Bible (the books of prophets Isaiah, Daniel, the book of "Esther").

The tribal unions of the Kurds battled against the Shumers and the Assyrians in the structure of the Persian armies and they captured Ninevia and Babylon. The ancient historian Xenophon narrates colorfully how the Kardukhs, being a part of the Kurdish ethnoses, crushed a big Greek group receding after defeat in Babylon through the Kurdish lands in the area of modern Northern Kurdistan.

So, it was usually supposed, that the Karduchs mentioned by Xenophon undoubtedly were the ancestors of the Kurds.

Orientalist P. Shekhtman in his work "The Karduchs, ancient ancestors of the Kurds" wrote that the Karduchs used to live in the territory of Northern Kurdistan. The ancient tribes of the Karduchs spoke the language, which did not belong to the Iranian group of languages. However it is doubtless, that the Karduchs were among ancestors of the Kurdish people and subsequently became a part of the Kurdish ethnoses. The lands of the Kardukhs stretched up to the Kentrit River (Botan). Armenia was situated a little farther. They battled as true highlanders: occupied the tops of the mountains along the line of the enemy, attacked separate groups, fired at enemies with bows and slings and rolled huge stones down the slope to the road.

The Karduchs, Xenophon says, were so quick, that they managed to retreat even after they approached the Hellenes at a close distance. The arrow punched holes in the shields and armour. When the Hellenes had arrows, they used them as darts. In learning about the Kardukhs and the modern Kurds we see many common features in them: they are highlanders, occupy the same territory, both are very brave, have a similar name, - what more is necessary to support the hypothe-

sis? However the present condition of researches does not make it possible to confirm this hypothesis with confidence. First orientalists such as Neldeke, who is known as an authority on the given question, then Hartmann and Veisbakh proved that on linguistic reasons the terms of the Kurd and the Karduk cannot be considered as equivalents. These scientists suppose, on the contrary, that Kurts of the antique authors, especially those of Strabo who lived in Small Media and Persia, were the Kurds. Recently S.F.Leman-Haupt, a well-known expert in the history of this part of Asia, has returned to the question of the Kardukhs in whom he sees the ancestors not of the Kurds, but of the Georgians, or the Kartwels.

These people who were also called the Ibers immigrated to the modern territory at a comparatively later time and gradually mixed with the Moskhs who already lived there. On the other hand, this immigration according to the Georgian legend, came from the south, in those times when Herodotus knew nothing about the Ibers who were in the Caucasus, took place between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> centuries B.C. So, continues Leman-Haupt, the territory around the place of the merge of the East (Bokhtan-Su) and the Western Tigris was occupied at the end of the century by the Kardukhs, and these people as T.Neldeke and R.Hartmann proved, have nothing in common with the Kurds who came from Persia and some centuries back have settled in that area. The term of the Kardukhs loses its Aramenian ending of the plural Kard-kh and similarities with the name of the settlers in Georgia (Iveria), the Kartwels. The name of Korduena, Gordia and others by which the southern territory and its population are called, contains the same root. In the past this territory was occupied by the Kardukhs, there are a significant number of the cave dwellings that have a strong similarity to the Georgian mountain settlements, but essentially distinguished from pre-Armenian constructions on rocks.

After the conquest of Asia by Alexander the Great a part of the territory of the Kardukhs, including Nusaibin, was colonized by the Macedonians, the natives of Migdonia. The disturbances, caused by their invasion, directly or indirectly could have touched the Kardukhs and forced a part of them to emigrate north at the same time as the above-mentioned date of the immigration of the Ibers; the other part



remained on the former place of settlement in Gordiena or Korduena of the Greeks and the Romans. And if it is so, then in "Anabasis" by Xenophon, where he recounts the seven-day transition through the country of the Karduchs, we have the earliest description of ways of conducting fight, customs and traditions of the ancient Georgians. The Kardukhs Kartwels hence, were the southern neighbours of the Khalds (the Urartu) while the other part of the Georgian people-the Moskhi - adjoined the Khalds in the north.

This supposition on the link between the Kardukhs and the Kartwels, made by Leman-Haupt, however, is not new. The same hypothesis was formulated by the Russian scientist N. Marr in his article "Once Again about the Word "*Chelebi*" (On the question of the cultural value of the Kurdish nationality), published in the "Notes of the Oriental branch of the Imperial Russian Archaeology society". However, if Leman-Haupt excludes the Kurds from his concept, according to the Kurdish chronicle "Sharef-Nameh", the Kurdish tribe union "horns" captured from the Georgian King lands south of Van (the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> c.) and subordinated the Kudaks, who subsequently have joined the Kurdish tribes, Marr supposes, that "...In the course of time the initial identity of the Kardukhs (the Kurds) and the Karts (the Georgians), nowadays torn apart from each other by a millennial history will be supported by their real experiences".

A bit later we shall return to the theories of Marr. Coming back to the Kardukhs whose relation with the Kurds, apparently, is almost completely denied, we shall note, again having referred to Xenophon, that they never recognized the authorities either of king Artaxerx, or Armenia. When in I century B.C. the Armenian king Tigran II conquered Korduena, its king Zarbien was executed. In 115 A.D. Manisar became the king of Korduena, and only superficial was the Armenianization of the province of Korduena.

No matter whether it is permissible or not from the point of view of the laws of linguistics to compare the Kardukhs and the Kurds, it must be noted, however, that in the local toponymics the term Kard is certified. For example, we can find it in the name of Bet-Kardu, which was an area in the province of Korduena, and in the name of modern city of Dzhizre-ibn-Omar Gazarta d'Kardu. The Armenians used the name



Kordukh, and the Arabs Bakarda. The Armenians and the Arabs spatially limited the area, which was actually Kardu. However, nobody knew the exact borders of the province of Korduena. Its three cities Sareiza, Satalka and Pinaka (modern Date) - were located on the Tigris. But it is necessary to remember, that, according to Strabo, the Corduen Mountains stretched between Diyarbakir and Mush.

However hypotheses about the origin of the Kurds based on studying the names that historians retained for us in this area are not limited to the Kardukhs of Xenophon. Between the 9<sup>th</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C. the mountains, which later became Armenian, served as the territory of the Khald Empire, or Urartu (the first local name and the second Assirian are equivalent to biblical Ararat). These Khalds who should not be mixed with the Chaldeans - Semites of Babylonia, at one time represented the force, capable to cause serious troubles to Assyria with which they waged frequent and sometimes successful wars. So, phonetic laws admit the comparison of the names Khald and Kardu, which in turn can have some connection with the Kartwels-Georgians.

Nevertheless these ideas do not shed more light on the origin of the Kurds as we do not know much about the Khalds, whose ethnic characteristics are also disputable. It is known only that their language was not an Indo-European, having some similarity to the languages of the Kartwelian groups. Meanwhile the Kurds, at least now, speak, undoubtedly, the language of the Iranian group, hence an Indo-European one.

All that has been said above, certainly, does not form the basis to mix pre-Armenian Khalds with the Babylonian Chaldeans. But this necessary distinction was established and accepted in the oriental studies only recently. It was just a hypothesis based on their relationship with the Chaldeans that had been dominant. According to the Bible, the latter were really placed in Eastern Kurdistan. Marco Polo expressed it in the same way. Besides he spoke about the Kurds - Christians in the mountains of Mosul. For the medieval Western-European scientists that was sufficient grounds for seeing the Kurds as the descendants of Chaldean sorcerers, mentioned in the New Testament.

The outstanding historians and philologists of the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Michaelis and Shletser, insisting on the necessity to collect exact data on the language and culture of the Kurds, nevertheless sup-

ported a hypothesis of medieval science about the Chaldean origin of the Kurds. Meanwhile already at that time the practical works of missionaries-dominicans Garzoni (whose Kurdish grammar appeared in 1787), Soldini and others based on the excellent (for those times) knowledge of several Kurdish dialects, showed a direct connection of the Kurdish language with modern Iranian.

This connection was so transparent, that Garzoni, for example, found it possible to use the Iranian Latinized alphabet for printing in the Kurdish language the translations of Church books. They were edited by the congregation called "Propagation of Belief" and created for this purpose at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, the recognition of a close relationship between the Kurds and the Iranians, and their language as a dialect of Iranian put forward the problem of the Iranian origin of the Kurds.

In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century a great number of works appeared about Kurdistan, the Kurds, their language, the first concrete data on the history of the Kurds, their dialects, tribes, settlements or architecture, and pre-Islamic beliefs, as well as the revolution in the scientific representations, as a result of opening and decoding of the monuments of the ancient cultures of the Near East, part of which was found in the territory of Kurdistan, - all of this promoted revision of obsolete judgments of the first scholars who specialized on the Kurds.

The science again put a problem of the origin of the Kurds and their language. Known linguists E.Rediger and A. Pott, basing on comparative linguistics, have resolutely rejected the probability of the Chaldean origin of the Kurdish language, having established its connections with modern Persian and with Zendian which was their common parent language. Thus, the hypothesis about the Iranian origin of the Kurdish language gained a firm hold in the science.

The Russian scientist Kunik, establishing with the help of the historical data the conclusive connection of ancient cultural peoples of the Near East with the Kurds, asserts on the basis of materials about relationship of the Kurdish language with the Persian language, first Iranian, and then and an Aryan origin not only of the biblical Chaldeans, but also of all the culture of Asia Minor. These ideas of Kunik were advanced and popularized by Renan. These ideas with Dorn's influence



formed the basis for P.Lerh's uncompleted monograph "Research on the Iranian Kurds and their ancestors, the northern Chaldeans". The latter already a priori sees the Kurds as the descendants of those warlike and strong Iranian Chaldeans, who already in the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC as highlanders, full of military spirit, went down Tigro-Evfratian lowland and subdued here weak Semite tribes of Babylonia, bringing some fresh strength to this state.

#### **V.Minorsky's linguistic theory on Median-Scythian origin of the Kurds**

Based on the agreement that the names Karduchs', Kartwels', Khalds' and Chaldeans' have similarities with the Kurds, many researchers tried to see them as the ancestors of the Kurds. The opinion that the Kurdish language is close to Persian is now most widely spread.

V.Minorsky notes that should the researchers try to find for the Kurds their local ancestors they most likely would appear to be the Pactis (but not the Kardukhs). This name is mentioned by Herodotus when he writes about the area up to Bokhtan, the northern inflow of the Tigris. It is true that this inflow is actually in Bet-Kardu and was pronounced in the past as Bokhtan.' According to Herodotus the Armenians and the Pactis (the Bokhtans) occupied the 13<sup>th</sup> satrapy of the Persian Empire. In the Kurdish legend, in the "Sharaf - nameh" the significant role is attached to Bokhtan. It is said here, that all the Kurds may have been the descendants of two brothers Bohta and Bachana.

However, Minorsky himself has certain reservations, saying, "It is basically risky to establish the origin of peoples on the etymological data. The latter must be based on the historical and geographical facts". Then he remarked, that in the Arabian sources the name "Kurds" was a synonym of "nomads"; the Arabs called the Kurds "Akrad". In order to prevent a mess, Minorsky considers the Kurds to be those who speak the Kurdish language. He wrote: "For the Kurds scattered on so vast space and having so appreciable distinctions in somatic feature, essential factors (for their national characteristic) are the way of life, and also language."



Though the Kurdish language has some dialects, it nevertheless displays many similarities of characteristic features and belongs to the northwest group of the Iranian languages. Having proceeded from this, Minorsky comes to the conclusion that a language of some significant group lies in the basis of the Kurdish language. Its basic specific features were formed even before the expansion of the Kurds and their settling in the mountains. And in spite of the fact, that from the original Median language only some proper names have remained up to now, nevertheless it is impossible to imagine the formation of the northwest dialects of the Iranian areas without the participation of Median. Not denying a number of the historical and geographical positions, some historians suppose that the expansion of the Kurds could take place only from Media Minor, that is Atropatena, or modern Azerbaijan.

Then Minorsky passes to the historic and ethnic analysis of the area, located to the south off the Lake Urmia. For a long time it was a cause of bloody conflicts between Assyria and Urartu. At first some non-Aryan princedoms, such as Allabria, Harhar, Ellipi, etc. were situated to the south off the lake, then in the southwest there appeared an area which was called Parsua (for the first time in history it was mentioned in 844 year B.C.). It is this territory that is considered to be an ancient place of the Persians' residence; to the southeast off Parsua there were the Medians, mentioned from 836 B.C. Later, since 714 B.C., the name "Parsua" disappears (Persians emigrated to the south), and little by little the Medians become the owners of the whole area. And finally a mysterious people, the Mannais, or Manneis by name have become the direct eastern neighbours of Parsua since the years of 856-830. There are no exact data about their ethnic origin, but it is known, that they have thoroughly mixed up with the Medians and experienced a strong influence of the Iranians and later the Scythians.

Having analyzed the compositions of Xenophon, Strabo, Herodotus, Polybius, Livy (Titus Livius), and also a number of place names, the scientist comes to the conclusion that the Kurds in their expansion followed from the Lake Uremia to Bohtan where since the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. a Kurdish princedom of Mahkert has been known.

V. Minorsky in his works offers rather a witty hypothesis, explaining the name "Kurmandzh" which was the Kurds' native name. Separating

the suffix "dzh," the scientist sees "Kurd" in the first element of the remaining components, which is kur' and in the second, which is man' something appropriate to Media or the Manneis. It seems plausible, that the Kurdish nation was generated from the merge of two homogeneous tribes who spoke very close Median dialects. On the other hand, there is no doubt, that in the expansion westward the Kurds included some elements of the local languages in the structure of their language.

### **N. Marr's linguistic theory on the Kurd's origin**

Another prominent scientist - orientalist N.Marr made his conclusions on the basis of the legend according to which the Kurds have abdicated their original language and have acquired a language which was close to Persian. However if we take into account this legend, first mentioned by Masudi, we should not forget, that originally they spoke the Arabian language. Marr supposes, that the Kurds have replaced their language (quite possible, since the Bulgarians did the same), but at the same time he emphasized, citing Ker Porter, that "the customs of the Kurds are as firm, as rocks of their territory". It is possible, the scientist hinted at yezidism. This belief, on the one hand, has a number of features common with mandeism and sabeism and on the other hand with various trends which were found out in Armenia. It is the set of features by which the formation of national character is caused that matters.

Marr has devoted only one of his works to the problem of the Kurds. Later, in other researches, he comes back to this problem again and again. In the opinion of the scientist, the Kurds are the avtokhtons of the mountainous areas of Asia Minor. The Kurdish language was generated in this territory, but not in any other point of the globe. Kurdish had undergone basic changes from the Yafetic state up to Indo-European one, because people who spoke this language endured the changes in socio-economic conditions and also under doubtless influence of the shift of the centers of culture. All this also affected its connection with the Iranian languages, the languages of Armenia and,



probably, with the Indo-European elements of the Khet languages. It tested on itself also the Turkish influence in feudal Kurdistan. Hence, in the Kurdish language only at the certain stages of its development are found out Indo-European features that by no means can be defined either as the beginning or as the end of its formation.

The researcher himself defines the reasons that have caused changes in the language in the following way:» It was not due to external massive migrations, but to revolutionary transformations of social layers caused by the new resources of material life, qualitatively new engineering and qualitatively new social order. As a result we have a new thinking, and with it a new ideology in the structure of the language and, naturally, its new technology».

As to the problem of the origin of the Kurds there exist two concepts. According to one of them, the Kurds are of the Iranian origin (Indo-European) also moved in the 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C. from the area of the Lake Urmia to Bokhtan (Kentr). In the basis of the other is an opinion, that the Kurds are avtokhtons related to such peoples as the Khalds, the Georgians, the Armenians, whose language they spoke in the past, having replaced it by Persian later. It is necessary to note, that both concepts do not exclude completely each other. In fact, on the one hand, Minorsky admits the possibility of a certain influence of the Asian languages on Kurdish.

On the other hand, Marr, asserting the avtokhton character of the Kurds, does not exclude their relationship with the Medians, and the scientist considers that the Yafetic layer in the Kurdish language is traced less precisely while in the Indo-European features the Kurdish language is perfectly defined as Persian.

Both concepts do not contradict to each other chronologically. The Kurds appeared on the left inflow of the Tigris in the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C. For a long time they had been the neighbors of the Kardukhs and Xenophon certified this name in 400 - 401 B.C. According to Leman-Haupt the Kardukhs emigrated from this district to Georgia-Iberia only under Alexander of Macedonia and probably even later, in the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C. At this particular time the Kirtis and the Kardukhs, being neighbourly mountain tribes, could have had contact and influenced each other in many ways.



It would be desirable to note, that in modern historiography discussions about the origin of the Kurds take place up to now. In our opinion, today it is impossible to rule out the works of the ancient authors: Polibius, Strabo, Pliny the Elder, Tacitus, Xenophon, Herodotus and such famous modern orientalists as N. Marr, V. Minorsky, V. Nikitin and many others. Modern orientalist M. Lazarev in his introduction to the "History of Kurdistan" ignores the researches of the predecessors and it is impossible to agree with him here.

Thus, it is necessary to continue the researches on the origin of the Kurds, and at the same time to accumulate and analyze the historical, social and linguistic facts.

### Notes on the History of the Kurds

*Only he deserves life and  
freedom, who daily  
fights for them.*

*Johann Goethe*

Nowadays the Kurdish people persistently aim at the right to self-determination. This nation has spent its whole history trying to prove to the whole world, that it has all the grounds to strive for this right. In this section we shall try to outline some aspects of the national-liberation movement in Kurdistan, some significant facts from the history of the Kurds. Unfortunately, the absence of traditions in the Kurdish historiography, insufficient sources and lack of the literary base lets down the sequence of illumination of the historical material. As historians note, nowadays there is no authoritative common opinion on many key questions concerning the Kurdish history. It can be explained by a number of reasons: 1) scant sources of material culture; 2) the data of Ethnography and Linguistics are abundant in versions and, at times, are insufficiently convincing scientifically; 3) frequently the objectivity of the author is affected by his political convictions and world outlook.

The important geographical and strategic position of Kurdistan for many centuries has drawn the attention of the neighboring states, which aspired to subdue this country using all means.

Kurdistan became arena of numerous wars after the fall of the Median state (the 6<sup>th</sup> c.). From the 7<sup>th</sup> till the 9<sup>th</sup> century Kurdistan was in the structure of the Arabian caliphate.

Later the tribes of nomads from Central Asia the Turks and Mongols intruded into the territory of Kurdistan. The Mongols and the Turks crushed the independent Kurdish principedoms of Shakhrezur and Mervanids.

The Kurds achieved power under the great Salah-ad-Din (Saladin), the Kurd from Erbil, who successfully battled against the crusaders. Having united the Kurds of Southwest Kurdistan in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, he created the Ayubidian state.

### **The Knight of the East**

The Star of the Ayubidian dynasty was Salah-ad-Din Yusuf Ayubi (1138-1193). In the history of mankind there are many names whose fame will never fade. Our narration will be incomplete without the detailed story of the ingenious military leader, the representative of the Kurdish dynasty of Ayubids Salah-ad-din, whose name is translated as "the Blessing of Belief" (he is known to historians under the name of Al-Malik an Nasir I, that is "King, the Winner", and Fatikh al-Makdis, which means "the Conqueror of Jerusalem"). The Europeans called him Saladin. It was about him that seven centuries later, the English writer Walter Scott spoke: "Saladin is the greatest figure in the history of the East". The hero of W. Scott's "Richard the Lionheart" asked whether it was fair to take away the sacred land from pagan Saladin, who was full of all the virtues which even a non-Christian person can have". And the writer adds: "Glance and manners of the sultan were so magnificent, as if Nature had traced on his brow: "This Is the King!"

Salah-ad-Din Yusuf Ayubi is a representative of a tribe which came to inhabit the territory of Armenia. The Kurdish dynasty of the Ayubids ruled from the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> till the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century in Egypt, Syria, Diyarbakr and Yemen. Saladin's grandfather Shazi and his two

sons the Radzhi-ad Din Ayub and Asad ad-Din Shirkukh were natives of the mountainous area near Dvin in Armenia, and later they moved to Iraq.

So, let us imagine the picture of the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century: the incorporated army of crusaders under Phillip, the King of France and Richard the Lionheart penetrates into Near Asia and to the Middle East, aspiring to win the coffin of the Lord from the Moslems. The Egyptian and Syrian state is torn with bloody civil strifes: palace plots, numerous murders; the weak-willed and feeble caliph is substituted by the vizirs; the authority is helpless and corruptible. Rascals of all sorts persistently and shamelessly make their way to the throne.

Amalrik, the King of Jerusalem, crosses the Egyptian frontier, the Franks approach the walls of Cairo, and the capital of the ancient state is at the point of falling and becoming easy prey for the predatory conquerors. But the defenders of the city destroy a dam, and the waters of the great Nile rush into Lower Egypt, and the aggressors seek safety in flight.

The Syrian governor Nur-ad-Din was connected by a treaty with the predecessor of Amalrik, Bolduin III, and did not stop to pay a tribute to the new King of the Franks. The military throw of Amalrik, who had intruded into the territory of Egypt, forced Nur-ad-Din to send there an army led by Shirkukh. The main aim of the Syrians was to rehabilitate high-ranking exile Shavar, the former chief vezir of the Egyptian sultan.

Shavar, a brilliant diplomat, a subtle politician, crafty, prudent and unscrupulous, conducted a complex double game: he was considered as their adherent both by the crusaders and the Syrian governor. So Shavar cleared away the road to Emir Shirkukh, defeated the Amalrik's army and triumphantly entered Cairo, then the capital of the Fatimidian state. The townspeople enthusiastically welcomed the winners.

Side by side with Shirkukh in the streets of Cairo, filled with exulting Egyptians the nephew of the military leader Salah-ad-Din al-Ayub rode on a white horse. Thus on the political horizon in 1169 rose the dynasty of Ayubids rose to rule permanently until 1252.

In the meantime the great intriguer Shavar was not appeased. Having restored the property that he had lost, the chief Fatimidian vazir



made up his mind to deceive Nur-ad-Din. The work was done and he did not pay to the Syrian for their help. As the Kurdish military leaders were not necessary any more, but were dangerous, it would be best to get rid of them as soon as possible. Shavar thus begins confidential negotiations with Amalric.

The last Fatimidian caliph Al-Adid, a fiery and resolute person, did not forgive Shavar of such perfidy. When Shirkukh again appeared in Cairo, the traitor ended up on an executioner's block. Caliph Al-Adid entrusted to head the vazirat to his deliverer Shirkukh. Unfortunately, he did not enjoy this responsible state post for a long time: sudden death in some weeks interrupted the life of the outstanding soldier and talented politician.

But the Ayubids went on to stay near the Fatimidian throne: Salah-ad-Din occupied the place of the deceased Shirkukh. Now the name of Salah-ad-Din preceded honorary titles «sultan» and “Almalik an-nasir”.

Salah-ad-Din won this high post in a bitter and long fight with the contenders from the Turkic cavalry. Firstly the position of the new vezir was shaky and instable there was no strong military forces behind him. So he had to create his own fighting groups, which got the name of “salakhia”. He had to confiscate the manors of the Egyptian emirs to award his own military leaders. The Sudanese infantry incited to revolt, however Salah-ad-Din who did not have the option of acting as a liberal made short work of the rebels in the most severe way.

Nur-ad-Din did not like how Salah-ad-Din, transformed Egypt into the family ancestral lands of the Ayubids. His mistrust was growing and becoming stronger in spite of the fact that with the death of Al-Adid the Fatimidian caliphate came to an end, and Salah-ad-Din became the governor of Egypt. No matter how much the governor of Syria tried to constrain Salah-ad-Din, he remained independent and autonomous: he did not help the suzerain to attack a Frank fortress in Transjordan, restored with the help of his brother, Turan-check, the authority of Egypt over Yemen, and he did not transfer completely the collected taxes to Syria...

When suspicious Nur-ad-Din died, Salah-ad-Din formally continued to remain the vassal of his successor, the juvenile son, but he did

not stop dreaming of the creation of the state uniting the Egyptian, Iraq and Syrian lands. All these years while in Damascus political intrigues proceeded, Salah-ad-Din now battled against the Franks, now concluded a peace treaty with them, but he always steadily promoted to the main goal - in every possible way to expand his Empire.

He even married the widow of Nur-ad-Din. Now his eminence disturbed the Abbasidian caliph an-Nasir who forced Salah-ad-Din to raise a siege of Mosul (1182). The caliph stood in the way of the global claims of Salah-ad-Din. Next year the angry Kurdish commander took Aleppo, the capital of northern Syria by assault.

While these bloody conflicts were going on, the position of the Christian enclave in an environment of the Muslim states worsened. Amalric died, the Kingdom of Jerusalem weakened, because reinforcements in men and beasts from Europe did not answer the requirements. The assistance on the part of Byzantium stopped when the sultan of the Seldzhukids Arslan II defeated emperor Manuil I Komnen. The Franks lost their last ally.

Salah-ad-Din remained the main enemy of the Crusaders' states. "Irresponsible" Reynald of Chatillon in 1183 drowned a vessel with Muslim pilgrims from Syria and Egypt in the Red Sea, his troops threatened sacred Islamic cities. Salah-ad-Din operated promptly and successfully. His armies made a lightning throw to the Lake Tiberiad in the battle at Hattin (1187) the Franks could not offer almost any resistance. On went the offensive; soon Acra, Jaffa, Sidon, Beirut and Ascalon fell. It did not take long to the soldiers of Salah-ad-Din to besiege and capture the capital of the Jerusalem kingdom.

When the crusaders had grasped Jerusalem, they killed and committed acts of violence against peaceful inhabitants; they plundered and set everything to fire. Magnanimous and merciful Salah-ad-Din, with the nobility of great soldier, satisfied all the conditions of the preliminary agreement, the Franks freely abandoned the city, leaving the Coffin of the Lord intact, and also the tombs of the Frank governors remained intact and safe. The last stronghold of the Franks was the city of Tir on the coast of the Red Sea.

The Muslim world enthusiastically received the news of the terrible defeat of the Franks; Salah-ad-Din was esteemed as the main sol-



dier of Allah, the mighty defender of belief. The European sovereigns undertook a third crusade, and three military leaders headed it the Emperor Fridrich I Barbarossa, the King of France Phillip August, II and the English king Richard the Lionheart.

Despite an unexpected tragic loss in the military Christian triumvirate, when crossing one of the mountain rivers Fridrich choked and died, Phillip and Richard managed to win back Acra, and it became the new capital of the state of the Franks. And yet, though Richard's armies came close to Jerusalem, Phillip by then had come back to Europe, between the English King and Salah-ad-Din a peace treaty for three years was concluded. The Christians, since 1192, have had an opportunity to make pilgrimage to Jerusalem and Bethlehem. Salah-ad-Din became the hope and the torch - bearer of the Muslim world.

Kurd by origin, Sunni by religious convictions, Salah-ad-Din transformed Egypt into the centre of the Islamic civilization. The huge Ismailite library of the former rulers the Fatimids was crushed, but Salah-ad-Din founded a number of medreses where Islam in its Sunni interpretations was studied. Let's say some words about Salah-ad-Din's army. He arrived in Egypt with the hired Turkmen and Turkic soldiers though in fact he trusted the Kurdish and Turkic cavalry. The Turks and the Kurds were not on good terms with each other, but that did not prevent the head of the army extinguishing inflaming enmity, for after the battle at the Lake Tiberias he had an indisputable authority in the Muslim world. And the Salah-ad-Din's guards consisted of the soldiers, battling with the leader right at the beginning of his military political career, of the Shirkukh's "askars"(soldiers) and of the "salahs", a young generation of the best Kurdish soldiers.

The period of the reign of the Kurdish dynasty of Ayubids in Egypt was a time of prosperity when the European merchants successfully traded in the Egyptian seaports under the protection of the sultan, and trading duties brought considerable income. Export to Europe of Egyptian products, minerals, in particular, the works of handicraftsmen, was well developed. The transit trade was also carried out. The main care of the administration of Salah-ad-Din remained the protection of peace affairs of the people, of trade, of occupations with various crafts, agriculture and manufacture. And the state constantly supervised the in-



tense economic life, but did not interfere in everything that occurred in its own possession.

The reign of Ayubids left a trace in the history of civilization as the gold period when Egypt and Syria were considered centres of Arabian philosophy, historiography and literature. Medieval Arabian historians and the latest researchers recognize Salah-ad-Din as the greatest personality of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. He was perceived by the contemporaries as the leader of the sacred war of the Islamic world against the crusaders in which he and won a decisive victory.

The son of Ayub, Salah-ad-Din Jusuf was born in 1138 in the fortress of Tekrit on the coast of the Tigris (Iraqi Kurdistan), He died from a fever five years before the 13<sup>th</sup> century, at the age of 55. Disputes on the personality of Salah-ad-Din have begun in the Middle Ages. Some of the historians see in him a kind of "Napoleon" of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the governor of an adventurous type who would resort to any means for the sake of his ambitious aspirations. Some chroniclers even unreasonably belittled the role of Salah-ad-Din in the life of the Muslim world.

But al-Isfahani, the secretary of Salah-ad-Din (he left the narration about the last years of life of his patron and the multivolume biographic chronicle of the sultan) calls him the unifier of the Muslim world, the winner of the third crusade, the liberator of Jerusalem. Nobody can deny that the value of Salah-ad-Din for Muslims, not only in the Middle Ages, is crucial.

Compatriots idolized Salah-ad-Din. Even enemies recognized his remarkable political foresight, his unique talent for military leadership and his noble courage. The devout Moslem, he aspired to observe the instructions of the Islam, was known for his magnanimity, the feeling of validity, invariably helped the poor, took mercy on the weak. There are some legends about his selfless bravery, in particular the one described by Volfram von Eschenbach. The poem by the famous minnezingler is not a unique work of art about brave Saladin. Six centuries later Lessing in his drama "Natan, the Wise" recreated noble image of "the knight without fear and reproach," whose worthy human qualities were recognized not only in the East, but also in Europe.

The mysterious figure of Salah-ad-Din, majestic and inconsistent, is worthy of historians, philosophers, writers and poets' attention. In

our book we limited the narration to the main events in the life of the great Kurd, who managed to unite many countries of the Middle East under his flag. He was like a torch that illuminated the native hearth, being in the darkness. Salah-ad-Din was one of the greatest figures in the history of mankind, the genius, who managed to fire expectations and aspirations of broad masses, to take the lead and to put into practice their hopes; therefore the nationality of this person does not play a decisive role. And today the peoples of the Muslim East recollect with pride: "Here is our king! Here is the King, the Victor!"

It is necessary to add, that the dynasty of the Ayubids (1169-1252) ended in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and the power passed to the hands of the Mammeluks.

Many independent Kurdish tribes and dynasties, such as Shedaids, Marvanids and Hasanvaikhids, were formed in the Middle Ages when the power of the caliphs weakened.

In the middle of the 10<sup>th</sup> century in the period of the caliphate the Kurdish statehood was most strongly represented by the dynasty of Hasanvaikhids (959-1015.)

"The First sultan of the Kurds," as Sharaf-khan Bidlisi writes, "became Akhmad ibn Marvana". Historians note, that the founder of ascensions of this dynasty the dynasty of Marvanids was a legendary Abu Abdullah al-Hussein. The dynasty of the Marvanids achieved the apogee during the rule of the 3-rd nephew Akhmad ibn Marvan, known in the history under the name of Nasr ad-Dauleh, "the Relief Aid of the Power" (1010-1061). On the one hand, his policy was reduced to safety measures, i.e. he tried to secure himself from the point of view of various military actions. He concluded peace with the Buidian emir, Fatimidian caliph, the Byzantian emperor, the Seldzhuk sultan. On the other hand, he carried out a fierce struggle with the Beduin clans of the Ukailids and the Mirdasids in Syria and Dzhezir. The chroniclers write: "The successful combination of tactics of the agreement and force allowed Nasr ad-Dauleh to achieve a high level of stability, economic and cultural prosperity".

Far beyond the Muslim world spread the glory of Nasr ad-Dauleh as an educated sovereign, the person in every possible way supporting scientists and poets. He had a high reputation among the leading rulers



of his time and all his acts left an indelible trace in the history of the Kurds.

The dynasty of Shedadids ruled in Dobila (Dovin) and Gandzha for more than a hundred years. As historians mark, this dynasty has played an important role in the cultural life of this city. V.P.Nikitin rightfully believes that this time is the time of refinement, i.e. the educated governors. Academician Gamid Arasly holds the same opinion: "The Kurdish dynasty of Shedadids carried out many important works on economic and cultural development. The fact that Gandzha was the capital of the state had an important influence on the development of literature and art. A famous Tebriz poet Katran Tebrizi gained his glory at the court of the Shedadids. Here he had written a number of his fine kasyds and gazelles, rubais and kytas."

In our opinion, the clan of the great poet of the East Nizami Gandzhevi originated from the dynasty of Shedadids, for his mother was a Kurdish woman.

The numerous Kurdish feudal states, into which Kurdistan was divided in the Middle Ages, were only nominally parts of the despotic monarchy. They retained their independence.

The crisis happened at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Osmanli governor Sultan Selim I resolutely defeated the armies of the Iranian Check Ismail from the dynasty of the Sefevids that resulted in the division of the territory of Kurdistan between Ottoman Empire and Iran. And then three centuries of continuous Iranian-Turkish wars for the richest Kurdish lands followed.

In 1514 after the battle of Chaldyran Kurdistan was divided between the Ottoman Empire and Iran. In 1639 this division "was legalized" by the contract signed in Kasra Shirin. The division was kept until 1918. Only in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century did these states actually seize Kurdistan. The new stage of struggle of the Kurdish people for independence against Turkey and Iran begins from now. The struggle took the shape of numerous revolts, such, as the revolt under the leadership of the Kurd Abdurakhman-pasha (1806), the revolt of 1815 and others. The Kurds struggled against the Turkish authorities during the Russian-Turkish war (1828-1829). In 1827 as a result of powerful revolt under the leadership of Makhmed-pasha Revanduzi the indepen-



dence of the country was proclaimed. This revolt speeded up the victory of Russian armies over the Turks. The independent existence did not last long. According to the decree of the Osmanli sultan, Makhmed-pasha was arrested and hung up in Sivas.

### **The revolt of the Badyrkhans (1842 - 1848)**

No sooner had Badyrkhan become the emir than he started to wage a war for independence. His possession included the areas of Mosul, Revenuz and Amad (Diyarbakir). Unfortunately, Osmanli authorities managed to set Badyrhan's nephew Yezdasher on the uncle and with his help to suppress the revolt. In 1847 Badyrkhan was arrested and put into prison.

During the Crimean war of 1853-1856 the Kurds again showed an aspiration to achieve freedom: the Kurdish cavalry of two regiments within the structure of the Russian army launched effective attack on the Turkish armies. As is known, the armed risings against the Turkish regime became stronger during the Russian-Turkish war of 1877 - 1878. The Kurds in the union with the Assyrians grasped territory from Mekhabad and Urmia up to Shamzin (today Iranian Kurdistan).

In the history of liberation struggle of the Kurds one of the most significant events was the revolt of 1880 under the leadership of sheikh Obeydulla, armed to establish the independence of Kurdistan. The rich actual material about this revolt contains in P.I. Averyanov's book "The Kurds in the wars of Russia against Persia and Turkey during the 19<sup>th</sup> century", published in Tiflis in 1900 and in D. Dzhilil's book "The revolt of the Kurds in 1880".

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century among numerous revolts of the Kurdish people, the most significant armed revolt in the province of Kochgyri (1920) was led by Alisher. A year earlier, in 1919, there was a revolt of sheih Mahmud Barzandzhi against the British who had appeared in Iraq in 1918. The revolt of sheih Mahmud Barzandzhi began in Suleimania on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May 1919. In this uprising great assistance was given by Makhmudkhan Dizli, the leader of the Avromants in the territory of Iran. As historians mark, it was Makhmud Barzandzhi who for the first time embodied valid ideas of the first Kurdish independent statehood.

He introduced the attributes of the sovereign state: the flag, bank notes, postmarks, post stamps. In this period the newspaper "The Rozha of Kurdistan" ("the Sun of Kurdistan") was published for the first time. The new government was formed. The Cabinet included: the Minister of Finance Abdul Kerim Alaka, the Minister of Education Khadz Mustafa-pasha, Commander-in-chief Saleh Zekibei. At first the affairs of sheih Mahmud went well. He had seized the residence of the English political officer in Suleimania, gained some successful victories and spread his authority down to Kirkuk. His popularity among the Kurdish tribes was great and doubtless represented threat to the British authority in Iraq.

The Anglo-Indian armies under T.Frezer's general command began retaliatory measures against insurgents in June. On June 18, as historians inform us, the detachments of the sheikh in area Derbende Bazian suffered strong defeats. Suleimania fell some days after the wounded sheih Mahmud had been captured. Only after some months (August, 3, 1919), after a number of retaliatory operations was the suppression of the insurgents officially announced. The court-martial sentenced sheikh Mahmud to the death penalty, but to avoid the second wave of revolt replaced the verdict with the ten years' exile to India. In spite of the fact that the revolt has suffered defeat, in the opinion of historians (M.A.Gasratyan, M.S.Lazarev), the political analysts of that time, including British political officer U.Hey, was the first serious revolt at the beginning of the XX century and had a strong impact on the prestige of the British armies in Kurdistan.

On August 12, 1922 in Suleimania the independence of the Kurdish padishakh state was proclaimed. However, the Arabs, took fright and concluded the union with the British and subjected Suleimania to bombardment and violently suppressed the revolt.

After the First World War the revolt led by Ismail-agy Simko Shekaki swept over the Iranian Kurdistan (see about it in detail in the chapter "East Kurdistan").

During the First World War (1914-1918) the Kurds adhered basically to Russian orientation. A well-known orientalist V.P.Nikitin in the book "The Kurds" writes, that Kamilbei-Badyrkhan from Bokhtan went to Tiflis in 1916 and informed the Grand Duke Nikolai, the Governor-

General of the Caucasus and the Commander-in-chief of the Russian-Turkish front about the Kurdish national idea. It was found out, that the then Russian government did not have any clear and certain position concerning the Kurds. The Kurdish problem was bound with the prospect of making Armenia an independent state. In the course of the First World War by the powers of Antanta, where Russia at that time also participated, the question of the necessity of the autonomy of Kurdistan was put forward for the first time. At last, such autonomy was guaranteed by the Sevr peace treaty (August, 10, 1920), Signed by Turkey and the powers of Antanta. However, the victory of the Kemal movement in Turkey crossed out this agreement. The Sevre Treaty was replaced by the Lozanne Treaty (July, 24, 1923), according to which there was a new division of Kurdistan, this time between Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria.

Though the Sevre Treaty remained only on paper, nevertheless it marked a very important turn in the development of the Kurdish problem. For the first time in history in the diplomatic document the question of the autonomy of Kurdistan was put forward to consideration. From now on the Kurdish problem gains increasing international attention.

Having come to power, Kemal Ataturk began to pursue policy of violent assimilation and turkization of all the peoples, who lived in the present territory of Turkey, under the slogan: "One country, one nation". "The unity" of the Turkish nation was fixed in all the Turkish constitutions, including the current one. In practice any displays of national consciousness by non-Turkish peoples were considered as separatism and punished severely. Especially hard blows were imposed upon the Kurds. The Kurdish language, the Kurdish customs, even the concept of "Kurds" and "Kurdistan" were forbidden. The Kurds were declared as "mountain Turks", who lost their national identity. The Kurdish language was considered (and it is considered till now) a mixture of the Turkish, Persian and Arabian languages. In 1928 the Act on the resettlement, providing compulsory deportation of the Kurdish population to only Turkish areas was adopted. The Kurdish revolts that erupted as a result of such measures was suppressed bloodily. In total from 1925 till 1940 only in Northern Kurdistan where lived and live



about 20 million Kurds, there were more than 30 revolts. About one million people were killed during their suppression and the same number was deported to internal areas of Turkey. Teaching was conducted exclusively in the Turkish language. The policy of rough assimilation is still carried out. No investments are made to the economy of Kurdistan, and the area remains in a condition of deep decline.

At the beginning of 30-s a new revolt under the leadership of Akhmed Barzani in the province of Barzan erupted.

The Kurds of Syria were under the French mandate. They were under the influence of the anti-Kurdish policy of the Turkish authorities which concentrated on the violent assimilation and physical destruction of their brothers by birth.

The Southwestern part of Kurdistan in the modern history of the Kurds is the area with the most advanced cultural attitude. Here outstanding Kurdish educators, the Badyrhans brothers published a magazine "Khavar" and carried out certain educational work among the Kurdish population. The Kurds of this region have made a large contribution to the national-liberation movement and to the struggle for freedom and independence of the Kurdish people.

In 1925 the Turkish state using strong military forces as a result of a large-scale operation suppressed the revolt under the leadership of sheikh Sayid. More than 10 thousand persons participated in the revolt of sheikh Sayid. For a short time it swept over 14 eastern and more than 10 southwestern vilayets of the country. Unfortunately, sheikh Sayid did not head the regular troops of the Kurdish tribes, but isolated detachments of Kurdish insurgents. In spite of the fact that some editions propagated the reason of the revolt as being religious disagreements, the basic purpose of the revolt was the creation of independent Kurdistan with the capital in Diyarbakir. In the course of fierce and unequal battles, despite separate successes of the insurgents, in the middle of April they were surrounded and defeated in the Gendzh hollow. Sheikh Sayid and other leaders of the revolt were arrested. The Turkish ruling circles, afraid of new revolts of national-liberation struggles and their consequences, took retaliatory measures for seven more months. After that, amendments were adopted in the criminal code of the country according to which persons inciting people to anti-govern-

mental armed revolt or against another part of the population of Turkey were sentenced to death.

One of the main reasons of the defeat of this revolt was the superiority of the governmental armies over the forces of the insurgents. According to the evidence of Ismail Khakky, a participant of the movement against 10 thousand Kurdish soldiers it was thrown about 200 thousand Turks, 12 planes, and also 8 - 9 divisions of active armed forces on full alert, were committed.

As historians-orientalists have already marked, the other reason of the defeat of this revolt was the absence of unity among the leaders of the Kurdish tribes because many of them, unfortunately, did not believe in the victory and were afraid to lose their semi-independent position. Semi-feudal conditions of Kurdistan, the arrest of military leaders and outstanding figures of the Kurdish intellectuals, the absence of the unified and strong political organization, resulted in the defeat of the Kurds.

It is necessary to note, that no external support was rendered to the insurgents. Besides, the Turkish government managed to convince the public opinion that the revolt of the Kurds were the machinations of the reactionary sheih who aspired to restore caliphate and sultanate under the leadership of England.

At the end of May 1925, litigation over sheikh Sayid started, and it lasted for about one month. The verdict for 47 main participants of the revolt was unequivocal. All of them were sentenced to hanging. Before his execution sheikh Sayid said: "My natural life is coming to an end. I do not regret at all, that I have sacrificed myself to my people. We are glad that our grandsons will not be ashamed of us in front of their enemies..."

So, the Turkish authorities severely suppressed the revolt. Thousands of Kurdish intellectuals were compelled to leave the native land and settle in western countries.

In 1926 in the mountains Agri (Ararat) the representatives of Kurdish tribes of Dzhallali, Khasanan, Chibran and Khaidaran with their chiefs at the head stirred up a revolt. At the head of it was the leader of the "Organization of Khasike Teliye", the legendary hero of the Kurdish people Dzhallali B'ro (Ibragim pasha, Braim bege Khasike Teliye). He created the Centre of the Kurdish revolt the centre of the



struggle for freedom of Kurdistan. He was assisted and in every possible way supported in this struggle by the legendary Kurdish hero Ihsan Nuri pasha who later headed the revolt. The military-political committee "Khoibun" ("Independence") took an active part in this action. Materials of the book "The Kurdish movement in new and the newest time" testify that each member of the committee "Khoibun" swore the oath of brotherhood, promising to struggle for the unity of all the Kurds for the sake of the creation of independent Kurdistan.

Being one of the most important military leaders, Iskhan Nuri pasha united his forces with the forces of the Ashirats of Dzhalali in Agri and Ibragim Khasike Teliye. The latter together with Ibragim pasha took part in the edition of the Kurdish newspaper "Agra" ("Ardent"). They did a lot to create the bases for the Kurdish statehood (1927). It was then that for the first time the Kurds hoisted the Kurdish flag in the mountains Agri. Having seen the unity of the Kurdish tribes and the Ashirats, the Turkish authorities once again decided to use their favourite method resorting to cunning to destroy the union by all means. With this purpose they decided to invite them to peace talks. They tried to assure the participants of the revolt that the government of Turkey will declare the general amnesty to insurgents, and Iskhan Nuri pasha will be given a high post in the state. However, they did not fulfill this promise. Iskhan Nuri pasha as a big expert of the Turkish external and internal policy did not make concessions and at the same time put forward his own concrete conditions: firstly returning all the Kurdish refugees to their primordial lands which are in Eastern Anatoly and secondly assigning these lands to them.

These conditions were supported by all the Kurds of Sasun, Dersim, Sarhad and other regions. Afraid of this national movement, the Turkish authorities were compelled to make concessions. So in 1927 they passed a new law in which these conditions were accepted. Nevertheless, the Turkish authorities demonstrated their political adventure in these laws and showed that their strategic plans towards the Kurds in effect remained unchanged. Naturally, it was finally directed to the suppression of the national-liberation movement of the Kurds. Fortunately, these provocative sorties of the Turkish authorities had been



known for a long time to the Kurdish organizations "Khoibun," and they carefully prepared for these Turkish intentions.

After these events the representatives of the progressive intellectuals, left the western countries and returned to Syria (March, 29, 1926), with the purpose of creating close interrelations with the Kurdish organization "Khoibun". They were Dzhamil pasha and his sons Kadri, Akram, Makhmet, Badri of Diyarbakir, doctor Ahmet Nafiz with his brother Nurattin Zaza of the district of Agri, Arif Abbas of Elaziz and many others. Having seen all the hopelessness of the suppression of the Kurdish liberation movement in Agri, the Turkish authorities started to search for new methods.

They began to negotiate with Iran for reconsideration of the state frontiers where a new strategic tactics in relation to the Kurdish national-liberation movement was developed (later it took the name of the English tactics of struggle). It consisted of the following. The Turks and the Iranians decided to give a part of the vilayet during the revolt and to receive in return the northern and the southern parts of the mountain Ararat. This district had a strategic military value for Turkey. They deprived the Kurds of any external help.

On September 5, 1930 large-scale fights with the use of new modern combat material began against the Kurdish insurgents with the active assistance of aircraft. However, the Kurdish insurgents under the direction of the organization "Khoibun" showed powerful heroic resistance. The forces were not equal, the Turkish authorities increased the number of the armies in the area of the revolt up to 60,000 men, and, as a result of it many thousands of the Kurdish families were compelled to abandon their houses and to escape in inaccessible mountainous areas of the Big and Small Agri (Ararat).

The majority of the Kurdish insurgents were lost heroically in the fights for freedom and independence of Kurdistan. The leaders of the revolt led by Iskhan Nuri managed to escape from prosecution and to disappear in the mountains of Iran. Despite of severe winter, Ibragim pasha continued to assert the independence with the weapon in his hands. Trying to break through encirclement he was killed in one of the fights. On May 22, 1932 the Adan court brought in a verdict on the

insurgents seized in the area of Agri (Ararat). 30 persons were sentenced to a death penalty, 58 - to various terms of imprisonment.

It was one of the blackest tragic pages in the history of struggle of the Kurdish people for their independence and freedom. Nevertheless, as modern political scientists mark, this revolt has proved the high level of Kurdish political maturity. After numerous Kurdish armed revolts in the 20-30s in Northern Kurdistan, the center of the national-liberation struggle moved to Southern Kurdistan.

The Kurdish revolt in Dersim (1936-1938) actually is one of the most heroic events of the national-liberation struggle of the Kurdish people. There were too many reasons that served to provoke this revolt. Among them, as usual, we find numerous attempts of the Turkish authorities in every possible way to infringe the rights and the position of the Kurdish people. So, for example, the Kurds of Dersim had been announced as being "mountain Turks".

At elementary schools teaching was conducted only in the Turkish language with the purpose to educate those who "have forgotten the language of their ancestors. Even the word "Kurd" was withdrawn from circulation. Wearing the national clothes, singing the national songs also was persecuted. Nevertheless one of the main reasons of Kurdish discontent was the introduction of excessive tax duties and the confiscation of the lands of Dersim peasants in favour of the Turks-immigrants. At the same time the Turkish authorities openly subjected the peaceful Kurdish population to punitive measures. In the streets of Elyazig some of the Kurdish intellectuals were executed by hanging. All this exhausted the patience of the Kurdish population and incited them to a new open rebellion.

At the Assembly of the Kurdish chiefs in the small town Kurnik in June, 1937 under the leadership of Seyit Riza they adopted a resolution to begin a revolt. The territory, seized by revolutionary spirit, quickly expanded. As historians note, military actions in Dersim had unprecedented scope. Seyit Riza addressed the general Alpdogan with the suggestion on "stopping bloodshed and recognizing national rights of the Kurds".

At the same time the Turkish government did not waste any time. Using their favourite method - treachery and bribery, with the help of

Rekhber, the nephew of Seyit Riza, they demoted some of the Kurdish chiefs to apostasy. Rekhber was also guilty of brutal murder of Alisher (the assistant of S.Riza) and his wife. Eventually, he fled to Elyazig.

After the arson of a wood around Dersim by the Turkish armies, the insurgent abandoned their mountain refuges and made for the borders of Iraq. Having found out about a site of Seyit's detachment in the area of Uzun-Meshe the authorities directed armies, artillery and aircraft there. By the end of the summer of 1937 in the area of Kozludzha there was a fierce battle between the Turkish armies and the Kurds. From this moment the revolt began to decrease.

But the Turkish government did not calm down. With the support of the governments of Iran and Iraq, the general Alpdogan wrote a letter to Seyit Riza in which guaranteed the peaceful outcome of the military conflict. Having believed his treacherous promises Seyit Riza arrived in Erzindzhan for negotiations on September 5, 1937, but was arrested and brought to trial.

On November 10, 1937 the military court in Elyazig brought in a verdict according to which Seyit Riza and his 11 companions-in-arms were sentenced to death penalty. On November 18 the verdict was executed. Before his death Seyit Riza exclaimed: "I am 75 years old, I am going to be executed and I shall lie in one line with the victims of struggle for Kurdistan. Dersim is defeated, but the Kurds and Kurdistan will live, the Kurdish youth will take revenge! Shame on the tyrants!"

As a result of the next anti-Kurdish policy of the British and the Iraqi government a new wave of protest erupted in Iraqi Kurdistan in 30-s. At the head of this revolt, as we know, was Sheikh Mahmud Barzandzhi. At the end of 1930 and at the beginning of 1931 between the Kurdish insurgents and the Anglo-Iraqi forces there were some armed conflicts. Certainly, the forces of sheih Mahmud against well equipped and numerous armies of the Iraq chastisers were inferior. At the end of May, 1931 it became clear that many inhabitants of Suleimania had been arrested on the ground of "attempting to create a Kurdish state at the cost of the Turkish, Persian and Iraqi territories."

At the beginning of 1931 the meeting of sheih Mahmud with the representatives of the British commissariat was held. During the nego-



tiations sheikh Mahmud Barzandzhi and his family were guaranteed complete safety. On the arrival of the sheikh in Suleimania the Anglo - Iraq authorities in avoidance of "new troubles" decided to isolate him, having sent him on via Baghdad to the town of Ur in the south of the country. Despite of the defeat, the revolt of sheih Mahmud Barzandzhi has left an indelible trace in the history of the national-liberation struggle in Kurdistan.

As historians mark, in the middle of 1930-s in Iraqi Kurdistan the national-liberation movement was not so wide. There were only some disturbances of local character. Among them it is possible to note the riots under the leadership of Akhmed Barzani, Mustafa Barzani.

On January 22, 1946 in Mekhabad (Eastern Kurdistan) with the assistance of the USSR the Kurdish (Mekhabadian) Republic was proclaimed with Kazi Mukhammed at the head. It existed for 11 months (for details see the chapter "The Mehabadian Republic Eastern Kurdistan").

Struggle in Southern Kurdistan (Iraq) was developed under the direction of the Democratic party of Kurdistan (KDP), which was founded in 1946 by its leader Mustafa Barzani. The name of Barzani, who was born in Barzan, a village in Iraqi Kurdistan, on March 14, 1903, became synonymous with courage, resistance and resilience. More than any other national leader of the 20<sup>th</sup> century he was inextricably identified with the cause and tragedy of his people and *vice versa*.

The uprisings organized by Barzani since 1943 were not local or tribal like all the previous Kurdish uprisings, but included officers, intellectuals and townsmen from all over Kurdistan, from its different districts and regions. His march to Mahabad with thousands of his men was the first large-scale protest in Kurdish history. Barzani's uprisings broke down the class, tribal and regional barriers, and united the nation pursuing one patriotic goal.

Barzani himself in an interview given to a correspondent of an Egyptian newspaper "Al-Watan" said, "I opened my eyes on life to find myself a captive. I remember my whole family was under arrest by the Turks who were occupying Kurdistan. I was a prisoner when I was only three years old. As an adult, I was sent into exile with my family to southern Iraq. Fortunately, I managed to escape from exile. I

offered all that I could to my Kurdish people revolts and uprisings. I took refuge in Iran and was followed by 500 of the bravest Kurdish knights. A Kurdish State was established in Eastern Kurdistan. I supported its leadership headed by Kazi Mohammed. Shortly thereafter the Kurdistan Republic collapsed. A very difficult march started. An armed march stretched over hundreds of miles... Finally we took refuge in the Soviet Union where I stayed for many years as a refugee looking forward to returning to my Homeland and to my people. I traveled everywhere I could in the Soviet Union and socialist countries and met whoever I could, seeking assistance for my people who are still suffering from unprecedented injustice, oppression and maltreatment... In 1958 I decided to return home..."

The enemies of the Kurds believed strongly that Barzani's death would completely obliterate not only the resistance movement but the very Kurdish question itself. In June 1963 London's *'Times'* newspaper reported that the Iraqi regime of Abdul Salaam Arif was offering a reward of one million US dollars for Barzani, dead or alive.

The Kurdish Democratic Party achieved the granting of an autonomous state within the framework of the unitarian Iraqi state to Southern Kurdistan. As historians mark, the riot led by Mustafa Barzani (1961-1975) in its scope, duration and consequences, was one of the most significant among the revolts of 1960-1970-s.

However to achieve positive results in the solution of the Kurdish problem in the course of the revolt was not possible. The proclamation of the Kurdish autonomous region in 1974 did not answer interests of the Kurdish people. The basic part of the territory of Kurdistan has remained outside the limits of autonomous region. Naturally, the Kurds rejected the formal autonomy imposed to them. In 1974 the Iraqi government again unleashed a large-scale war in Kurdistan. As a result tens of thousands of innocent civilians were lost and more than 4 thousand Kurdish villages were wiped off the face of the earth.

Mustafa Barzani died on March 1, 1979, at Georgetown Hospital, Washington DC. He will remain alive in the hearts of all the Kurds who support the aims he struggled for all his life.

In 1980-s Southern Kurdistan turned to be the arena of military operations between Iran and Iraq. In 1983 the Iraqi regime murdered



not only each male member of Barzani's family within their reach, but also their young children in an attempt to wipe out his family line. Taha Yaseen Ramazan, Iraqi vice-president standing on the ruins of the destroyed village of Barzan after the completion of the Anfal military operations, when more than 180,000 Kurds were murdered in 1989, declared: "Now that we have destroyed everything on the land of Barzan, we must must destroy even the worms beneath it".

In 1988 Suddamian regime applied the chemical weapon forbidden by the international community in the Kurdish city of Halabaja where it killed over 5 thousand innocent civilians; 20 thousand became invalids and hundreds of thousands - refugees.

In 1991 during war in the Persian Gulf the Kurds, provoked by the USA and the countries of Western Europe, rose up against the central authorities and declared the creation of a national state within Iraq on the principles of federalism, but the Kurds were deceived once again. Therefore tens of thousands people perished, hundreds of thousands were left without a roof over their head and became refugees.

(The policy of mass destruction of the Kurds in Southern Kurdistan proceeded until the very end. At last the day when the victory of Good over Evil has come. For a long time being under Saddam Hussein's yoke the Kurdish people with the help of coalition army of the USA and Great Britain has overthrown Saddam's despotic regime. Spring of 2003 will be remembered in the history of the people of Iraqi Kurdistan as a holiday of revival of the nation).

A new stage in the history of the Kurdish national-liberation struggle has begun since the end of 1970-s with the birth of a new organization - the People's party of Kurdistan (PPK) led by Abdullah Ocalan. The appearance of PPK on the political arena promoted the fast growth of the national consciousness of the Kurds on the basis of the idea of liberating Kurdistan.



## SETTLEMENTS

The 12<sup>th</sup> century is considered as the beginning of the formation of "the country of the Kurds" though the origin of the Kurds and their settling in this territory has roots in the deep past. At first it was a province in the territory of Iran with the main city of Bahkar. The founder of this area was Sandzhar from the dynasty of Seldzhukids. Bahar was a magnificent city-fortress. The structure of the province included five large vilayets Hamadan, Dinavar, Kermanshah, Shekhrizur, Sandzhar and sixteen districts of Alani with a city of the same name; Alishter with a cult place of fire-worshippers Aruhsh or Ardehsh; Bahar; Khuftian a fortress constructed on the river Zab; Derbende Tadzkh Khatun a small town; Derbende Zenge a small town, Dezbil, Dinavar a town; Sultan Abade Dzhem-dzhemal, located at the bottom of the mountain Bekhistun, Shekhrizur, Kermanshah (or Karmisin), Kerend and Khoshan, Kengever (or Kasr el Lesus), Makhidesht (or Maidesht), including 50 settlements, Khersin, a fortress, Vestam, a village. Up to the 13<sup>th</sup> century Kurdistan included also Luristan (Iran).

Kurdistan consisted of several Kurdish princedoms, which were independent from each other. At the head of each similar princedom there was the most outstanding chief of the tribe. More often they were feudal princes from powerful Kurdish dynasties, such as, the Sheddadids, the Mervanids, the Ayubids, etc. They were the suzerains not only of such princedoms as Diyarbakir, Mardin, Shakhrizur, but also of some other territories, for example in Trans-Caucasus, and they also ruled over the separate states. Some historical sources inform us that in Trans-Caucasus in the 10<sup>th</sup> - the 12<sup>th</sup> centuries the Kurdish dynasty of Sheddadids ruled. The territory under their sovereignty spread from the Kura up to the Araks. During many years the known leader of the Kurdish tribes (the dynasty of the Ayubids) Salah ad-Din ruled over Egypt.

As it was already marked, after the battle at Chaldary, and then after Zokhab treaty (1514, 1639), territorially the geographical integrity

of Kurdistan was broken. The division of the Kurdish territory occupied by the Kurds took place later. Establishing the state frontiers between modern Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria thoroughly undermined social, economic and cultural development of the Kurdish people. Thus, nowadays despite the century-old history of the existence of Kurdistan its geographical and ethnic borders have not been precisely determined until now. The population of Kurdistan consists of numerous clans, tribes and tribal confederations.

The first data on the four big confederations: Goran, Kelkhor, Lury, Kurmandzhi appeared by the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century in the Kurdish annals "Sheref-nameh". With the division of Kurdistan, not only was the communication of the population belonging to one ethnos was broken, but also the economic contacts of the representatives of the same tribe. In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century **O.L. Vilchevsky** wrote: "The winter huts of a large Kurdish tribe Kharki numbering some dozens of thousands families, are in the territory of Iraq the summer quarters, located on the east slopes of the same mountain ridges in the territory of Iran. Moving to the summer huts and back this tribe twice a year crosses the Turkish-Iraqi and the Turkish-Iranian border, passing through the Turkish territory and collecting taxes from the settled Kurdish and Aysor population, dependent on them."

Leaders of one and the same tribe, for example Kharki, depending on the territories of winter and summer quarters count themselves the citizens alternately now of Iran, now of Iraq. The same thing happened to the Kurdish tribe Shekka. It also is divided by the Iranian-Turkish border. The settlements of the Kurdish tribe Artoshi are on both sides of the Iraqi-Turkish frontier.

The religious structure of the Kurds evidently testifies that the division of the Kurdish tribes between the several states of the Middle East. For example, the representatives of the Kurds-yezids live in Iraq, Syria, Turkey, in Trans-Caucasus, and their head is in Iraq. Different peoples occupied Kurdistan in the 19<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Nevertheless the prevailing majority was the Kurdish population. Basically they were the representatives of the rural, foothill and high-mountainous areas. Armenians, Assyrians, Jews also occupied flat

districts and cities alongside with the Kurds, the Turks, Persians, Arabs, but in relation to the Kurds they were in minority.

The largest Kurdish tribes Dzhelali, Zilani, Mylaya, Shekaki, Khaid-eranlu, Kharki, Khasania, Bruki, Sipki (or Sipkanli) etc., historically occupied a northwest part of the Iranian Kurdistan - mountainous areas around Maku, the area of the Seigmen mountains, the area of the Kotur gorge, Salmas, Tergever, Mergever the lake of Rezaieh (Urmia). Tribes: the Zerza, the union of tribes Mukri (Bek-zade, Debökri, Mamash, Mangur, Piran, Geuryk), Susani, Kyal-Bakhi, Ardelyan, were in the central part (areas of Ushnu, Mekhabad, Bokan, Serdesht, Sekkez, Ban and Senededzhetc). Tribes: Dzhaf, Guran, Avroman, Balavend, Valatbegi, Vanrud, Kalkhani, Doradzh, Kelkhor, Merivan, Sendzhabi etc., lived in the southern part of Iranian Kurdistan.

Tribes: Dzhelali, Mysyrki, Zgshani, Milani, Sipki, Bruli, Kharki, Shekaki, Dzhaf, Gorani also lived in Turkey, Iraq, Syria, and partly - in Transcaucasia.

Khakkyari is the area of Bitlis, Khakkyari is the upper current of the Big Zaba, the mountainous area in the southern part of the Lake Van up to the river Tigris and Dzhizr-ibn-Omar, Ruzgoyi, the area of Bitlis, Zaza, the area of Dersim were the largest Kurdish tribes inhabiting Turkey. In vicinities of Diyarbakir the Kurds of the tribe Bekeranli, having much in common with the Trans-Caucasian Kurds were located. The largest tribal unions which were located in the territory of Iraqi Kurdistan are Baban (the area of Suleimania), Khemavends (the area between Kirkuk and Suleimania), Avroman, Dzhaf and Pishdar.

Because of the repeated change of the administrative, social, economic, historical reasons in the territory of Kurdistan now it is difficult to define the ethnic borders of settling of the Kurdish tribes.

By the middle of the last century on the basis of a new administrative division in the Ottoman empire the following vilayets were formed: Khakkyari, including liv Khakkyari, Mardin, Dzhizra, consisting of the livs Dersim, Mush, Diyarbakir, vilayet Mosul including the livs Mosul and Ravanduz and vilayet Bagdad with the livs Suleimania and Basra.

Besides the reasons of having an administrative character, the external reasons also influenced the change of the ethnic structure of the territory of compact settling of the Kurds. So, for example, according



to the Erzurum treaty of 1823 the Iranian government undertook to transfer in possession of the Osmanli state the western areas the Zokhab sandzhak, occupied by the Kurds. It also refused from "any claim on the city" and on the vilayet of Suleimania and also undertook "not to interfere with the right of the possession of the Ottoman government of this sandzhak". The Osmanli government, in turn, undertook to transfer in possession of the Persian government all the mountain areas of the east part of Zokhab sandzhak with the Kerendian valley. Thus, this Article of the Erzurum treatise has played an essential role in the further history of the Kurds.

The tribe Dzhaf, taking place on the most high-mountainous areas of Dzhavanru, in the summer season passed to the mountains of Hadzhi Akhmed near Senneh in Iranian Kurdistan, and in autumn went down below, to the area of Shakhrizur, at times reaching up to the mountains of Avroman. It is necessary to note, that the most part of the tribe Dzhaf was in dependence on Turkey, having their winter huts in the provinces of Shakhrizur and in the north of Zokhab. In summer this tribe wandered back to Iran, to the area of Merivan, the other part of the tribe dzhaf was in the Iranian Kurdistan in the Senendzh province of the section Dzhavanrud.

The tribe Bilbas was placed basically in the area of Lahidzhan, (Iranian Kurdistan). This tribe on territory of its settling was the subject of constant disputes while the boundary questions were under discussion. A settlement Pishdar which was located in the north of Suleimania area, before the formation of Iraq, was one of boundary sections with the territory of Turkey. It is necessary to note, that irrespective of a place of the settlement, the Kurdish tribes kept their traditional life and culture. In the history of mankind we continue to see the remarkable phenomena of tribes retaining their national traditions even under violent attempts at assimilation.

The Kurdish population of the eastern part of the former Osmanli Empire in the second half of the last century was concentrated in three vilayets: Diyarbakyr, Erzurum and Baghdad.

In the province of Hakiari bordering in the north with the Lake Van, in the west with the river Tigris, in the south with the Mosul valley and in the east with the snowy mountain-tops forming a frontier line

between Turkey and Iran, the majority of inhabitants were the Kurds and the Christians. It has not been precisely established who exactly were the Christians. The German scientist Shtrekker wrote about the Kurds and the Nestorians. In the Hakiarian mountain settlements, a certain number of Chaldean-Nestorians lived also. The centre was Dzhulamerk. Living among the Kurds, they populated the villages between Salmas, Tergever, Mergever, Gaver, Somai and Baradost on the Iranian side. From the Turkish side they also lived among the Kurds between Albak, Mahmudi, Valtu, to the south off Dzhulamerk, between Dis, Dzhelu-Thubi, Taiari, Bas and Berver. The Kurdish settlements were situated on a site on a route from Bitlis to Bashkaleh. The Armenian and the Kurdish population were concentrated to the west of Diyarbakir and Harput. For example, in Sasun the majority of the population in Sasun was the Kurds and the Armenians. Just like the Armenians who lived outside Western Armenia, the Kurds-Zaza occupied mountainous areas from the Taurus mountains and the Pre-Taurus mountains in the western part of Dersim, a little south of Erzindzhan, and in high-mountain areas along the Iranian border.

The mixed ethnic structure of the cities of Kurdistan and the territories next to it, especially in Eastern Anatoly, was appreciable feature of this region. The ethnic, language and religious structure of the population of Kurdistan and the territories adjacent to it were diverse.

In the second half of the last century the population of Ardagan, Gellian and Chaldyran sandzhaks consisted of Georgians, Karapapakh, Kurds and Turkmen. In the Gellian sandzhak the Kurdish population prevailed, mainly represented by the natives of Diyarbakir.

Here, in Turkish Kurdistan the best - known city is Diyarbakir its ancient name being Amad. It was a large cultural and administrative - trade center with religious and secular establishments. In the 19<sup>th</sup> - the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> c.c. the population of the city consisted of the Kurds, the Turks, the Armenians and the Jews. Besides the Muslims, the Christians, the Jews, there was a population belonging to other confessional groups. Alongside with the Kurds of the Moslem creed this area was occupied historically by the Kurds - Yezids and the Kurds - Shamsi.



The city of Mardin at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. was an administrative centre with prevalence of the Kurdish population. Besides Kurds, Turks, Arabs, Armenians and Assyrians lived here. The ethnic structure of the population of Urfa-town was made by the Kurds, the Arabs, and also by those Armenians and Chaldeans who came here from the valleys of Mesopotamia. The prevailing majority of the Kurds was in the other old city of Amadiya, too. Besides Kurds, here lived the Jews lived here along with small population of Armenians. Among the inhabitants of this city the creed the Muslims prevailed. The population of Râdvân consisted of the Kurds-yezids, the Armenians, the Jacobites and the Chaldeans.

In the north of modern Iraq there is a city of Mosul known in history for the ruins of Nineva, which are near the city. In the ethnic and the confessional plan Mosul is represented by Kurds - Muslims, Kurds Yezidis, Turks, Arabs, Armenians, Jews and other peoples. The city of Siirt in the Ottoman Empire though it was considered Kurdish, however in the literature it was identified with the ancient Tigranokert, populated not only by the Kurds, but also by the Christians. Tailor believes, that in Siirt the colony of Jews was based, the place of their settling is known under the name of Turub el-Dzhakhud ("the Jewish .ombs"). The Kurdish city in Iraq Revanduz in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century consisted of 500 families and only 80 of them were Jewish, the others were Kurdish.

In Iranian Kurdistan there were some cities with the prevailing Kurdish population in which separate quarters were occupied by Persians, Armenians and Jews. The ancient Kurdish cities here are: Mekhabad (the old name was Soudzbulak, Sablah in Kurdish), Sekkyz, Ushnu, Baneh (Vorozha in Kurdish), Negatseh, Senendedzh (old name Senne), Kermanshah and others. By the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. among 12 thousand population of Sekyz the Kurds prevailed. Besides them, Jews, Assyrians and Armenians lived here. The population of Baneh consisted of 4 thousand inhabitants, mainly, the Kurds. Besides the Kurds, Armenians and Jews lived here. In Iranian Kurdistan the largest Kurdish city of Mekhabad (Soudzbulak) as it is described in the literary sources, in the first half of the last century totaled 12-15 thousand inhabitants. Besides the Kurds who were the majority of the pop-



ulation here were Armenians and Jews. The ethno-demographic structure of the population was kept for a long time. So, according to O. Vilchevsky data, in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. here Persians, Azerbaijanians, Armenians, Assyrians and Jews lived, but, as before, the basic ethnic structure consisted of Kurds. The other city in Iranian Kurdistan, Senendedzh according to Chirikov, also was occupied basically by Kurds. Alongside them Chaldean and the Jews lived here.

In Iraqi Kurdistan cities such as Mosul, Revanduz, Dakhok, Kifr (old name Salakhia), Kirkuk, Erbil (in Kurdish Khavler), Suleimania etc. were well-known. The Kurdish population made the primary majority in these cities in the 19<sup>th</sup> - the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup>c. Only in Kirkuk the basic population was the Turkmens.

Suleimania is one of the best known Kurdish cities in Iraqi Kurdistan. The Kurds lived here for more than a hundred years. Separate quarters belonged to the Jewish and the Armenian families. Old city of Kirkuk in the second half of the last century had 12-15 thousand inhabitants basically the Kurds and only 40 Armenian families occupied separate quarters. An English officer Edmons in his notes, mentions the population of Kirkuk in the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> c., notices that the main inhabitants were the "Turkomans". **M.Menteshashvili**, referring to Edmons, writes, that before the First World War the population of Kirkuk totaled 30 thousand persons and "the majority of quarters had been populated by the Turks", while "a part of influential aristocratic families of the city was of the Kurdish origin though they named themselves the Turks. In a number of the cities of Iraqi Kurdistan, for example in Khanakin, there lived not only the Kurds, but also other peoples of the Middle East.

The ancient city of Erbil (in Kurdish Khavler) has always played an important role in the life of Iraqi Kurdistan. At the end of the past and at the beginning of our century the Kurdish population in the city made up the majority. In other large cities of the Iraqi Kurdistan (Altynkyopru, Zakho, Dakhok etc.) the Kurdish population also prevailed.

However it is impossible to limit a place of the settling of the Kurds only to the ethnic territory of Kurdistan. Multinational cities with the significant number of the Kurdish population, was located outside Kurdistan - Van, Bitlis, Adan, Kars. For example, Van in the last century

was occupied mainly by the Armenians; there was almost no Turks there, but as some ethnographers assume, in nearby villages Muslims, of a Kurdish origin lived.

In Kars area (Eastern Anatoly), and also to the west of Diyarbakir and Kharputa Kurds and Armenians lived. Like the Armenians, who settled outside this area, the Kurds lived practically in all the mountainous areas from the Taurus Mountains and the Pre-Tauri in the western part of Dersim, to the south of Erzindzhan, and on the Alpine ridges along the Iranian border.

In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century according to Bishop, 20 thousand out of the 30 thousand-strong population of Bitlis were Kurds. In the administrative centre of Adan, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the Adan vilayet, it was totaled 60 thousand inhabitants: the Muslims, Armenian-Gregorians, Armenian-Catholics, Armenians-Protestants, Greek-orthodox. Annually in a warm season the city was filled with seasonal workers: Turks, Kurds, Arabs, Turkmens and Circassians. In searches of earnings they came to Adan from Diyarbakir, Sivas and Alepp vilayets. Eastern Anatoly was extremely diverse in its ethnic and linguistic structure. This was especially true of the city of Kars with its suburbs, mostly populated with the Armenians.

Local authorities made efforts to increase the Muslim population. With this purpose the Turks, the Turkmens, the Adzharians settled here. From Iran and Borchalinsky district (Transcaucasia) the Karapapakhs, the Jews moved here. The Kurds found a place for themselves in the mountains here, and the Ossetes, and the Kabardians. As a result of such a migration the ethnic structure of the population of Kars area, was varied. So, under K.Sadovsky's data, in 1883, the population of Kars area consisted of Armenians (21,5 %), of Turks (27 %), Turkmen (5 %), Kurds (15 %), Karapapakhs (15 %), Caucasian highlanders (the Ossetes, the Chechens, the Kabardians, the Lezghins - 0,3 %), Russians (5,5 %), Greeks (10,5 %), Georgians - Muslims, Assyrians, Persians and Gipsies (0,2 %).

After the annexation of Kars to Russia, the Muslims, mostly the Turks began to emigrate from this area. From August 26 till July 15, 1880 according to the official data from Kars area to Turkey has moved 65447 persons.



The free lands in the basin of the Kars River were occupied by the Russians (the Molokans and the Dukhobors), who settled in the lands of Shuragelsky, Takhtinsky and Zarushadsky districts; the Kagyzman-sky district was occupied by the Greeks.

The reason of heterogeneity of the ethnic structure of the Kurdistan's population itself consists in the fact that, firstly, the city dwellers were mostly of a non-Kurdish origin and, secondly, the process of establishing residence of the Kurdish settled farmers in many areas of countryside occurred in mixing up with the other peoples, first of all with Armenians of Northeast and Eastern Anatolia, Persians, Arabs, Turks, Assyrians, etc. A similar situation was also typical of Turkish, Iranian, Iraqi and Syrian Kurdistan. It is impossible to disregard the fact that during Ottoman empire, i.e. when the cities of modern North-east Iraq were part of the empire, they, (as, for example, Kirkuk, Mosul), alternately belonged to one, and then to another province depending on administrative changes.

By the end of the last century in the territory of Ottoman Empire Kurdish tribes, appeared to be closely connected to the Armenians and the Greeks with their economic and cultural activity, in spite of other language and religious belonging. By the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in these territories there were peoples of Indo-European language family (including Iranian and Kurdish), and also of Turkic, Caucasian, Semitic groups.

Many of the Kurdish villages which are situated in the northwest of Iran, in the region of modern Iranian Azerbaijan, were occupied, by the Azerbaijanians, the Armenians, the Assyrians, the Karapapakhs and other peoples, besides the Kurds.

For example, the Chkurov plain along the foothill territory of the Taurus Mountain was settled by Turks, Turkmens, Gypsies, Arabs (the Egyptian fellakhs, deported by Ibrahim-pasha after his march to Syria and Kilikia), etc. There were also many representatives of the Caucasian peoples, such as the Chechens, the Ossetes and the Circassians.

Historical sources do not mark the presence of the nomadic population in this area. Probably, the Kurds, living here, were mostly settled, or each summer rose with cattle up the slopes of the Taurus, the Dzhebel-Masis and other pastures. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. a small



town of Khamidir (with the population of 10 thousand persons) and its vicinities were occupied mainly by Turks and Circassians; among them were Armenians (40 families), Chechens, Ossetes, and Crimean Tartars (180 families).

As a rule, the Kurdish population of Kurdistan and outside its frontiers used as the language of communication their own native language. Bilingualism and even trilingualism was typical of the areas with the mixed ethnic, linguistic and religious structure. In the 19<sup>th</sup> 20<sup>th</sup> centuries many Russian and western researchers mark the interethnic integration in language, religion, traditions, which is typical not only of the Kurds, but also of other "minority peoples", for example, the Armenians, Assyrians and Chaldeans. The language of interethnic communication was the language of the dominant nation, such as Arabian, Turkish or Persian.

It was not always possible to distinguish villages with the Kurdish and Syrian and Jacobite population in which the Kurdish language prevailed. However it is necessary to note, that no matter what language the Kurds spoke, as a rule they kept the ethnic consciousness. It was demonstrated in the observance of the customs and traditions, irrespective of their place of residence, or the socio-economic factors.

The majority of those living in the areas of Der-Dzor and Urfian were the Muslims. After the Muslims the greatest part of the population professed the Christianity. Such a ratio could not fail to have an effect on the historico-cultural interrelations of the Muslim and the Christian population among whom the nomadic and settled peoples with intermediate forms of housekeeping were identified.

It is a well - known fact, that religion plays a very important part in the life of the Asian people. Mainly it is typical of the Muslims. Nevertheless, many travellers pay attention to the fact that the Kurds have never had religious intolerance.

In Russia the majority of the Kurds appeared by the end of the last century. They lodged basically among the fellow tribesmen. According to the first General census of the population of Russia of 1897 both the Muslim-Kurds and the Yezidi-Kurds totalled 99.9 thousand persons.

According to All-Union census of the population of 1926 both the Muslim- Kurds and the Yezidi totalled 69.1 thousand persons, out of

this number in the territory of Transcaucasia lived 66.7 thousand persons, and in Central Asia 2.2 thousand.

The Kurdish population in Russia at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was mainly concentrated in Transcaucasia. The history of occurrence and a substantiation of the Kurds in Transcaucasia is one of the burning problems of the Kurdish branch of orientology and it takes a certain place in modern science.

Though the Kurds have been living in this territory for a considerable time nevertheless archaeological and literary material testifies of the settling of the Kurds in Transcaucasia in an earlier period. It is known from the researches of the most outstanding expert of the Kurdish history V. Minorsky, that in the 11<sup>th</sup> century the Kurdish dynasty of Sheddadids ruled over a huge territory from the former Elizabetpol (modern Azerbaijan) up to Ani (modern Turkey). Besides the dynasty in this territory settled many Kurdish clan unions. There are some data on the settling of the Kurds in Transcaucasia in the 8<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> cc.

A great number of the Kurdish tribes appeared in Transcaucasia in 1801 in connection with the annexation of Georgia and several khanates, occupied by the Kurdish clan associations. We mean the Gandzha, Karabakh and Sheki khanates with the annexation of which "Russia began to have the Kurds among its peoples." The migration of the Kurds amplified especially after the Russian-Persian wars of 1804-1813 and 1826-1828, finished with signing of Gulistan and Turkmanchai treaties. Not only did the Kurds acquire Russian citizenship, but so did the Armenians and other peoples according to the article XV of Turkmanchai treaty. This article, in particular, said: "His Majesty the Shah... grants the perfect and full pardon to all the inhabitants and officials of the area called Azerbaijan. No one of them without distinction to what category he belonged can undergo to prosecution (or) the insult for opinions, acts or behaviour during the war or during time of temporary calm of the above-mentioned areas, occupied by the Russian troops. Moreover one year will be given, considering from this date, to those officials and inhabitants for the free transition with the families from the Persian areas to Russian ones". The Iranian armies forbade the Kurdish and other inhabitants, former Iranian citizens, to keep in touch with compatriots. The Russian emperor for his part prom-



ised not to permit the former Persian citizens to settle in some khanates of Transcaucasia.

By the agreements, in particular, by Article XIV of Turkmanchai treaty were conditioned some other questions concerning migrations. Here is the text of this article "Any of the High Contracting Parties will not demand the extradition of fugitives and deserters, acquiring the citizenship of the Other Party up to the commencement of the last war or in the course of it. For the prevention of the harmful consequences, mutually able to take place from deliberate relations between some of these fugitives and their former compatriots or subjects, the Persian Government undertakes to prohibit the staying of those persons who nowadays or in the future will be named by the Russian government in its possessions existing between the Araks and the boundary, which is formed by the river Chara, the lake Urmia, the river Dzhakatu and the river Kizil-Ozan, up to its confluence into the Caspian Sea. His Majesty the Emperor of All-Russia for his part promises not to permit the Persian fugitives to settle or live in the khanates of Karabakh and Nakhichevan and regarding the khanate of Erivan, lying on the right bank of the Araks. But it goes without saying, that this condition is and will be valid only with regard to the persons carrying public ranks or having some advantages, as: Khans, Beks and spiritual Chiefs or Mollas, who by the personal example, suggestions and confidential communications can have harmful influence on the former compatriots that had been under their management. As to the inhabitants of both states in general, the High Contracting Parties have decided, that mutual citizens, who have gone or henceforth will pass from one state to the other, can settle and live at all places where will permit the Government under which they will be".

All the peoples in those times and, in particular, the Kurds were divided into the clans, but according to the creed they were non-uniform: among them were the Sunni, the Shia and the Yezidi. The Sunni tribes were as follows: Dzhailily, Bruky, Radkany, Milan, Sypky, Galtury, Kharkany, Mamkany, Bashky, Msyrky, etc. The Shia comprised the tribes: Kelkhany, Karacholy, etc. As to the Kurds Yezidis, there were Sypky, Khasny and others, who had returned to Turkey.



The Tiflis province by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. administratively was divided into nine districts: Tiflis, Akhalkalak, Akhaltsikh, Borchalin, Gory, Dushet, Sognakhy, Ôelavy, Tionet and one circuit that of Zakataly. The Kurdish population was concentrated basically in Akhalkalak, Akhaltsykh and Borchalin districts.

In Azerbaijan the Kurds settled mainly in Aresh, Dzhebrail, Dzhevanshir and Zangezour districts of the former Elizavetpol province.

Besides the above-mentioned districts of Transcaucasia at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Kurdish population was concentrated in Kars, Ardagan, Kagyzman and Oltin districts of the Kars region (nowadays this territory belongs to Turkey).

According to the census of the population in 1979, in the former Soviet Union the Kurds made 115,858 persons. In the CIS, the Kurds make agricultural population of former Transcaucasian republics Armenian SSR, Azerbaijan SSR, Georgian SSR, and also of the republics of Central Asia, Kazakhstan and Russia.

In Armenia the Kurds live in Ararat, Masis, Vartenis, Aragats, Asharak, Artashat, Dilizhan, Oktemberyan, Talin, Shaumyan, Echmiadzin areas and in Yerevan (basically Kurds-Yezids); in Azerbaijan they live in Zangelan, Kelbadzhary, Kubatly, Lachin areas and in Baku. After the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan in Nagorny Karabakh the settlements of all of so-called "Red Kurdistan" were destroyed. The Kurds became refugees (1988-1993).

In Georgia the Kurds mainly live in Tbilisi, Ôâlavi, Rustavi. The earliest Kurds - immigrants from Forward Asia, appeared in Ôurkmenia, they are basically the natives of the areas of Khurasan (Iran), which entered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the khanates of Deragez, Kelat, Rodkan, Kuchan and Budzhnur.

At present, according to statistics the Kurds of Turkmenia mainly live in southern settlements located near the Kopetdag Mountains in Ashkhabad and Geok-Tepinsk areas and in the cities of Ashkhabad, Marry and Bairam-Ali. The Kurds moved to the two above-mentioned places from the areas near the Kopetdag mountain in 30-s of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Simultaneously some part of them has lodged in the other republics of Central Asia.

During continuous emancipating struggle for the existence, for national and cultural independence a part of the Kurds at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was compelled to move to Russia, mainly to Transcaucasia. Thus they found refuge either with their fellow tribesmen who had moved from the countries of Near East to Transcaucasia slightly earlier, or they created new settlements, mainly in the territories of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

In 1807 the chief of a Kurdish clan İâkhmed the Sofî-sultan crossed the Russian-Iranian border with the clan, including 600 families, and located in the Karabakh khanate.

Though some scientists rank the Kurds as peoples of the Caucasus but despite of moving in these territories the Kurds were and have remained aboriginals of Forward Asia, the Near East.

Numerous archival documents testify that at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century some Kurdish tribes petitioned the Russian authorities in the Caucasus asking them to allow them to move to Russia and to be naturalized as Russian subjects. So, since November 1831 till August, 1833 the Kurds of Bayazet pashalyk asked to be granted citizenship of Russia and to lodge in the Armenian area. Quite often the Kurds passed from Turkey "secretly". The ancestor of the Kurds who lived in Êârâdag, has addressed to local authorities with the request to allow lodging of one thousand Kurdish families in the territory of Transcaucasia. In 1885 as historians testify, some Kurdish tribes crossed the Russian-Turkish border and received Russian citizenship.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Kurds who lived in the Transcaucasian areas, were divided into many tribes. A field material about the Kurdish clans and tribes of the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, collected in the 50s in Transcaucasia, confirms the existence of some Kurdish tribes there (for example, *Sipky*, *Dzhalali*, *Shekaky*, *Zilany*, *Gasananly*, etc. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. in Armenia the Kurds settled according to the clan principle, in Azerbaijan according to blood relationships.

The reasons for the Kurds' migration to Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia are various. First of all, it is possible to enumerate the following: an aspiration to avoid physical destruction in the countries of the Middle East, an aspiration to be rescued from a heavy social and eco-



conomic dependence, the search for necessary arable lands and pastures, an aspiration to be reunited with their relatives. Both separate patrimonial groups and families migrated to Transcaucasia.

In 1923 the Central Executive Committee of Azerbaijan created the Kurdistan uyezd (administrative unit) or the so-called "Red Kurdistan". It was made up of the Kurdish settlements in Azerbaijan including Kelbadzhar, Lachin, Kubatly, Zangelan areas. In the 30s Kurdistan uyezd was territorially reorganized and transformed into Kurdistan district with Kelbadzhar, Kubatly, Koturly, Zangelan and partly Dzhebrail areas. The center of the Kurdistan district remained Lachin. Before the formation of Kurdistan district (in 1929-1930) a project of creation of the Araks district (not that of Kurdistan) with the center in Dzhabrail was developed. The project included the district areas such as Kelbadzhary, Lachin, Kubatly and Zangelan, occupied by the Kurds. In 1930 with a view to eliminating illiteracy among the Azerbaijan Kurds, a Kurdish alphabet based on Latin script, was developed. Since 1931 the training in the Kurdish language has begun - a number of manuals for schools has been prepared. Till 1960 in Lachin in a regional newspaper "Soviet Kurdistan" was published. As we have already noted, after the Karabakh events of 1991 the whole territory of Red Kurdistan was seized by the Armenian army and completely destroyed.

Historically in Azerbaijan the Kurds have twice received the right to national-territorial formation, despite of heavy economic conditions, especially during famine at the beginning of the 20-s. In the 30-s, many families were deported to Kazakhstan and Central Asia (see chapter "Kurds of Kazakhstan").

The appearance of the Kurds within the borders of Russia and their settling occurred in various ways and for various reasons. We cannot agree with the point of view ratified in the modern science that frequent transitions by the Kurds across the interstate borders and their constant movings inside the same state is the consequence of their nomadic life and psychology appropriate to it.

First, among the Kurdish tribes there are settled tribes, a fact known to historians. These settled tribes, alongside with the tribes of the Kurds-nomads, repeatedly carried out a role of organizers of migrations and keepers of traditional culture. Secondly, moving of those or other Kur-



dish tribes and breeding associations was caused by a number of reasons among which it is possible to allocate the reasons of economic character (absence of opportunities for housekeeping, unwillingness to obey this or that feudal lord etc.), of political character (war between the states, interstate differentiations, the Turkish - Armenian and the Turkish - Kurdish slaughters and inspired by the Turkish feudal lords of national and religious intolerance among "small peoples", numerous revolts of the Kurds, etc.), Administrative-territorial character (repeated change of separate areas with the Kurdish population). Thirdly, many Kurds migrants pursued the purpose of reunion on confessional foundation with the fellow tribesmen living in Transcaucasia.

The Kurds living in the territory of Russia accepted Soviet power. After the Great October Socialist Revolution in the territory of the USSR they had all civil rights, in contradiction to the millions of their fellow tribesmen living on their primordial lands.

The First Congress of the Kurds at which a constitution was adopted was held in Armenia in 1929. That year, under the decision of the Government of Armenia, the Kurdish alphabet on the basis of Roman letters was created by Arab Shamilov and Assyrian Morogulov. Up to that time the primary classes of the Kurdish schools used the textbook "Shams" ("Sun") Kurdish schools created in 1921 by Akop Kazaryan on the basis of the Armenian alphabet. In 1921 were opened 5, in 1925 - 10, and in 1930 - 27 Kurdish schools.

In 1930 the first number of the newspaper "Rya Taza" was issued, in 1931 in Yerevan the Transcaucasian Kurdish Pedagogical College was opened. The First All-Union conference of the experts of Kurdish studies took place in Yerevan. Two years later at the Union of writers of Armenia a section of the Kurdish writers was opened. In 1935 in accordance with the decision of the national commissariat of education of the Armenian SSR the Kurdish theatre was organized. On demand of the central authority in 1944 the Kurds of the USSR acquired a new alphabet created on the basis of Cyrillic alphabet by such advanced representatives of the Kurdish national intellectuals as Adzhiye Dzhndy, Vezire Nadiry, Nado Makhmudov, Grachia Acharyan, Amine Abdal and A.Kapanyan.

After 60-70s the Soviet science of Kurdish studies began to be developed actively. The departments of Kurdish Studies appeared at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR and at the Yerevan State University. They have played a significant role in studying the history and the culture of the Kurdish people.

In July, 1990, an All-Union scientific-practical conference "The Kurds of the USSR, history and the present" was held in Moscow at the Institute of Marxism-Leninism, attached to the Central Committee of the CPSU, on the initiative of All-Union association of the Kurds "Yakbun" and of some Kurdish scientific and political figures, supported by the similar Institutes in Kazakhstan, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

At the conference more than 40 reports on various problems of the Soviet Kurds were heard and discussed. Special attention was given to the position of the Kurds in Azerbaijan and Armenia in connection with war in Nagorny Karabakh. The Soviet Kurds, living in Armenia and Azerbaijan, having been victims of this conflict.

Criticism was stated to the Soviet leadership for concealing the tragedy of the Kurdish people in Iraq in the mass media, including the scandalous crime against humanity - a chemical bombardment of the peaceful population of Halabja in March 1988.

The conference has condemned the liquidation of the Kurdish autonomy in Azerbaijan in 1929 as an infringement of the rights of the Kurdish people and has called for their prompt restoration. It was underlined at the conference that the creation of a Kurdish radio station for broadcasting in Moscow and a Kurdish publishing house for the publication of books in the Kurdish language (on the basis of the Roman alphabet) were necessary as the fundamental factors in the development of the Kurdish language and culture in general.

It was also noted that, unfortunately, the aggregate number of the Kurds, living in the USSR till now has not been specified. The contradictions caused by disagreements in the field of religion, and also between various social layers became a serious obstacle in the establishment of an association of Soviet Kurds.

As an extremely positive moment it is marked, that all the Soviet Kurds who have taken part in the conference have kept the national



feelings, culture and traditions. Even those Kurds, who arrived from Siberia, during long years cut off from the Kurdish world, have not lost anything of the cultural heritage of their ancestors. Their folk music and dances, as well as the Kurdish language, have kept their original character. And it is in the territory of the USSR: in Russia, in the republics of Transcaucasia and Kazakhstan a broad layer of Kurdish intellectuals was formed: writers, scientists, musicians, artists, many who have made essential contributions to the development of the national culture of the Kurds.

Unfortunately, disintegration of the USSR and the formation of some independent states have nullified or invalidated the applications, decisions and recommendations of the conference.

Proceeding from the law on the national-cultural autonomy of the Russian Federation recently 3 regions of Kurdish national-cultural autonomy Moscow, Krasnodar and Saratov at joint session were united in a common federal structure. With this purpose on April 28, 2000, in Moscow in the Ministry of Affairs of Federation and Nationalities of the Russian Federation Constituent congress of the Federal national-cultural autonomy of the Kurds of the Russian Federation was held.

Representatives of the Kurdish diasporas of Stavropol krai, the Republic of Adygeya, the Tambov oblast, Yaroslavl, Ekaterinburg, Nizhni Tagil, Nizhni Novgorod, Chelyabinsk areas, Kostroma, St. Petersburg took part in this congress. Now in Russia live more than 250,000 Kurds. This significant event opens ample opportunities for the development of national culture and preservation of the Kurdish ethnicity in the territory of Russia.

In the summer of 1999 at the Faculty of Orientology of the St.Petersburg University a branch of the Kurdish Studies was open. It is a positive move in the continuation of the study of a history and culture of the Kurdish people. At the faculty alongside the representatives of the Kurdish nation the youth of other nationalities also study.

Kurds also live in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan. In the period of the political reprisals of the 1930s the Kurds, compactly living in Armenia, were deported alongside with other "small nations" to Kyrgyzstan. There, they basically were placed in the town of Skukta (the Osh area), Kyzyl-Kiyaksky and Uzgensk regions.



Due to the activity of the Kurdish cultural centre "Nshtman" ("Patriotism") the Kurds do not forget the traditions, national holidays, their history and culture. The Kurds of Kyrgyzstan have successfully put into practice the dreams and expectations. For example, **Sheikh Ramazan Seidov**, the Chairman of the Cultural centre "Nshtman"; **S. K. Kasymov**, Cand.Chem. Sci., **Ibragim and Bari Nadirovs**, **Sulkhaddin Nadirov**, **Vekil Khudayarov** have been working in law-enforcement agencies for many years. **Ishkhan Chatoyev**, **Telman and Elman Amirovs**, **Taifure Rasho**, etc. are businessmen. The Kurds immigrants, natives of Near East, live mainly in Turkmenistan as well as in Uzbekistan. Nowadays, they live in the southern settlements at the foot of the Kopetdag Mountains (Ashkhabad, Geok-Tepinsk, Rodkansk, Kuchansk districts, and also in the village of Maary and Bairam-Ali). The lessons at schools in the places of Kurdish majority are conducted in the Kurdish language. There is a Kurdish folklore ensemble and groups meet to study the history and culture of the native people.

We consider the problem of the Kurds of the former Soviet Union, nowadays the countries of the CIS, to be a separate and extensive subject, which still demands further scientific research.

### **The Kurds of Kazakhstan**

In the message sent by the President of Kazakhstan N. Nazarbayev to the peoples of the country he emphasized that the most important thing is that during the years after gaining independence "no person in the whole of Kazakhstan be lost in interethnic collisions". Actually today the interethnic mutual understanding and interaction as a pledge of our successful development is absolutely necessary for us. All the Kurds living and working on the native land of great Abai well remember that Kazakhstan is a poly-ethnic society. Let's remember that our people are one of the most ancient among the peoples of the Middle East. Many disasters have befallen us but through the extremely complex geo-politic conditions the Kurds until now have had no independent statehood. The Kurds who suffered genocide in their own country, divided between Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Syria, have found the second homeland

in the Soviet Union, settling in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kirgystan, as well as in other parts of the world (Europe, Australia, America).

The Kurds first appeared in Kazakhstan in 1937, when they were deported from the Caucasus because of their "ties with abroad". In May 1938 when in the mountains Karatau the first Kurdish collective farm was organized, people have started working in the collective farm living in tents in the open-air. The construction of the houses was to begin after the end of the sowing.

Mahmude Khasike (Asanov), a Kurdish aksakal, the father of nine children said to them: "I remember the autumn day of 1937 as if it were yesterday, when we arrived at the village of Bakanas. We were welcomed by Kazakh families, who emptied some yurts for us, and shared the last piece of bread. These people have such a big heart and generous soul.

I indefatigably repeat to all my nine children: "Be friends with the Kazakhs, they are people of the great kindness who saved us from unavoidable death!" (see newspaper "Yegemen Kazakhstan", January 15, 1997).

6297 families were deported from Georgia in 1944, 27 657 people were sent to Kazakhstan and the republics of Central Asia. Out of them about three thousand (the number of the Kurds among the deportees, unfortunately, is not known) were dispatched to Alma-Ata area.

Analyzing the archival documents of 1937 - 44 one can see that because of the absence of warm clothes, footwear many deportees could not leave their homes and go to work. But it was the children who suffered most. The language barrier was the main cause of non-attendance at schools in 1946. As the statistics testify, only 21 % of children of school age were educated in schools and of these only 12 % attended preschool establishments.

The biggest problem was accommodating and providing the newcomers with work. Nothing was done for reception and accommodation of immigrants by the state. According to eyewitnesses, because of this, in the winters of 1937/38 and of 1944/45 many people and among them plenty of children and old men died. Kazakhstan in the 30-s had a hard social and economic position. Local authorities could not pro-



vide the population with accommodation, meals and the consumer goods and the position of deportees deteriorated. Nevertheless Kazakhstan and its people received and accommodated hundreds of thousands of forced immigrants.

Now in the Republic of Kazakhstan complex social and economic processes are taking place. Many of them are caused by the problems of development of the sovereignty of the young independent state.

The last decade saw the exodus of some ethnic groups, to other post-Soviet states of the CIS. Simultaneously the indigenous population grew due to the influx of immigrants from adjacent states Iran, Mongolia, Russia, China and Turkey.

Growth of some small ethnic groups was planned. There are several explanations for this. Here are some of them: the unstable political, economic situation in some republics of the former USSR; interethnic conflicts and the reasons for them, mainly Eurasian political processes. One of the ethnic groups of the population of Kazakhstan, which has numerically increased are the Kurds.

As the statistics tell us, from 1989 to 1993 the number of the Kurds in Kazakhstan has increased by 29 %. The increase in population of the Kurdish nationality can be explained by several reasons. But the most significant perhaps, are and remain the interethnic stability in Kazakhstan, its social and economic stability, and in contrast to this political instability and aggravated interethnic conditions in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

It is necessary to note, that the political management of the republic of Kazakhstan on behalf of the president Nursultan Nazarbayev concerning the problems of national minorities tackled with understanding. In its long-term development programme "Kazakhstan 2030" the president has noted, that we, the people of Kazakhstan, stand for the strengthening of mutual ties and relations between peoples. And we will gradually, step by step, deepen our national solidarity and thus increase our national potential.

A special role in the Kurdish diaspora in Kazakhstan has been played by the Assembly of Peoples of Kazakhstan which has been created under the initiative of the President. The head of the state is the Chairman of this unique public institution. The Association is recog-



nized by authoritative international organizations and has no parallel in any of the CIS countries.

Now peoples of Kazakhstan have opportunity to realize their creative and spiritual potential in all spheres of public work whether it will be in the arena of politics, the establishment of small private business or carrying out research.

Nowadays in Kazakhstan the association of the Kurds of Kazakhstan "Barbang" ("Dawn"), the Kurdish cultural centres function in the cities and the regional centres of the republic Almaty, Almaty oblast, Southern Kazakhstan, Zhambyl regions, etc.

The newspaper "Kurdistan", literary and art magazine "Nubar" are issued. In places with Kurdish majorities, the Kurds creative collective-folklore ensembles and poetic circles are organized. At schools for the Kurdish children lessons of the Kurdish language are conducted.

A sociological interrogation of the Kurdish population in Kazakhstan was carried out with a view of research of social and economic position of the Kurds and studying the prospects of their development. It was organized by the faculty of theoretical and applied political science at the Abai Almaty State University together with the Union of the Kurdish intellectuals of Kazakhstan and the Kurdish association, in May July 1995.

Here are some data from this investigation.

More than 600 respondents from 16 till 60 have taken part in this interrogation. Out of 600 people interviewed 265 were young people, from 18 to 30 years, 153 middle-aged, from 30 to 60 years, and 82 from 60 and older. Especially it would be desirable to note, that 138 women took part in the investigation.

The form of the activity of respondents has divided them into three basic groups. The first group consisted of those working in the state institutions and pupils of educational establishments. They were composed of 34 % from all interviewed. The structure of the second group included those who were engaged in private business and idle. They were composed of 56 % from the general number. The third group included all pensioners. They made 10 % from the general number of those interrogated.

From the general number of respondents more than 80 % were independent, that is at the time of interview they had their own family. The average Kurdish family consists of 5 or 6 persons.

In answering the question: "Do you know, when and how and from where you arrived in the Republic of Kazakhstans" 60 % answered, that they were born in Kazakhstan, 19 % answered, that they arrived in Kazakhstan more than 10 years ago from Transcaucasia, and 26 % answered, that they arrived 2 or 3 years ago from Kyrgyzstan, Russia or Uzbekistan.

In answering the question: "What language (or languages) do you know?" more than half of the respondents answered, that they know Kazakh and Russian, and only 70 % of the people interviewed said that they know the Kurdish language.

In answering the question: "Do you or your children have an opportunity now to receive higher or secondary special or general secondary education?", 172 respondents answered, that they can receive higher education, 263 that they can have special secondary and 456 general secondary education.

In answering the question, "Do you consider yourself the citizen of Kazakhstan?" the overwhelming majority of respondents answered "Yes".

In answering the question, "Do you consider it expedient to render moral, material or other help to the foreign Kurds, who are exposed reprisals or other anti-humane acts?" 478 respondents answered positively; the others did not reply at all.

All the above-said evidently testifies that the Kurds have adapted to Kazakhstani life. For many Kurds of Kazakhstan this country has become their second homeland.

Gasane Hadjisuleyman, who began his poetic career in Kazakhstan, writes about Almaty:

**I'd like to sing of your beauty  
With a lovely song,  
But the song's too tight for you,  
Though it comes from the bottom of my heart.  
You've covered the longest way  
From the times immemorial;**

And now you've become my Homeland  
O my dear magnificent City.  
You've got shady parks,  
Your marvelous places are bright,  
My fairyland, my city-garden,  
O my brilliant leading light.  
What are the words? I know the feelings  
Which are submitted to your beauty.  
O my capital dear, words fail me to describe  
How I am in love with you\*

Today in Kazakhstan alongside other ethnicities, the Kurds have achieved great success in science, culture, education, social and political life. In the former USSR it was Kazakhstan that gave the first Kurdish Academician of National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Academician of the International Engineering Academy of the Republic of Kazakhstan and of some International Academies, the winner of the State Prize of the RK in the field of Science and Engineering, the Honored Scientist of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Doctor of Chemistry, the professor, working in the fields of catalysis, physical chemistry of complex organic systems **N.K. Nadirov**, who is one of the prominent figures of Kazakhstan.

Nowadays a certain scientific contribution to the development of modern literary criticism is introduced by the Doctor of Philology, the Academician of the International Academy of Sciences of the Higher School, a member of the board of the Union of Writers of Kazakhstan, the Academician of Social Sciences of Kazakhstan, Professor **K.I. Mirzoyev**. It is desirable to note the great scientific activity of the late Dr.Sci. Tech., Professor, the Member-Correspondent of the International Academy of Mineral Resources **G. A. Musayev**; Dr.Sci.Tech., Professor **U. A. Sadykov**; **T.A. Aliyev** – an honoured meliorator of Kazakhstan, Candidate of geographical sciences; the Cand.Phil.Sci. **M. S. Yusubov**, **G.A. Aliyev**, **M.A. Badirov**, **Bari** and **Arif Nad-**

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\* This poem and all the other poems are presented in per line translation.



irovs; the Doctor of Political Sciences **M. M. Mamedov** and many others.

There are also outstanding Kurds in the field of education. So the rank of the Honored Teacher of the Republic is awarded to such teachers as **A. K. Nadirov**, **M.T.Suleymanov**, **A.B.Nadyrov**, **S.I.Seyidov**, **I.A. Aliyev**. The Exemplary educationalist of the Republic of Kazakhstan became **A.S. Aliyev**, **V.U. Broyev** and **Akhmed Nabiev**. The Honoured Teacher of Kirghyzstan **N.A.Chatuyev** works in Kazakhstan.

The Kurdish writers and publicists of Kazakhstan are **Barie Bala**, **Madzhide Suleiman**, **Saleh Sayadi**, **Gasane Hadjisuleyman**, **Malikshakh Gasanov**, **Zakhar Sadykov** and others. **Sayid Us've Sayid Ali**, **Sheikh Gasane Sheikh Kadyr** and **Alima Amo Nadirova**, the first Kurdish woman scientist, pedagogue and ethnographer, today plays an outstanding role in spiritual education of the Kurds of Kazakhstan.

Today dozens of Kurds have achieved high results in different kinds of sports. Their names are known not only in our republic, but also far beyond its limits. Brothers **Mikael and Ismail Nadirovs**, **Ramazan Sayadov** are European champions in kickboxing, masters of sports of the international class. Master of Sports **Alik Aslanov** is the senior boxing trainer of the team of the Central Sports Club of the Army. **Malikshah Myrzayev**, an Honoured Master of Sports, nowadays is the Chairman at the Faculty of Academy of tourism and sports. The two-multiple champion of Kazakhstan in fighting, Master of Sports is **Hanevaiz Hanayev** and many others.

Many Kurds work in law enforcement bodies, as heads of the large industrial enterprises, joint-stock companies, in mass media and people's education.

**Sh. R. Dursunov** is the former first Deputy to Public Prosecutor of Almaty oblast; **M.M. Suleimanov** is the President of the Firm "Technoplast" in Almaty; **Sh. A. Mustafayev** is the Chairman of the Council of Directors of multi-profile firm "Tales", the President of the firms "AKL", General Director of the firm "Sharf-Lina"; **A. M. Asanov** is the President of Joint-Stock Almaty Company "Dormech-anizatsia"; **D. M. Alikhanov** is Deputy General Director of Associa-

tion "Kazavtoremont"; **G.B. Nadirov** is the General Director of Open Company "Murad and G.", an Honoured Trader; **A.Z. Aliyev** is the President of Joint-Stock Almaty Company "ESD" (Almaty); **S. J. Mamedov** is the Vice-President of Joint-Stock Almaty Company "Ovoschprom"; **Narina Knyaz** is the Vice-Chairman of the Board of International Bank of Alma-Ata; **Fatima Makhmude**, having worked more than 22 years in a project institute now is engaged in the education of rising generation; **Sh. K. Karimov** is the President of a Civil Engineering Almaty Firm "Triada"; **Agali Ibragimov**, Colonel, is the Deputy Chief of the Criminal Investigation Dpt. of the Municipal Department of Internal Affairs of Almaty; **S.A. Shamoi** The Department Director of Inner Control and Audit; **Elim-khan Aliyev** is the officer of the Almaty Tax Committee; **M.A. Ayupov** is the Police Colonel; **A.B. Isayev** is the first Deputy Public Prosecutor of the district and many others who work in law enforcement bodies of the Republic; **A. I. Suleimanov** is the Deputy of Maslikhat (Parliament) of Zhambyl oblast, **V.K. Mirzoyev** is a member of the Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan, the Assistant of Prosecutor.

Today in Kazakhstan many scientists and culturologists, comprehensively investigating causes and effects of different phenomena write extensively on the development of Kurdish-Kazakh relations.

The Doctor of Philosophy, Professor **A. Ishmuhamedov** writes: "It goes without saying that, if the Kurdish people in the past and the present had had a unitarian statehood, and all the Kurds or even the majority had lived on the free native land, their spiritual development would have reached even bigger heights, and the literature would have been characterized by more development, importance and greater independence. Here the fault does not lie with the Kurdish people and their creative intellectuals but with certain states of the West and the East and their political divisions".

Spiritual ties connect the Kazakh and the Kurdish peoples. As confirmation of this fact between 1937 and 1941-1944 many Kurds found shelter in the land of the Kazakhs. In connection with instability in the Caucasus, events in Nagorny Karabakh and around it, in 1988-1990 Kurdish immigrants were again drawn to Kazakhstan. The Kazakh people showed care and mercy to the Kurds. This friendship be-



tween two peoples tested in the most difficult historical circumstances, should never be underestimated.

Nowadays the Kurds and the Kazakhs live in one common house in sovereign Kazakhstan. They work for the general welfare, and prosperity of this young independent country.

## KURDISTAN

According to numerous historical and geographical sources Kurdistan is located in the centre of the Near East between 30 40 ° northern breadth and 37 48° east longitude. In the north the country of the Kurds borders on Armenia and Georgia and Nakhichevan (Azerbaijan), in the east with Iran, in the south with Iraq and Syria, in the west - with Turkey. The total area of territory of Kurdistan makes 520 thousand sq. km. The extent of the territory from the north to the south makes 1000 km, and from the east to the west - 750 km. Kurdistan is divided into four parts. The area of Northern Kurdistan, seized by the Turks, makes 250 thousand sq. km. Eastern Kurdistan with the area of 176 thousand sq. km is a part of Iran.

Southern Kurdistan, which is more than 97.7 thousand sq. km is a part of Iraq and Southwest Kurdistan - about 23 thousand sq. km is a part of Syria.

The landscapes of the country are different and contrasting. The largest hills are the long mountain range of the Taurus Mountains, which passes across the entire territory of Northern Kurdistan, dividing it into two parts, down to the area of Dzhulamerk. Here begins another chain of mountains the Zagros Mountains, which extend 1000 km, passing through the whole territory of Kurdistan. The heights of individual peaks reach 4700 m.

In Northern Kurdistan there are such mountains known to all the Kurds, as the Munzur, the Dersim, the Murad, the Tendurek, the Sypan, the Nemrut, and Big Ararat is the highest mountain (5165 m.).

The area of Southern Kurdistan is both mountainous and flat. In the mountainous areas the height above sea level reaches 4000 m. The highest mountains are Beher, Bagrman, Akra, Safin, Baziyan, Karadah and Kharir. All of them are covered with snow half-year. The moun-



tainous area of Kurdistan is in the zone of increased earth-quake risk. The population of Kurdistan frequently suffers from destructive earthquakes the force of which sometimes reaches 8 or more on the Richter scale. Among high hills there are many plateaus, plains and fertile valleys, suitable for the development of agriculture.

In Kurdistan it is possible to find almost all types of climate: from severe mountain, continental, to Mediterranean and subtropical.

The average temperature of January from -10 up to -15, in high-mountainous districts temperature falls up to -35 degrees C. In June the average temperature is + 35 C, and it sometimes rises up to + 40 + 45 degrees C. In Kurdistan there are many large forests. However for many years wood has been used as a source of heating. Recently Kurdistan's nature including its woodlands, have suffered greatly from barbarous actions of the Turkish militarists who under the pretext of the struggle against the Kurdish guerrillas have destroyed and continue to destroy woods. In mountains the amount of deposits is much more, than in the plains. Almost in the whole territory of the country the maximum of deposits falls in the warm half of a year. Atmospheric precipitations drop out mainly as snow in winter.

### **Minerals**

Kurdistan is rich in minerals. The main mineral is petroleum. The largest petroleum deposits are in the south of Kurdistan: in Kirkuk, Babagurgur, Beihassann and Dzhembur. In 1970 in Kirkuk 57.8 million barrels of petroleum were extracted. About 10 thousand barrels of crude petroleum are extracted every day from Kirkurk sources. In the province of Koisandzhak from the chinks of Taktak 5000 barrels of petroleum are extracted per day, also much petroleum is extracted from the oil well of Hanekin. The largest stocks of petroleum are found in the areas of Erbil and Suleimania.

Petroleum is one of the main causes for the colonization of Kurdistan. The Kurds do not profit from the riches. The incomes of the Kurdish petroleum go on the development of the Arabian part of Iraq. In 1977 incomes of the Iraq of 50 % from Kurdistan petroleum made 6900 million dollars. The part of this money was used by the Iraq au-

thorities for struggle against the Kurdish people for destruction of cities and villages and peaceful population.

In Northern Kurdistan there are also petroleum deposits. In April 1940 in the Batman province from Raman-Shelmo they began to extract petroleum. Till 1980 from this reserve 2 330 192 t. of crude petroleum had been extracted. Petroleum through the pipeline leaves Batman to the western part of Turkey. Besides the Batman region, in Northern Kurdistan petroleum deposits are found in Amad region: in Ketin, Terkan, Termil and Nusaibin. Lately in the town of Samsur in Kolik area one of the richest in the world of petroleum deposits has been found. In this area operates 42 oil wells from which it is extracted 1600 barrels of petroleum per day.

Bowels of Eastern (Iranian) Kurdistan are also rich with petroleum (The deposits of Shakhabad, Nefteshakh and Kermanshah). The southwest (Syrian) part of Kurdistan is also rich in petroleum. Here petroleum is extracted in the provinces of Derik and Rumeil. Since 1984 from these deposits 8.5 million tons of petroleum have been extracted.

Kurdistan natural resources are still poorly studied, but geological researches show, that the country is rich in coal, iron ore, bauxites, gold, copper, silver, uranium, rock crystal, marble, plaster and many other minerals.

In the Middle East water is valued as highly as petroleum. In Kurdistan there are the biggest and deepest rivers of the Middle East - the Tigris and the Euphrates. The territory between these rivers is known in history by the name of Mesopotamia. The Kurds name the northern part of Mesopotamia as Mazra Botan. Where the land of Mesopotamia was most fertile, a human civilization arose. Archeological findings show that man first began working the ground here. The most lingering river of Kurdistan is the Euphrates (2800 km), 1110 km of which flows in Kurdistan.

On these rivers a whole cascade of hydroelectric power stations has been constructed. The hydroelectric power stations constructed on the Euphrates in Northern Kurdistan, develop 26 billion kwt of the electric power per one year.



The other rivers of Northern Kurdistan are Avarash, Murad, Arake, Pasin, Habur, Chah-chah, Munzur. The rivers Avarash and Murad begin their current on the highest mountains of Kurdistan. Both these rivers merge near Keban and in a bottleneck form a rough stream. Here in 1974 the Keban hydroelectric power station, which is now the basic source of the electric power in Turkey, was constructed.

Among the large rivers in the territory of Southern Kurdistan are the Khabur, the Big Zab and the Small Zab, all tributaries of the Tigris. On the Small Zab in 1959 the dam of Dokan, and on the rivers Sirvan and Tendzher in 1961 the dam of Derbendikhan were constructed.

The waters of Dokan basin irrigate more than 500 thousand hectares of soil. Power stations, which give vital energy for the needs of the Arabian part of Iraq, are also constructed here. In the area of the irrigated grounds of Kurdistan the Iraq authorities will pursue a policy of the Arabization by resettlement of Arabian tribes (mainly - in the province of Kirkuk).

In East Kurdistan there are numerous smaller rivers which lengths do not exceed 250 kms. The best known of these rivers are the Zerindzhan, the Kizilzen, the Mako, the Spi, the Zlend, and the Kotre.

In Kurdistan there are a lot of lakes, the biggest in the area being the salty lake Urmie located in East Kurdistan. It is 140 kms long, 50 kms wide and 15 m deep. The second-largest salty lake is Van, located in the north of the country; the local residents call it the Van Sea. The depth of the lake is 100 m. Annually from its waters up to 100 - 150 tons of fish are caught. The Lake Van attracts thousands of tourists with its beauty; on its coast several tourist complexes are located.

The population of all four parts of Kurdistan is made from 35 up to 40 million people, including 20 million who live in Northern Kurdistan, 8 million - in East Kurdistan, 6 million - in Southern Kurdistan and about 2 million of Southwest (Syrian) Kurdistan. In total the number of Kurds all over the world makes approximately 40 million.

In Northwest (Turkish) Kurdistan 23 cities are located. The city of Amad (Diyarbakir) is an ancient city in which more than one million persons lived; nowadays the number of its inhabitants has increased up to 2 million due to refugees. Batman is a new city. In the area of Batman there is a large oil recovery. About 400 thousand people live in



Bitlis. Dilok (Antab) is a large administrative centre in which about one million people live. The stream of refugees from the countryside to large cities is increased because of the severe war, which the Turkish authorities conducted and conduct in Kurdistan. Since 1984, from the beginning of the armed struggle of the Kurdish people for freedom and independence, refugees became more than 3.5 million person, more than 3 thousand Kurdish villages were destroyed.

In East (Iranian) Kurdistan there are cities and urban settlements. These number 50, the largest of them being Kerman-shah (2.5 million people), Sine (1.5 million), Mekhabad (0.5 million).

Mekhabad is known as the centre of the national-liberation movement in the Eastern Kurdistan after the Second World War. In 1946 Mekhabad was announced the capital of the Democratic Republic of Eastern Kurdistan. The Iranian military authorities crushed the Mekhabadian republic in 1947.

The number of large, average and small cities in Southern (Iraqi) Kurdistan reaches 70. The largest is Dykhok (200.000), Khavler (Erbil) (400.000), Suleimania (500.000), Kirkuk (700.000), Khanekin. These cities are administrative centers of the provinces of the same name. Khavler (Erbil) is the capital of Southern Kurdistan. Suleimania is renowned as one of the centres of Kurdish culture.

The industry in Kurdistan is extremely poor. The reason is in the colonizing policy of the governments, deliberately standing in the way of the development of the Kurdish national industry and the formation of the national market. In Kurdistan the industry is mostly of local value light, food, small domestic industries, workshops are advanced.

The basic part of the population is occupied in agriculture. In Kurdistan grain, melon-growing, industrial crops are developed. Various vegetables and fruit grow in the country. The animal industries - in particular cultivation of large horned livestock and sheep breeding is advanced. The products of agriculture are basically used for the colonial needs of the mother countries.

In Kurdistan the settlements are connected by a basic infrastructure, very few of the roads are asphalted. The roads constructed by

the states which have divided Kurdistan, were used, firstly, for plunder of natural riches of Kurdistan, and secondly for military purposes.

The railway communication is not advanced. The Baghdad railway passes through the territory of Kurdistan. Sivas Erzincan Erzurum - Kars Armenia are also connected by railway. There is also a road Erzurum Mush.

The asphalted roads, constructed by the Turkish authorities, connect almost all of the large cities of Southern Kurdistan. All of them have themselves and the cities, first of all, military significance.

### **Socio-economic structure**

Many people perceive Kurdistan as the country occupied mostly by nomads despite them only making up an insignificant part of the Kurds. Such a stereotype, which was formed as far back as in the Middle Ages, concerning the social and economic structure of Kurdistan, continues to exist and shape the public consciousness.

Contrary to the established opinion on the cattle breeding monospecialization of the Kurds and their ranking to the number of cattle breeding peoples of Southwest Asia it is necessary to note, that economic life of ethnos was never limited to cattle breeding in general, and nomadic cattle breeding in particular.

The geographical environment representing a close interlacing and alternation suitable for agriculture of the flat grounds and mountain pastures, created favorable conditions for overlapping nomadic cattle breeding and settled agriculture. From here sources of features of economic-cultural situation in Kurdistan, consisting in coexistence and close coherence of nomadic cattle breeding and settled agriculture are also conducted.

Economic life of the overwhelming majority of the population of Kurdistan is connected to two basic kinds of labour activity, with cultivation of cattle and processing of the ground. Agriculture was concentrated basically in the valleys famous for their fertility.

Thus the local population completely provided for themselves and their cities with agricultural production. And today the valleys in Iraq and Syria, occupied by the Kurds, are the granaries of these countries.

Wheat and barley are the principal agricultural crops in Southeast Kurdistan. As a rule, they were sown repeatedly on the same grounds. In the valleys the peasants never gave the ground an opportunity to have a rest and lay under the ferry. Usually to ground helped to restore the fertility simple alternation of cultures. In a hilly terrain the ground had a rest in one year.

The natural deposits that were dropping out basically in the rainy winter-spring period in volume from 400 up to 800 ml annually promote cultivation of tobacco and rice. Thus they made irrigation necessary for such cultures.

The cotton, too, needed watering. More often this culture on the mountainous grounds grew at times only when irrigated with the rain. An artificial irrigation needed one sort of wheat, which was called *bakhara*. Non-irrigation agriculture practiced as a whole, and the peasants fertilized the ground only under grapes and tobacco. Corn, millet, lentil, and also tomatoes, watermelons, cucumbers, onions grew in plenty in Southern Kurdistan. The Ardelenian farmers and gardeners, for example, were considered as excellent.

The engineering of processing of the ground and the instruments of work of the Kurdish farmers were notable for simplicity.

In mountainous villages and on the highlands a wooden plough with iron the plowing of the ground has been made by a wooden plough with iron a ploughshare. A tractor and harvesting machines have appeared only recently. The western sources describing "the conditions of life" in Southern Kurdistan at the beginning of the 50s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, too mention only traditional wooden plough with an iron tip. On plowing of the ground the Kurdish peasant usually spent much time and work as for restoration of the forces it was necessary for empty fertile soils regular plowing.

After the threshing the grain was thrown upwards against the wind, and then sifted through a sieve. A crop stored in the special vessels made of not burnt clay, with the height of the growth of man. These clay granaries of the cylindrical or rectangular form from above were closed by a flat stone and put under the floor, in the corner of the premise. The grain was milled on water mills. The mountainous rivers



and channels created extremely favorable conditions for their construction.

The structure of cattle and its number depended, first of all, on the prosperity of the family, and also on its mode of life. The sheep and pack animals were obligatory and the most important in an economy at a nomadic way of life. The first made a fixed capital of the nomad, the second - enabled to conduct a nomadic economy. In the Kurdish nomadic environment people said: "No sheep, no life".

In the basis of the cattle breeding economy there was a cultivation of the fat-tailed sheep with rich and thin wool. Besides the sheep, the Kurds grew goats and large horned livestock on the encampment and in the village. Nevertheless conducting manufacturers of cattle breeding production in Kurdistan were and remain till now sheep and goats.

Camels, bulls and buffaloes were used as pack animals. Donkeys and mules have not received a big distribution in Kurdistan. The Kurds, changing the place of nomad encampment trusted backs of these peaceful and patient four-footed animals all their property. Women and children also rode on the backs of these animals.

Farmers on bulls and oxen ploughed the ground and transported cargoes. Buffaloes used a monopoly in a village to carry a vehicle. In the areas of East Kurdistan a big preference was given to them for the performance practically all the agricultural works.

Camels in Kurdistan were used on encampment and in a village. The prosperous Kurds owned even "chains" of camels. The Kurds - nomads during stops used camels, as an original fencing where for night the cattle was driven. For transportation of the cargoes the Kurds did not use the horse even on their way to a new place of dwelling. It was a symbol of prestige. During the time of moving to new places only soldiers and wives of tribal leaders, with gold decorations and the best dresses were on the horses. The Kurds esteemed the noble animal and used it exceptionally for riding and conducting military actions.

The ratio of cattle breeding and agricultural economy in various areas of Kurdistan was rather unequal. In some areas (Southeast Kurdistan) the cattle breeding on the economic value gave up the place to agriculture. In some other regions a basis for housekeeping was made with cattle breeding and agriculture had an auxiliary character.

According to the Kurdish scholar Mela Makhmud Bayazidi, the Kurdish society was precisely divided into two groups: nomadic and settled. He does not accept the concepts of "semi-nomadic" or "semi-settled".

Speaking about the Kurdish nomads in the book "Traditions and customs of the Kurds" Mela Makhmud Bayazidi names them the "inhabitants of the tents."

Despite this unequivocal estimation of a situation in Kurdistan by the Kurdish author of the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, of precise for him division of the Kurdish society into two parts, nomadic and settled, it seems logical, that the most part of the population occupied nevertheless intermediate position. The majority of inhabitants of Kurdistan combined processing the ground in valleys and on slopes of mountains with conducting a cattle breeding economy in much big scales, rather than completely settled population, and the main thing - with seasonal moving with all house to the mountains and camp there residing. The distance up to encampments varied from several hours to about several days. Seasonal re-settling to the summer pastures also served as a criterion of nomadic customs of the population of a part of villages of Kurdistan.

The entire village or its greater part together with cattle went to the pastures in the mountains. When there came time of works with the ground in the village men used to return and after their performance hastened to be back at the encampment. In some areas many Kurdish villages were populated only in the winter months of the year.

Such farm pattern, in the opinion of ethnographers, is characteristic of plateaus and areas, adjoining to the mountainous regions. People left for the mountains in summer because of the depressing heat, not so much because of pastures and cattle, as for the sake of the mountain coolness. Even the inhabitants of the big cities were in the habit of spending summer months in the mountains, preferring residing at tents.

Analyzing the economic-cultural situation in Kurdish areas, we come to a conclusion about the absence of sharp borders between nomadic cattle breeding and settled agricultural mode in the life of the Kurds. However it is necessary to note, that the similar conclusion reflects modern position when completely nomad tribes became a rarity.



In conditions of high mountains, where there are no numerous passes, the alternativeness in the routes taken by the Kurds was reduced to a minimum. The number of used pastures was strictly limited, too. Now each of the numerous nomad tribes has two, or sometimes three mountainous pastures that it uses one by one.

In spring and autumn the Kurds settled down in gorges and the covered places, the summer temporary living quarters and the camp of special purpose - were on high-mountainous pastures where there appeared an issue. Moving was strictly regulated territorially and chronologically.

The example of the situation in Kurdistan shows that the term "Nomadic" does not always mean a way of life and a kind of economy in the "conditions of constant moving". Most likely, the question concerns the residing and housekeeping in the conditions of a tent camp, and under the "mobility" we must mean just moving from one camp to another. Thus it is necessary to note, that the number of these parking places was rather limited.

All aforesaid testify, that speaking about Kurdistan, we talk about the settled proprietors of cattle and the migration as such simply had no place. In such a situation we have the driving off form of cattle breeding, which can be characterized as a form of the settled agriculture.

The Kurdish shepherds who grazed the herds of the nomad tribes, couldn't be reproached for the absence of professionalism. Only the poorest did without shepherds professionals; they grazed the cattle themselves. Their main task, as people of the Kurdish tribes considered was the performance, first of all, the functions of the soldiers, protecting their people and their cattle from an attack. Correspondingly the shepherds (one for the herd of 500 heads) were traditionally employed from the poorest part of the tribe, and sometimes from aliens.

Among true nomads agricultural occupations were very rare. Their economy had only cattle breeding character. They did not condescend to agriculture as long as they were made to do that by force. The warlike nomads considered the processing of the ground unworthy occupation, which humiliate them. The reason of such an attitude was the fact that nomads were always forced to accept the settled mode of life.



In the scornfulness of a true nomad to the work of the farmer is clearly seen the real border separating a nomadic society from a settled one. And here begins the opposition sharply perceived by the both sides. The semi-nomads who were engaged in the complex agro-cattle breeding economy, in the social plan first of all adjoined to the settled farmers, but not to the nomads.

First of all nomads were distinguished with a big number of the livestock of cattle, the leading factor being the level of the social organization. Conducting the nomadic cattle breeding economy is inextricably related with the tribal structure of a society. At the level of a tribe and its divisions there was an organization of labour processes and all social life: the economic, social, administrative, military and ideological relations strengthened the society of nomads.

The numbers of a nomadic community first of all were estimated by the economic expediency, the quantity of cattle and the possibilities of pastures. The average amount of the Kurdish encampment was 20-30 tents (or houses).

Moving to summer pastures and back Kurdish nomadic communities were united and that occurred already at a level of a tribe or its division. It, certainly, does not mean that the tribe outside of the nomadic environment did not exist. There were also settled tribes, but the clan ties in them, most likely, were inverted to times when the tribe conducted a nomadic way of life, and had retrospective character.

Farming was connected by the system of duties, management and the control at a level of a village. Inhabitants of villages after performance of all cycle of agricultural works made seasonal migration to the nearby mountain pastures. Thus they always remembered the belonging to a tribe. Self-control of labour activity and social life was carried out on the entire rural level. All accepted the major economic solutions concerning the beginning of annual migration or returning home. If military actions took place, each village was to direct a group of 10 to 15 warriors. Thus, if the social integration of the settled farmer occurred at a rural level the nomads were united in independent communities as tribes.

In sources and the literature about the Kurdish nomads, mutual relations between the nomadic and settled population did not find any reflection.

Basically it was paid attention to the factors of distinction. Between the nomads and the farmers in Kurdistan were erected various barriers: both caste and ethnic, and even racial. The nomads very often refused to acknowledge the settled as belonging to the Kurdish ethnos, accepting them thus for lower and despised race.

The impassable barrier between the nomads and the settled is first of all the result of the usual stereotypes, for neither the first, nor the second perceived themselves as "hermetically sealed castes." "Their relations sometimes had antagonistic character, especially when the way of wandering communities lay through the grounds of settled peasants. The nomads seldom passed without conflicts. The nomads were very often accused of moving too slowly, as a result of which the fields and the pastures suffered greatly. But in the armed conflicts the rural community was weaker than the nomadic community. Nevertheless, it was not the actions of mutual confrontation that determined the relations between the nomads and the farmers, but the economic gain for both sides. That is in the process of communication they exchanged the products of their labour.

Even before starting for their migration, the nomads could predetermine all the key moments of their dialogue with the population of various villages by which passed their "breeding way." They could sometimes make a certain arrangement with the farmers on the performance of transport works or on delivery of fuel. So, for example, in Afghanistan the settled inhabitants willingly let the nomads graze the cattle in their fields where the crop had already been gathered, for the sake of fertilizer, in autumn within one or two months. The countrymen, even "were rather pleased", when the nomads stopped in their fields, for it was much cheaper to buy cows from them than in the market.

The manufacture of material benefits during wars and border conflicts concentrated in the economy of the nomads cattlemen, and during relative stabilization in the economy of the settled farmers. Thus, within the limits of one region the constant exchange of productive



forces from the sphere of a nomadic economy to agriculture and *vice versa*.

All known large tribes included in their structure both settled farmers, and nomads cattlemen. Depending on concrete political situation in the area the correlation of these parts varied. The tribe of the Dzhaifs, for example, together with the breeding communities, which had adjoined them in the first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, totaled approximately 10 thousand tents and 3 thousand settled families. A bit later the ratio of the settled farmers in a tribe considerably exceeded. However such subsidence was not final, and many families again started to conduct a nomadic way of life as soon as they can afford it. Kurds frequently neglected agriculture for the sake of cattle breeding, even in the presence of the fertile grounds.

What an attractive force consisted in a nomadic cattle - breeding way of life if the settling of the nomadic tribes of Kurdistan in newest times occurred mostly compulsorily. One of the popular beliefs is the opinion that the work of the cattleman is easier, than the work of the farmer and consequently the cattleman was inclined to come back to the nomadic mode as soon as possible.

But it had nothing to do with the situation in Kurdistan. If the cattle breeding demanded smaller number of hands, then it was also less stable. In case of an attack the nomad could lose everything. The nomadic way of life in the conditions of the high mountains, the severe existence face to face with the nature daily demanded from him passing an examination on the viability. To make transitions and to overtake cattle, moving across steep rocks and rough streams, was possible only by improbable efforts.

And still the nomadic mode in the life of the cattle breeding communities was very essential. Chingiz Aytmatov in his memoirs gives a celebratory sketch of a Kirghiz nomadic tribe. In the memory of the far childhood a crossing to new encampment was kept as a big ritual procession, an original exhibition of the best harness, the best ornaments, riding horses, carpets body cloths, display of beautiful girls and the best singers - improvisators of mourning songs. "I have found these bright shows, writes Chingiz Aytmatov, on their most outcome then they have disappeared with transition to the settled way of life".



The Kurds could have arranged their crossing with no less beauty and solemnity. But, unfortunately, peace and stability were very rare on the land of Kurdistan. Military actions occurred constantly for centuries. Necessity but not solemnity had sense in this situation. Herds and pack animals could be lost in severe winter or robbed. There was a case when a cattleman lost one thousand sheep that died of winter colds. The victim could not endure the loss and after the impudent threat addressed to the God, fell down from his horse and died. Conducting nomadic cattle - breeding economy demanded more significant labour expenses and skills, than the farming. The Kurdish nomad practically always had to live on the limit of human opportunities.

Hence, the reasons of stability of nomadic cattle breeding way in the economy of Kurdistan by no means can be explained by easiness' of work and free life of the Kurdish nomad.

So, we can say without the exaggeration, that in whirlpool of political events in the region the Kurds hardly probable could keep themselves as an ethnic community if in extreme situations of the history they had no opportunity to leave for the mountains where as their stronghold served the nomadic encampment and the tribe.

Besides that, both a nomadic tribe and a nomadic community carried out also another important socio-ethnic and political function. For the Kurds there were no borders dividing the Ottoman Empire and Iran and Iraq. So, for example, after the Iranian-Turkish Treaty of 1639 which, apparently, has brought in some clearness to boundary claims of two empires the Kurds year after year continued to move in the same way of seasonal migrations, as before.

The political border between two states and interdictions of governors to cross the border of their possessions was not able to change the traditional ways of the tribes of the Kurdish nomads, who purportedly washed away the borders of the states, which have divided their country in two. As arteries, they connected the separated Kurdish areas together, carrying out the integrative function within the limits of the entire region.

Mobile nomad tribes up to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. concentrated practically all the military potential of the Kurds, who were glorified for their bellicosity and fearlessness in all the Middle East. It was with the

Kurdish nomads that their neighbours had to fight on the battlefields, and more than once suffering the defeat from them. Most likely, stories about these battles turned into legends and caused, in their turn, among neighbouring peoples a representation that the Kurds were only nomads - cattlemen. However a nomadic economy and nomads never were either sole or the determining factor in the social and economic structure of Kurdistan.

Cattle - breeding in Kurdistan does not represent an embodiment of economic backwardness and a brake social - development. It served in extreme conditions of a history the keeper of productive forces of region and a link between the Kurdish areas, which have been violently broken off on a part by the states, which have divided the grounds of Kurds.

Even fragmentary data of sources on economic life of Kurds evidently testify, in our opinion, what the mobile nomadic economy rescued Kurdish areas from full economic ruin and destruction of productive forces during full ruin with which so the local history is rich.

The short periods of relative economic stability in Kurdistan were frequently replaced by desolation: "The area is on fire, the works are not carried out, the villages are destroyed and citizens are not to be found". The boundary position of the country between the hostile empires transformed the country of the Kurds into a permanent range. As a result of it the economy and a condition of productive forces experienced constant recessions.

In such a situation we cannot speak about the ecological equilibrium of the economic activities of man and the environment, about sliding balance of the nomadic and the settled ways of the economy. A high degree of concentration of population and its more organized community and consequently, the opportunity to defend them were practically a unique shelter of the economic, political and ideological order in the temporal tent camps.



## THE POSITION OF THE KURDS TODAY

### **The Southern Kurdistan (Population of more than 5 million)**

It is a paradox, that the Kurds, one of the most ancient nations of the world, with strong ethnicity and the richest traditions of national culture have not until now gained national independence because of discriminative policy of some countries in the Middle East and self-interested position of great powers. What is possible for all other peoples is banned to the Kurds. But, as frequently happens, the objective reality finds its own path. The inability to solve or make any decision concerning the Kurdish question results in new waves of the national-liberation movement in Kurdistan. The well-known saying is true here: a question is only solved when it is solved correctly.

The roots of the modern political processes in Iraq go back to the late 1960-s and early 1970-s. Therefore, to fully investigate the Kurdish problem, it is necessary to analyse some key questions of the Baath domestic and foreign policy. The control of all political activity spread of dictatorial methods of ruling, the violent policy against the Kurds, were the main features of baathist policy. At the end of 1969 and the beginning of 1970 some attempts to overthrow the ruling regime were undertaken. A gloomy picture loomed before the baathist regime reminding it of 1963, when the nine-month party rule was a complete failure.

Under such circumstances the regime of Bakr Hussein began negotiations with the Kurds concerning a peaceful democratic solution to the Kurdish question reflected in the Declaration of March 11, 1970. The subsequent events confirmed the belief that this programme to solve the Kurdish question was only tactical in character.

The finale of these dramatic events was an anti-Kurdish bargain in Algeria. The agreement in Algeria in March 1975 between Iraqi and Iranian regimes concerning joint actions against the Kurdish national movement has put the Kurdish forces in difficult position.

After the events of 1974 - 1975 the situation in Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan sharply changed. Having put down the armed revolt of the Kurds, the Baath party took full control of the country. The Iraqi authorities



quashed every trace of the Kurdish movement. Therefore it is not by chance that in 1975 and the years after, the terror in Kurdistan has essentially been total. Being rescued from prosecutions, suffering from the hardest deprivations, shortages of food, habitation, medical aid, tens thousand families of the Iraqi Kurds have got over to the Iraqi Kurdistan.

Having suppressed in the middle of 1970-s the mass armed struggle in Kurdistan, the baathists aspired to prevent its renewal in the future. For this purpose they first of all started to change the ethnic composition of Iraqi Kurdistan, deporting as many Kurds as possible to the Southern and Central areas of Iraq.

Local climate and illnesses of various kinds connected to this caused an increased death rate among the deportees.

The policy of change in the structure of the population of Kurdistan was carried out as long ago as under Kames in 1960 1970-s. It had a successive character. All the governments in Iraq without exception adhered to it. Authorities tried to create the so-called "Arabian belt" in the border territories with Turkey, Iran and Syria, deporting the Kurdish population from the frontier areas and moving the Arabs there to distance the ties between the Kurds of these countries.

More than 700 thousand Kurds have undergone mass deportation. Since 1970 the Baghdad authorities have made so-called "No Man's Land" (uninhabited grounds), 20 km wide along the entire Iraqi-Turkish border. The government had set the task of destroying all the Kurdish villages along this strip. For the Kurdish deportees the Iraqi authorities created special "inhabited complexes," guarded by the armed groups. Contacts between separate families were forbidden and the Kurds were not authorized to leave their settlements. Demonstrations and protests against the regime in the "inhabited complexes" were severely suppressed. The scales of the violence against the Kurds, can be seen in the fact that the area? which the Kurds were moved from, was the same size as the territory of modern Lebanon. During the period between 1974 and 1978, one thousand two hundred and twenty two villages in the provinces of Dial, Sulemania, Erbil, Kerkuk, Dhok and Mosul were deserted; some of them were burnt or erased from the face of the Earth by bulldozers and tanks. All Kurdish schools were

closed and replaced by Arab ones. Teaching and educational work was reconstructed in the spirit of "baathization".

To strengthen the struggle against the Kurdish movement, the Iraqi government, having adjusted its relations with Iran on the basis of the Algerian agreement, took steps towards rapprochement with Turkey. In 1978 as a result of Ached Has an al-Bark's visit to Turkey the Iraqi-Turkish contract coordinating the joint efforts of the two states against the Kurdish movement was signed. In April 1979 during his visit to Iraq Even, the then Head of the General Staff of the Turkish army conducted negotiations over the coordination of actions on the suppression of the Kurdish national movement.

Since the autumn of 1979 in the Iraqi policy on the Kurdish movement there have appeared new nuances, which obviously, were caused by preparation for war with Iran. In the autumn of 1979 Saddam Hussein visited Iraqi Kurdistan, in particular, Salamanca, where again he tried to show himself as a supporter of the "independent area" where the Kurds could have the legislative council. At the same time he declared, that the thousands of the Kurds would be authorised to return from Southern areas of the country back to Kurdistan. In 1980 elections in Iraqi Kurdistan were held in view of its "autonomy". As a result 50 deputies were elected to the so-called Legislative council, most of whom were those who cooperated with the ruling regime.

The Iranian-Iraqi war brought new disasters to the Kurdish people. The majority of the front line passed through the territory of Kurdistan. Attempts of the Iraqi authorities to use the Kurdish opposition in Iran against the Khomeini regime, the similar actions of Hominy followers among the Iraqi Kurds against the bassist regime, some steps were taken to unite the Kurds around the ideas of Islam and a number of other military-political measures, undertaken by belligerents, distracted the attention of the Kurdish national forces from the primary goals of their struggle and disoriented the Kurdish democrats.

The Kurdish population, especially in Iraqi Kurdistan, suffered the greatest disasters culminating in the tragedy of the city of Halabja. Chemical weapons of mass destruction were used against the Kurds. It is necessary to note, that as long ago as 1984 American experts had noted that the Iraqi armed forces had used yperite and herd on the



Iranian-Iraqi frontier. On March 16, 1988 as a result of such a barbarous action in a few hours the 70 thousand strong city was transformed into hell. The poisonous gases instantly killed thousands of innocent people and crippled thousands of others. According to western journalists who visited the area of Halabja, thousands and thousands of corpses of men, women, children, old people and animals lay in the houses and in the streets of the city. This was an act of genocide against the Kurdish people. The chemical weapons were also used against the Kurds in August and September 1988. A wave of the protest against this crime in Kurdistan began to spread over the world, and Halabja became known as "the second Hiroshima". The USSR, socialist countries and countries and regimes connected to the baathists with "ties of friendship and cooperation," kept silent. It is typical that the entire "Islamic world" and the international Islamic organizations deny the tragedy of Halabja. The only exception was the Islamic republic of Iran, which condemned this brutal action of the Saddam regime, but it was done not for the sake of the protection of interests of the Kurds in Iraq but for the purpose of discrediting its opponent the Iraqi regime. Unfortunately, the actions of the western countries did not leave the frameworks of public protests. The Iraqi dictator remained unpunished for his crime that inspired him to undertake new steps, which resulted in the sharpest destabilization of the situation in the region.

Saddam regime frankly put the plan of the violent solution of the Kurdish question into practice. The war with Iran gave it renewed opportunity. The law on independence of the Kurdish area formally continued to exist, but the ruling regime suppressed even the slightest hint of the possibility of a new wave of struggle for real autonomy. The policy of changing the national structure of the Iraqi Kurdistan with the purpose of "dekurdization" of the Kurdish provinces began to be carried out even more intensively by destroying the cultural-ethnic originality of the Kurds, by transforming them into a national minority, deprived of their own territory. Thus, by the calculations of the dictatorial regime, the Kurdish problem was transformed from a problem of a majority population inhabiting their original territory into a problem of an ethnic minority. The destruction of Kurdish villages and cities proceeded on a massive scale.



The families subject to deportation had 2 or 3 days to gather personal things, load them on the military transport and to move to new residences. Camps for deported Kurds were organized according to a military principle: there were neither schools nor shops; barely any drinking water, and if so it was distributed from car-tanks only twice a day. The Kurdish population living in refugee camps totalled, according to some sources, 2 million people.

The world came to know about the punitive measures against the Kurdish population thanks to such humanitarian organizations as "Amnesty International", "The Organization on Protection of Human Rights" and the mass media. Executions without trial and investigation of the people suspected of belonging or merely sympathising with the Kurdish deportees were estimated to be in the thousands in 1988.

In February 1989 "Amnesty International" published a seventy page report containing on Kurdish children who had been tortured in Iraq. The report included many horrifying facts: the torture of babies in front of their parents, the murder of 12-13-year-old children, whose parents were suspected of anti-Governmental activity. The bodies of the children who died as victims under torture were returned to their relatives only after the payment of "the tax for execution". On June 30, 1983 about 8000 women and children from the area of Barman, living in a camp for the deportees in Kushtspa (in 10 km from Gerbil) under supervision of the Iraqi army, were driven in an unknown direction. Inquiries of the humanitarian organizations and the Red Cross concerning the destiny of these people remained unanswered. Saddam Hussein confined himself to declaring on TV: "These traitors are sure to have gone to the hell". According to the Kurdish sources, these women and children were at first used as guinea pigs during the experiments with chemical and biological weapons and subsequently killed.

Iran, Syria and especially Turkey were aware that these large-scale anti-Kurdish actions in Iraqi Kurdistan, which amounted to genocide, could put the Kurdish question on a level of the international discussion and induce the West, especially European states to support the struggle of the Kurds for their national self-determination. Turkey was especially concerned when the Kurdish question became an issue in the parliaments of some European countries. The intention of Turkey

to revive the idea about the annexation of the Mosul Vilayet (Southern, or Iraqi Kurdistan) to Turkey attracted attention. Banking on the Kurds' naivety, Target Opal pulled out the old card, which had been played by Mustafa Kemal at the beginning of 1920-s concerning the creation of a federation of Turkey with Iraqi Kurdistan. However this idea obviously amounted to nothing. He was against granting the Iraqi Kurds a high-grade of autonomy, and most importantly - against bringing the Kurdish question to the international prominence. It is important to emphasize that, in spite of contradictions and disagreements on a number of the interstate questions, the governments of Turkey, Iran and Syria have shown unanimity in the Kurdish question, repeatedly declaring, that they support "territorial and political integrity of Iraq".

It is a matter of common knowledge, that the USA and the European countries are sympathetically concerned for the struggle of the Iraqi Kurds who have become the victims of Saddam's regime. In such circumstances, having taken the advantage of Hussein's defeat in Kuwait and expecting the favourable attitude from the USA and their allies, the Kurdish masses rose spontaneously against the ruling regime. The US declarations on the non-proliferation or use of aircraft and other weapons by Saddam against the Iraqi opposition gave confidence to the Kurds. The uprising of the Kurdish masses liberated practically the whole territory of Iraqi Kurdistan. With active Iranian support the Iraqi shias put up a struggle against Saddam, but the USA and their western allies, including Turkey did not want Shia fundamentalism in Iraq to be strengthened. They therefore abandoned the Kurds to Saddam's fully armed forces. Taking revenge for its shameful defeat in Kuwait, the regime launched a new wave of genocide against the Kurds. More than 2.5 millions Kurds became the victims of aircraft and artillery bombardments. Afraid of more chemical weapons, they crossed the Turkish and the Iranian frontiers, enduring the cold, famine and epidemics. The tragedy of the Kurds became the subject of wide discussion all over the world. The mass destruction of the Iraqi Kurds, horrifying conditions in which hundreds thousands of the Kurdish refugees found themselves, caused a wave of indignation in the western countries. In these conditions the British government maintained by French, suggested creating "a safety zone" in the north of Iraq so that



the Kurdish refugees could return home using the international trusteeship which should then become the basis of Kurdish autonomy. This renewed excitement about "Kurdish separatism", generated mostly by the ruling circles of the countries wanting to carry out policies of discrimination against the Kurds. The governments of England, France, Germany, supported by the USA and a number of other European countries, have acted as guarantors of the safety of the Iraqi Kurds. The zone created to the North of the 36-th parallel by the resolution of the United Nations was protected from the strikes of the Iraqi aircraft by the western armies. In this connection there was a question on the further destiny of the "Kurdish liberated region". So, the democratic forces of the Iraqi Kurdistan had to make a choice: either to come into contact with the ruling Saddam regime for searching the coordinated solution of the problem of "the North of Iraq", or to follow their own way in solving the problem of self-determination of the Kurds. Originally leaders of the Kurdish movement were inclined to the first variant of the solution of the problem. The leaders of the Front of national - democratic forces of Iraqi Kurdistan have responded to Saddam Hussein's appeal concerning this dialogue with him.

Their meetings with Saddam Hussein caused various reactions among the Kurdish public in Iraq and abroad. On the one hand, these meetings were perceived as justified steps towards the search of the solution to the Kurdish problem in Iraq and on the other hand they were condemned, since the leaders of the Kurdish movement were deemed to "have shown disrespect for the memory of thousands of victims of the genocide carried out by Saddam Hussein against the Kurdish people". However the Iraqi dictator himself has disseminated illusions concerning the opportunity of peaceful and democratic settlement on the recognition of the rights of the Kurds to self-determination. Saddam's well-known perfidy made unpromising negotiations with his regime was a sign of new large-scale anti-Kurdish actions.

In the political circles of the Iraqi Kurdistan the idea of the necessity of new forms of the solution of the problem of the Kurds ripened. In such conditions the idea of internal autonomy as a solution to the Kurdish problem reached crisis point: becoming more and more unpopular. The absence of the original democratic traditions, the widespread



dictatorial forms of ruling, the pressure of the prevailing Islamic religion standing in the way of the definition of the national frameworks and staking on Islamic "ummu", make national autonomy more problematic today. An example of this is the destiny of the "autonomy of the Kurds" in Iraq.

In practice the decaying Law<sup>1</sup> 33 of March, 11, 1974 on the autonomy of a part of the Iraqi Kurdistan, the further manipulations of Saddam and his regime around "the independent status", well-known acts of violence against the population of the "Kurdish Autonomous Zone" have resulted in full discredit of the earlier forms of the solution of the Kurdish question.

**But now that the Saddam's regime has been overthrown the Kurds have the unique chance to declare before the world community of their rights, and the United Nation's help in solving the Kurdish question is vital.**

### **The Northwest Kurdistan (The population is about 20 million people)**

Recently there has been a worsening of interethnic relations in Turkey, caused first by the fact that the Kurdish problem remained unsolved has been observed.

The majority of the Kurds overwhelmingly live in east vilayets, such as Agri, Adyaman, Bingehl, Bitlis, Van, Gaziantep, Diyarbakir, Kars, Malatya, Mardin, Mush, Siyirt, Urfa, Hakkyari, Elazig, Erzincan, Erzurum. In the vilayets of Agri, Bingehl, Bitlis, Diyarbakir, Hakkyari, Mardin, Van the Kurds make more than 90 % of the population.

Besides Turkish Kurdistan the Kurds live in Istanbul, Ankara, and also in some cities of Central and Western Anatoly (Dzhikhanbeili, Tokata, Chankyry, etc.). In spite of the absence of the Kurdish schools, of the ban on newspapers, magazines and other literature publication in Kurdish, of the assimilating policy of the Turkish ruling circles, forbidding all other languages, apart from Turkish, about 80 % of the Kurds, especially in the countryside, do not know Turkish and speak only Kurdish. Moreover, the Kurds maintain not only the native language, but

also their culture, and ethnic originality which distinguish them from the Turks.

The absence of accurate ethnographic statistics means that we do not know the exact number of the "Turkish" Kurds. There were 13 censuses of the population during the republican period in Turkey. The last five of them were carried out in 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985 and 1990. But their results concerning the national structure of the population were not published. In every possible way the authorities denied the existence of the Kurds and the Kurdish language in the country. As an example the following fact may be given. In connection with the census of the population in Turkey in 1985 a Directory for the officials who were carrying out the census was published. It contained a question: "What language besides the native language do you know?" As the answer it was offered to note "English", "French", "Arabian" or "Kurdish". The Office of the Public Prosecutor of the Court of State Security considered the mentioning of the Kurdish language in this Directory as an effort to weaken the "national" feelings by the propagation of Kurdish. It brought to trial 11 persons, who took part in drawing up the Directory, and demanded to sentence them to imprisonment from 5 up to 8 years. Moreover, according to the Turkish press, the question on the native language was withdrawn from the forms of the census of population, which was held in October 1990. The Turkish authorities were afraid that many citizens of the country would note "Kurdish" as the answer and that thanks to the census the true number of the Kurds in the country would become known.

A significant role in the spiritual life of the Kurdish population is played by religion. The Kurdish population of Turkey are mainly Sunni Islam. About two million are Shia. Besides, approximately 2.5 - 3 thousand of the Kurds are the Yezidis. The Kurds of the Shia orientation live mainly in Dersim (the vilayets of Tundzheli, Elyazig, Malatya, Kahraman, Marash, etc.). They make up a special ethnographic group zaza, with their own dialect, is the most oppressed part of the Kurdish population as they test not only national, but also to a certain extent religious oppression.

Turkish Kurdistan continues to remain the most backward area of the country. It occupies approximately 1/5 part of Turkey about 18 %

of the population of the country live here. Here the population density is lower, than in the west of Turkey. So, if in the whole country in 1985 it made 66 persons on 1 sq. km., in the Kurdish areas - 46 persons on 1 sq. km. Thus, the population density in Turkish Kurdistan in essence has not changed since 1980 while all over the country it has increased to 8 persons. Thus it is necessary to mention, that the increase in population in the Kurdish areas was higher (3 %), than the country average. Therefore the low population density here speaks mainly about the constant outflow of the population to the western vilayets, to cities, from the economically backward areas of the east of the country, the absence of the advanced industry in the Kurdish areas. During 1989 only from three eastern vilayets (Kars, Agra and Erzerum) to the western areas of the country had moved 100 thousand people. During 1990 from the east of the country some 663,500 people moved to Istanbul. The population shift from the eastern vilayets continues. Approximately 70 % of the Kurds live in the countryside and 30 % - in the cities. As a whole the city dwellers make up more than half of the population of Turkey.

Only 10 % of the state and 2,7 % of the private enterprises of the manufacturing industry on which 5 % of the workers of the given branch work are situated in the eastern provinces. There is practically no factory industry. Here it is placed only 18 % of capacities of sugar factories, 14 % - cement works and not less than 10 % of all spinning spindles and weaving looms. But the main place in economy of the Kurdish areas belongs to agriculture. About 40 % of fine horned livestock are raised here. 21 % of process able arable lands in Turkey are located in the east provinces. Turkish Kurdistan gives 15 % of all agricultural production of the country. Now in Turkey mechanization of agriculture is occurring. Naturally, this is excluded from the Kurdish areas. However this process proceeds very slowly. So, the east has about 10 % of Tractor Park (47 % - in the west and 43 % - in the centre). In the west up to 70 % of all arable land is processed by tractor, in the centre - 40 %, in the east - about 20 %.

Turkish Kurdistan brings as a whole in national fund 8 % of an industrial output and 19 % of agricultural production. Great bulk of the Kurdish population - the peasantry makes 72 % of economically ac-



tive population. In 22 villages, that make up Eastern Turkey, 30 % of the peasants in the middle of 70s were landless while in the hands of 5.3 % of large ground proprietors was 42 % of all cultivated land. In the village only 3 % of agricultural farms have an opportunity to use agricultural machinery. Now the Kurdish village experiences a transition period which is characterized by the gradual death of the feudal relations. The process of formation of the Kurdish rural bourgeoisie began due to the capitalist transformation of the Kurdish feudal lords. Stratification in the Kurdish village occurs not only as a result of internal evolution of the Kurdish society, but also owing to the influence of the social and economic processes occurring in Turkey as a whole.

As to the Kurdish movement, it experiences a qualitatively new stage. If earlier, in 20s the Kurdish movement was headed by the tribal and clerical top nowadays more mature parties having developed programmes of struggle for the solution of national tasks, as a rule, head it.

Nowadays in Turkey, and also in the countries of the Western Europe about 10 political parties and groups of the Turkish Kurds operate. Most influential of them are the People's Party of Kurdistan (PPK) whose leader is Abdullah Ocalan and the Socialist party of Kurdistan (SPK) with its leader Kemal Burkay.

### **ABDULLAH OCALAN**

Several patriots of the Kurdish nationality, (including some Turkish democrats, for example, Kemal Pir), founded the People's Party of Kurdistan on November 28, 1978. Abdullah Ocalan was the head of the party. Under his leadership the Charter and the Programme of the party were developed. For the first time emancipating movement of the Kurds was ideologically proved, has received the legislative base which has expressed the will of 20 million of the Kurds, living in Turkey.

Collision of the Kurdish insurgents with the regular Turkish army took place for 15 years, which became the reason of the destruction of more than 30 thousand people.

Unilaterally PPK repeatedly stopped operations, offering the Turkish side to sit down around the negotiating table. The Turkish authori-

ties ignored it. In a counterbalance to this the Turkish authorities have declared to the entire world, that they would not conduct negotiations with the terrorists, having overlooked thus, that 40 million people, thirsting for national autonomies and self-determination cannot be terrorists.

The genocide of the Kurdish people compelled PPK to renew military actions. In the history there are a lot of examples when leaders of people struggling for their liberation, have been referred to as "terrorists": N.Mandela, M. Cadafi, J.Arafat and S. Milosevich. Today Ocalan is in such a position. In the Middle East there are lots of disputable questions at issue causing even military collisions but when speech comes about the Kurdish problems, Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Syria unite the efforts against the Kurdish movement.

In 1999 supported by CIA and Israeli "Mossad", Turkish special services arrested the leader of PPK Abdullah Ocalan.

The arrest of Ocalan became one more tragedy of the Kurdish people. More than 100 people burnt themselves before embassies of different countries of the world as a token of the protest against a barbarous trial in Turkey has drawn the attention of the entire world and has caused sympathies of people of good will to the Kurds.

An article of the international observer of the popular Almaty newspaper "Gorod. Utro" ("City. Morning"), in January, 1999 a Member of the Union of Kazakhstan Journalists **Leo Balayan**, was published.

In it the author convincingly shows the misadventures of Abdullah Ocalan, the national hero of the Kurdish people up to the moment when the enemies managed to catch him. We present some fragments from this article by Leo Balayan "The Odyssey of Abdullah Ocalan".

### **Collective self-immolation**

Two Kurds Ahmed Jyldyrym and Remzi Akkush deprived themselves of their lives by self-immolation on November 17, 1998 at

15. 30. before a building of the Russian State Duma, and left the dying-message which did not leave doubts in the political character of this action, which was against genocide of the Kurdish people and prosecutions of their leader Abdullah Ocalan, committed by the Turkish authorities. And also as a token of regret that Boris Yeltsin and Evgeni Primakov have not given political asylum to Abdullah Ocalan though deputies of the State Duma have supported the appeal of the Kurdish national leader to the president of Russia on the given question.

Who is he, this Abdullah Ocalan?

Who is he, the person, for the sake of whom people sacrificed their lives?

What has he done for the Kurdish people? What is he famous for?

Here are some facts from his curriculum vitae.

Abdullah Ocalan was born in 1947. He graduated from the Ankara University of the Near East where he took an active part in Marxist student circles. His works have been translated into many languages of the world, including Russian. In 1978 he founded and headed the People's Party of Kurdistan. And since 1985, having created the Front of National Liberation of Kurdistan, Abdullah Ocalan supervises the armed struggle for independence of the country.

From 1993 Ocalan four times unilaterally declared the discontinuance of all the battle actions. Last announcement of cease-fire was made on September 1, 1998. However peace initiatives of the Kurdish people have not found the appropriate reciprocal steps on the part of the Turkish authorities. On the contrary, each such moratorium causes escalation of genocide against the Kurds.

### **Hunt for the «terrorist».**

To justify legal mercilessness in relation to the leader of any progressive movement, especially as rendering a military resistance for "the strong of the world of this," there is nothing easier than to accuse him of the terrorist activity. And the American, the Israeli and the Turk-



ish special services for whom Abdullah Ocalan was like a bone in a throat, aspiring to decapitate the heroic movement of the Kurdish insurgents, have achieved that in October 1998 Interpol has given out to Turkey the international warrant on the arrest of "terrorist" Abdullah Ocalan.

As soon as the Turkish authorities came to know, that the leader of the Kurdish people hides in Syria, they have on the spot concentrated 30,000 strong army on the Turkish-Syrian border and have put forward the ultimatum: either Syria extradites Ocalan, or two hours later Damascus will be razed to the ground.

### **The Kurdish leader is rescued by an Armenian pilot.**

No sooner had the world news agencies carried the information about the unprecedented ultimatum to the world community than Ocalan managed to leave the limits of Syria by the plane of the Armenian Airline. But the liner with the fugitive has landed not in Yerevan, but in Moscow. While the Turkish "Pinkertons" with the assistance of ubiquitous agents of CIA in searches of an Ocalan trace overturned all Armenia upside down, Ocalan himself who managed so brilliantly to confuse the Turkish special services was already in Russia.

### **Yeltsin doesn't give a damn about anything**

On October 25 the national leader of Kurdistan directs an application to president Yeltsin on granting a political asylum to him. Five most intense for Ocalan days have passed - Yeltsin keeps silence. Though, according to the Russian laws, only the president has the right to issue a Decree on the political asylum in Russia. But Yeltsin, whose conscience has been burdened with treachery of the leader of GDR Erich Honecker, doesn't stop at a new betrayal: he has simply ignored the application of the leader of Kurdistan in spite of the fact that 300 deputies of the State Duma at the special session on November 4, 1998 have supported Abdullah Ocalan.

## **Fly by the planes of the "Aeroflot"!**

Meanwhile the governments of some states such as Italy, Belgium, Finland, Ukraine, Greece, Bulgaria and Romania have declared their readiness to give him political asylum.

Having understood, that he can't feel safe in Eltsinist Russia, and the status of the political refugee is impossible for him, on November 12 Abdullah Ocalan leaves Russia as the ordinary passenger of "Aeroflot" and goes to Rome, whence to him an official invitation of the Italian parliament has come through diplomatic channels. While the government of that country makes out his documents, he finds a shelter in a military hospital where doctors restore his health, and the guardsmen of Garibaldi protect his life.

The hunt for the head of the courageous fighter proceeds. Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey Ismail Chem, arrived in Italy by a special flight with particular mission, in the categorical form declared that he would not wait for bad jokes from the ally on the NATO and is afraid even to think of possible consequences of refusal of the Italian authorities to give out the Kurdish leader to Turkey.

Unfortunately, after the pressure of members of the NATO upon Italy (especially America) Ocalan was turned out from that country. He appeared in Greece, then in embassy of Greece in Kenya. By means of CIA and Israeli Mossad he was captured, put in the Turkish plane and was handed over in the hands of Turkish authorities and was condemned to a death penalty on February, 15, 1999. After numerous demonstrations of the Kurds and all progressive mankind the death penalty commuted to life imprisonment on the island of Imrali in Turkey.

## **The "Kurdish question"**

The so-called "Kurdish question" is a national problem of 40-million Kurdish people, a problem of their physical survival in conditions of the most severe genocide. "The Kurdish question" is an international

problem, but not an internal business of Turkey as the authority of that country and their American friends would like to introduce this matter to the world community.

Process of peace political settlement of the Kurdish-Turkish conflict on the basis of respect of the conventional rights of the national minorities fixed by the Convention of the United Nations about the protection of national minorities, - is the only way of the decision of "the Kurdish question" in Turkey.

And then in itself a question about "terrorist" Abdullah Ocalan will disappear.

There is a popular wisdom: "You will not wash off blood by blood". One way of peace settlement is only possible- the negotiations behind a round table of the governments and peoples of the interested countries and the realization of national rights of the Kurds. It would be in the interests both of the Turks and of the Kurds.

The existence of the large number of political parties speaks about the fragmentation of the Kurdish movement, the presence various ideological and political trends in it (from extreme Left up to Right Nationalistic). Some of them stand for declaring the independence to Kurdistan, preferring the armed struggle for the achievement of this purpose. Others stand for the union with the left forces of the country and the region, connecting the solution of the Kurdish problem with the success of all the progressive movement in Turkey and in other countries of the Middle East. They see the solution of the Kurdish problem in the form of a national autonomy or federation within the framework of democratic Turkey and do not put forward the obligatory slogan of separation of Turkish Kurdistan from Turkey, subordinating this question to particularly historical conditions. The third forces are limited to requirements of granting of a cultural autonomy to the Kurds within the framework of Turkey. The significant parts of the Kurdish intellectuals constitute this group. Its representatives address the world public opinion with appeals to put pressure upon the Turkish government so that it cancel the state of emergency in the east and the southeast villages of the country, allow the Kurds to use their native language to train their children at the Kurdish schools, to develop the culture, to issue the literature in Kurdish language.



The new qualitative stage in movements of the Kurds of Turkey has come in the middle of 80s when some Kurdish political parties have started to act together with the left forces of the country, including the Communist Party of Turkey. As a result of efforts of all the parties in December 1984 the organization "the Left unity of Turkey and Turkish Kurdistan" was created. However because of disagreements this organization by the end of 1988 has broken up.

At the end of 80s the Kurdish parties have tried to coordinate actions.

The Front of the Emancipating movement of Kurdistan (Tevger) was created in Sweden in June 1988. Eight political parties and groups of Turkish Kurdistan united in this front. The front has called the United Nations and the organizations connected to it, the democratic and peaceful countries, democratic parties, humanitarian societies, the youth and female organizations, all fair people to express solidarity with the struggle of the Kurdish people. However these references did not give real political results.

The chauvinistic policy of the Turkish ruling circles in the Kurdish question was legislatively fixed in the last Turkish constitution adopted as a result of the referendum of November 7, 1982.

The working constitution of the Turkish republic, as well as the previous one, ignores the expectations of the Kurdish people, does not recognize their national rights. Moreover, it is a legislative expression of the assimilation policy of the Turkish ruling circles in relation to the national minorities of Turkey.

Formally the constitution of 1982 proclaims equality of all the citizens of the country before the law. So, in a preamble it is said, that "each Turkish citizen" has the right to live a worthy life in conditions of national culture, progress and legal order and to improve in this direction his material and spiritual development. In Article 10 it is marked that all are equal before the law without distinction of language, race, colour of skin, political views, philosophical outlook, religion, creed etc.

However the acquaintance with the other articles of the constitution shows that in it even such formal equality does not exist. So, in the preamble alongside with other positions it is emphasized, that "the

sovereignty unconditionally and certainly belongs to the Turkish nation". This position receives development in a number of articles: "the judicial competence is carried out on behalf of the Turkish nation..."(Art. 9); "Every Turk has the right to act to public service" (Art. 70). "Every Turk at the age of 30 can be elected the deputy" (Art. 76).

How can anyone escape being a Turk? It appears that according to the Turkish constitution, the only people who live in Turkey are the Turks. The constitution tries to attribute all the citizens of any nationality who live in the Turkish Republic to the Turks though in the country live about 30 various peoples whose number exceeds 15 million. Article 66 says: "Everyone who is connected with ties of citizenship to the Turkish state is a Turk". And in Article 42 it is said, "No other language, besides Turkish, can be studied and taught in educational institutions as the native language". Differently, children of national minorities, including Kurds, have not the right to be trained in their native language.

Earlier different kinds of orders of the Turkish authorities on actual prohibition of all languages, besides Turkish, were made contrary to the constitution. Now this policy will be carried out within the framework of the constitution. Thus, the Article 26 says: "At the application or the publication of the views it is impossible to use any language, forbidden by the law". Here, certainly mainly the Kurdish language is meant. In Article 28 of the constitution of 1982 it is said: "It is impossible to publish editions in any language forbidden by the law". The constitution of 1961 did not have such a position. Earlier the publication in the Kurdish language seldom, but appeared. Now the constitution legislatively forbids it.

The working constitution limits trips and movement in the country. Thus, the Article 23 says: "The Freedom of movement can be limited with a view of prevention of a crime, the maintenance of socio-economic development, the realization of the comfortable town-planning and protection of state property". Similar statutes were applied in the 20 - 30s against the Kurds with the purpose of their mass resettlement from their native places to the central and western areas of the country, with the further restriction of movement.



Politically the main care of the authors of the constitution of 1982 was aspiration to suppress class and democratic movement, and also national movements of the Kurdish people. We shall quote articles of the constitution:

Article 14: "None of the fundamental laws stipulated in the present constitution and freedom can be applied with the purpose of undermining the unity of the state, the country and the nation, creation of threat for the existence of the Turkish state and republic..."; Article 68: "Charters and programmes of political parties can not contradict the unity of the state, the country and the nation..."; Article 122: "In case of violent actions which can threaten the integrity of the country and the nation from the outside and from within the Council of Ministers can declare the state of emergency both in separate villages, and in the country as a whole".

Article 143 assumes the creation of courts of state security, which will consider the affairs connected with activity, directed against indissoluble integrity and unity of the nation, against internal and external safety of the state.

Actually the working constitution ignores the national rights of non-Turkish peoples. The Turkish ruling circles have brought legal bases for realization of their assimilation policy relating to national minorities, including the Kurds. According to the constitution in May 1983 the Law on a national settlement was adopted according to which under the pretext of "national safety the Turkish authorities can move inhabitants from one part of the country to another. On the data of the Kurdish foreign press, on the basis of the above-stated law many Kurdish families were sent to the west of the country.

In October 1983 in Turkey the Law on editions in other languages, besides Turkish (the law № 2932) was adopted. It included eight clauses. Here are some of them.

First clause established a basis and the conditions connected to languages, forbidden at illumination and distribution of points of view. Second clause forbade the publication and distribution of views in the languages that are not being official languages of the states, recognized by Turkey. Third clause considered the Turkish language as the native language of the Turkish citizens.



It forbade any activity directed on use and distribution as native one other language, besides Turkish. Fourth clause provided punishment from one till three years of imprisonment for the activity contradicting to the given law.

Actually the law № 2932 forbade the use of the Kurdish language in all spheres of political, cultural activity in the country. Besides there were articles 141, 142 and others of the Turkish criminal code, and also position in the law on the press and the law on the political parties, restraining national rights of the Kurdish people in Turkey.

The Turkish authorities accepted other anti-Kurdish actions as well. So, according to the Turkish press, after the post-war revolution of 1980 in Southeast Anatolia 80 % of the names of the villages were changed. In particular, the Kurdish names were changed into the Turkish ones in 376 of the Kurdish villages (from 558) in vilayet Agra, 426 in vilayet Van, 289 (from 363) in vilayet Mush, 229 (from 273) in vilayet Bitlis. All this was made under a pretext "of the maintenance of calmness and safety".

At the beginning of April, 1985 two additions to the Law on villages were accepted according to which the so-called "rural guards" (korudzhu) were organized. These "rural guards" officially should have protected inhabitants of a village from encroachments on their life and property. Authorities have given out the weapon to them and have appointed monetary compensations. However, soon these newly appeared "guards" began to make various violence and mockery at the peace population under a pretext of searching the "terrorists". It has displeased not only among broad masses of local population, but also representatives of the Kurdish top. So, the Chief of the tribe of Adiyen Durmazaga (Bilen), living in vilayet Siirt, in February, 1986 supported by a great number of people arrived in Ankara and addressed to authorities with the complaint on the so-called "rural guards" and asked to protect local population from their excesses.

With the purpose of the justification of extreme military measures against the Kurdish population the Turkish ruling circles and the means of propagation tried to discredit the Kurdish movement, putting forward against the Kurds a number of accusations. The main

thing from them was accusation of aspiration of the Kurds to dismember Turkey. However the authorities were not confined to only anti-Kurdish propagation, they lately strengthened military actions against the Kurdish population of the country. In these actions took place military units, forces of safety, groups of "commandos", the hired "rural guards" whom the propagation incited against the Kurdish national movement. The purpose of military operations of the Turkish armed forces was the suppression of the Kurds, and all the Left forces working in Eastern and Southeast Anatolia. In the applications of statesmen of Turkey, in the comments of the press concerning military operations in the Kurdish areas it was usually spoken about "separatists", about "danger of the unit of the country", about the "communist", "Marxist" terrorist organizations, facing ostensibly behind the Kurds' back.

On March 14, 1991 the House of Representatives of Belgium has accepted the resolution condemning the policy of the Turkish government in the Kurdish question and directed against the acceptance of Turkey in the European community. In the resolution, in particular, it was said, that the House of Representatives asks the government to inform the Turkish government, using for this purpose the channels of the European community, the Council of Europe and the United Nations, that it demands the termination of deportation of the Kurds living in southeast provinces of Turkey, to cancel the state of emergency introduced in these provinces, to respect political, social and cultural rights of the Kurds and all ethnic minority, and also suggests, that Belgium should counteract the acceptance of Turkey in the European community while in this country the rights of the person are violated and cultural rights of the Kurds are not recognized, and also considers, that Belgium as a member of Security Council of the United Nations is called to make everything that the Kurdish problem was considered at the international conference.

This resolution has caused the protest of the Turkish politicians, who demanded that Turkey reconsider the relations with Belgium and even withdraw the ambassador in Brussels. The Turkish government, however desiring to join in the all-European processes, was compelled to accept steps on democratisation of political life in the country. So,

the Turkish parliament after the long session, which continued all night from April, 11 to April, 12, approved the bill submitted by the government which besides the "removal of an interdiction" on the use of the Kurdish language, cancelled articles 140, 141, 142 and 163 of the criminal code providing punishment for heterodoxy.

It is necessary to note, that under articles 141 and 163 of the Turkish criminal code 100 thousand persons were condemned. September, 12, 1980 (day of military revolution) till February, 1991 under these clauses (articles) business in the attitude (relation) more than 70 thousand person was excited. As the prime minister of Turkey Akbulut declared, according to the new law are being released more than 43 thousand prisoners.

Concerning prospect of Kurdish movement in Turkey, historians mark, that its role will grow for the following reasons: 1) The Kurdish population both in Turkey and in other countries lives compactly, that promotes preservation of national traditions and the development of national struggle; 2) despite of a policy of assimilation, persecutions and reprisals etc., the number of the Kurdish population constantly grows; 3) though at the present stage the Kurdish movement in Turkey is shattered, is headed by several parties and organizations, nevertheless occurrence of these Kurdish parties and speaks the organization about growth of political activity of the Kurdish weights, about readiness of wide layers of people to take part in the struggle for national - democratic rights. Experience of national-liberation struggle of the Kurds in Turkey gives the basis to consider, that this struggle, despite of severe reprisals will proceed. It is necessary to take into account the fact that for the Kurdish movement in Turkey the struggle of the Kurds of Iraq, Iran and Syria has a big value.

### **The Eastern Kurdistan**

The Kurdish question in Iran is the important internal problem connected to aspiration of the Kurds to achieve the national self-determination contrary to the interests of the ruling circles of the country. The concept of the dividing of the Iranian state on the basis of the Muslim unity, developed and carried out in Islamic Republic of Iran by Imam



Khomeini, and then by his successors, has not received support from the Kurdish population as not capable of guaranteeing their national and social rights.

The Kurdish question in Iran at the same time is a part of complex unit of interstate contradictions in the Middle East region in which are involved not only forces of various political orientation of the internal anti-governmental opposition, but also the international forces.

The Kurds in Iran make a primary part of the population of the northwest province of Kurdistan and also live in the Western Azerbaijan, Bakhtaran (Kermanshah) and Ilam. Besides, the Kurdish population compactly lives in the province of Khurasan (in the areas of Kuchan, Bodzhnurd, Deregez), and also in the province of Beluchistan and some large cities of the country (Isfahan, Teheran etc.).

Areas of moving of the Kurds of northwest Iran where the majority of the Kurdish population is concentrated, in the scientific literature is accepted to be called as Iranian Kurdistan. The exact data on the number of the Kurdish population is not known. The data of the last census of the population, carried out in October 1986, officially were not published. The Kurds name the figure of 6 or 7 million. The Kurdish political organization Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (DPIK), in the publications gives the figure of 8 million Kurds in Iranian Kurdistan and 50 thousand in Khurasan. The Kurdish scientist I.S. Vanli by estimations for 1985 specifies the figure of 5 million in northwest Iran and 6 million - over all Iran. On the data for 1990 the Kurdish population in Iran made up 6.1 million which is equal to 11 % of the whole population of the country. The majority of the Kurdish population of Iranian Kurdistan (98 %) are Muslims. Many of them are Sunnis, a quarter of the Iranian Kurds are Shias (mainly in the city and vicinities of Bakhtaran, in Khamadan and in Khurasan). A small part of Khorosanian Kurds is the Alevits. Besides, among the Iranian Kurds there are adherents of some Sufian orders.

Confessional diversity of the Iranian Kurds brings the certain intensity in the relations between the Kurds and the ruling regime; as the Kurds come out in favour of the idea that in Iran all directions and senses of the Islam had the identical status. But peoples of other na-

tonalities also live in the Iranian Kurdistan the Assyrians and Armenians (Christians), and also Jews, Persians, Azerbaijani etc.

Iranian Kurdistan belongs to socially and economically underdeveloped parts of the country. Its ethnic-social development is determined by the general regularities, characteristic for similar processes in the country as a whole.

Among the Kurds prevailed pro-Russian moods before the First World War. Many authoritative leaders supported good relations with the representatives of Russia in Teheran. The known leader of the Iranian Kurds Abdurrezak was granted the Russian citizenship. He founded the first centers of education in the Iranian Kurdistan. At the beginning of 1913 he established a society and gave it the name of "Gekhandeni" - ("Education"). The society intended to issue a newspaper, to open a printing house and a school. Abdurrezak asked Russian consulate to take "Gekhandeni" under its protection. He also made the programme of the development of Russian-Kurdish cultural relations, enlisted academicians N.J.Marr and I.A.Orbeli, and demanded that the Kurdish youth should receive education in Russia.

On the eve of the war Turkish Kurdistan raged; these events touched also the western Iranian provinces occupied by the Kurds. The Iranian revolution was suppressed by the imperialist powers. It prevented the national consciousness of the Iranian Kurds, struggling for their rights, from developing and getting stronger. Practically, almost in the whole territory of Iranian Kurdistan up to the end of the First World War there was an occupational regime.

In February 1912 the Kurds of Southwest Iran have risen. At this time at the head of the uprising was Salar od-Douleh. He has seized Kermanshakh and Seneh, approached to Sodzhibulak and called the Kurds of all country to join to the rebels. The Turkish authorities have immediately offered their help to the Kurds, and the Turkish armies intruded into the frontier zone. Nevertheless Salar, knowing, that many Kurds mistrust the Ottoman Empire, and also not daring to displease the Russian empire resolutely refused from the help of the Turks.

Then the Turkish authorities have offered the government of Iran to pacify Salar. However, the Iranian government itself without special effort suppressed the revolt because the majority of the Kurdish tribes



had not supported the mutinous prince. At the end of May of the same 1912 the Salar's forces were crushed near Kermanshakh. The next year Salar, who had suffered defeat, again approached Kermanshakh, but the tribes refused to render the mutinous prince any help. Salar tried to transfer the struggle to the north, but in vain. The revolt of Salar od-Douleh suffered defeat, but it showed that the population of Iran has departed from the Ottoman Empire; the Turkish expansion to Iranian Kurdistan was finished.

The population of a borderland vigorously resisted to the Turkish occupational regime. The Kurds were convinced that fidelity to Iran, undoubtedly protected by Russia, is more favourable than the Turkish trusteeship which brought new taxes and requisitions and deprived the sovereign Kurdish beis (landlords) of their independence and freedom of actions.

In the summer of 1914 among the Iranian Kurds German-Turkish subversive activities were seriously amplified. The Kurds were told that the Russians would soon leave; the Turkish armies will occupy their place again. Unfortunately, they were not mere words. Since January 1914 on the Turkish-Iranian border continuously there were skirmishes with the participation of propagandised Kurds, and also the soldiers and officers of the regular Turkish army. At the beginning of the war the Germans and the Turks partly pressed Russia and weakened her positions.

Nevertheless Russia played a leading role in the territory of northern and western Iran, in particular, in Iranian Kurdistan. Under English-Russian agreement of 1907 this "zone of influence" was fixed behind the imperial government. The Russian armies came here in 1909, suppressed the revolution; the Turks have left these grounds at the end of 1912. So Russia continued to remain the master of the situation.

During the first years of war the Germans and the Turks tried to use with a little success a negative attitude of people and nationalist Iranian circles to the English and Russian colonizers.

By the end of the first year of the war the Turkish-German agents in Western Iran operated everywhere. "... The Province of Kermanshakh and Kurdistan began to resemble the boiling boiler" - so one Russian officer has written in the official report. The Kurdish-Turkish



armies have grasped a significant part of Iranian Kurdistan and Azerbaijan. The Iranian Kurds rose everywhere. On January 14, 1915 the Turkish armies took Tebriz.

But Russian armies began counteroffensive operations, and beat out the Turks from Tebriz and promoted up to Dilmen. The English armies landed in Khuzestan.

The struggling states tried to exploit the Kurdish tribes. Ismail-aga Simko (Smitko), who was the leader of the tribe of Shekkaki, which lived in the areas of Kontur, Mergaver, and Bardost, headed the movement of the Iranian Kurds with the purpose of creation of "independent Kurdistan". Ismail-aga Simko is mentioned as "the most influential local leader". Simko together with the Russian armies intruded into the Turkish territory. He supervised in 1915-1918 the Kurdish lands north-west Iran and the areas of Turkey adjoining to them.

Simko believed that there was no remaining Power except that of the British Government. He said: "The Bolsheviks have shot their bolt and gave away. Persia, as a Power, does not exist. The Turks are represented by Mustafa Kemal and not more than 20,000 men round Ankara, and in this quarter there is no stability. He wrote a secret memorandum to the British political officer in Suleimania on July 20, 1921: "I am aware that my reputation is one of treachery and deceit in dealing with Governments and I therefore address you who have standing and credit in the eyes of the British Government upon the following matter: all my actions have no hostile intention with regard to the British Government. On the contrary I have a sincere desire to be on friendly terms with that Government. For this reason I ask you to approach the officials of that Government on my behalf for the purpose of arranging some mutual understanding. For this object I am prepared to come south as far as Ushnu, for the sake of meeting any representative sent by the Government to discuss the matters.

I would prefer that an English official be sent, but in case it would be impossible, let it be any man who is trusted by the Government, and can read and write.

I am willing to follow any orders given by the Government, and I am especially interested in establishing good relations with the said Government, there being many points that could be effectively and to

both parties advantageously settled by means of well designed understanding between the two parties. I request that secrecy may be afforded to this communication”.

What kind of person was Simko? In June 1920 H.Mackenson wrote in the book “A Remarkable Rescue”: “The chief Simko, or Ismael Agha, is the most picturesque character. His name is true to form, for he has been an outlaw, has played fast and loose with the Russians, Persians, Assyrians, and British, according to the exigencies and shifts of his border region, and somehow kept on top...

He is a natural leader. To look at him is to recognize a man of force and resource... In conversation he is magnetic, genial, witty, shrewd, brutally frank, and always playing a game.

One feels that all the time. He is playing a game and enjoying it greatly. He is the typical romantic border desperado, carving out a career with his wits and rifles and playing with men and lives a bad game but the only game he knows, the only game that seems possible to him where political changes are the rule...

When the imperial armies left, Simko acted against the Iranian authorities; many tribes of northwest Iran trusted to the vigorous leader. He aspired to dominate over the Kurdish tribes living between the border of Turkey and the lake Urmia to subordinate the lands to the west and northwest from this lake.

Aiming at the exile of the Iranian administration, Simko supported the sheikh Muhammad Hiabani, the head of the democratic movement in the Irani and Azerbaijan. Simko has gathered great forces, has reorganized feudal teams in the regular army. The arsenal of the uprising Kurds replenished with the weapon left by Russian army, and also Iranian trophies.

The Iranian authorities were not going to wink at Simko's actions. They broke political calmness in the country, created border conflict between Iran and Turkey prevented the policy of centralization, submission to Teheran large feudal lords, in particular leaders of nomad tribes. Simko, naturally, in every possible way resisted, and in 1922 the insurgents went to the attacks on garrisons of the governmental armies. Simko proclaimed himself the king of “independent Kurdistan”, generated the government of the newly proclaimed state; it tried to establish

diplomatic relations with other countries. It even had the official publication the magazine "Kurdistan".

But soon the destiny of "independent Kurdistan" was solved. In August 1922 the Iranian army crushed the armies of Ismail-khan, he himself ran to Turkey, and his patrimonial ancestral lands, the capital of "independent Kurdistan" Chekhrik was seized by the governmental troops.

Till 1943 the Iranian authorities severely suppressed any uprising of the Kurds in the territory of former "independent Kurdistan".

### **Mekhabadian Republic** **(January 22, 1946 - December 17, 1946)**

The Mekhabadian Republic of Eastern Kurdistan inscribed many brightest pages in the heroic and tragic history of the Kurds. Its creation has finished the Kurdish movement in Iran, its certain stage. The appearance of the republic was promoted by post-war conditions in the Middle and Near East, in particular, in Iran.

The children of Mekhabadian judge Kazi Fattakh - Kazi Mohammed and Sadr Kazi were engaged in lively political activity. Kazi Mohammed was one of initiators of creation in 1941 the Kurdish independent areas and from now on combined a rank of the spiritual judge with the post of Mekhabadian governor. Practical activities of the government of the Mekhabadian Republic corresponded to the tasks of realization of the national - cultural autonomy in representation of Kazi Mohammed.

On January 22, 1946 in the central square of Mekhabad "Char-chyra" ("Four-torch") the Kurdish patriots led by Kazi Mohammed solemnly declared of the formation of Mekhabadian Republic. Kazi Mohammed was elected the president. Almost simultaneously the Constitution was adopted.

The government immediately created necessary state structures: economic, cultural, educational, scientific, law-enforcement, military, public health services, diplomatic activity, and so forth; issued newspapers and magazines on the native language: the newspaper "Kurdis-



tan", magazines "Khavar", "Agir", the special newspaper for women "Halala"; by the order of the government new school textbooks were prepared. Broadcasts in the Kurdish language have begun, communication lines were laid; the post began to work. In a word, the government involved all the attributes of the state power.

The project of the reform of school education provided obligatory elementary education of children from 6 till 14 years, the creation of a new curriculum. At schools where teaching was conducted in the Kurdish language, an evening language course for liquidation of illiteracy of adult population was organized. The Kurdish intellectuals felt freedom, Art and Literature experienced the epoch of the Renaissance. For example, as far as in March 1945 some amateurs of music put an opera "Native land". The performance was a great success.

The official language of Mekhabadian Republic became Kurdish. The National theatre has been opened. The liberation of the Kurdish woman began - the Union of women of Kurdistan was formed led by Kazy Mohammed's wife, Mina, the person of exclusive energy and fidelity to the ideals of national revival of Kurdistan. For the first time women actively participated in the social and political life of Iranian Kurdistan.

Financial assets were found; in particular, the taxes began to be collected more vigorously, which had not been taken for the last two years. It is mutually acceptable disputable boundary questions were solved, a good-neighbourhood between Mekhabadian Republic and the Azerbaijan Republic was established.

The government struggled for the recognition of the independent Kurdish state by the world community. But numerous and persevering diplomatic steps were in vain. Great powers did not wish to quarrel with Iran; they cared of the mercenary interests. The Soviet Union earlier friendly treating the Kurds, has ceased to support the Kurdish state and its head Kazi Mohammed, having left the Mekhabadian Republic alone with the superior forces of the armed Iranian army to which the imperialistic states as the USA, Great Britain and Turkey openly helped with military engineering and directing skilled advisers.

The destiny of the independent Kurdish state was predetermined.

On December 13, 1946 the Iranian troops entered the capital of Iranian Azerbaijan, the city of Tebriz, and on December 17 the town of Mekhabad fell. Poorly armed Kurdish soldiers resisted for the whole month, and for the whole month there were bloody fights. Human, military and material resources were finished. The winners who have rushed in city have ruthlessly finished with government of the Mekhabadian Republic, government officials, officers and soldiers, executed members of families, peaceful inhabitants. Before the arrival of the governmental armies some leaders managed to run to Iraq. Mulla Mustafa Barzani left Mekhabad and receded to the Iranian-Iraqi border, a bit later he sought asylum in the Soviet Union.

Kazi Mohammed on the command of his heart came towards the Iranian armies, declared about the support of integrity and independence of Iran by the Kurdish democrats, about fidelity of the Kurds to the Iranian government. This sacrificial act, really, as well as Kazi Mohammed wanted, has reduced the scale of the bloody punishment, but cost him his life. On March 30, 1947 on the verdict of a court-martial Kazi Mohammed himself, his brother Sadr Kazi and his cousin Safeh Kazi were hung up on that square "Charchyra" where the Mekhabadian Republic was proclaimed.

The Iranian leadership was not satisfied with the defeat of the Kurdish republic and execution of its leaders. It has tried to destroy even the memory of it. Kurdish printing houses were closed, publications in the Kurdish language were forbidden. Books in the Kurdish language were burnt, training in the Kurdish language was forbidden. The first Kurdish independent state has existed only for 11 months.

**At the analysis of the reasons of its defeat it would be desirable to allocate some factors. As political scientists marked at that moment, the great powers were after their own interests, and the Kurdish leaders were so naïve as to hope on the help from the outside.**

The other reason of the defeat was the religious feelings and sectarian moods among the Kurds. So, for example, the population of provinces Kermanshah and Silts professed the Islam of the Shiit persuasion that made them closer to the Persians-Shias, than to the fellow tribesmen. It is far from being all the Kurds-Shias that expressed sympathy



for the republic. The support by the Soviet Union made an impression, that the Kurdish leaders share and support the communistic ideas. The Iranian authorities in every possible way tried to keep and sustain this illusion. Teheran named the republicans atheists. Some got under the authority's propagation and did not join the republic.

The third reason of falling was the absence of experience in the managements of the republic. Kazi Mohammed had only two-year-old organizational and political experience.

But despite all this the Mekhabadian Republic will remain in the memory of the Kurdish people and in the world history. Practically unarmed people, having transferred extreme deprivations, have remained not defeated. Yes, the enemy has taken hold of the Kurdish woods and mountains, has misappropriated to himself the natural riches of Kurdistan. But the Kurdish people has remained recalcitrant, has not lost the honour and advantage of most ancient people. The martyr Kazi Mohammed has forever remained in the souls and hearts of forty millions of Kurds of all four parts of the enthralled, but not subdued Kurdistan.

The lessons of proud Mekhabad have not been wasted. The dreams of the Kurdish statehood did not die away. New generations of Kurdish patriots continue the struggle for the rights of freedom-loving Kurdish people. And the striking example here is the courageous heroes of Mekhabad.

And in modern Iran position of the Kurds still leaves much to be desired. The representatives of the Shiit establishment are inclined partly to involve the Kurds in political life of Iran. They are resisted by the supporters of the doctrine of the Islamic statehood accepted by Khomeini and his colleagues. Therefore the ethnic "cleanings" still proceed in the Kurdish areas so that the Kurds could not even think of the Kurdish autonomy; therefore the heads of the national - democratic movement have still been killed. Not casually some years ago the secretary general of DPIK (Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan) S.Sharafkendi was shot in Berlin.

The reactionary part of the Iranian society does not accept that the Kurds, the eastern ethnos according to its ethno-genetic attributes - are inclined to construct a society on the samples of the West-Europe-



an civilization. Such a model is absolutely rejected by the reactionary clergy of Iran.

The Iranian Kurds call for the cancellation of medieval practice when for larceny hands is chopped off; do not agree with the state laws restraining the rights of women.

It is not so easy to put things in order in Iranian Kurdistan itself: there are too many of the Iranian armies, there are still too many consequences of the long Iranian-Iraqi war, here is a lot of the Kurdish refugees from Iraq and Turkey; so far it be from speaking about normal conditions .We will address to reports of Amnesty International and the State department of the USA on human rights for 1994.

Ruling circles try to destroy the members of the Kurdish political organizations of Iranian Kurdistan wherever they were. Repeatedly they tried to kill the present secretary general of DPIK Mustafa Khedzhari who was sentenced by the Iranian government to the death penalty. As it is informed, since June 1993 till March 1994, at least, 56 persons were arrested on the suspicion of belonging to DPIK. Only on September 8, 1993, 700 persons were detained on the accusation of carrying national Kurdish clothes. 190 of them are still missing. At the appointed time more than hundred thousand of the Kurds held in custody in various areas of Iran. In the second half of 1993 hundreds of the villages were destroyed in the vicinities of such cities as Serdesht, Ban, Oshnoviy, Sakkyz, Bokan and Mekhabad, the inhabitants of which were expelled. Other villages severely suffered from the explosions of numerous mines...

The official Teheran still insists on the firmness of the position in relation to the Kurds; the ethnic variety of the country is denied. According to the representative of the president of Iran in the Supreme Security Council, doctor Hasan Roukhani "there is no difference between the Kurds, the Turks, the Persians and the representatives of other nationalities". In the same interview Mr. Rouhani to the newspaper "Resalyat" (July, 1994) declared, that each Kurd may be elected to the Medzhidye (parliament) and freely study in any higher educational institution of Iran. However, dear doctor has overlooked

about one circumstance: for all this the Kurds first of all should give up their own nationality and recognize themselves as Shiits.

The Islamic Republic of Iran aspires to coordinate similar actions against the Kurds in Iraq and Turkey. For this purpose the ministers of foreign affairs of Iran, Iraq and Turkey constantly meet.

On June 13, 1994 Ankara demanded from the Minister of Internal Affairs of Iran Mohammad Besharati who was on a visit to Turkey - to allow the bombardment of the bases of the People's Party of Kurdistan, located near the mountain Ararat. On June 14 the president of Turkey Suleiman Demirel even interrupted his rest to declare about the joint action of Ankara and Teheran against the People's Party of Kurdistan.

On June 16, 1994 Turkey received the long-awaited sanction to operate against the PPK in the Iranian territory to prevent members of PPK from passing to Iran from the territory of northern Iraq; not to allow them to get over through Armenia to Russia. Besides, the government of Iran allowed to destroy the roads in territory of Iran, along which to the bases of PPK the weapon and ammunition were delivered.

And this is how the things are in the modern position of the Kurds in Iran, and this is the behaviour and outlook of the ruling regime in the Kurdish question.

But a military opposition never achieves the peace. Only the persistent creative work can result in it. And the Muslim clergy, spiritual leaders of the Kurdish population should not stand aside. Nowadays it is discharged of the political activity through the fault of the new Kurdish political elite.

There are many opportunities, including the existing Iranian legislation constructed on the theocratic foundation for overcoming animosities, for the triumph of tolerance. There are no restrictions in it for upholding and development of the valid national - cultural equality of all peoples of the country, including the Kurds.

## Modern Position of the Kurds in Iran

The Shah's policy in 60 - 70s under the name of "white revolution" has transformed the Iranian Kurdistan into a raw-material producing appendage of the country. Bourgeois reforms were carried out here irregularly and with a great delay. They only increased a disproportion in social and economic development of the Iranian Kurdistan. Semi-nomads, peasants, petty bourgeoisie were a significant social strata here. The important role in social and economic development of the Kurdish society belonged to prosperous peasants as the agricultural production was strong enough in the Kurdish areas.

The nomadic way of life is characteristic only for the mountainous areas where the Kurds are engaged in sheep breeding, overtaking up the flocks in the summer and in the winter. The traditional social categories exist in villages such as "aga," "sheikhs", "rishsefid", "ketkhods," etc. As to the industrial development, Teheran deliberately froze the development of the industry in this area. Therefore the working class here is small, but rather strong positions in the Iranian Kurdistan occupy the trading - usurious circles. Because of incompleteness of the reforms in 70-s the modernization of the semi-feudal facilities on the basis of new economic relations did not bring positive results. Therefore the made production hardly satisfied the needs of the home market of the Iranian Kurdistan. Despite of the development of special regional programs for social and economic development of the country in which for the Kurdish areas the increase of the state assignments and the stimulation of the private capital was provided, the backlog of Iranian Kurdistan did not only fail to reduce in comparison with the state parameters, but even it increased by 80-s, and that was perceived by the Kurdish consciousness as infringement of the national interests.

The Kurdish petit bourgeois unsuccessfully aspired to strengthen its positions in the competitive struggle against the big business of the central areas of Iran.

The majority of the Kurdish population supported the idea of the original development of the Kurds within the framework of Iran. However, various currents and directions have come to light in the movement. One of them had an Islamic-Sunnite colouring, others acted un-



der an ideological influence of the West-European public ideas. At the same time, there were contradictions also inside each of the directions. Some Sunnite seminary students headed the political groups that put forward the slogan of the "independence" of the Kurds. Thus, for example, the group "Razgari", which was headed by the sheikh Osman Nakshbandi, stood for the separation of the Kurdish areas from Iran. Though supporters of this organization actively participated in overthrowing of the Shah's regime on the side of Homeini, it supported the revision of all the borders of the region of the Near East and the Middle East and the reunion of all the Kurds within the framework of the uniform and centralized Kurdish state. The activity of this organization ran counter to the ideological and political principles of the new regime of Iran which made efforts to liquidate it. In November 1981 on the basis of the circular of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of IRI the activity of this organization was forbidden.

The most popular were the movements headed by the organization "Komal" (Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (DPIK)).

Firstly (DPIK) acted with the programme accepted as far as in 1973, in which the priority was given to the socialist way of development of the Kurdish society. This programme was designed with the aim that the Kurds in their struggle would find the support of the Soviet Union and the socialist camp headed by it at that time. The USSR ignored the events happened in Kurdistan. It has forced the heads of the Kurdish national-democratic movement to reconsider principles of the struggle. The leader of DPIK A. Kasemlu managed to come into contacts with the European social-democratic parties, which rendered material and moral support to the Iranian Kurds within the framework of the program on protection of human rights. This was the main reason of the political reorientation of DPIK, which in the struggle began to be guided by the social democratic principles: heightened interest to social, economic and administrative experience of the European social democracy, to those its achievements which are connected first of all to the protection of the financial position of the working people, the increase of their well-being and the development of measures in the field of economy.

According to the views of the leaders of this party the concept of "human rights" is considered secular and it is meant that each person, having been born, has the rights irrespective of acceptance or non-acceptance of any belief. The Iranian Kurds and some Sunni religious politicians share such treatment of human rights that do not correspond to the views of the Shia clergy.

The position taken by DPIK allowed it to develop the programme, in which the ultimate goal of the party was the fulfilment in Iranian Kurdistan, the models of the "democratic socialism" which was supposed to be carried out under the slogan "Democracy to Iran, autonomy to Kurdistan". The author of the concept of "democratic socialism," the secretary general of DPIK A. Kasemlu stated its contents at the VI Congress of DPIK in 1984. The idea was ambiguously perceived by the functionaries of DPIK.

The Kasemlu concept of "democratic socialism" was coordinated with the political platform of DPIK promulgated as far as in March 1979. According to this program it was offered to differentiate functions precisely between the central government and the local authorities. The questions of the international relations, the national defence, the finance and the perspective economic plans should remain in the competence of the central government, which at the same time should guarantee national rights to the entire ethnic minority. The Democratic Party demanded equal rights for all ethnic minority of Iranian Kurdistan, rights to speak the native language and to follow traditions; freedom of speech and the press; freedom of activity of associations and trade unions. The party declared that the provinces should solve their internal affairs independently.

In the competence of the independent governments, it was marked in the programme should remain the questions of the culture (the recognition of the Kurdish language the official language of the local governments and its studying at all schools; the creation at universities the faculties of the Kurdish language and literature); administrative (delimitation of the Kurdistan frontiers in view of historical, economic and geographical criteria); the creation of the Kurdish parliament elected by the universal suffrage; the election of the local authorities; the formation of the gendarmerie and the police from the local population;



social problems. Office-work in the Kurdish areas should be conducted in Kurdish, and the correspondence between establishments - in Persian.

In the opinion of the leaders of DPIK the planned purposes could be realized in the conditions of a genuine democracy with which the regime existing in the country cannot provide. That is why as a method of achievement of tasks in view DPIK selected the way of the armed struggle, not rejecting peaceful ways of settlement.

During the 80s DPIK tried to achieve the solution of the Kurdish problem in Iran in the peaceful way. Its representatives participated in negotiations with many state and religious figures, who expressed the point of view of official Teheran on the Kurdish question. One of the last attempts was A.Kasemlu's meeting in Vienna with the representatives of ruling circles of IRI for the discussion of the process of Kurdish settlement. But A.Kasemlu's perfidious murder in the summer of 1989 during this meeting has put an end to negotiating process. In the first half of December 1989 in the mountainous district belonging to Iraq, during five days the Plenum of DPIK worked. It elected Doctor Sadik Sharafkendi as the new secretary general of the party; he was known under guerrilla nickname Said Badal, i.e. Said the Brave, and also five members of DPIK. Plenum declared continuity of the political course taken under the leadership of A. Kasemlu, that is the "continuation of the armed struggle until the autonomy for 6.5 million Kurds of Iran" will be achieved.

At the end of the 80s in the Iranian Kurdistan existed about 1500 military bases of the Iranian regime. The Kurds began to use tactics of the guerrilla war, carrying out the armed actions at nights, blowing up the military fortifications, warehouses, the lorries belonging to army divisions, deployed in Iranian Kurdistan.

In those years DPIK totalled tens of thousands members. It demanded autonomy in the frameworks of IRI. At the same time it condemned the terrorism.

After overthrowing of the Shah's regime, the Kurds managed to use the easing of the central power in the Iranian Kurdistan and to organize the so-called "free areas" where the Kurds solved internal affairs. After the stabilization of the new regime of the Shia clergy the



Kurdish movement for autonomy was more and more superseded, removed into the mountains, and then turned out of the limits of Iran. The headquarters of the Kurdish organizations now are located in the territories of Iraq controllable by the Iraqi Kurds.

Within the framework of the realization of the programme of the "Islamization" and "cultural revolution" the new Iranian regime has undertaken some liberalization of the policy in cultural sphere. Since spring 1985 the famous Kurdish poet Hemin began to subsidize and publish magazine "Shiva" in Iranian Kurdistan. It was met by the Kurds with the big enthusiasm. Even more important step was the realization of the First Congress of the Kurdish culture and literature, which was held on September 25-27, 1986. Hundreds of Kurdish writers and scientists have taken part in the Congress from all Iran. The prime minister of Iran of that time Mir Hosein Musavi directed a message in which some positive ideas concerning the prospects of the development of the Kurdish culture contained. The Congress adopted the programme of 10 items, which reflected the basic directions of the Kurdish culture in the future.

In spite of the fact that now, the publication of works by the Kurdish writers is adjusted, and the Kurdish centre of science "Salaheddin" also was opened in Oshnui, the Kurdish culture is poorly promoted. Some Iranian radio stations broadcast in the Kurdish language; there are some programmes for the Kurds on the central TV in Teheran and local TV in Kurdistan.

But nevertheless the basic needs of the Kurdish population - training in the Kurdish language, at least, at schools in spite of the fact that the textbook for elementary education was printed. The reflection of the history of the Kurdish people in it is presented through the prism of Shia propaganda and the Islamic way of life. There was no opportunity for the Kurdish creative intellectuals to organize unions and associations. Many of them are compelled to be abroad because of the absence of the conditions necessary for normal creative activity, and also prosecutions on political convictions. Special courses on the Kurdish language and literature, history and culture at the universities of the country were not opened.

Liberalization has only touched the Kurdish musical culture. But nevertheless some performers are forbidden act in public, and also some cassettes have been withdrawn from circulation. Representatives of the Islamic revolutionary committees supervise musical shops.

After the conclusion of an armistice between Iran and Iraq in the summer of 1988 some outstanding statesmen of the country have shown interest to problems of the Kurds and Kurdistan. In autumn of 1988 a delegation of authoritative Iranian leaders visited Iranian Kurdistan; among them was the then President Khomeini, the Chairman of parliament and the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces of IRI A.Rafsanjani, the Prime Minister Musavi, the minister of the information and social security Reishakhri. In spite of the fact that this delegation was not allocated powers of settlement of the Kurdish question, its decision on necessity of restoration of the Kurdish areas affected in the Iranian-Iraqi war, and on the accelerated economic development was accepted. The commission also ascertained the need to take urgent measures in the field of development of public health services and education. But these measures did not touch the essence of the Kurdish question.

By the beginning of the 90s the Kurdish question in Iran had not been decided. The heavy heritage of the past was felt: the backwardness of the economy of the Kurdish areas of Iran and their infrastructure, the huge cultural backwardness inducing ignorance, regionalism and isolation, "binding" of the politically active part of the population not to the general social orientation, but to separate leaders and figures.

Subjective difficulties are connected mainly to backward views and the habits inherited by masses of people, including figures and separate members of the Kurdish political organizations. The traditionalism was also a very significant factor that affected the process of formation of the political organisations.

An excessive congestion of the Iranian armed forces, a heavy economic situation and ruin as a consequence of the Iranian-Iraqi war, a congestion of Kurdish refugees from Iraq and Turkey, complex social conditions etc. that was a daily reality in Iranian Kurdistan did not promote the settlement of the Kurdish question.



According to the report of "Amnesty International" and the annual report of the American State Department on human rights for 1994, it can be seen that the situation in Iranian Kurdistan remained complex. The ruling circles aspired to physical destruction of the members of the Kurdish political organizations, functioning underground in Iranian Kurdistan irrespective of, whether they are in the country or behind its limits. The present Secretary General of DPIK Mustafa Khedzhari on whom the attempts of assassination had already been undertaken is sentenced to the death penalty. The American State Department on human rights ascertained in the report, that at least 56 persons on suspicion of belonging to DPIK were arrested and punished in the period from June 1993 till March 1994. On September 8, 1993 70 persons were interrogated because of wearing national Kurdish clothes. 10 of them are missing. 100 thousand Kurds were held in custody in various regions of the country. In July - December 1993, 100 villages located in the vicinities of Serdesht, Ban Oshnoviy, Sakkyz, Bokan and Mekhabad were destroyed, their inhabitants were turned out from places of their constant residing. Other villages were destroyed owing to explosions of the mines placed on all the area during the whole period of 1993 - 1994, and especially along the border with Iraqi Kurdistan. Over 300 villages and for the entire period of the power of the Shiit clergy 500 villages have been destroyed in Iranian Kurdistan.

These actions are qualified by official Teheran as reciprocal, accepted against the attack of the Kurdish guerrillas on the locations of the Iranian army. As a result of bombardments the crop was completely destroyed, and the Kurdish inhabitants were compelled to run on the Iraqi side to the zone of the independent Kurdish area. Iran also tries to use the Kurdish tribes, which earlier had cooperated with Baghdad. At the same time, the number of the Iranian army in the Kurdish areas was reduced from 200 to 150 thousand persons.

One of the reasons inducing the ruling regime of Iran to apply force methods of suppression of the Kurdish movement in the country is the aspiration to keep untouched its territorial integrity. Meanwhile, though the movement of the Iranian Kurds puts forward the requirements of the territorial - administrative and national autonomy in the frameworks of IRI, it is connected to the movements of the Kurds in Iraq and



Turkey, putting forward requirements of national self-determination either in the form of an autonomy, or in the form of independence.

In the spring and autumn of 1993 and 1994, Iran subjected to bombardment cities and villages located in the Iraqi territory, controllable not only by Baghdad, but also by the Iraqi Kurds where the staff and bases of the Iranian Kurdish adherents of autonomy are situated. And Iran intruded 5 km inside Iraqi territory. Carrying out these actions, trying not to draw upon them discontent of USA and the West, Iran has qualified the armed actions in the report signed with Turkey in November, 1993 as reciprocal counter-measures against the attacks of the Kurdish guerrillas, carried out from the Iraqi territory.

Controlling the situation in Iranian Kurdistan, the ruling regime of IRI does not disregard the conditions in other parts of ethnic-geographical Kurdistan, supporting aspirations of the governments of Iraq and Turkey to the co-ordinated actions against the Kurdish movement. Within the framework of these arrangements regular meetings on the Kurdish question at the level of the foreign ministers bring together Iran, Iraq and Turkey. Similar meetings took place in November 1992, in the summer and in the winter of 1993 and 1994. Besides between the countries of residing of the Kurds the bilateral agreements regulating their policy in the Kurdish question were subscribed also. So, on November 30, 1993 Iran and Turkey signed the Protocol on security in which it is marked, that any of the sides will not admit the activity of any terrorist organizations in their territory. Moreover, the authoritative representative of President A.Rafsandzhani Mr. Golan Hussein Bolandizhyan has declared, that Iran will undertake the armed actions against the People's Party of Kurdistan - (Turkey). On June 13, 1994 Ankara demanded from the Iranian Minister of Internal Affairs Mohammad Besharati, when he was on a visit to Turkey, that Iran allows bombing the bases of PPK located at the foot of the mountains of Ararat and Tendurek. And on June 14 President Suleiman Demirel interrupted his rest to declare about the joint actions of Ankara and Teheran against PPK. On June 16, 1994 Iran authorized Turkey to operate against PPK in the Iranian territory, having allocated especially three moments: to interfere with the members of PPK to pass from the territory of northern Iraq to Iran; to forbid the members of PPK the

transition to Armenia and further to the territory of Russia; to put out of commission the roads in the territory of Iran on which PPK delivers an ammunition to the bases located in Iran, whence it strikes impacts on Turkey. The similar Protocol was signed between Iran and Syria about the security in which also it is marked, that the sides undertake measures to oppose PPK and its branches in Germany and France.

Signing of the documents on security between the countries of residing of the Kurds testifies that they are concerned with the rise of national consciousness of the Kurds. Ankara, Teheran and Baghdad were united. Forward-looking politicians of these countries thirst to supervise also the Caucasus, in particular Armenia and Azerbaijan, including the zone of Nagorny Karabakh, under the pretext of struggle against the Kurdish movement, but here there is a big handicap for them that is the presence of Russia.

The only way to overcoming animosities and settle the Kurdish problem is in returning to the negotiating process guaranteeing personal safety to the fighters for the Kurdish autonomy, the acceptance laws and their strict observance.

### **The Southwest Kurdistan**

According to some foreign Kurdish sources, the Kurdish population of Syria makes up 10 % of the entire population of the country. Since the end of the 50s official statistical collections, and also the constitution of Syria evaded from direct indications on the presence of the Kurdish population in the country. At the same time for the period of 1941-1955 the population in Dzhaziri (the province of Khaseke) has increased by 92 % mainly due to the natural increase of the Kurds and their migration. Even then the population of Dzhaziri made 14% of the entire population of the country.

The Kurds live in the provinces of Damascus, Khaseke, Khaleb, Rakka, Latakia, Kham, Homs, Deir Ez-Zor, Tarts and Idlib. The larger part is concentrated in the province of Khaseke and the areas of Ain Al-Arab and Afrin of the province of Khaleb, where they make up the majority of the local population. In the period of 1960-1970 between two censuses, the population of the province has increased by 28.7 %,



and its share in an aggregate number of the population of Syria has made 7.4 %, and the increase in population in the entire country was equalled 32.8 % of 1970. For this time the urban population of province Khaseke has reached 96 thousand persons, and rural - 373. However the official statistics did not take into account 150 thousand Kurds deprived of the Syrian citizenship.

The tendency to the growth of the population in the Kurdish areas was kept quiet in 1970-1980s. Thus, according to the official data, in 1980 in the town of Khasek lived about 74 thousand persons, in the town of Kamyshli - 93 thousand, in the town of Afrin - 20 thousand, in the town of Ain al-Arab - 13 thousand, in the town of Rasulyain - 15 thousand, in Ain-Malikni - 14 thousand. Calculations show, that on parameters of a mid-annual increase in population for one decade of 1970-1980 Khaseke took the second place in the country, having 76.5 %, and Kamyshli - the sixth place (62 %), other Kurdish cities had as a whole high rates of the gain - from 47.6 % up to 50.1% while on the country this parameter was equalled 40.9 %.

According to some foreign Kurdish sources, by 1980 the Kurdish population in Damascus totalled over 30 thousand, and by 1990 - more than 170 thousand. Such growth has taken place due to natural a nature and migrations of the Kurds from the Kurdish areas of the country. By the middle of 80s the population of the province of Khaseke, on the official data, has come nearer to 700 thousand.

Thus, it has occupied the 5<sup>th</sup> place on the given parameter after the provinces of Khaleb, Damascus, Homs and Kham. If to start with a 10-percentage share of the Kurdish population in Syria in 1960 its number has made 450 thousand people, in 1970 - 625 thousand in 1980 - 900 thousand and in the middle of 1980 one million in view of the Kurds deprived of the Syrian citizenship.

The Kurdish population of Syria grows steadily. Only for the period of 1960-1980 it was doubled. If to leave rates of a gain of the Kurdish and Arabian population equal, that, under offers and estimations, number of the Kurdish population in the country in 2000 year can reach one and a half millions person, and in the province of Khaseke - not less than one million person.



Great bulk of the Kurdish population of Syria is the peasantry consisting mainly from poor men and peasants of average means. The majority of the poor do not have their own land. The proprietors of semi-feudal type represent the agricultural bourgeoisie. In 1960-1980 the layer of prosperous peasants has extended, the number of farmers businessmen, the number of Kurdish industrial workers, the workers of trade enterprises, of the sphere of services, and also agricultural workers has increased. Petit, average and large proprietors, including those assimilating in the Arabian environment, represent the city Kurdish bourgeoisie.

Kurdish workers are engaged on the railway transportation, oil fields, in the enterprises and establishments of the state sector. Many Kurds work as loaders. The growth of the number of workers occurred due to poor men and the landless peasants leaving the countryside. In northeast of Dzhazira the Kurdish workers are engaged in the oil fields of Karachuk, Rumeilyan, Suveidin and Dzhabs. In the oil fields of Rumeilyan, for example, at the beginning of 1980s it was totalled 7 thousand Kurdish workers. There are a lot of workers of the Kurdish origin in the cities of Deir Ez-Zor and As-Saur. In Damascus workers of the Kurdish origin are engaged mainly at the enterprises of the textile industry. The Kurds work as machine operators, mechanics, mechanics - repairmen, drivers of vehicles, builders and watchmen. However when the Kurds are hired they experience some bureaucratic obstacles and formalities in which basis the national discrimination lies.

A new Kurdish average trading - financial and building bourgeoisie appeared as a result of social and economic changes in the country. There was a merging of the Kurdish and Arabian trading and industrial bourgeoisie.

The majority of Kurds in Syria are the Sunnis, the minority are the Shias and the Yezidis. By the middle of 1980s the Yezidis totalled 20 thousand. They live in the areas of Dzhebel-Samaan to the west of Khaleb, Dzhebel Al-Akrad to the north of Khaleb, in some villages to the south of the city of Amudy, and also in the area of Dzhebel Abdelaznsin Dzhazira. Many of the Yezidis are farmers and work on the farms of landowners - Muslims.

The Kurdish clergy is represented by the Supreme sheikh mardzhai, mullahs-Imams and fakikhs. The sheikh mardzhai is an absolute authority in his Order; the most widespread is the Order of Nakshbandia. The Mullahs are appointed to the Kurdish areas either by sheikhs or the owners of the villages.

The Kurds are not even mentioned in the official documents.

A very bad effect on many Kurds had the approach that Syria should be an Arabian country. In the autumn of 1962 the population of Dzhazira has undergone an "extreme census", the result of which became the deprivation of 12 thousand Kurds of the Syrian citizenship, the persons deprived citizenship were named strangers "adzhanibs," in spite of the fact that the majority of them lived and worked on the lands of their ancestors even before the formation of the Syrian state.

In some cases one half of the members of a family are enlisted as "adzhanibs", and the second half as the citizens of the country, the parents are citizens the children are foreigners. The "adzhanibs" lost all the civil rights in social, economic, political, cultural fields. As well as in the sphere of public health services. Such fate of destiny pursues more than 200 thousand of the Kurds in Syria up to this day.

In 1963 the party Baath started the liquidation of imaginary "Kurdish plot" ("Second Israel"), having ostensibly the purpose of creation the independent state of Kurdistan in the territory of Dzhazira. In the areas of residing of the Kurdish peasants the agrarian reform was not carried out, and when the "General Federation of Peasants" was established there was a demand that its structure must not include peasants of Dzhazira on the ground that in this area of the country the Kurds with the pro-Communist orientation ostensibly prevailed.

The Syrian and Iranian authorities in 1963 were united for the achievement of military cooperation in the struggle against the Kurds of Iraq. Then a motor-infantry brigade of "Yar-muke" 5 thousand soldiers and officers strong and the Air Forces of Syria took part in fights against armed revolt in the Iraqi Kurdistan which began in September 1961 under the leadership of Mustafa Barzani.

In the policy in relation to the Kurds the authorities of Syria at times demonstrated a certain tolerance and concession. At the end of 1971 President Kh. Asad permitted the distribution of the ground plots



among the Kurds of the province of Dzhazira. In 1976 the president has condemned the plans of eviction of the Kurds from the so-called "Arabian belt" or "the green zone" in Dzhazira and also the plans of creation only Arabian settlements and villages. After that the Kurds began to feel like in a greater safety; the radio broadcast the Kurdish music, the structure of National Council of SAR included the deputies - Kurds elected in the districts the Kurd-Dag and Afrina.

As a whole the course of the discrimination of the Kurdish minority in Syria proceeds. The ruling circles of Syria still do not recognize the presence of the Kurdish question at home, recognizing simultaneously its existence in Iraq, Turkey and Iran. The consequences of such a policy have a negative effect on the position of the Kurds in Syria and its neighbouring countries.

The Kurdish question in Syria becomes aggravated owing to the long refusal of ruling circles to recognize the right of the Kurds, and the steady growth of the Kurdish national and political consciousness. The Kurdish political parties in Syria have acted for the realization of the territorial autonomy in Dzhazira and named the Kurdish people in Syria the "second people after the Arabs" according to the number of the population. The appearance of the Kurdish parties since 1957 and the expansion of the Kurdish movement have brought in the new political contents to the Kurdish struggle for the realization of national rights in the country. But the Kurdish movement in Syria differs from the movements of the Kurds in Turkey, Iraq and Iran. Here, in Syria it develops in the peace, but not in the armed way.

The Arabian emancipating movement and the gaining of the national statehood by the Arabs became the additional lever of amplification of the activity of the Kurds. The Kurdish intellectuals put forward the ideas of the necessity of struggle for the preservation of national originality of the Kurds. A significant role in the cause of national and political awakening of the Kurdish people played such prominent representatives of the Kurdish intellectuals as Dzhagarkhun, Sabiri, Badrkhan, Khasan, Nami, Teplo, Akhmed Zaza and Nureddin Zaza.

In the second half of the 1940s the Kurds of Syria opened schools for studying the Kurdish language and the literature, the cultural - educational, sports and charitable centres. The further strengthening of



national and political consciousness of the Syrian Kurds was promoted by the struggle of fellow tribesmen in Iraq and Iranian Kurdistan. In 1946 being inspired by the Mekhabadian Republic the Kurdish students established the Organization of the Kurdish Democratic Youth which carried out educational work among the Kurdish workers and peasants. The Kurdish working people demonstrated the ideas of struggle for national rights, acted for the creation of trade unions (in particular, for the workers of the textile industry). As the newspaper of the Kurdish Democratic Party of Syria "Al Khayat" wrote, "the workers showed class character of their demands and the growth of their national consciousness in the Kurdish quarter of Damascus, other areas of residing of Kurds." It was the certificate of the factor of the national unity.

Up to the middle of the 1950s the Kurdish intellectuals, operating in illegal conditions, continued the search for ways of the association of isolated circles in a political party. The big role in this affair belonged to its representatives, such as Osman Sabri, Nureddin Zara, Rashid Khamo and Khamid Darvish. As a result, in 1957 there took place the Constituent Congress of the Kurdish Democratic Party, which consisted of: the "Movement of the Kurdish Patriots", the "Committee of the Kurdish Active Workers" and the "Kurdish Marxists" - from the Syrian Communist Party.

Besides the influence of internal factors the Kurdish movement in Syria tested on itself the consequences of political events happened in the Arabian world, and also in the Kurdish movement outside Syria.

In March 1958 in Syria the law on dissolution of all political parties was adopted, that, naturally, was distributed to the Kurdish Democratic Party, too. The Syrian authorities were concerned with that the Kurds of Syria have shown solidarity with antimonarchic revolution of July 14, 1958 in Iraq which victory has allowed the Kurdish emigration led by Mustafa Barzani to return to Iraq. The ruling circles aspired to liquidate the danger of amplification of the Kurdish movement; therefore it went underground.

In 1963 the head of the department of the police of the province of Dzhazira M. Khilyal published the work in Damascus, which had the

title "The Research of national, social and political features of the province of Dzhazira."

M. Khilyar offered the whole plan, which was to finish with the Kurdish question in Syria.

Here are the basic items of this book:

- 1 - Deportation, eviction, resettlement and dispersion of the Kurds.
- 2 - Deprivation of the Kurds of opportunities to receive education.
- 3 - Deprivation of the Kurds of opportunities of employment.
- 4 - Extradition to Turkey all the Kurds saved during the revolts in Northern Kurdistan.
- 5 - Kindling conflict among the Kurds by means of policy "divide and rule".
- 6 - Realization of "cordon policy", which began in 1962.
- 7 - Realization of the policy of colonization, including the re-settlement of the "thoroughbred" Arabs to the Kurdish areas.
- 8 - Accommodation in the areas of "the Arabian zone" army detachments with a task of taking measures on resettlement of the Kurds and accommodation on their places of the Arabs.
- 9 - Creation the collective farms with military training for the Arabs in the Kurdish areas.
- 10 - Prohibition to participate in elections and to be elected to all persons who do not know the Arabian language.
- 11 - Realization among the Arabian population of wide anti-Kurdish explanatory work.

However in connection with -Israeli war of 1967 the Syrian government was compelled to put off the realization of some actions of this plan. The Kurds remained liable for call-up and, in particular, were subject to sending "Golan Hights". At the same time reprisals against the Kurds began.

The mass enthusiasm among the Kurds, observed in the 50s in the connection with the formation of the first party in Syria that caused the inflow to its line of new members, by the middle of the 60s was replaced by disappointment.

Since 1965 in Syria two illegal Kurdish parties began to operate: "the Kurdish Democratic Party of Syria" and the "Kurdish Democratic Left-Wing Party of Syria". The secretary general of the first was Khamid Davresh and the second was Salakh Badreddin.

After 1972 a new stage in the Kurdish movement began, and it was determined by ideological "behaviour" of the new born Kurdish political party.

In Syria by the middle of the 80s existed about ten Kurdish parties and the groups working in illegal semi-illegal conditions. Almost all of them were under the control of the Syrian special services.

Demanding the realization of national rights of the Kurds, all the Kurdish parties declared the necessity of the preservation of the territorial integrity of Syria, the continuation of the development of "brotherly connections" between the Arabian and the Kurdish peoples. The majority of them recognized that under Asad the lessening of tension took place in the Kurdish question intensity in a Kurdish question, but the national oppression remained, especially in the field of education.

The position of the Syrian authorities concerning the Kurdish movement both inside the country, and in Iraq and Turkey, substantially depended on the character of interstate relations in the region of the Middle East. Thus, in 60s Damascus helped Baghdad in the operations on the suppression of Kurdish revolt. But in 70-80-s and at the beginning of 90s. Damascus supported the Iraqi Kurds; in Syria the Kurdish emigrants from Iraq and Turkey settled down. From this territory the armed groups of the Kurds, making operations in Iraq and Turkey have started to operate; the weapon and ammunition were carried out from here.

In August, 1971 official Syria has declared the right of the Iraqi Kurds to their national autonomy in Iraq, to the equality of rights with the Arabs though opposed to the rights of an exit of this autonomy from the structure of Iraq.

When Baghdad in 1970 officially declared forthcoming autonomy for the Iraqi Kurds, Damascus reacted to it in such a way that in 1971 allowed to Syrian Kurds of Dzhazira to receive re-distributed allotments, an unprecedented decision. Further, when Baghdad declared all over the world that in 1974 in Iraq the Kurdish independent area was



established, Damascus in 1975 included into the structure of the National council of SAR some deputies of the Kurdish nationality who were not, however, the national representatives of the Syrian Kurds.

On February 4, 1994 at Istanbul the summit of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Iran and Syria was held, where there were discussions on the situation in the north of Iraq after the creation of the Kurdish parliament and independent management. The Ministers recognized that the situation in Iraqi Kurdistan had a negative effect on safety and stability in their own countries. Having acted against the idea of "division of Iraq", they hinted that "their governments oppose the division of the countries ever in the future in the interests of the Kurds or other minorities". The true purpose of the Syrian government in the Kurdish question was thus shown.

Its essence is reduced to the following: not allowing the development of the Kurdish movement at home, the Syrian government at the same time was not against exploiting the movement of the Kurds in neighbouring countries.

## RELIGION

The representations about pre-Islamic beliefs of the Kurds even now are rather vague, as the science has no necessary written data. The rituals kept in the Kurdish environment and other religious vestiges, in particular, - beliefs of the Yezidis, force researchers to assume, that before the acceptance of the Islam the Kurds professed the same religion, as other Iranian peoples. Thus some experts represent the factor of the unity of beliefs as the proof of the Iranian origin of the Kurds.

Researchers, agreeing with the similar point of view, find nevertheless some contradictions, accenting attention that the pre-Muslim religion of the Kurds was the Zoroastrism, and that it is not clear when and how it was brought to the Kurdish environment.

It is known, that in the Akheminidian period with an active participation of Median magicians the Zoroastrism gradually started to be distributed from the east to the western areas of Iran where under the Sasanids, who carried out a struggle against the Christianity, it has finally became the state religion.

Among the Kurds the opinion also is distributed, that before the Islam their ancestors were the Zoroastrists-Madzhuses. But, as V.F. Minorsky notes, the Aramean-Christian sources inform, that the Kurds who have accepted Christianity, earlier were pagans.

### Cosmogonic

*The sun*, on presentation of the Kurds is a very beautiful woman. Shining with beauty, it amazes and does not let anybody come near. *The moon* is the man; therefore his face is more dark-complexioned covered with spots, traces of smallpox. According to a national legend, the moon and the sun are a young man and a girl. Once he asked her to marry him, but the proud and unapproachable girl did not want to marry him, and the unlucky groom said: "Change into such a thing so that nobody could reach you!" She changed into the sun, and the unlucky groom into the moon.

*The eclipse* of the sun and the moon is considered a bad omen. It is caused by malicious creatures. To drive away malicious forces, people shout, shoot, beat in copper utensils.

*The sky is strengthen*, on columns, like a roof. The columns are under the jurisdiction of Khazret Suleiman who can destroy them. The outline of the sky changes after the expiration of a century.

*The Milky Way* - a way to Mecca; branch of it is a way to Medina.

*Stars*. Each person has his own star in the sky. When the person dies, his star falls from the sky. Therefore the Kurdish peasant, seeing a falling star, whispers a pray for the repose of the dead man's soul.

*Comet* is the messenger of the big disaster: wars, famine or illnesses.

*Rainbow* "Kaskasor", "Fatma anayn Kurshagy"- a belt of mother Fatma. There is a Kurdish popular belief, known to other peoples as well, that if man pass under the rainbow he will turn into the woman; and if the woman passes under the rainbow she will change into the man. The red strip in the rainbow promises happiness and abundance, yellow neither bad, nor good, dark will bring trouble and misfortune. Therefore children, having seen a rainbow, shout: "Red is mine!"

*The rain* is distributed by the God. He gives orders to Khazret Suleiman to send the rain to the so-and-so district. Suleiman as the Supreme master of animals and birds transfers the order to the manager of birds Khumai; who immediately gathers all the birds and rules over them to execute the order.

### Magic Views and Customs

*Counting*. According to magic views the knowledge of quantity of subjects gives the power over these subjects. From here the existence with many shepherd peoples the custom not to name the quantity of the cattle, and also prohibition to count them. In Kizikia, for example, shepherds never count the animals of their herds, from fear, that it can injure them. The Kurds are afraid to count the horned livestock, saying, that if they do count, the neighbour can become aware and put an evil eye on them, and the cattle will be sick and die. The Kurds tell nobody



the exact number of the domestic animals, being afraid of the envious evil eyes.

*Providing with abundance.* The Kurds have a custom: if a peasant milks the cow for the first time he sends a vessel with the milk of the first yield to his neighbour. The neighbour, returning utensils, necessarily should put some salt or an egg in it. To return an empty vessel is impossible, because in this case the next year cows will not be milked. Also it is not accustomed to return an empty boiler in which the godfather brings the pilaff to the boy to whom he made trimming. Something valuable is usually put into the boiler or sent together with it (dress length, for example). Here, besides the custom of endowing, magic views are present, according to which the returning of empty utensils entails loss of well being for the owner of utensils, brings the infection of "emptiness" into the economy.

The same purpose of preservations of well - being and abundance in an economy also pursue the customs are observed when selling and purchasing the cattle. When the cow is sold, the seller and the buyer take a handful of the ground in a hand and, shaking hands with each other, say: "The God will give you something useful!"). The horse is sold necessarily with a bridle and a coverlet; the horse bought without a bridle will not go for the benefit of the buyer. It is possible to replace a bridle with a cord.

*Circle.* The magic force of the circle is recognized as is known, by many peoples. So, Ossetian sorcerers in order not to admit the Devil Uoig to the house, which causes a lot of trouble, advise to encircle around the house with a sabre or a dagger. Other peoples surround the village with the circular line not to let illness into the settlement etc. The Kurds also attribute a powerful magic force to the circle. If the Kurd should spend the night in a lonely unfamiliar place, he would encircle himself with a line to protect himself from an attack of the malicious forces. If in addition to it he scatters around some pieces of pitch, the Devil who would attack person will stick and can be caught.

*Calling the rain.* In order to cause a rain during a long drought, women go to the spring and pour water on each other.

Many peoples consider, that, flinging open the ground or representing a plowed land, women are capable to cause a rain. The Kurds

adhered to similar views also. The Pshavs and Khevsurs in the Caucasus have a ritual executed during a drought under the name "the plowing of the rain". Girls are put to a plough and drag it in the river until water reaches their belts. The Armenian girls and women act in the same way in similar circumstances. The senior woman or the spouse of the priest puts on a cassock, and other women disguised as men, drag under her leadership a plough through the water against the current. If the drought lasted long in Georgia, the girls who have reached the age of consent harnessed in pairs in bulls' relays, the priest took reins in his hands, and they made the way over the rivers, pools and bogs, praying, squealing, crying and laughing. In one district in Transylvania when the ground bursts from a drought, some girls strip, then under the leadership of the woman of advanced age, also nude, steal a harrow and drag it through all fields to a brook. Having reached the brook, they launch the harrow floating, sit on it and within one hour support a small light in each of its corner. After that, having left the harrow in the water they return home.

**The termination of the rain.** Sometimes in order to stop the rain a group of 5 to 15 boys at the age of 10 - 12 years come together and arrange a so-called "kodu" that is they take a stick with a thick end used as a head and puts on a female dress on it. With this "doll" the boys bypass the settlement, coming into each yard, and sing a song: "Kodu, kodu!" Women give the boys eggs, cheese and bread and so on. After this procession rains or fogs should stop.

In Arabian sources are poor, but very valuable data on the medieval beliefs of the Kurds. They concern not only to the Islam, but also and the parallel Zoroastrism, to Christianity and other ideas which, probably, took place in the Kurdish environment before the Islam.

In some compositions of the Arabian authors the role and the place of Zoroastrism in the life of the Iranian peoples are brightly reflected. Under the message of Ibn Khaukal, in all the areas of the Iranian region of Fars and in Dzhibal of the Mosul region there were uncountable temples of fire. In one of his works Al-Masudi, very superficially concerning the pre-Islamic religions of some peoples including the Kurds, writes, that "many of them worshipped fire and engaged in magic".



Unfortunately, available data do not give an opportunity to make full representation about the pre-Islamic beliefs of the Kurds, cannot form a basis for the conclusion that all the Kurdish population consisted of the followers of Zoroastrism.

There is an opinion, that both in the pre-Islamic period, both the Islam and the Christianity were among the widespread religions. Iraqi scientist S.Hasbak assumes, that the Christians in Kurdistan were basically the Armenians and the Nestorian Syrian whereas the Kurds were the followers of Zoroastrism and adopted the Islam later.

It is necessary to note, that the Christianity was widely distributed among many peoples of the Middle East, including Arabia. From the sources of the Arabian authors it is obvious, that in Dzhazira, Iraq, Dzhibal and the Iranian areas under the Abbasids still continued to exist both the Christianity, and Judaism.

Speaking about the Kurds, al-Masudi writes, that "the tribes al-yakubiya and al-dzhurkan are the Christians, and their settlements are between Mosul and the mountain of Dzhabal al-Dzhud". However al-Masudi does not specify the time of adoption the Christianity by these tribes. Probably, before the distribution of the Islam the Christian religion dominated here.

Some fractional information about the Christianity as one of the Kurdish religion contains in the works of other authors. One may attract a special attention to the materials about the monuments of the Christianity churches in the areas, occupied by the Kurds. There were some churches, and they were located in the places where the Christian Kurdish tribes lived. The message of Ibn al-Asir confirms that at the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century cases of refusal of the Islam and acceptance of the Christianity were observed among the Kurds.

All aforesaid allow to assume, that at the beginning of the Arabian gains and distribution of the Islam religious beliefs of kurds were various. In the Kurdish environment alongside with the Paganism, were also distributed the Zoroastrism and the Christianity in its orthodox and sectarian forms. But all this in due course of time has given up the place to the Islam.

The distribution of the Islam among the Kurds in the 7<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> centuries is an insufficiently studied question. In spite of the fact that many



researchers were engaged in the questions of the Islam, the theme we are interested in has not found wide reflection in their publications.

The process of coming-into-being of the Islam as the official religion has been going on for some centuries and is still continuing. The Kurdish historian Amin Zyaki considers, that the cases of acceptance of the Islam by the Kurds took place as far as under the prophet. A. Zyaki writes that among the followers of Muhammad were the Kurds as well. In this connection he mentions Abu Maimun al-Kurdi and his son Maimun Abu Nasir.

The ideas of the Islam in its initial stage were distributed slowly and took root in a violent way. We have at our disposal only fractional information that after the Arabian gains of the areas occupied by the Kurds, the cases of the renunciation of the Islam and refusal to pay taxes took place. Nevertheless, being based on materials of a tax policy of the Caliphate, it is possible to conclude, that the Kurds in the 9<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> centuries have started to adopt the Islam.

It is known, that in the 7<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> centuries the Kurds participated in the movement of the Kharidzhits, whose ideas were distributed among the Kurds already in the initial stage of the movement. According to al-Masudi, at the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century the center of this movement was the area of Sindzhar down to Mosul.

The program of this sectarian movement in the Islam expressed expectations of the lowest layers of the people occupying the territory of the Caliphate. One of the main tasks of the movement was the establishment of the equality between the Moslems. According to their representations, the Imam-Caliph should be elected by the believers, and his post could be applied not only to the Kureishits, but also to the Negro-slave if he deserved it. Completely clearly, that these requirements should find the positive response in broad masses, thus providing movement significant breadth. It is not difficult to notice, that for the Kurd this support of the Kharidzhits did not mean the conversion into a Muslim. But through this movement the Kurds closely adjoined to the ideology of the Islam, which created new preconditions for the adoption of the Islam.

Having taken the advantage of the weakness of the central authority, in particular, the capture of Baghdad by the Bundams in 945,

the Kurdish feudal lords strengthened their positions and founded a number of the Kurdish princedoms. They used the ideas of the Islam for strengthening of their authority; representing the ideology of the ruling class in the Caliphate, the Islam became the religion of the Kurdish top, which began to play a significant role in the Islamization of the Kurds.

It is known that Prince Badr (979-1115) paid a great attention to the distribution and the confirmation of the Islamic ideas among the population.

Many authors testify about the religious blessings of Badr. Thus, Ibn al-Dzhauzi (the 12<sup>th</sup> c.) writes the following: "Each year Badr spent one thousand dinars for 20 person making khadz (pilgrimage). He gave each Friday to the poor men and the widows 1000 dirhems. Each year he spent 3000 dinars for the shoemakers, from Hamadan up to Baghdad, who made the footwear for the pilgrims. He spent each month 20000 dirhems for the shrouds for the dead. In his territory he founded 3000 mosques and constructed a caravanserai for the strangers. Each year Badr spent 100000 dinars for the alms to inhabitants, the protection of roads and other needs scarlet of Mecca and Medina. When he died, all this came to an end. Badr prayed much and praised God, he was buried on a cemetery of the Lord of the believers Ali". Even if the above-mentioned sizes and the sums of blessings are exaggerated, they do not leave doubts that only in the 10<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> centuries and later the Islam was widely distributed in the Kurdish environment. In that epoch among the Kurds of the Muslim orientation there were adherents both of Shia and Sunni.

Thus, the Islam has penetrated into the Kurdish environment, since the 30s of the 7<sup>th</sup> century when the Arabs have conquered the Kurdish areas. But the process of the conversion the Kurds into the Islam actually began, probably, only in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. And in the 10<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> centuries it has accepted mass character when the Kurdish feudal top, proceeding from the political and economic interests, and also wishing to expand the sphere of the influence, has carried away broad masses of people. So, as it is mentioned above, the Kurds on the creed are the Muslims.

Most part of the Kurds of the Near East is considered as Muslims-Sunni. The Sunni doctrine is the most numerous directions in the Islam. The followers of this doctrine are supporters of Caliphate as a form of the state power, which is carried out by the Caliph chosen by the authoritative Muslims from the heads of the community belonging to clan of Prophet Muhammad.

The Shias recognize the divine nature of the authority predetermined in the clan of the "righteous Caliph" Ali ibn Abu Talib. It is he whom the Shias consider the exclusive successor of the prophet, three others who ruled in the 7<sup>th</sup> century as "righteous Caliphs"- Abu Bakr, Omar and Osman the Shias as those are not recognized. This form of a political system carries the name of Imamate. If Caliph is a person, first of all, secular (though carrying out spiritual authority), Imam is a person extremely spiritual and his power has theocratic character.

The Kharidzhits are one of the earliest sects in the Islam - deny both the fourth "righteous Caliph" and Muavii, the founder of the dynasty of the Omeyyads (the 7<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> cc.), abolished the political authority in the Muslim community. At the same time the Kharidzhits assert the communal character of authority and unconditional electivity of the head of a community.

In the religious organization of the Muslim Kurds there is a special institute of spiritual instructors - the seyids and the sheikhs. The descendants of Fatima, the Prophet Muhammad's daughter and of his son-in-law Ali were named the seyids. Those who were not the seyids were the sheikhs. In Kurdistan they were called "praying on a carpet". The sheikh, as a rule, practically is the only person who knows and tries to teach his pupils all subtleties and nuances of the true doctrine. Best of his followers become his representatives (*caliphs*) in tribes.

The Myurids, as Nikitin marks, under the vigilant control of their spiritual teachers-instructors pass some steps of initiation (*tariqat*). Most important is moral purification from sins, repentance and the aspiration to the contemplation of God and to merge to him in mystical ecstasy. Frequently the similar condition was reached in a pray (*zikr*, *talkin*) which was accompanied either by certain ritual motions or dances. Usually it was done in a special house, the so-called tekkeh.



The sheikhs strictly observe the fulfillment of religious practices and traditions. This function of the sheikhs is the main explanation of their special influence in the emancipating struggle of the Kurds.

As specifies V. Minorsky, the question of the fourth caliph Ali is not as simple as it may seem. There was a doctrine, which had many followers among the Kurds; and that was the religious community of Ali-Ilakhi (People of the Truth).

In the opinion of the followers of this doctrine, out of the seven embodiments of the God was Ali. Four angels who accompanied God represent one of the qualities of the God. Such an angel was Prophet Muhammad in the epoch of Ali. Full "disclosing of secret" has taken place, however, not in the times of Ali, but at the latest embodiments under Baba Khoshin and Sultan Iskhak. "People of the Truth" trusted in metempsychosis. They concluded among themselves something like mystical contracts, sometimes even between representatives of different sexes.

One of the basic dogmas Ali-Ilkhs is the belief in seven embodiments of the God who are personified with the attires, which are put on by a deity: "to become an embodiment" means "to come in attire". In each case God appears accompanied by four or five angels with whom he forms a close group. His first appearance in the world was in the person of Khavandagar, the founder of the world, for the second he appeared as Ali.

The belief in transformation finds its parallel in the common belief in metempsychosis. "People, do not be afraid of the punishment of Death! The Death of the person is similar to a jump of a duck into the water: it is immersed in one place to come up in another. Ali-Ilkhs trust in resettlement of souls. According to their doctrine, human beings should pass a cycle from 1001 embodiments during which they will be remunerated for the actions".

Customs of Ali-Ilkhs are rather original. At their general meetings "all difficulties" are resolved. The assemblies pass through the certain time intervals and in connection with the important events. They read the prays under the accompaniment of music. In solemn occasions the dervishes under the sounds of saz reach the condition of ecstasy in which they go on burning coals, take them in their hands etc.

At the assemblies sacrifices animals of the male sex are obligatory: horned livestock, sheep, cocks), and also the donation - (for example, the prepared food, sugar, bread etc.). Ritual of sacrifice is strictly regulated. Meat is separated from the bones, which are subject to a burial place. Cooked meat and other donations are distributed among the people, who are present at the meeting.

Every dervish should have a confessor. During the ceremony the persons symbolizing five angels, surround the child, and the priest breaks a nutmeg, which then serves as an amulet together with a piece of silver.

With the purpose to achieve moral perfection the unions between the man (or several men) and the woman who call each other the brother and the sister are concluded. The fast is strictly observed in winter and lasts only for three days (just like it is among the Yezidis). Then after the fast the holiday comes, which is celebrated with a great enthusiasm.

They believed that a person for his sins revives to a heavier life whereas the souls of the righteous persons come back in the heavenly bosom which has caused them.

Such holidays as *Nauruz*, *Khdrnabi*, *Aida Kurbaneh*, *Aida Ramazaneh*, *Aida Rozhiye* take an important part in the life of the Kurds.

A very special role in the life of the Kurds belongs to the holiday *Nauruz*, the holiday of spring and freedom. It is marked not only by the Kurds, but also by many peoples of the East. The Kurds visit the cemetery to appreciate respect to the deceased on the eve of this holiday.

*Nauruz* is the New Year (March, 21) the day of the spring equinox. This day is celebrated by the people as the first day of spring, the day of revival. All Kurds, irrespective of their creed, mark it also as the day of freedom, the day of resistance, the day of unity and independence. Today this holiday is a symbol of struggle for freedom because on this day the country was rescued from the tyranny of the mythical governor king-dragon *Zokhak*. Unlike the Europeans, *Nauruz* is met not in the midnight, but in the daytime. All the members of a family in this gala day should gather at home round a celebratory table. People prepare beforehand various illuminations the light crackers, the rock-

ets and fireworks. On the day of the holiday on nearby hills they plant huge fires, set fire to crackers and start rockets.

The Kurds mark the New Year each first Wednesday of April. They consider, that on this day Malakeh Taus goes down to the ground, which makes everything blossom and turn green. The coloured eggs are a symbol of the updating and revival of life. People congratulate each other and give gifts to each other.

The Khdrnabi is an annual holiday, which will be on the 3-rd Tuesday of February, on that day, when forty days of winter are over. Then 20 days later people again celebrate a small holiday this time the end of the winter. Kurds and their neighbours sing on that day: "Khdrnabi, Khadyr Ilyas, Kysh getdi, geldi yaz!" ("Khdrnabi, Khadyr Ilyas, winter has passed, the spring has come"). This holiday is a holiday of Good, of the execution of all desires. All the peoples of the Near East have this holiday. It is marked by the Muslim Kurds, for whom this holiday is connected with the name of prophet Khyzyr. On this day prophet Khyzyr gives to the entire Nature the first heat. (Roots of this holiday are in the pre-Islamic period. On this day people paint the eggs, beat them against each other, congratulate and give gifts to each other.



## CULTURE

### Dwelling

The tent (*kon, chadyr, reshmal*) for the most part of the Kurdish nomadic and semi-nomadic population is the basic type of dwelling of the 19<sup>th</sup> the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> c.

Its skeleton consists of wooden poles. Half of them are hammered in the ground vertically in one or two lines to support the central part of the tent. The other part is driven in the ground on various distances, depending on the size of the tent, but with some inclination in the sides from the vertical poles. The top ends of all the vertical and inclined poles are fastened by means of woolen cords which ends on both sides from vertical lines are tied to wooden pegs, which are firmly hammered in the ground around the tent. This is the skeleton of the tent over which the panel from a rough black woolen fabric (usually made of goat fur) is thrown. The panel covering the tent, approximately half a meter does not reach the ground. The Kurds close this space with cane fences or mates, decorated with color threads. The forward side of the tent is focused on the East and is open. The back and lateral faces of the tent are closed. Such type of a tent is prevailing for the Kurds living both in huge territory of Forward Asia, and for the Kurds of Transcaucasia.

There are some so-called rooms inside the tent. They are separated from each other by woolen curtains or screens, which are skilfully, weaved with multi-coloured woollen threads.

Floor, as a rule, in the tent is earthen, but it is covered with self-made felts and oriental carpets. The beddings, which are spread at night directly on the carpets, in the daytime, are usually put in pile opposite the entrance.

For the storage of foodstuff woolen bags and clay jugs are used. The hearth is usually made outside the tent from two or three stones. On both sides of the entrance to the tent there are special pens for domestic animals, more often for the sheep; there are stakes driven in the ground near the tent to which the saddled horses and cattle are tied.

It is possible to distinguish tents of ordinary nomads and the representatives of the top of the tribe by the quality of material, size, an internal layout and furniture.

More often the Kurds scatter their tents on the coast of the river or a brook. In fine weather the food is prepared outside the tent, and on rainy days - inside the tent on the hearth (tandur).

Depending on geographical conditions it is possible to distinguish some types of tents. It is, first of all, shown in its form and features of a design, and also in some details of a layout. The Kurdish tent differs greatly from the tents of other peoples of Near East and Transcaucasia. In some areas of Iranian Kurdistan, for example, the lateral walls of the tent are laid out of the mountain stones and covered with the panel.

In Iraqi Kurdistan where there are very good pastures, the semi-nomads in summer build huts. They drive in the ground four sticks, the space between which from three sides are closed by leaves; leaves also close the top of the hut. As the entrance in such a dwelling. The fourth (the northern) side serves as an entrance in such a dwelling. Inside the hut is divided into two parts by a curtain or a small screen made of cane. One part of the hut serves as a drawing room and a place for lodging for the night, the other is used for housekeeping purposes.

A part of the semi-nomads and especially settled Kurdish country population, in the summer season builds dwellings of a special design, covered by branches with leaves.

*Mal, khani* are a traditional kind of dwelling in the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> cc. of the semi-nomadic and the settled Kurdish population. It is a kind of the caves abode cottages, semi dug-outs and various ground kinds of constructions. Many types of dwellings occurring in the past are kept by the foreign Kurds up to this day, differing among themselves by some local features in a layout and a building material.

The settlements representing dwellings caves are met in the territory of Eastern Anatolia and in Western Armenia, not only of the Kurds, but also of the Armenians, who adapted convenient caves under cult premises with an altar cut in a rock.

Kurdish underground dwellings can be classified and on an internal layout: single-chamber, two-chambered and multi-chamber. This difference depend on well-being of family whose prosperity was determined by the quantity of heads of the large and fine cattle placed usually under one roof with people, and frequently and in one premise with them. Therefore it is possible to speak, that in the given territory the Kurdish dwelling represented basically an indivisible household complex. The premises abode cottage or a semi dugout had one, common both for people, and for cattle, very low entrance door. In such dwelling there were no windows; it was heated, as a rule, in a black way, was constantly crude and filled with a caustic smoke, a smell of dung water.

The building material for dwellings depends on the place of residing. In valleys they were built of raw bricks. The raw stone was used in the mountainous areas of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria and Transcaucasia. The construction of the house was a duty of the head of the family to whom the male relatives were to help.

The poorest part of the population built their dwellings of the rough raw stone fastened by a solution of clay. Walls of the houses of a prosperous part of the population were built of the processed stone. In the mountainous districts the walls of a house are of different height: usually the forward wall is some meters higher than the back one, which is more often in a rock. Thickness of a wall is about half a metre.

One-storied pise-walled structure with a flat roof, small windows, with one or several inhabited rooms and adjoining to the house a premise for cattle is the other type of ground dwelling. The Kurdish rural dwelling as a rule is rectangular.

Thus, in designs of the dwelling of the settled and the semi nomadic Kurds, there are some distinctions depending on the region of residing.

Such distinctions as the flat-roof design of the underground and semi underground dwellings of the Kurds, and the dome construction which were widely distributed in the 19<sup>th</sup> c. in Northeast and Southeast Turkey, in Northwest Iran and in Transcaucasia, are caused not so



much by the internal developments of the Kurdish society as by some outside historical and cultural influences.

The building engineering used in the 19<sup>th</sup> and in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> cc. In the construction of the ground pise-walled and stone dwellings, has lived up to now, though, to say the truth, nowadays, alongside with it they use more modern instruments of work like the rotating cylinder with which the Kurds stamp the clay on the roof, etc.

Externally the Kurdish houses do not differ too much from the houses of the Armenians, the Assyrian, the Azerbaijanians, the Arabs, the Turks or the Persians, but the originality of the interior and furniture, certainly, specify that the Kurdish family lives in it.

Wall niches inside premises serve as "warehouse" for domestic utensils. The number of premises in the dwelling varies. There are houses with one or two premises; in the houses of a prosperous part of the population there are more rooms.

As a rule, the Kurds build the majority of houses with a facade to the south, in the direction of Mecca though in recent times you can find the remains of the dwellings having been constructed with an orientation to sunrise.

In the mountainous Kurdish areas of Iraq and Iran houses are located on the slopes of the mountains. Nowadays, as well as in the 19<sup>th</sup> century they are built so that the roof of the house which is below serves as a terrace for a house which is above, and the entire village looks as one multi-storied building.

The yard adjoins to the house of well-to-do Kurdish family with several subsidiary premises - sheds, barns etc. It is surrounded with a clay or stone wall with a wooden gate.

Speaking about the Kurdish dwelling of the 20-40-s of the last century, it is necessary to note, that more and more often the Kurdish population moves to the state buildings as constant dwelling. This phenomenon is caused by quite certain reasons.

As is known, the most part of the Kurdish population of Near East in the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries led a nomadic life. But by the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century rather a complex process of the slow transition of the Kurdish nomads to the settled way of life began to be traced. The main reason of it is that in the life of the nomads the short-

age of pastures created the extremely adverse conditions for the pasture of the cattle. On the one hand, the settled life attracts more and more of the nomads by new conveniences; on the other hand this process is artificially accelerated by the governmental circles of the states in which the Kurds live. After long resistance and attempts to avoid new conditions of life, which were imposed to them, the nomads nevertheless chose a settled way of life.

The process of settling was no doubt promoted by the so-called state constructions' for the Kurds. The construction of these dwellings as ethnographers mark, took place in the period between the two world wars. However, new constructions involved Kurdish nomadic and semi nomadic population but a little, firstly, because of the monotony and, second, because of absence in them of a traditional Kurdish originality in a design, a layout of a house etc. It has resulted in the fact the Kurds began to return to the nomadic life, at the same time to the initial, traditional and most archaic forms of dwelling.

Presently the Kurdish dwelling, as well as other components of traditional - household culture of the Kurds though rather slowly, but nevertheless does undergo some transformation under irreversible processes of assimilation and the modernization which were inextricably bought with the westernization.

Basically such processes are characteristic of cities. Besides, they concern also that part of the Kurdish population, which is violently moved from their primordial lands, from their dwellings to other, mainly non-Kurdish flat areas.

Special ethnographic studying is deserved *with the hearth, or the center* in Kurdish dwelling, for in the life of Kurdish family it is highly esteemed. On a national deep belief, the center is "the beginning of all beginnings", i.e. the beginning of family, a tribe, a clan.

The development of methods of the dwelling construction of the Kurdish houses from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and up to middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, not including some regional deviations in details of construction, as a whole also finds the reflection in the evolution of the center.

The archaic and primitive form of the center (tandur, odyasah, kani), arranged both outside and inside of a premise, is characteristic of the



19<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There are two kinds of the center: one is made in the open air before a tent, especially on nomad encampments, the other consists of two stones of almost square form put in parallel on some distance one from the other so that there could be a small, in some centimeters, space (in this space they make fire). All the family usually gathers round this center. The mistress prepares meals on it for numerous Kurdish families.

Such elementary type of the center existed in the 19<sup>th</sup>c. (also exists until now). The second kind of the center is a metallic tripod, which is arranged outside the tent. In conditions of nomadic life the Kurds bake bread on a special convex round sheet (sadzh), and fry meat on the fire. The center of such type is made in an insignificant deepening in the ground, from three sides blocked by stones.

In the middle of the dwelling, as a rule, under the only whole in the ceiling, which was used both for light and smoke, they made approximately a half-meter deepening in the earthen floor. A ceramic vessel of the cone-shaped form in which the mistress made fire was inserted into this deepening; the premise thus was heated in a black way. This type of the center occurs in some areas of Kurdistan and Transcaucasia and until now. For the preparation of meal on the center a special metal crossbeam and the traditional boilers with meal are put. In the summer it usually serves for a batch of bread. In this room parents and children sleep; the first are in the depth of the premise, the second - after the achievement of the certain age - on the sides of the center.

With the penetration of changes into the life of the Kurdish population, especially in the cities, the traditional fuel is changed, too. Before the basic kind of fuel for the Kurds was the pressed dung. The Kurdish women dried the briquettes made of a mix of manure with straw on the sun. But during the last decades the Kurds, especially in the areas of Kurdistan, rich of wood, began to use as a fuel trees, branches and twigs. Nowadays the population uses charcoal or even gas. In villages the population uses charcoal for samovars and small portable stoves. People have developed the whole system of a traditional way to kindle fire in the center. For this purpose in the center in a strictly definite way they put pieces of a tree from small logs. Logs are put so that they form something like a small throne with steps. At the same time the



mistress shifts the pieces of the tree in pairs so that one pair of the pieces of a tree could be across the other and gradually approach to the center with each subsequent ledge. This way of maintenance of fire in the center was considered by the Kurds as the most convenient for preservation of the heat. But gradually it began "to be improved" too. In the cold, especially high-mountainous areas of Kurdistan, and also in the cities, families began to care of the best concentration of heat in premises, big quilted coverlet which, falling down, and closes space around of the center. To be warmed, sitting on an earthen floor though covered with mats, carpets, mattresses and pillows, it is necessary to place legs under the coverlet, which covers a small table put over the center.

Alongside with development of forms of the center and heating system the big distribution especially in cities and suburbs, have received the centers are iron furnaces with a pipe through which the smoke leaves in an aperture in a ceiling, and built-in fireplaces with flues, usual for the dwellings of the city Turks, Persians, Arabs and the prosperous Kurds. Thus, in one dwelling there are two types of the center: old and new. The first is used for preparation of bread, food, and the second type serves for heating a room.

Speaking about the center, it is necessary to stop on that huge role which it always played in the spiritual life of the Kurdish population and continues to be "a sacred place" in the life of the Kurds. For a Kurdish family the center never was only a source of heat elementary necessary for domestic life: for heating the dwelling, for cooking the food, for baking the bread etc. The center in the family of the Kurds first of all is a symbol, which materializes "the supreme force".

The center, on religious - household traditions of the Kurds symbolizing well-being and a constancy of the family, never should die away. Especially it is impossible to extinguish fire by means of the water, which are taking away heat and cooling the center. If necessary the Kurds extinguish fire with ashes, that is, according to their beliefs, a substance, "which is close to this fire". But, according to the custom, it would be better not to extinguish the fire at all. Small decaying coals are constantly under the ashes.

The role of the center in the Kurdish family life is the synonym to the family itself.

### The Family Customs

The family customs play a significant part in the life of the Kurdish family.

Special value is given to the birth of a child, and we shall start with it.

As ethnographic sources of the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> cc. testify, the childbirth occurred on the ground covered with straw. The husband left the house and came back only a day or two later after the childbirth. Women having experience served the lying-in woman, as a rule. Usually they were paid for their work by a natural product. Before the birth of the child parents necessarily should address to mullah. He wrote a talisman so that all would go safely. After the birth to the talisman a new applicability, the maintenance of the mother and the newborn in perfect health, was given. The Mullah was rewarded, depending on prosperity, with a cow, a bull or a ram.

In folk beliefs, a difficult childbirth was eased in the following ways: the woman giving birth was pulled by ears, called by name, shouted in an ear, conjured to come to herself, told that her brother or the visitor etc. has come. If she was in a faint, shot from the gun to recover her consciousness. Sometimes they went to the river and "cut water" with a dagger (a magic custom - to cut all that ties the lying-in woman). In folk beliefs, Khal-anasy, an imaginary woman of huge growth, thin, awful, with the huge breasts thrown behind the shoulders attacks the woman during the birth. She pulls out the heart and lung of the lying-in woman, carries them to the river and washes in water. If she is not in time to do that the lying-in woman dies. To banish this monster, the Kurds arrange gun firing around the lying-in woman, "cut water" of the river with a dagger to release the heart and lungs of the woman in childbirth whom khal-anasy could come to wash in the river.

If there is a misfortune in the house, e.g., children died, the relatives went to the mullah. The mullah gave an explanation, for what reason the child had died. Sometimes he explained it by the arrival of a

woman with an ill pray. But for a good compensation, he gave such a good *doa* that sorcery concerning other children became impossible. To protect a newborn from the influence of the bad *doa* women who were suspected, were not allowed not only to enter the house, but even to appear in the yard. If the child was frightened, they usually took a piece of coal and dropped it into the water, and then gave this water to the child for drinking.

As a rule, a name to the child is given by women. They gather on a special council at the lying-in woman just to choose together a name. Sometimes this right belongs to the mullah as well. At a choice of a name he uses the magic book, serving him for talismans. And he declares, that if to the child will be given another name, than he offers, the child can die. The frightened parents, certainly, assure, that will follow the order of the mullah who receives an extra fee for the advice.

Trimming occurred only when the parents of the boy could prepare a good entertainment. For this occasion the parents search for the godfather (*kirva-krvo*), it is desirable of any rich and influential family. Only the father of the child does the invitations. Refusal of such an invitation is regarded as an insult, as an act of dishonour. The godfather drove two or three sheep for the organization of an entertainment. Father of the child cuts them and arranges a *toi fot* the entire village, represented by one person from each house. After the feast the visitors went away, and there were only close relatives of the father and the godson. Trimming occurred usually only in their presence. The local barber with the help of a razor and a little reed stick did it. Three or four days later the godfather came find out about the child and brought a pot of pilaf, a big loaf of bread, milk, honey, eggs and oil with him. Giving the pot for the godson the godfather necessarily put a piece of stuff for *chokhi* or *arkhaluk* (the sort of a coat or a caftan), sometimes a little carpet, sometimes gave him a cow. Anyway, the pot was never empty. It would be considered as a big shame.

Children were nursed about two or three years. The boy was an object of special cares. He was brought up with special tenderness. The girls were cared less. If the woman gives birth only to girls she is looked at with compassion, sympathy.



Any sort of talismans was considered as effective means against an evil eye, malicious spirits and other misfortune. So, for example, bread was put under a cradle of the child as a talisman. If anybody left the house at night, the child was taken out into the yard to save him from malicious spirits which wander at night, and the child was given a piece of bread, which, according to the national superstition, frightens off the devil.

One of references of that time has kept a description of a one-year-old kid. He was all covered with talismans. On his shoulder a pray (*doa*), embroidered on a small black square rag was attached, a bowl, a glass pearl, a metal plate; on his back there was the second *doa* in the form of a triangle and some pearls, tied up with color woolen threads. Another child had on his shoulders small brushes of red and yellow woolen threads that fluttered. Some pearls, suspension brackets and little bells were adhered to one brush on the left shoulder.

The customs described above were observed, mainly, by semi nomads - Kurds of Azerbaijan. Similar customs of the Central Kurdistan differed a little from above described.

When the moment of the childbirth came nearer, the neighbours gathered necessarily in the house of the lying-in woman. The more distinguished she was the more people were present at her dwelling. The indispensable participant of similar cases was the midwife (*da-pirk*). She stands in front of the lying-in woman whereas others are behind or sideways. Childbirth passed mostly in standing position. Sometimes a cord was tied to the ceiling to which the lying-in woman clinged. As soon as the child appeared, mothers gave a bottle or any vessel with a narrow neck, in which she blew to facilitate the separation of a placenta. Then the midwife cut an umbilical cord and threw it away. However everybody tried to notice the place where it would fall. If the umbilical cord fell on the weapon, the child would be a warrior if on dining utensils the child would like to eat well etc. For the first ten days the well - swaddled child was kept in a sieve. During this time the midwife, other women who were present at the birth, were not to leave the house, to carry away the subjects brought for the birth, especially at night. Women are authorized to leave the house only in the afternoon, but they necessarily should come back by the end of day, other-

wise malicious spirits sheshe (this name occurs from shesh "six") can grasp and kill the mother and the baby. For the same purposes during all night in the house fire or light was maintained. It was protected by turns not to give an opportunity to malicious spirit to come. At this time the mother receives various gifts (*koudyk*), usually the cake with a cream and nuts (*kade*). For the newborn baby the mullah writes a special pray (*nevichti*) which sew up in triangular amulet and attached to the baby's clothes.

### Weddings

Kurds mainly marry inside the tribe (endogamy). Men, who take wives from other tribes, are strongly reproached. In old times children were betrothed already from a cradle. The girl tied a scarf on her head as a token of being engaged. Coins were sewn to it. From this moment and up to reaching the age of consent the groom during all years on the certain day the day of *bairam* (March 9) brought to his fiancée the ram and a fabric for clothes etc. The father of the bride, as a rule, is given the bride money, or the repayment (the size of which depends on the prosperity of the family. Sometimes it was paid with money, sometimes with the cattle, i.e. cows, sheep etc. Father of the girl, in turn, gives the groom as a dowry (*dzhekhez*), i.e. all the things necessary for a good housekeeping. Besides that the father necessarily gives to the daughter the horse or the cow. This dowry, received from the father, as well as the other gifts, makes, according to Kurdish custom, the only property, which the married woman has.

Wedding demands from the parents of the groom great expenses, but their relatives always try to help them. Some relatives help with the cattle, others with products, some with money. There is also a custom - for the organization of wedding to be united in the brotherly union-*kardashlyk* (from the word "kardash" - brother). As a rule, at the beginning two young people agree among themselves about such a union. As nothing should occur without the advice of the senior relatives, the father of the groom goes to the uncle of the young man, who was chosen for the union to receive his consent to the participation of the young man in the brotherly union *kardashlyk*. The partner in the



brotherhood delivers all products for a feast to the house of the bride (the cow, the ram etc.) After the wedding he goes with the relatives to the groom, bringing various products and gifts with him. There they are treated, and before leaving necessarily endowed with gifts. From his part the groom undertakes to make all the necessary expenses and to carry out all obligations during the wedding of his kardash, or a sworn brother.

In the first marriage night kardash is allowed to protect the door of the newly married. If the bride does not prove to be a virgin, they immediately call her father, offering him to take the daughter back. In a positive case the material evidences are in a pointed manner shown to the mother of the groom and the mother of the bride. In this connection it is necessary to note, that all observers are unanimous in an estimation of high morals of Kurdish women. Word *prostitute* does not exist in the Kurdish language do not exist. In the literature only one case of female infidelity has been described. Beauty Perizada, the young wife of old emir Shemdinan Zein-Edtsin, has fallen in love with one of the emir's servants, whose name was Iso. The old husband, having found out it, ordered to remove Iso. Then Perizada has poisoned the emir and has accepted poison herself.

To bring the bride to the house of the groom, friends of the husband are sent to search for her. When they approach to the house of the bride, they find the door of the house closed, and as soon as it will open, the kardash should give the repayment to girlfriends of the bride. With this moment they begin to dress the bride.

At the beginning the woman who arrays the bride, refuses to dress her, demanding that the kardash should pay her for the work. He fulfils her request. Then, when the bride is carried from the house of her parents to the house of the groom, the youth stops a wedding train, barring the way by means of a cord, and demands the repayment, too. The kardash gives them a small sum, and the train passes. At the head of the train there are musicians (zurnachi). The red scarf is thrown over the bride's head symbolizing the wish that the beginning of the family life should be red (that is happy).

After the arrival to the house of the groom the bride does not descend from the horse until the father of the groom gives her a gift. He



gives her a cow or a mare (it is impossible to give a bull or a stallion). Then the bride goes on the threshold of the house. One of the women on the part of the groom throws on her shoulders some unleavened wheat cakes (bread as flat cakes). The bride enters into the house, greeting and simultaneously selecting bread. Crossing a threshold, the bride necessarily kisses the bread. Inside the house women take her by the hand, force her to pass three times around the center (tandur), made, as a rule, in the middle of the room in the ground, saying: "we have accepted you here, and you should serve this house up to the end of your days."

After that the bride is taken to the place prepared for her in the corner of the room, screened with a red material. Encircled by the girls from her family or the family of the groom she remains to sit here on the carpet, leaning against the pillows. During the entire marriage ceremonies which last two or three days, she, nobody is to see her, except for the relatives of her husband, excluding the father-in-law who also cannot see her until he offers a gift (the ram, sheep, silver utensils).

The ceremony of bringing the bride out of the corner is also performed according to the custom. Father of the groom arranges an entertainment and invites his relatives and the relatives of the bride. During the meal father of the groom or his relative declares, that it is necessary "make exit" of the bride and to present her with the gifts. Each of the guests gives her what he can. One of the women collects all the presents and gives them to the bride, then removes from her the coverlet and leads her to the visitors. The bride passes the guests, kissing everybody's hand (sometimes at this moment they give her some money). From this moment she can already move freely. However her face still remains closed with the red scarf.

Approximately one week after the "display of the bride" her father invites her with her girlfriends and the groom with his relatives and makes a small entertainment for twenty persons. Then the bride remains at her father's house for two or three days and after returning to the house of her husband receives from the father a gift.

In due course all the relatives should invite the bride to their place, treating her and presenting her gifts, so that henceforth she could freely come to visit them.

One must not think that the young bride is in an awkward situation in her husband's house. On the contrary, she is paid a special attention. The young woman serves as an object of special cares up to the first childbirth. After the first birth she becomes a full member of the family and now occupies an equal position with the other daughters-in-law. Among other duties the youngest of the daughters-in-law should wash the feet of the elderly relatives, and also visitors. This procedure in some families is made daily, in others every other day.

### Funerals

The dead man is usually put upon the bed. His face is inverted to the south. From the first moment the death is necessarily accompanied by crying and sobbing. Then the deceased is carried to a special premise where he is washed and wrapped up in a shroud from a cotton fabric. The mouth, the nose and the ears are stopped up with cotton wool, which is also put under arm-pits in some regions of Kurdistan. If the dead person is not buried that very day they put on his breast a stone and a pocket mirror inverted to the face of the deceased.

Coffins usually are not used. The dead man is carried to the cemetery on a stretcher made from stakes. The funeral procession consists of relatives and neighbours. Women cry and beat themselves in a breast. Ahead of the dead man or behind him his horse goes. If a young man has died, his horse is decorated with a bright matter (usually a red shawl) is tied to its neck to the saddle his sabre and a dagger are suspended. If the dead man was an elderly person, his horse is covered with a black mourning fabric. After the burial the horse is allocated home where it remains among the property of the family of the deceased. It cannot be given to anybody, but it is possible to use it. If the dead person belonged to a rich tribe or was the leader of a tribe, after a stretcher conduct a number of saddled horses with body cloths and the weapon on the back.

Here is a description of the funeral of one leader: "One of ceremonies of Kurds, in many respects reminding those in Europe, are ceremonies of funeral in honour of the leader or the soldier. On this occasion special invitations are sent to the leaders of friendly tribes, all to

whom the deceased was connected with the friendly ties. By the appointed hour all the people hurries up to the house, the funeral procession whence should begin. The horsemen open the procession carrying out a number of exercises before the stretcher. In the centre of the procession the relatives and friends carry the stretcher with the dead man. The big group of horsemen close the procession. Women, relatives, girlfriends of the diseased carry a black veil as a token of mourning. When the body is taken out from the house, women start to cry and shout, tearing off clothes on themselves, strewing their heads with the soil and ashes”.

This funeral ceremony surprises, as the author notices. It contradicts the bases of the Koran and to belief of other Muslim peoples which consider, that the death of all people equalizes and that hence hardly probable to do more honour to the sultan, than to the loader. Having delivered the diseased to the cemetery, they put him near a tomb, preliminary having lowered and having lifted him three times. After a pray of the mullah the body is lowered into the tomb. In it the dead person is so surrounded with the stone plates that he freely can lie under them. On plates put hay in the same way, as on the roof of a Kurdish house. They say that they make the underground dwelling to the dead man. On the hay they strew the ground. Hay does not give the ground to be strewed on the deceased through cracks between the plates. Under the head of the dead man islain muhur-a clay print of Kerbela (sacred city of the Shias) for acknowledgement (confirmation), that the diseased belongs to the Muslims of the Shia orientation. A tomb is filled with the ground. At this moment the mullah reads a pray and gives a parting word to the diseased. The people recede on some steps from the tomb. When the mullah ends the parting words, they come nearer to the tomb and touch the ground with a hand.

According to the national popular belief the dead person at this moment again comes into conscience and looks, who has taken part in his burial. The poles, which served as a stretcher, are put on a tomb or near it. To carry them back home is a sin.

Then people come back to the house of the diseased; the mullah says a pray, the present people say “Àmen”. To the outcome of the day the owner lights the oil lampion and puts it on that place where the



diseased was washed. The lampion should burn since evening till morning so that the dead man has the light, otherwise it will be dark in the tomb. Besides, the Kurds always light in the eve of Friday a candle on a tomb of the dead young man or the young girl and on a tomb of the seid. (Descendant of Mohammed). In the evening on the day of funeral no entertainment in memory of the diseased is expected. In the house of the deceased also are not going even to cook. Neighbours bring the meal for the family of the deceased. The first entertainment in memory of the dead person is organized on the third day after death. The entire village takes part in it (from each family there are representatives). On the seventh day the second entertainment takes place, to which people are invited. On the fortieth day the entertainment is arranged, and per one anniversary the big commemoration for entire village is arranged. All these memorable meals would be heavy burden for the family if relatives and friends did not come to the aid.

Usually for each entertainment the prosperous relatives, godsons and friends deliver to family in mourning, one ram each. The neighbours bring such food as oil, cheese, grain, and sometimes they give money.

Up to the anniversary from the date of death the family of the dead person observes mourning which consists in abstention from entertainments and all pleasures and in prohibition to speak about pleasures of life. Just in the same way within the whole year everything, that is present in the house of the red colour, is under an interdiction: nobody is allowed to put on the red clothes, or to paint in this color a wool, eggs or hair (with henna). To prepare the fried rice is not allowed either. This dish is usually prepared in the Kurdish families once a week. But when a person dies, people stop preparing it not only in the house of the diseased, but also at relatives' and even at close neighbours'. If they continue to prepare, it is kept in a secret from the family of the diseased.

Before arrival on a holiday bairam the neighbours bring to the mistress of the mourning family some henna, begging to paint hair on the occasion of the big holiday. If she agrees and paint hair, mourning comes to an end; life comes back to the normal track. The new clothes of the diseased are kept all the year round, and on the day of the anniversary

it is given to a seid or a mullah so that they have prayed for the dead person. On a tomb they put a simple stone, or they put a stone obelisk, a small column on which the name and the date of death is written down. On some monuments to the smokers sometimes cut a pipe - hookah. A monument is erecting a month or two after death, sometimes a year later. It depends on the means of the family. On the days of old the gravestone of a monument had the form of a ram or a horse. Similar figures are met in the Kurdish cemeteries in some villages.

The solvent people sometimes mark the memory of the dead person with the affairs useful for people: by digging of a well, construction of the bridge or charitable acts: helping the poor, the maintenance of children, delivery of a gift for the seid.

The widow enters the second marriage only after the expiration of the year, and quite often she marries the brother of the dead husband or his father, anyway for somebody from his tribe. It is considered a disgrace for a family if the widow marries the person from another tribe. And it is clear: the fact is that in those times the bride money was paid for the woman; the tribe loses the property in that case.

## NATIONAL CLOTHES OF THE KURDS

### LADY'S WEAR

Traditional clothes of the Kurdish people are a component of their material culture. It undoubtedly represents a certain scientific interest not only for the experts of culture, but also for the wide circle of people who are interested in the problems of the history of culture.

To systematize national Kurdish clothes and to give its description in the historical aspect is - a difficult problem. On the one hand, it is caused by the lack of an actual material. On the other hand, the complexity consists in the fact that the extensive territory of Forward Asia with the Kurdish population covers the most various geographical zones from high mountains up to plains, including various cultural areas from nomadic cattle breeding up to agriculture. Cities and settlements represent a motley picture in the national, social, tribal, linguistic and reli-



gious plan. Professor V.P. Nikitin marked that to classify the clothes of the Kurds is almost impossible. In this connection he wrote about G. Kristov's work "Fluctuations of Doctor G. Kristov are quite comprehensible, when he mentions a question of the Kurdish clothes, for it is so difficult to give it a methodical ordering. It is impossible, he says, to establish, what clothes or their features have arisen under the influence of the way of life and geographical conditions and what part of it should be attributed to the influence of a trading exchange and contacts with the other ethnic elements".

Irrespective of the type of the economic and cultural activity, the traditional clothes of the Kurdish people vary not only with the exclusive brightness but also a big originality, in many respects giving to it difference from the clothes of other peoples of Near East: the Persians, the Arabs, the Assyrians, the Azerbaijani, etc. It is necessary to note, that in connection with the accelerated process of urbanization, especially today, some modification of separate details of the traditional Kurdish clothes slowly develop.

Disintegration of the tribal relations, the process of subsidence of many nomad tribes, the amplified penetration in the region of the West-European influence, complex social, economic and ethnic processes, certainly, have brought in a number of changes to clothes of the Kurds in 19<sup>th</sup> 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. However even these reasons essentially have not affected features of the traditional Kurdish clothes as a whole. Some of its elements varied and vary only: the footwear, the head scarves, separate ornaments etc. as a whole traditional clothes remains constant that certainly testifies to a known generality in material culture of the Kurdish people.

National lady's wear of the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries as a whole is typical of the big territory with allocation of separate local variants the Caucasus, Near East, the area of Anatoly. For the first areal (Eastern Turkey, Syria, North-Western Iran and Transcaucasia is typical a complex lady's wear.

This complex, as a rule, consists basically of the bottom belt clothes sharovars, which means wide trousers', bottom clothes worn on the shoulder-kras (a shirt'), top clothes worn on the shoulder- a dress, a waistcoat, trimmed with ornaments, and jackets, the top belt clothes a



skirt, an apron, belt - woolen or silver. Leather shoes on heels serve as footwear, without backs, dressed on woolen socks. A head of the woman was covered with various, mainly cotton and silk, scarves.

Wide trousers were narrowed from top to bottom. Their length was up to an ankle. They were sewn from dense silk or color sateen. Wide trousers could be of two kinds: the first were only the bottom clothes, the other were so wide, with so many deep creases that carried out a role of the top belt clothes - a skirt. Such wide trousers were the widespread clothes, for example with the Kurdish female population of the Kars area, Northwest Iran.

The prevailing form of clothes, characteristic for the entire territory of moving of the Kurds in Near East and in Transcaucasia, and in hot areas of Iraq, Syria, Iran are popular top clothes worn on the shoulder. It was sown as a rule, from a dense one-colour cotton fabric, with a vertical cut on the breast, without a collar, with the long sleeves, coming to an end in triangular rags of a matter, the length of a shirt reaches up the ankle. Kurds - Yezidis, according to the religious traditions prefer to carry shirts of white color.

In a cold season the women in Turkey, Syria and in Transcaucasia wore a traditional Kurdish dress such as a dressing gown *entari*. The dress was usually unfastened sewed from a dense one-colour material, on a lining, with the direct long sleeves terminating in cuts, without fasteners, without a collar. Such a dress was widely distributed at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. among the Kurds of Dzhavanshir, Surmali districts of former Erivan province, among the Kurds of Eastern Anatoly, especially in the Kars area.

Usually women put on a jacket over the *entari*. It is a top lady's unfastened wear on a lining. The jacket as ethnographers mark had a low high collar, long direct and wide sleeves, on the belt it was buttoned by one metal button. The Kurds of the Kars area sewed a jacket with the long sleeves, finishing in a triangle.

Over the shirt or a dress the woman wore a waistcoat *elek*, tailored of velvet, cloth, and also - a jacket *kurtek*, frequently wore all together, putting on one on the other. More often they were the female representatives of the nomadic tribes. The skirt-*navdere* is a top belt clothes. These are two identical on the sizes - pieces of the fabrics,

which are put on in front and behind and tied on the waist and hips with tapes.

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century among the Kurds of Turkey, especially in the areas of Kars, Erzurum and Van, a widespread element of national clothes was the apron shalek. In the 50 - 70s it was fixed among the Kurds of Transcaucasia, too (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia). Women sewed aprons from a bright dense material, and sometimes from the several pieces of different color vertically connected among them. The apron was fastened on a waist by two tapes, closing thus a forward part of the skirt. The edges of the apron embroidered or sheathed with silk tapes.

In the periods of the nomadic migration, and also in a cold season of the year the women wore several dress or skirts with waistcoats. The second and the third shirts simultaneously were considered also as the bottom clothes. So, probably, in due course the top shirt became the outer clothing - a dress. Thus, among the Kurdish tribes passing to settled way of life, types of clothes changed slowly. Probably, that is the reason why in Northwest Iran in the 50s of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. one more complex of lady's wear has existed. Here skirts and aprons were gradually replaced by the unfastened long up to the ankle dress, which the Kurdish women put on over the shirt and the trousers-sharovars.

A significant element was various types of female belts, put on the skirt or a dress. Among them it is necessary to note the belt made of a matter, trim with usually nacreous buttons and cockleshells, the second was home-spun, knitted with color woolen threads and the third was from a cord, knitted with colour woolen threads. Also it is impossible to forget about the Kurdish belts from silver ornaments with a big silver buckle. Women also wore just a knitted, woolen belt, without ornaments.

*Kyambar* is an indispensable element of smart clothes of the Kurdish women in Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria and Transcaucasia.

The Kurdish women of the Ottoman Empire wore leather shoes without the backs (on heels or without heels), with sharp noses. The same footwear was distributed among the Kurds of other Kurdish areas.

To the Kurds the female soft leather footwear, i.e. the closed shoes without heels, was not familiar. The Armenians of Kars wore such footwear.

In due course in this region and in a number of others down to Northeast Turkey women preferred to wear female soft leather footwear on heels or without heels, without backs but with the bent socks.

The footwear panibers, which Kurdish women daily wear in Iran and especially in Iraq, as a rule, is tailored from top made of cloth and a solid leather sole. It has no backs, no heels, but with the socks closed and bent up. Closed fore-part of a boot, approximately up to an instep, is usually embroidered with a color pattern.

In high mountainous and foothill areas of Iraq, Turkey, Syria, in winter when roads snow drifts, people move with the help of *kala-opitav*. It is some kind of "snowshoes, or a ski". They are produced as follows. To leather footwear (with the closed socks and on a solid sole) adhere special wooden, more often round adaptation with which it is possible to move on snow easily.

Headscarves differ from each other on colouring, on the selection of color scales, for the quality of a material. Their cut has changed only a little. Ways of tying up and carrying of scarves are also various.

By way of carrying a scarf, by its material and by colour it is possible to define to what tribe this or that woman belongs, what belief she professes, of what age she is. For example, in Iran a head female scarf from a thin transparent fabric of white color is distributed. The field of a scarf is usually covered by machine embroidery of black threads with a figure like draught as an ornament.

The ethnographers are unanimously convinced that neither in Turkey, nor in Iran, neither in Iraq, nor in Syria or in Transcaucasia the Kurdish woman ever wore the chadra (veils). Only, by the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> c., as the western authors note, in some cities of Iraq there were cases of wearing veils by the Kurdish women, similarly to the Arabian women.

Arabian author Madzhid writes, that before the distribution of the Islam on the Near East the Arabs conducted basically a nomadic way of life, and women w side by side with men participated in the common works, so they did not wear the veils. It enables to assume, as the



Kurdish women do not know carrying a veil for the same reason, for historically in the Kurdish society prevailed nomadic and semi-nomadic way of life.

Among the Kurds of Transcaucasia various kinds of coquettish headgear still remain. Girls put on a little felt cap - fino, tied around a forehead with the scarf tomazi of bright color. Fino was of two kinds: in the form of tyubeteyka (embroidered skull-cap) and in the form of fesca with a slightly raised crown trimmed with coins. Kofi basically wore married women in the family and national holidays. A round skeleton of kofi, made of plywood or bast was inserted in the wooden hoop. Certainly, besides this prevailing complex of lady's wear there were some variants, but as a whole they practically did not differ from the basic and general model.

The headdress of the Kurdish women of the Ottoman Empire in the 19<sup>th</sup> c. was a turban. From above the headgear was covered by several bright silk scarves. The Kurdish women were submitted by wide trousers of white color, a shirt with long sleeves. This shirt simultaneously replaced outer clothing and referred to in the literature as "dress".

Leather, high, with a wide top jackboots served as footwear. Such footwear usually was so spacious, that filled in a top not only the bottom part of wide trousers, but also a hem of a dress.

A fabric served as a material for clothes among the poorest part of the population. The prosperous families she it was expensive, purchased. Wide trousers and a shirt sewed from a cotton matter. If the shirt simultaneously served as outer clothing women from prosperous layers of the Kurdish society sewed it from an expensive material. More often it was red silk with yellow longitudinal strips. Cloth or any other dense material tried to sew a jacket from one-colour, dark tones. The big place in clothes of the Kurdish woman was given to embroideries and other various ornaments. Cuffs of sleeves and boards of a jacket were embroidered or sheathed by multi-coloured patterns.

Kurdish women of some areas of Turkey, and also Iranian Azerbaijan, wore very wide sharovars (skirts - wide trousers). The sharovars were closed with a long shirt, which was also used as an outer dress-entari. It differed only by the cut. The belt part always had a cut

along all skirt. In the waist it was intercepted by a belt, but not so "multi-layered". The Kurdish women of these regions put on long unfastened clothes, the *jube'*, which had long wide sleeves, above the *entari'* had. The sleeves extended only at a hand, and on the ends of the sleeves cuts were made. Cuffs of sleeves, and also a forearm were necessarily embroidered by a bright pattern. *Kolakh* is a headdress, a cap having the cone-shaped form. Women usually covered the *kolakh* with motley silk scarves, reeling them up several times as a turban. Under the weight of these scarves and the silk brush attached to a headdress by a special silver ornament on the right, all headdress-ees overhung on the right shoulder a little.

As footwear served top boots made of yellow morocco with the bent socks.

The clothes of the Kurdish women from Diyarbakir consisted of wide trousers, a shirt and outer clothing such as a jacket with the long sleeves. Over a jacket usually put on - same, as well as in other areas, a long overcoat with long, cutting sleeves at a brush. As against the clothes considered above, the female suit of this area was supplemented with an embroidered apron - it was very much distributed at peoples of Northeast Turkey and Transcaucasia. A headdress was made of rough felt with a flat bottom. Usually it was supported by two scarves, which have been reeled - up around a forehead. In this bandage of head scarves on each side there were four gold or metal pins.

The clothes of Kurdish women Harputa differed a little. They consisted of long wide trousers, a short shirt which hardly covered knees and in front had a cut up to a belt. However special fasteners densely closed a neck. Outer clothing - a dress - without fasteners from thin dark green cloth was put on the shirt. Some ethnographers have named such clothes a *caftan*. Sleeves of a *caftan* from top to bottom extended, had cuts higher than a wrist, and at a hand came to an end with a rag of a matter of the triangular form.

The clothes of women from the areas of Erzurum, Van and Kars etc. differed a little from the clothes of the majority of other areas of Turkey where Armenians lived. Nevertheless, it is necessary to note,

that if the Kurdish population made minority, nevertheless it always kept the national traditions. In particular, it was showed in the observance of all the norms of traditional clothes.

In these areas the Kurdish population was not homogeneous and in the religious relation. Alongside with the Kurds - Muslims also the Kurds Christians here lived. Their religious isolation and beliefs too imposed the certain print on the clothes. Mainly it was shown in a choice of clothes (Kurds - did not wear clothes from a material of blue or dark blue color though open clothes was common.

The traditional clothes of the Kurdish women of Iranian Kurdistan in their basic complex are kept to this day in that kind in which they occurred in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and mainly for northwest of Iran. They differ but little from described above. The economic and social reasons also have imposed the print on the clothes of the Iranian Kurds. As a whole from the general basic complex of the Kurdish lady's wear it is possible to allocate three historically usual types: clothes of the Kurds of Southern or Iranian Azerbaijan, clothes of the Kurds of Ardelana and clothes of the Kurds of Southwest Iran (area of Kermanshah).

Sometimes they wore leather shoes on heels as footwear. The footwear, as well as everywhere, was put on woollen, with knitted pattern stockings.

Wide sharovars and short shirt entered into a complex of clothes of women of Northern part of Iranian Kurdistan, short unfastened jacket, a skirt and an apron. As the prevailing headdress the felt cap served.

In some areas of Ardelana (Iranian Kurdistan), and also in Iraqi Kurdistan the clothes of women belonged to the prevailing type: the wide sharovars, long and very wide shirt on which it was put on a long color jacket on a lining.

In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and till today the clothes of the Kurdish population practically have not changed. However the "modernized" elements of clothes appear among the youth. In Iranian Azerbaijan the Kurdish women still wear wide sharovars, a shirt, a jacket, a belt, a headdress, headscarves and footwear.



## MEN'S WEAR

Men's wear of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> cc. in the Southeast and the East areas of Turkey, North East Syria, Northwest Iran and Transcaucasia consisted of the bottom and top belt clothes, bottom and top shoulder clothes, which included some versions of belts, headgears, head scarves, socks, footwear.

Trousers from monophonic coarse calico or a cotton fabric gathered in a waist on a lace and were put on under the sharovars (wide trousers). The sharovars of monophonic, often dark, dense material the men wore very wide. With the help of the lace they gathered them in the waist and at the ankles. In Turkey and Syrian Kurdistan, and also in the north of Iranian Kurdistan there are some differences. Here the sharovars from top to bottom are not narrowed. Above the wide trousers the Kurd puts on a shirt - also of light monophonic and dense material. It has a direct cut on the breast, also long and wide sleeves terminating in white triangular pieces of a matter with which the Kurd sometimes wound his hands. For example, in the area of Diyarbakir, in Turkey there were shirts only with cuffs. The Kurds of Surmalinski district of the former Erivan province the shirts were sewed with a standing collar. The length of a shirt reached knees. The sharovars were very wide and narrowed to the ankle. In Turkish and Northern Iranian Kurdistan there are local variants, for example, in some areas near Urmia. Long white rags of a fabric are sewn to the cuffs of a man's shirt. They, as a rule, wrap up sleeves of a jacket approximately up to half of forearm. The headdress consists of felt or cotton cap around which one or two scarves are tied, usually with brushes. Such scarves are of different colors and patterns, depending on district. The men's wear is supplemented with felt waistcoat without sleeves and buttons, a short felt jacket, a long felt raincoat. In due course to this complex of clothes the non-conventional purchased topcoat of the European style or a jacket is added. Solvent Kurds usually wore two sharovars and two shirts: bottom ones and top ones. During long territorial transitions nomadic and semi-nomadic Kurds put on several shirts, trousers, waistcoats etc.

Irrespective of the social, tribal, economic characteristic, and also territory of settling of the Kurds, their waistcoat from a dense material, felt or cloth is well-known and distributed. Flaps, armholes and a hem of such a waistcoat are usually, stitched with a lace, bright tapes, and also with leather decorations in a toothed form. Prosperous Kurds or leaders of tribes finished their waistcoats with expensive decorations.

Above the waistcoat the man wore a jacket. Usually the jacket was sown from a dense woolen material, frequently on a lining. It was the top warm clothe on a lining in length up to a waist with long sleeves. Kurds of some areas of Iran and Transcaucasia wore the jackets with a high collar, and long sleeves came to an end as a triangle, the same as the sleeve of a shirt.

Top warm unfastened clothes (arkhaluk) were widely distributed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century not only among the Kurds of the Forward Asia, but also among the Kurdish population of Transcaucasia. The small high collar of the arkhaluk was frequently embroidered with color threads. The arkhaluks were not worn by the Kurds of Southwest Iran and Iraq. The chokhs represent top clothing of Transcaucasian or better to say Armenian type. In a cold season the Kurd wore the top clothing (aba). Usually aba differed according to cut and length.

Integral and very important part of national clothes of the Kurdish men was the traditional belt. Traditional belts can be divided into four groups conditionally: knitted from wool, silver, and at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. - leather. Kurdish belts (the Iranian, Iraqi, Turkish, Syrian and Transcaucasian Kurds) are submitted in the museums of Moscow, St Petersburg, Tbilisi, Yerevan, Baghdad and Suleimania. Their difference is quite insignificant besides coloring, width and quality of material. Due to these features, it is possible to define a tribal and territorial belonging of the Kurd. Woolen belts are necessarily decorated with a bright pattern. On the trims made of cloth are sown with ornaments from coins etc. Silver belts are trimmed with jewel ornaments.

Several multi-coloured silk scarves, as a rule, a felt cap of the different form and colour, repeatedly wind the basic Kurdish headgear. Depending on district, scarves differ in color.

As a rule, the Kurds did not wear the tyubeteikas. In Turkey, Syria and Iraq they wore widely known traditional cotton or knitted feskas.

By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. in some areas among Turkish, partly Iranian and Transcaucasian Kurds the fur caps of various forms, like Caucasian papakhas were in great demand.

Men in high-mountainous areas with severe, snow winters wore a traditional woolen headdress. This specially knitted headgear had an element (a head scarf) knitted from the same wool for closing a forehead, a neck and partly a back.

In the Kurdish ethnographic museum in Suleimania there are exhibits confirming exclusive survivability and a generality of traditions in manufacturing and sewing of national clothes.

On legs the Kurds wore knitted woolen socks and leather shoes. During riding they put on felt white footwear or high leather boots.

Irrespective of the territory of settling of the Kurds an essential addition to the Kurdish ancient suit usually was the smoking pipe. The pipe consists of an iron tip about 6 or 7 cm in height, with an ornament and a wire grid. The tip is put on a direct wooden pipe about 20 or 25 cm in length.

In the Kurdish national suit of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. (both in female, and in man's) the sharp difference is caused by the social and economic reasons. First of all, it was expressed in quality, and in the cost of a material and ornaments, so numerous among the Kurds. As the most part of the population was needy, the basic material which was used for sewing clothes, was home-spun, less often - purchased.

In the area of Dzhizra wide trousers and outer clothing for the man's population of average prosperity was produced from rough silk. It is necessary to note, that in general the men's wear consists of a rigid woolen fabric which is weaved by experts - men. Such material has brown, gray, yellow - gray color more often. Solvent Kurds on markets bought separate elements of men's wear and a headdress from the local non-Kurdish merchants. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in cities of Turkey and Iran usually those fabrics which were necessary for manufacturing felt raincoats and wraps were bought. The brown cloth of felt type being especially popular in Iran at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. was in great demand.

Kurdish nobility also wore all kinds of headscarves, mainly of bright colouring, and the various purchased shawls glorified at the end of the



19<sup>th</sup> c. in beauty of figure and quality of a material. The preference was given to the shawls made in Iran, in the cities of Kermans and Meshed - in the centre of manufacture of shawls.

Now in cities of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria, the Kurdish population began to buy some pieces of clothes on markets more often. In Iraq, for example, alongside with traditional head scarves the men wear the scarves prevailing among the Arabian population and clothes available in the Baghdad museum of clothing and ethnography.

### NATIONAL KURDISH FOOD

Kurdish food, as well as other elements of material culture, has its specificity. It is caused by a number of reasons, among them: economic activities of people, trading and ethnic communications between the Kurdish tribes, the incomes of the Kurdish families, natural environment and geographical position. However all of them show only local distinctions in a food mode of people.

The traditional national food has some common features with the food of other peoples: the Persians, the Turks, the Arabs, the Armenians and the Azerbaijani (for example, in the batching of bread, in preparation of boiled meat, coffee etc.). Where the Kurdish population adjoined to other peoples, the common features are traced especially clearly. In high-mountainous areas there were less common features and in some cases they are not traced at all.

Distinction in a diet reflects, first of all economic activities of the Kurdish population - in the 19<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> cc. As a rule, the food of the Kurdish nomads and semi-nomads consisted of dairy and meat products (East Turkey, the south of the Iranian Kurdistan, Iraq and Syrian Kurdistan). Dairy products thus made not only a basis of a diet of the population, but also in many areas were a subject of sale in the markets.

The groats and vegetable dishes have received a wide circulation among the Kurds engaging in agriculture. Nevertheless, whatever type of economy prevailed in the life of the Kurds and in whatever area of Forward Asia and Transcaucasia they lived nevertheless preference, first of all, was given to dairy and meat food. Traditional preparation of

dairy, meat and groats dishes as it was in the 19<sup>th</sup> c. is kept by the Kurds even now.

Integral part of a diet of the Kurds, as well as it is among other peoples, takes bread (*nan*). Batching of bread is a primary duty of the Kurdish women. Cutting of the test attracts also. The name of bread depends on the method of cutting, and also on the way of baking in the center, on the form and an arrangement of the center (in the house, in conditions of encampment or outside of summer habitation, a tent, a hut etc.).

Kurdish bread is the same as it is with the Persians, the Arabs, the Turks, the Armenians, the Azerbaijanis and others peoples of Near East. Lavash is like an unleavened wheat cake, represents thin layers (about 50 sm in diameter) of the baked pastry. Usually the sifted wheaten is prepared for a dough from wheat, barley or corn flour, with the addition of water and salt to taste. No yeast is used; bread is baked only of the fresh pastry. First the dough is kneaded; then is liberated with the help of a flat spoon. Then it is laid by hand in small heaps on the floor or the ground on any laying playing a role of a cloth.

Bread is batched either in the center-tandure (in this case it has the name of nane tandure or on an iron convex sheet (*sadzhi*), located on the center outside of a house (this sort of bread is called nane *sadzhi*. There are some differences on flavouring qualities. The Kurdish woman rolls out dough into thin flat cakes of oval form, squatting on the ground and using a special low wooden little table for preparation the form of bread from the pastry.

For this purpose three or four women-relatives work simultaneously. Each of them lifts the left hand on the unrolled piece of the pastry, hangs it up on a special rod or a stick and by means of this rod places dough on a special pillow for baking which basis is plaited from the rods from above fitted by a canvas. This pillow serves to attach the dough unrolled in a flat cake to the walls of the center. Then it is overturned in the center from one side to the other and as soon as it gets baked through, it is removed from the walls of the center and is put on the spot as a hilloc on a cloth spread on the floor. Among the Kurds of Northern Azerbaijan the mistress puts the unrolled dough by hand and without any special adaptation attaches it to the walls of the center so

that a face sheet of an unleavened wheat cake, which is usually ornamented, was outside.

Ready bread is put in a high hill on a piece of a fabric spread on the earthen floor. In this piece of fabric the bread stock is kept. From time to time the mistress takes from this stock the necessary quantity of half-dried bread and after small wetting it by the water puts it on the table.

The way of batching bread in *tandure* is known not only to the Kurds of Forward Asia and Transcaucasia. It is also rather distributed among the Armenians, the Azerbaijani and the Tatars, the Persians, the Turks, the Arabs and other peoples. It evidently testifies of long historical and cultural relations between the peoples of the huge area (East Turkey, Northwest Iran, Northern Syria, Transcaucasia, Northern Iraq and Southwest Iran).

The form, the size and thickness of bread are various. For example, the Kurds of Iraq bake for sale the bread under the name of nane tiri which has a round form and very thin; kulere, of the round form, but thick, and lavash *an unleavened wheat cake of the oblong form*, very thin. The Kurds of Iraq also eat the small bread samun of oval form, bought at the market.

Dough got mixed up not only for the batching of bread. From times immemorial the Kurds prepared for the dishes which basis was made with dough. In the past the Kurds of Iranian Kurdistan made the so-called *zerevat*. From wheat flour on water they got fresh dough. The mistress baked bread from it like a thin unleavened wheat cake, stacked it in a copper basin - a layer of a unleavened wheat cake and a layer of sour milk with garlic - and again so until the basin was full.

As before, the Kurds prepare meal from the pastry, for example, noodles (*reshde*). Earlier when the Kurds lived as family units and when it was required to prepare products in plenty, the dough was kneaded by 10-15 women. Then they wrapped dough up in sheep skins and kicked it with legs. From the brought down pastry the women prepared the noodles. There was a division of labour: one woman cut a dough on pieces, another - formed these pieces in thick flat cakes, the third - unrolled them with rolling-pin on thin flat cakes, the fourth - put thin flat cakes one on another, and the fifth - cut them on long strips.



These noodles have original taste. From such noodles a tasty national Kurdish dish *reshde* is prepared. Stocks of noodles are stored in the big woolen bags. If noodles boiled in salty water, throw to a colander and fill with oil this dish refers to as *reshde runn*. If noodles cook with meat then the dish is called *reshde gosht*. If noodles are made with groats they are called *reshde u savar*.

With the Kurds of Forward Asia and Transcaucasia among the flour semi-finished items, prepared in plenty by a domestic method, the fried flour (are *kalandi*) is known. Flour (torment) fries on the big iron sheets. Usually it is used as seasoning to porridges, and also for manufacturing sweets.

As well as in the past, various porridges, soups, national soups are cooked. The grain for various porridges and soups is processed in the following way. One person strikes with a special wooden hammer on a grain in the mortar, another, during a raising of a hammer hands over-turns it until it completely will not be cleared of a peel, but thus grains do not break and are not crumbled. After a grain is peeled it is poured out on a woolen laying and dry on the sun. A dried up grain is frayed by hands and winnowed with the help of a special sieve. The received grain is stored in bags or the big clay jugs.

Sometimes the grain is passed through a manual mill (*dastar*), is sift through a sieve, thus making flour from grains. From grains porridges and soups are prepared.

Fried wheat is also very popular. Boilers or special iron sheets, are heated on fire, and then covered with a small layer of wheat. Then the roasted grain some times is passed through a manual mill and sifted through a fine sieve. From the received fried flour they prepare various sweets.

Groats *savar* are also prepared from wheat. For this purpose wheat is cooked in huge boilers until the grain does not expand and does not become soft. Then cooked wheat is filtered in wicker baskets with low boards. After that it is poured out on lying to dry in the sun. The dried up grain is crushed in a stone mortar until its peel is separated, again it is poured out on a laying, is dried and sifted by means of a special sieve. Boiled, dried up and shelled wheat is shattered in a mill, sifted

and receive groats from which porridge more often like a pilaf is usually cooked.

Among the Kurds of Turkish Kurdistan and Transcaucasia porridge enjoys a great popularity. It is also well-known to the Armenian population. Well dried up, finely crushed in a big mortar and repeatedly sifted wheat is filled with plenty of cold water and cooked with addition of fat. The Kurds eat such porridge with oil (*kharisa runn*), with meat (*kharisa gosht*) meat, or with chicken (*kharisa dika*).

Groats are the basic component of traditionally national dishes, including the dairy. Fellow villagers work together in processing a grain to help big families. With this purpose in the countryside peasants appoint a day of crushing the wheat with big wooden hammers in a special deepening in the ground. These days in modern Kurdish villages (for example areas of the Iraqi Kurdistan) are considered celebratory. They have special names: "Day of cooking the wheat" "Day of boiling the wheat"). In the summer, from cooked, dried, pounded and impregnated with sour milk wheat they roll balls and dry up in the sun. In the winter from them porridge dish *doine*' is cooked.

In high-mountainous areas of Kurdistan where it is cold, the wheat grown in domestic conditions is crushed and porridge *samani*' is cooked from it, with oil or with meat and with the big portion of garlic.

In Iranian Kurdistan is in special demand, as before, the traditionally cooked wheaten dumplings with the mutton fat, finely cut onions and the big portion of oil. Kurds of Iran are going from wheat flour and other dishes having especially a great demand at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The *pilaf* makes a significant part of a diet in agricultural areas with the Kurdish population (especially in Iraq and Iranian Kurdistan). There are some ways of its preparation. Rice is cooked in boiling and slightly salty water up to readiness. Then water merges and to the filtered rice heated on a frying pan butter is added. The second way is when rice is cooked in the cold, slightly salted water with butter and onions. Usually in rice add sauce from rubbed tomatoes or pomegranates.

To the pilaff, irrespective of the way of preparation, separately meat or the chicken is cooked. A sauce with meat, garlic, onion is also

cooked. The Iraqi Kurds frequently prepare a sauce from a cooked leguminous plant *bamia*. Such a sauce is eaten not only with rice, but also with bread as an independent dish.

Nowadays such dishes as *kyufta* are very popular with the Kurds. Basically there are two versions, one that is prepared from pastry and stuffed with rice or rice with meat, and the other with the chicken and meat. The Kurds are fond of milk (*shir*), and every possible dairy product. They use the milk of sheep, goat, cow; but most of all the Kurds prefer the sheep milk and buffalo milk to any other.

They prepare fermented boiled milk (*mayet*), cottage cheese (*tor-ag*), butter (*runn*), cheese (*panir*). For the reception of the fermented boiled milk and the cottage cheeses the milk is boiled and cooled down and then fermented with sour milk.

Butter is forced down from sour milk. Churning, which remains after knocking down of butter, is used by the Kurds as a favourite drink. Among the Kurdish population the use of dry cottage cheese, prepared in summer was distributed.

The settled Kurds having an opportunity to use the summer season dry up cottage cheese balls under the hot sun. In winter time when the yield of milk is reduced people will eat these balls with the porridge and soup instead of bread.

Always and everywhere the Kurds use the cheese, which the Kurdish women prepare from milk boiled together with ferment up to density. For the reception of fibrous cheese milk at the moment of its condensation passes through a sieve.

Kurdish fried eggs are original. The way of their preparation is identical for all the Kurds. Eggs are poured out into the saucepan with a large amount of boiling oil and held on the fire for several minutes. People eat it with tomatoes and herbs. The Kurds prefer fried eggs with onions and garlic.

The big value in the nutrition of the Kurdish population, especially nomadic and semi-nomadic, had meat, mainly the mutton and the goat meat. Kurds do not eat pork.

From the meat dishes in Turkish and Iraqi Kurdistan at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century are known *kullame*, *burbel* and some others. *Kullame* is prepared by men. The carcass of the ram turned in its skin and



buried in a hole filled with ashes and hot coals. From above the hole was strewn with a thin layer of the ground, and made a fire. Three hours later the hole is dug out, meat is taken out from the skin and served to the table.

Another meat dish is burble; it is kept only in mountainous villages of Iranian, Iraqi and Syrian Kurdistan. The Kurds prepared it from the mutton cut in pieces. They poured the meat with water and sour milk and cooked.

Special meat dish is the meat of a lamb, cut by pieces, fried in a big metal cup.

In agricultural areas people stuff cabbage or grape leaves with meat is widely distributed by meat and prepare the traditional dolma (golubets). It is also distributed among the Persians, the Arabs, the Armenians, the Azerbaijanis and other peoples of Forward Asia and Transcaucasia.

The food of the Kurds contains a plenty of fats of animals and vegetables. Either cow, or mutton or goat fat is usually added to the pilaff and many other dishes.

Many traditional dishes, especially pilaff, shashlik, kebab etc., the Kurds eat mainly with sauces and sharp seasonings. As seasonings the settled population, mainly use fragrant grasses, vegetables, fruit. Eggplants, tomatoes, cucumbers, a garden radish, onions, garlic, pepper etc. are eaten not only as fresh vegetables, but also both pickled and cooked. In autumn and in winter they use dried vegetables, which are dried within all summer. The Kurdish women salt cucumbers, pepper, eggplants and pickle for winter.

In the areas, that are rich in fruit trees (for example, in Iranian or in Iraqi Kurdistan), people eat much fresh and dried fruit - apples, pears, grapes, figs, apricots, peaches. Various sweets have been made from grape juice.

Now in Iraqi Kurdistan widely are used dates, not only for preparation of confectionery products, but also for various fruit salads.

From soft drinks everywhere, irrespective of character of economic activities and from moving Kurds, the whey, which is very popular.

This traditional drink (*day, arches*) perfectly satisfies thirst. So, E. Soan, an Englishman has named this drink "a national drink of Kurdistan".

According to instructions of the Koran, the Kurds of Kurdistan and Transcaucasia never drank alcoholic drinks in the past. In some places the Kurds prepared wine only for sale.

From hot drinks tea is in special honour. Usually it is made very strong, up to blackness, and, as before, "is drunk from small glasses several times per day, sometimes even before meal". The rural population prepares for themselves tea from mountainous fragrant grasses, which lately are more and more superseded by the purchased Indian, Ceylon and Chinese tea. When a visitor is satisfied, he overturns the empty glass on the saucer, letting the host know about sufficient tea drinking.

Coffee has appeared rather recently in food of the Kurds and is drunk basically by the inhabitants of cities. It is necessary to say, that, any extraneous person, having entered the Kurdish house even for a couple of minutes, can expect for a cup of tea or a cup of coffee.

Women and children are the big fans of sweets of domestic preparation from the pastry, sugar etc. Celebratory meal (New Year - March, 21, wedding and other holidays) differs from every day in the quantity of confectionery products. There is a traditional halvah, sweet almonds, cookies with pounded nuts and dates etc. The Kurdish women always prepare sweet dishes with the big addition of fragrant grasses, wood and garden berries.

The Kurds eat usually three times per day: in the morning, in mid-day and at sunset. They eat twice (after a sunset and at night) if they observe a fast of Ramazan. Dinner, as a rule, happens not so dense. In the evening - the most thorough reception peep.

Usually at the reception of food the Kurds sit (having crossed legs in a Turkish way) on carpets. A small carpet for prayers is spread beforehand. During meal notable and elderly Kurds lean their elbows on the soft pillows, which are behind their back. Food is distributed on big and often ornamented trays, on the east utensils, sherbets - in jugs. Non-liquid food was taken usually by hands, for the reception of liquid

food were used national wooden or purchased metal spoons. After meal they wash hands and with potable water rinse a mouth.

Before and after the meal the Kurds say some prays. At meal all the family sit together with the visitor and eat from the common bowl, having laid an oilcloth or a cloth on the earthen floor. Tables are innovation in the Kurdish house; during the meal a family sit either on the floor, or, which happens less often, behind very low little tables.

It is necessary to tell, that at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the use of forks and knives was not familiar to the Kurds. And now the agricultural population, as a rule, does not use forks, and take food with hands, helping themselves with a slice of bread. A spoon began to appear in a life of the Kurds, probably, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Now the tableware is used, basically, on formal receptions and in cities when the guest of honour is accepted.

Studying national - traditional food of the Kurds, it is necessary to note an exclusive Kurdish hospitality, originating in widely and for a long time tribal institute of hospitality.

It is possible to judge this institute, for example, under the description in the literature of custom the Kurdish hospitality: "whoever the visitor may be, - writes O.L.Vilchevsky a beggar, a criminal, an enemy to refuse him hospitality means to disgrace not only the house, but also the entire tribe or settlement. Kurds with identical kindness concern both to relatives and friends, and to extraneous visitors, but in the relation to the latter the observance of the entire complex of customs of hospitality is especially necessary".

First of all, the visitor is treated with sour milk, tea or coffee. Then the animal or the bird from whom the celebratory dish will be prepared is carried pass him. Guests of honour use the special privilege. Earlier for formal dinner party the Kurds prepared rice and meat in a fried and cooked way, and for the guest of honour directly at a threshold of a house pinned up a sacrificial animal. Hospitality is a characteristic feature of the Kurds.





Thank you Kazakhstan, thank you Mr. President!

*Kurdish people repressed  
to Kazakhstan (1937, 1944)*



Nadirov N.K. The first Kurdish Academician.



Mistoe Usiv with his grandchildren.



Dursunov Sh. R.- an honoured officer of prosecution organs of the USSR and Kazakhstan Republic, a senior councillor of justice.



Family of Mahmude Abdulle Hasike. The elder of kin.





Our Mothers



The Kurdish intelligentsia of Kazakhstan on the celebration of "Nauryz"

*Kurdish children, born in Kazakhstan.*



*Serve to my Motherland!*



*They are our future.*



A solemn ceremony on the “Char-chyra” square. Qazi Mohammad is declaring the independent Republic of Mahabad (January, 22, 1946).  
(In the center: Mustafa Barzani)



The author, and Ali Qazi (Qazi Mohammad’s son) -  
The representative of Iranian Kurdistan in Europe  
(Paris, 1996).





Massoud Barzani

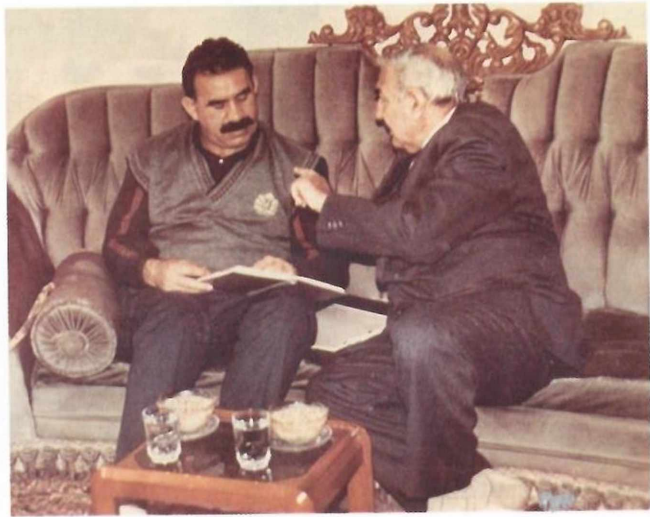


Jalal Talabani

Leaders of Iraqi Kurdistan



The final defense speech of Leyla Zana, one of eight Kurdish members of the Turkish parliament accused of fighting for the right of multi-million Kurdish of Turkey. Ankara, December 8, 1994.



The President of all-Union Kurdish Association "Yakbun", M. S. Babayev with the leader of Kurdistan, A. Ocalan. Damascus, Syria, 1991.



From left to right: N. H. Makhmudov - a deputy of Supreme Soviet of the USSR, a historian and writer; S. A. Siyabandov the Soviet Union Hero, a social and political contributor; Knyaze Ibrahim and H. M. Chatoyev scientists of orientology (1989).



Shaikh Makhmud (center) with his followers in Suleimania (1919).



Kamuran Bedurhan bei (in the center) and leaders of Democratic party of Syrian Kurdistan, Beirut, 1930.



*Members of government of Makhabat - Kurdish State*



Qazi Muhammad



Mustafa Barzani



M. Huseyn Seifi Qazi



Abdulkasim Sadri Qazi



The members of International Union of Kurdish public organizations from left to right:  
Alie Takhar, Azize Mazhid, Knyaze Ibrahim, Ismaile Usiv.  
Moscow 2002.



Kurdish delegates in Moscow in front of the Kremlin.  
After the meeting with the USSR leaders.  
Left to right: M. Osmanov, Sharaf Ashiri, M.C. Babaeyv  
(The President of the Association), T. Zurbayeva, A.Z. Aliev,  
Knyaze Ibrahim, Mukhamed Sharic, Eura Nabiev.  
Moscow 1990.

*Kurdish Writer*



Akhmed Hany. XVII c.





Shaikhmus Djigarkhun  
an outstanding poet  
(1903-1984)



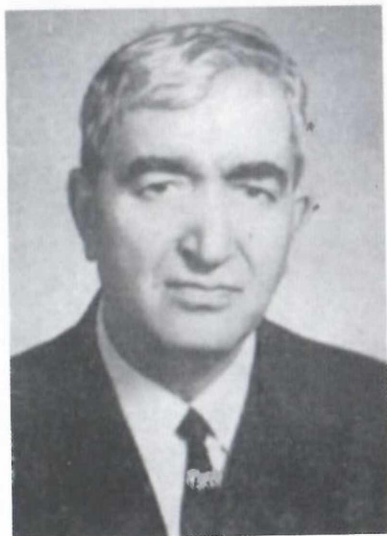
Vezire Nadiri  
Kurdish writer and scientist  
(1911-1946)



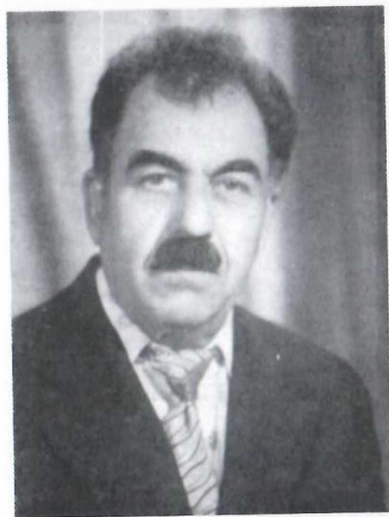
From left to right: Shakro Mgoi, Knyaze Ibrahim, Kamal Muzkhar Akhmed, Ali Abdulrahman, Abdurkhman Hazhar and Dzhalile Dzhaliil.



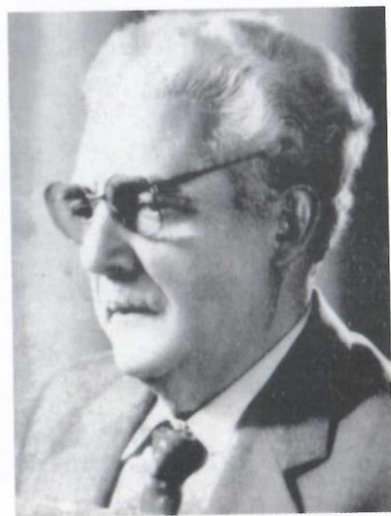
Arab Shamilov



Adjie Djindi



Dzhasme Dzhaliil



Ali Abdurakhman



In the family circle.



In the mountains of Mahabad.





From left to right: Kendal Nazan, the director of Kurdish Institute in Paris; Knyaze Ibrahim, D. Mitteran (the wife of the ex-president of France Fransua Mitteran), Shamil Asker, the Kurdish poet and scientist. On the International Conference of World Orientologists in Paris (1996).



The Kurdish folk dance "Govand".



A Kurdish noble in the national dress (19-th century).



Kurdish well known singers  
**Sivan and Gulistan**



The Kurdish “con” a tent for summer housing needs.



Kurban ayt sacrifice, Abdeldar, Armenia, 1969.



Kurdish women in ezidi national wear.





“Bunger” the process of salt crumbling.



Device for carrying a baby on a mother's back. XVII c.



A little carpet for prayers. XVI c.



Coins: Daisam ibn Ibrahim al-Kurdi, the governor of Azerbaijan (934-954), dirkhem, made of silver (left); Sheddadids, Shavir (1049-1067), Gyanja, dirkhem, made of silver.

## THE KURDISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

### THE LANGUAGE

The Kurdish language belongs to the northwest subgroup of the Iranian languages (it is a branch Indo-European language family). It is spoken in Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria and also in Russia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Middle Asia, Kazakhstan and the other countries of the CIS. Kurdish is one of the official languages of Iranian Republic.

The name of Kurdish has come from the word "Kurds" which, in its turn comes from the name "Kor-Didi"- so in ancient Greek the written sources designated the present central part of Kurdistan. Afterwards it was called "Badikhan" which meant "a place of the best belief", "a holy place".

Since the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Kurdish language has gained increasing value. Monuments of folklore are issued, products of art, scientific and political works are printed. The national language helps the Kurds to find their place in the world, helps to struggle for the unity of people, for their independence.

Modern Russian Oriental Studies allocates in the Kurdish language two main groups of dialects: northern and southern. The northern group includes all the versions of the dialects of kurmandzhi and zaza existing today in Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria and in some of the CIS countries. The southern group of dialects sorani and gorani has the common name of the language of the Kurds and are spoken in Iran and in Iraq.

The Kurdish literary language was developed on the basis of two dialects *kurmandzhi* and *sorani*. Modern Kurdish writers, journalists, scientists and other specialists use it, though different graphic systems limit the accessibility of the literature.

There are three graphic systems in use the Arab graphic, the Roman graphic and the Cyrillic graphic system.

Two forms of Modern Kurdish language are known: informal conversational and written. The informal conversational is most widespread; it has three versions: daily popular speech, special speech of elevated style, and at last, narrative.



The written language is characterized by rather a complex syntax, a plenty of compound words, the abundance of terms, including international.

The modern Kurdish language has the rich lexical stock, extremely advanced phraseology and, the system of functional styles. The best products of the Russian and the world literature are adequately represented in the Kurdish language.

Differences do not deprive the Kurdish language of its main function to be the means of communication. It keeps the independence and colourfulness in the entire territory of its distribution and helps to overcome dissociation of the Kurds living in the different states.

The first monument of the Kurdish writing which modern researchers have, - the description of the Arabian invasions to Iran and Kurdistan, dates from the 7<sup>th</sup> century. The high-grade written tradition has developed in Kurdistan a little bit later by the 10<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> cc. It was then that the works of the poet - educator Ali Hariri were created. He used the Arabian graphic, as well as the representatives of all early and medieval Kurdish classical literature: Melaye Dzehzi (1001-1069), Fakiye Teiran (1302-1375), Melaye Bate (1417-1491) Akhmed Khani (1591-1652), Ismail Bayazidi (1642-1709), Khan Kubadi (died in 1699).

Let's name also some of the writers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; they also applied Arabian to the diagram: Nali (1797-1855), Salim (1805-1869), Kurdi (1812-1850), Khadzhi Kadyr Koyi (1818-1898), Mir Shakar Ali Dinavarvand (1825-1865), Abas Khan Azadi (1858-1899). Now the literature is issued on the basis of three graphic systems: in Armenia and Georgia - Russian, in Iraq and Iran - Arabian, in the countries of Europe and some of the states of the CIS - Latin.

## THE LITERATURE

*"The Kurdish national poetry has passed a surprising way of development and has achieved possible perfection. Each Kurd, a man and even a woman in soul are born poets; all of them have a surprising gift of improvisation".*

H. Abovyan

The literary heritage of the Kurds exists in many countries of the world: Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the states of Central Asia and Kazakhstan. Roots of the Kurdish literature lay in the depth of the centuries. It is difficult to study it because it could not develop and be improved the way how it occurred in other literatures.

Let's consider the near past.

The Russian traveler and the specialist in oriental studies V. Dittel writes: "... In any way I did not expect, that languages of the tribe of the Kurds so poorly investigated by the scholars could have, besides the oral literature, such extensive written language. The Kurds have the literature partly transferred from the Persian soil. In it we find a set of the names which have become famous in poetry and history."

The Russian consul in Erzerum A. Zhaba, the tireless collector of manuscripts with the works of the Kurdish literature, has retold in French the A. Khani's poem "Mam and Zin". V. Minorsky has translated into the French language the poem "Al Ilakhi" and the book "People of the Truth". The Russian scientist conducted searches, which were crowned with brilliant finds, in the Istanbul library at a temple of Aia-Sofia. Many forces have given to studying of the history of the Kurds and the Kurdish literature by such scholars as N. Marr, V. Miller, I. Berezin, A. Averyanov, I. Krachkovsky, A. Orlov and others.

The most recognized expert in the Kurdish language and literature is Joseph Orbeli. In the work about the classical poem "Mam and Zin" J. Orbeli wrote: "When you think of the national character of the poet,

about the merge of the poet to the people who has grown him, the comparison of three great poets of the East involuntarily arises: the Iranian poet Firdousi, the Georgian poet Rustaveli and the Kurdish poet Akhmed Khani, forgotten by everybody except the Kurds, to be more exact, unknown to everybody except the Kurds, but who in the environment of his own people, undoubtedly, gained the right on this definition "national".

In the research devoted to life and creativity of Firdousi, Academician Orbeli has not overlooked to note, that great poem "Shakhsnameh" is no less popular with the Kurds, than with the Iranian people, that the characters created by the genius of the Persian classic, are very similar to courageous heroes of the Kurdish folklore. It is Joseph Orbeli who was the first to put forward the view about the existence of Kurdish-Russian and Kurdish-European literary connections. I.A. Orbeli has compared the poetic novels "Mam and Zin" and "Tristan and Isolde" by Strasbourg.

Perfectly knowing the slightest details of the Kurdish life, customs and traditions, he subtly noticed such feature of an outset of the novel "Mam and Zin", taken by the author of the work directly from the life: the beauty Zin with her girlfriend appear on a holiday disguised as young men, and Mam and his sworn brothers - dressed up as girls. Such carnival behaviour, naturally, was possible only on a holiday for in any other time and in any other conditions similar changing clothes would be an intolerable shame for oriental men.

J. Orbeli also admitted: "I cannot imagine even one example of infringement of friendship in the folklore and the literature of the Kurds." And he again referred to the novel "Mam and Zin". For the outstanding scholar high morality of the Kurdish literature was a bright and a constant feature.

Orientalist L.Klimovich wrote much about the Kurdish literature. In his opinion: "The Kurds are one of large and most ancient peoples of the Middle East... Kurds have brought in the significant contribution to the material and spiritual culture of the Middle East". The most valuable feature of the Kurdish national character, L. Klimovich believed, was the immeasurable courage and unshakable bravery in numerous fights and battles in the tragic history of the Kurds. And it has been



brightly reflected in the national - poetic creativity and the written literature of the Kurds. Getting acquainted with the samples of the Kurdish works of folklore, Gertsen wrote: "For the people deprived of public freedom, the literature is the only tribune from the height of which he forces to hear the shout of his indignation and his conscience."

The scholar whose merits are undoubtedly great in the representation of the riches of the Kurdish literature to the entire world is Margarita Rudeko. She has prepared for printing critically verified texts of classical literary monuments, such as "Leila and Medzhnun" of Harris Bittlesy and "Sheikh Sananiya" of F. Teiran, having added the editions with interlinear translations into Russian and the most detailed comments. There is a lot of up to that time unknown Kurdish manuscripts that M. Rudenko found in the funds of the Leningrad Institute of Oriental Studies, including verses of Dzhafarkuli, the Kurdish poet unknown to the wide reader of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the gazelles of Murad Bayazidi, Durfishani, Mel Maksud and Asami Ramazan. Issuing originals together with carefully done word-per-word translation, M. Rudenko expressed hope, that sooner or later all that would become a basis for highly skilled art translations.

Besides, Margarita Rudenko has translated the Kurdish fairy tales, proverbs and sayings, the article "Kurdish literature" for the "Brief Literary Encyclopaedia" a big number of articles, including the one about the outstanding educator of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Makhmude Bayazidi, about the Kurdish literary version of plot widely distributed in the East about Yusuf and Zaliha.

The exemplary, highly professional researcher, Margarita Rudenko subtly felt the unique character of the Kurdish literature, its uniqueness in the world culture. She perfectly knew the extensive special literature, but among other things had the rare art of intuition. Her life is an example for the orientalists, nowadays proceeding traditions of the world science inverted to the problems of the Kurds and the Kurdish literature.

The story about the richest Kurdish literature which has begun as far as in 7<sup>th</sup> century AD, the literature, about which not only the non - Kurdish-speaking readers, but also, to our great regret, the Kurds them-

selves do not have any idea. So, the best way is to begin with oral national - poetic creativity.

Folklore is a fair mirror of struggle of people for freedom, for national self-determination. The roots of the Kurdish folklore is in the far past, the contents are heavy painful destiny of my people, mixed with courageous philosophy of freedom - loving and rebelliousness.

The oral national poetic creativity is the only wealth, which any conqueror by no means could take away. Here were powerless the fire and the sharp sabres of tyrants and aggressors. The alive soul of the people, territorially separated, broken off, almost not having opportunities to develop quietly the culture, literature, architecture, music, plastic arts, was saved up in the folklore which after all bloody invasions again to rise similarly as an immortal bird Phoenix from ashes. It was not for nothing that the academician N.J.Marr noticed: "...The Kurdish tribes in the history of Near East *represented and still represent* (Italics are ours. **K.M.**) an independent factor, a significant public - cultural force. First of all it is necessary to search for the key of this phenomenon in the rich Kurdish folklore, in Kurdish dances and songs". In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the great educator of the Armenian people Khachatur Abovyan admired of the pearls of the Kurdish oral literature: "... The national poetry of the Kurds has made amazing steps and has reached all possible perfection".

Researchers distinguish in the Kurdish song folklore lyrical, heroic and round dance elements. The subjects of the lyrical monologue are based on many-sided nature of human feelings. They are the songs about love, about the beauty of the beloved, about ardent feelings of the lover. But almost in all songs there is a grief, a sad presentiment, that aspirations and hopes never can come true. The most poetical samples of national Kurdish lyrics are the so-called "foreign-land songs", the confessional recognitions of the poor men who have gone on earnings, in searches of the best lot in the other countries, who stayed among foes and indifferent people. Homeless wanderers dream to come back home, nowhere do they find peace of mind, sympathy and compassion:

*My soul is like a caravanserai: the  
khodzha, the shepherd and the thief, the  
merchants from different countries have*

*passed through it. I would leave these  
places, but I know, that melancholy  
would be with me, for the death hour will  
overtake us everywhere and no stranger  
will mourn over us?*

*To damned Erzerum I sent my greetings, to my  
only beloved, and I waited for her answer for  
hundred days.*

*It is time to go to her, it's much harder to wait.  
You, a birdy, depart to damned Erzerum, eh?  
In slums you stay and in the stone chambers. Do sing  
the song of the captive to my beloved mistress...*

And the girl, seeing off her lover to the war, does not remain a dumb mute, but expresses her feelings in a sad lyrical recognition:

*Do rescue, oh, God, his mouse-coloured horse  
With a mark in the forehead and the  
horseman do pardon!*

*He that rides on it is my lover... The Groom  
of mine to the war has left from me.*

And here is inaccessible love:

*I have found my love by the will of the  
Creator on a high tower of a notable palace.  
Dark blue sky is sparkled with the stars, I  
have a headache, my soul is sad...*

*I have found my love by the will of the  
Creator on a magnificent tower of a notable  
palace. Stars in the sky have started their  
round dances... Satisfy my grief, - I pray from  
the Earth. I have found my love by the will of  
the Creator ...*

Each event found the embodiment in the song pitch of the national legends:

The thousandstrong army of the Turks lies in the battlefield in armed equipment. To us came for being beaten

*Who is alive, those run from us.*



Penetrated with a light grief the songs about courageous people, perished in the sacred fight with enemies, manifest not only mournful crying over heroes, but also glorify the inflexibility of the national character, the inexhaustible spiritual force.

*My horseman is buried on the snowy mountain...  
One can see the ground under snows in November...  
His tribe is crying above his untimely tomb. We load  
our belongings under the scratches of the carts,  
Our dwellings have become empty, we leave for ever.  
If only we had known earlier that the horseman  
was intended to the mountain.*

But not only grief, not only sorrow and melancholy are the contents of the Kurdish songs. Kurdish men and women gather in a round dance (govand), with the manager of dances (sargovandi) at the head. He holds a scarf in the right hand, and behind him, repeating his movements, cheerfully strides the dancing lot. And, certainly, what round dancing can be without love, without lyrical songs.

*The matchmaker, go to her father and ask him  
whether he will give me the girl of mine. At the  
village of Khasan-pasha, at the mountain of Gazi,  
the cattle at the brink of the precipice is still  
grazing. I shall pass like a beast through the woods  
and the backwoods. If he does not give us, we shall  
steal her and bring to our house. I shall hang up  
on my house a door, made of plane tree. In my  
house we shall pass the winter with my beloved.*

As the reader probably has felt, they are original Kurdish chashtooshkas with simple plots, briefly and expressively narrating about numerous everyday situations, with a simple language and figurativeness that is clear to all. And where the youth have round dances there is the place to sing of love, the beauty of the nature, the beauty of the beloved, of the lover. But you cannot do without the sadness - very frequently the lovers are separated by either parents, or a bitter lot of the poor men.

*The smell of roses is as sweet as the sleeping with  
the beloved. Maiden, I am on fire, why don't you*

*notice it? What you keep secretly in your soul, I shall not understand in any way. What do I love her for, I, the fool?*

*Fair-haired plait, gray eyes... With a lightning the thunder-storm over me rattles: To enter a small town is the same as to die, But without her is also impossible to live.*

*I shall find a wasteland, where I'll build a new house, Doors under a nut I shall turn for the entrance, in summer we shall live with my beloved behind the mountain*

*And if the God will want, we shall live a year more.*

There is a lot of wedding songs- especially for the round dances in the Kurdish folklore. On any wedding songs sounded continuously. All of them were different. But most of them were cheerful, it was told in them about ancient wedding ceremonies and customs.

Some songs remind us of an old Kurdish custom the exchange marriage when the son and the daughter of one Kurd linked life with the son and the daughter of another fellow tribesman. By the way, the custom of an exchange marriage is familiar also to other peoples of the Near East and Transcaucasia.

## THE LANGUAGE AND THE STYLE OF THE KURDISH LAMENTATIONS

The Kurds did not do without songs at funeral ceremonies too.

During the wailings and lamentations over the dead man the reproaches and the complaints addressed to the late are frequent:

Who has cursed you? You have left the orphans. The damned have inherited the tribe and the clan. The dreams have not come true, I have remained alone. On my hands I still have the henna you gave me. And ashes of yours are carried out of our gate.

Not only those no longer living are reproached but also the destiny, artful, severe and relentless, they complain that nobody managed to battle, break, subdue it successfully:

*The ill-starred destiny has broken my hands,  
Has changed all my ways  
And hinders the morning star to rise.*

The survived most of all regret for the untimely death of the young people, the gloomiest, inconsolable grief sounds here:

*The family has mourned over the lost sons:  
Handsome men - young men, beardless fighters the  
dry wind fathers has touched the not quite ripe  
fruits grieve with his own father the fathers of  
other children.*

The reasons of early death according to the Kurdish beliefs were explained by the executed damnation.

The pain and grief about the dead man force to bury the close person with every possible care so that his tomb becomes a safe posthumous fortress. In the Kurdish lamentations with especial grief the deceased is reminded, that he "has broken the back", "has broken the knees" to the clan - tribe, "has destroyed the house", has left in confusion and homelessness the defenseless women...

*How are careless the souls of the  
mortal? Why have you fallen asleep?  
You have destroyed your native  
house; you have curtailed the neck  
of your tribe.*

The deceased is bitterly accused in the lamentation, that the reason of his death is his own carelessness and lack of ability to anticipate events, to foresee, that there such irreparable trouble will happen to him.

But, certainly, the pity to the person, whose life - at young age or in old age it doesn't matter, has been lost prevail; both pity and compassion is expressed to his unlucky lot.

Certainly, in the gravestone song it is spoken about the merits of the deceased, what advantages he had, how valorous, brave, beautiful person was he, how everybody admired his clear mind, his wisdom.

The constant part of funeral wailings is the reference to those alive that the memory of the late should not stop, especially, if it concerns the mother and the father. As though hardly there were further everyday



circumstances, the oblivion should not touch their light image. The memory of the parents is sacred:

*The life is full of sorrows, but gloomiest  
of all is the death of the father and mum.*

The brevity, restraint of the Kurdish wails is well - known. Russian lamentations list in detail the merits of the dead man, describe various tragic situations and do not ignore sad experiences of relatives of the dead person. The Kurdish lamentations are constructed on an expressive detail; it also helps to create a whole picture in the imagination of the listeners:

*I went to Alagyaz. Among ice fetters my  
Khamadonian horse has cooled its hoofs. Oh  
horseman, what have you pleased our enemies for,  
Why have you blinded your friends and relatives  
with the misfortune?*

Researchers of the Kurdish funeral folklore mark that the Kurds are not frightened of the dead man; they are much more anxious with his beyond the grave existence. As they imagine, the lot of the dead man is a long way in the night or the flight of bird. The death itself has many faces. Now it is a predatory bird who rushes on its prey; now it is a murderer, the blood avenger, the ill-fated heavenly envoy, now it is the hunter shooting without a miss, now it is the robber, suddenly from an ambush attacking its victim, at last, the Padishah of Death who stretches the tent in the centre of the Earth and dispatches its obedient servants all over the world.

To transfer fatal suddenness of the death, in lamentations the images of the interrupted affair with which the deceased was occupied are used:

*The leg of his has remained in stirrup...*

Mother swinging a cradle with the dead baby, - such an expressive image in emotionally constrained and severe Kurdish funeral wails shocks by the deepness of the burning mother's sorrow: Your cradle I am swinging...

So, the Kurdish wails are constrained, and the metaphorical system is based on the pictures of the nature, on the symbols connected to flora and fauna. Quite often the nature in the wails as if stiffened,

seized by the human sorrow, struck with the grief concerning the loss of the close person: *From cloudy heavens does not reach a sound...*

### Proverbs and sayings

It is no less than the epics or ceremonial songs, the treasury of the Kurdish folklore is decorated by the proverbs and sayings. In any case they are designated among the Kurds of the different countries of the Near East and Asia: "Words of the ancestors" or "the Statements and reflections" (Iraq), "Words of the fathers" (Iran, Turkey, Armenia, Georgia), "Sayings of the ancestors" (Azerbaijan, Central Asia).

People's attitude to the proverbs and sayings are very careful, this heritage is holy of holies of each Kurd. Therefore in all cases of life it is indispensable to use a proverb and a saying. They pass from generation to generation; serve as the unshakable moral code, the arch of informal laws. And each folklore aphorism bears a bright national print.

The entire life of the Kurdish people proceeding in indefatigable struggle against enemies, among a severe mountain nature, their traditions, customs are features of the national life - all this is reflected in the collection of the Kurdish proverbs and sayings.

They speak about fidelity and love to the native land, honour and merits of family, about the native center and education of youth on fatherly precepts, about diligence and hospitality, honesty and nobleness, about fidelity and devotedness in love and friendship. Bravery, valour, fearlessness, courage, feats of heroes, irreconcilability and ruthlessness in battles with enemies are the values, which are glorified by national consciousness in proverbs and sayings. They also condemn cowardice, meanness, perfidy and treachery.

There are a lot of proverbs and sayings which are devoted to the Kurdish woman, the quick and careful and hardworking mistress, tender and gentle mother. "The Wife is a wall of a house", "the Wife is an internal wall the husband is an external wall".

The one, who gets acquainted with the treasury of the Kurdish folklore, will pay attention to how much attention in it the Kurds pay to hospitality. Each who even once in his life was on a visit in a Kurdish

wintering or in a mountain pasture couldn't help writing about this feature of the national character. The house that frequently receives guests is considered honourable. If a traveler even once was a guest in the house of a Kurd, he would put the host a big insult if during the following arrival he stayed in another house.

A proverb, as a rule, is exact and categorical: "Change the character, but do not change lodging for the night". Guest in the house is the happiness for the host: "Guest is a Divine messenger". It is necessary for to serve to him and protect him.

According to the legend when a young Kurdish soldier was captured and tortured, the steadfastness of the warrior struck the leader of the enemy army. He approached the Kurd exhausted by tortures and asked the young man whether there was a heavier day in his life. "Yes, there was such a day", the captured soldier answered, it was the day when the threshold of our house was crossed by a visitor, and we had nothing to treat him with. It was the heaviest day in my life".

The entertainment, however, is not all, but kindness, geniality, warmth of the soul is much more important. "Had it not been close in the soul of the host then for the visitor there would have been found in the house a place at the center", "Hot bread and cold water will be in each house but not each one can provide a treat of them".

The visitor of one Kurdish house immediately becomes the honourable and dear person for the entire village. Moreover, if the enemy of the Kurd has crossed a threshold of his house in search of protection and rescue, the host is obliged to let him in and with a risk for his own life - up to the last drop of blood to defend the visitor. It is a custom, which all the Kurds piously adhere.

The observance of the laws of hospitality is a matter of honour for the Kurdish famil: Disagreement in the family, disrespect for the grown-ups disgraces a home. Again we will address to the legend.

In one Kurdish family there lived a man with his seven sons. Some rural envious neighbours began to gossip, that his children do not listen to the father, do not respect him. To check up whether it was true or not, a visitor from another village came on a visit to this house. The secret intention of the visitor did not escape the host's notice. Only the youngest son was in the house. The rest worked in the field. The host



and the visitor were sitting on a carpet in front of the kindled center, and were talking about different trifles. It was time to light their smoking pipes. The host asked to give him some fire to light up the pipe. The son began to search for a poker, but it was lost. The host soon reminded the son of his request. Then the boy got a piece of coal from the center and, having put on a palm approached the father. Father did not hurry up to kindle his pipe. And the piece of hot coal burned the boy's palm up to a bloody wound. Despite of an intolerable pain, the son resignedly stood about the father while the latter was kindling the pipe, and then the pipe of the visitor. Being struck by what he had seen, the visitor said goodbye, having told "there is a hospitality that is higher than the courage". These words also became a national saying.

"Knights of the East" so that is how the Kurds are named, for they respect human dignity, are devoted to their tribe, are notable for their pride, honesty and bravery. The Kurds bring up these character traits since early childhood. When adult men conduct conversations about the heroic past of the Kurdish people, young men are present, and naturally, they do not interfere with the conversations of the grown-ups, but remember what has been told, and then all the life aspire to imitate the famous ancestors.

Kurds brought up their sons as people courageous and freedom-loving. Many Kurdish tribes practiced the real Spartan upbringing. And the young man received the right to bring in the wife to his house only after a lot of tests. In the opinion of the elders of a tribe only the neat arrow shooter and the excellent horseman, that is the person, capable to endure a strong pain, can become the head of the Kurdish family.

About the Kurds who have become famous for their courage and magnanimity people say: «The courageous man can forgive the coward, but the coward will never forgive the brave man». They were remembered long years, on their tombs stood monuments - stone sculptures of rams and horses, the symbols of courage and bravery.

Bright, figurative, laconic Kurdish proverbs and sayings are diamonds of popular wisdom. They sparkle with uncountable sides, amazing with accuracy and an acuteness of the statement, vigilance of anonymous authors, riches of associations and symbolical character. They

are most of all connected to the daily life of the people, and are present at the speech of each Kurd.

### FROM POPULAR WISDOM

Better to be carried away with water than to pass across the coward's bridge.

The spilled water cannot be gathered again.

A shameless person has been sent to the hell, and he says:  
"Firewood is crude".

A lonely person is only good for the God.

Dogs bark at everybody but at me only cats hiss.

You will not dig out the well with a needle.

When you admire the high growth, look at width of shoulders of others.

Call me the baron, and my wife - baroness (Speaking ironically about the one who is too ambitious).

The shifted stone will not lie on its former place.

Not by the beard a person is to be judged, but by his affairs.

Even the snake from a hole will creep out responding to a tender word.

Before pricking somebody with an awl, prick yourself with a needle.

Richness is in heart, but not in property. Greatness is in wit, but not in feasts.

A cluster of grapes will not grow up on a prickle.

Night is falling - the idler just starts working.

If meat is expensive, it may be cheaper not to eat it at all.

Come as many times as it is necessary, so that you should not cease to be respected.

Who sits near the boiler risks to get dirty with soot.

The same place, but not the same spring.

You want to catch the fish and not to wet your back.

The jug does not always come back from the spring unbroken.

He boils the eggs under his arms (speaking about an idle talker).

The lonely woman becomes malicious, the lonely man - wretched.

The donkey is mine, if I want I can even shoe his ears.

Do not be so bitter that you are spat out, do not be so sweet that you are swallowed.

Old straw is not winnowed, and what has passed cannot be regretted.

The cat has not reached bacon, saying "salty".

The Sun is visible as it is, do not point with your finger.

The axe will not chop off its own handle.

If two persons have told you: "you are without a cap", - touch your head with your hand.

Words are present, speakers are absent.

If there were no gossip, wolves and sheep would be grazed together.

If you have let out a word - do not catch it up.

Tell the Truth, - let it be pleasant to the God, though it may not be pleasant to people.

Your words are to my liking, but about the man one must judge according to his shot.

And that who escapes, appeals to the God, and who pursues appeals to the God.

The man who protects his own honour also protects the honour of another man.

One was asked: «Do you want happiness or authority?» The answer was: «Where there is happiness, there is authority».

Do a good deed, and let it go down the river.

## ENTERTAINING STORIES

Such a genre as entertaining stories also adjoins to proverbs and sayings as a part of common to all mankind humorous culture. The Kurdish jokes are various on plots and themes, with set of characters,



and the person listening to a joke recognizes people whom he meets every day.

The jokes connected with Mullah Nasreddin were very popular among the Kurds. In the Kurdish folklore he is mentioned under the name of Mella Mazbur (Mullah the Known). In spite of the fact that this image is the property of the entire literary East, nevertheless in Kurdish jokes he with folklore accuracy transfers the originality of the national colour.

Once Mullah was asked:

- Mullah, what is more important, the sun or the moon?

- The moon.

- But why?

- Because the sun shines in the afternoon when without that it is bright. Just think: the daytime traveller is afraid of nothing, whereas the night traveller waits when the moon at last will ascend.

### **I shall take it back at once**

At night a thief has made the way to Mullah's house. His wife has woken up and whispered in scare:

- Mullah, there is a thief in our house!

- Oh, my wife, sleep quietly. The thief here has nothing to steal.

- I shall take it back immediately. If only he will find anything in the house.

### **The watch-maker**

One person has come to the watchmaker to buy a watch. The latter has offered him the watch at a very low price. The buyer was surprised:

- Why is it so cheap? What's your profit?

The watchmaker answers:

- Take your watch and go away. And do not worry about me. When your watch is damaged and you will come again, then I shall earn.

## A Plot of garlic with honey

The poor man eats garlic with honey. Having seen it, the passer - by has stopped and asked:

- Father, why are you eating the garlic together with the honey?

- And what harm will that do to me? They will somehow be combined, - the old man has answered.

On his return way the same passer - by has seen that the old man is writhing with pain and calls to the aid:

- Oh, do help me I am dying.

- Father, I have warned you, that garlic and honey will not get along in your stomach.

- Oh, my son, I did not know that they would make an agreement to be the death of mine.

Such histories deride nonsense, admire with resourcefulness, wit, and at times cunning. More often they treat with contempt the human vices: cowardice, greed, impudence, boastfulness.

Distinctive feature of the Kurds, in the opinion of ethnographers, is hospitality. There are also some jokes about their hospitality and the fondness of their children. Especially it would be desirable to note, that a subject of jokes became the wit of women, their ingenuity.

The palette of characters is diverse: here one can find governors - kind and severe; the rich and ruined landowners; wise and ignorant sheikhs; dealers, shopkeepers, thieves and swindlers; tailors, carpenters, barbers, musicians and many, many others.

## The resourceful pupil

The teacher asks the pupil:

- How many will be five caps, five shirts and four pairs of boots?

The pupil answers:

- It will be four gentlemen, only one of them will be barefooted.

The histories connected to the wise and cheerful village headman by name of Khavez; he lived at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries). He could tell interestingly and funny, was kind and fair, and that is why he was very popular.

### **Did you put it back there?**

Once a neighbour came to Khavez, who was planting a tree in his garden and asked him:

- Khavez, can you lend me, please, one hundred dinars?

- Well, you see, my hands are dirty. Go into the house and under the pillow you will find one hundred dinars.

The neighbour approached to the pillow, lifted it and took the money.

Some months passed. Again that neighbour came to Khavez and says:

- Khavez, can you lend me, please, one hundred dinars?

Khavez answered:

- Can't you see that my hands are dirty? Go, into the house and under the pillow you will find one hundred dinars. The neighbour approached to the pillow, lifted it and exclaimed:

- But, Khavez, there is no money here!

On what Khavez said:

- And did you put it back so that it could be there now?

For the most part such stories are without a plot. They are a kind of fleeting genre picture, household sketching where the purpose of the entertaining story making people laugh is reached by an unexpected final phrase. Quite often this sharp comic ending leaves the space of an anecdote and becomes the widespread expression, the same part of daily informal conversation, as popular proverbs and sayings.



## THE KURDISH EPOS

The Kurdish tales were composed wherever the Kurds lived, and no "dispersion" could prevent it. These epic legends, which have appeared, say, in Iran, became gradually known and loved in Iraq, Azerbaijan and Armenia. Certainly, no epic legend remained unchanged; its text was constantly updated. And now that the perfection of the ancient legends, in all freshness came to us, we can speak that they are worthy to stay in an intellectual and spiritual treasury of the mankind alongside with "Iliad", "Beowulf", "The Song of the Nibelungs", Russian bylinas, Kazakh legends about the batyrs.

Anonymous authors of national masterpieces were, as is known, the Kurds of various creeds - Muslims: the Sunnis and the Shias, the Yezidis- fire-worshippers. It did not prevent the Kurdish epos to become higher than religious postulates; nothing like the submission to the rigid canons of interdictions and restrictions. That is why the Kurdish folklore, including songs and legends, is loved not only by the Kurds but also by the Azerbaijani, the descendants of the Assyrians, the Arabs and the Armenians, who esteem it at the same level with their own oral national creativity. Academician N.J.Marr explains: "Non-religious Kurdish songs are composed both on love, and on heroic plots. But the point is not in the updated plots, but in the rich repertoire of motives..." During centuries the Armenians who have accepted Christianity at the beginning of our era, extremely appreciated unusual fascination of the Kurdish national songs. According to the known traveller, "many Kurdish and Yezidi songs in Forward Asia are widespread in the Turkish translation". "Among mountainous Aysors there is a common custom to sing the Kurdish songs and to tell the Kurdish fairy tales".

So what is the reason of such a phenomenon? Where is the charm of the Kurdish epos? Its heroes do not think themselves outside of their own tribe, their friends and relatives. "Let even the mountain wolf not know loneliness. Feel sorry for the wolf!" - so the proverb says.

One Kurdish soldier was fatally wounded in the stomach. In his last agony he moaned: "Oh my back! Oh my back!" The comrades of the courageous warrior were perplexed: "But you are wounded in a stomach...". The brave soldier answered: "If there had been a friend

behind my back, I would never have been wounded in the stomach!" It is a very ancient parable but we must agree that the value of this moral lesson to the descendants has not grown dull even by nowadays.

As well as in the folklore of peoples of the East closely adjoining to the Kurds, the heroes of the legends are endowed with supernatural force, which helps them to overcome any obstacles, and barrier on the way to the aim. The fantastic Kurdish warriors-bogatyrs bravely rush to fight with an infinite enemy army, disseminate it and put it to flight. The reliable assistants of the invincible brave men are their true horses. Comrades-in-arms of the brave horsemen the horses like mighty eagles soar up in the air; fly on huge distances, and in case of need become wise advisers. A bogatyr and his true satellite were as though one creature. Life and death of the hero of the Kurdish epic legends depend on the fact, whether his horse is beside him. And if - at the will of the destiny - to the hero is intended to lose his life, a true horse is the participant of the funeral ceremony devoted to the memory of the victim.

In the hours of mourning farewell in honour of the falling hero, in honour of his true friend - the horse the solemn songs glorifying the union of two brave are composed.

It goes without saying that the legends included the descriptions of the original events, the stories about real historical persons. And the national epos became masterly represented history of the Kurds.

As the Armenian writer Raffi said: "None of more or less significant phenomenon or event in the life of the Kurd passes without leaving a trace. The National song immortalizes both courage, and cowardice, eulogizing the first and blaming the other. If anybody has cowardly hidden himself during the fight or has escaped from the field of fight, the next day women and girls compose about him a song full of caustic sneers and condemnation. The song becomes the property of entire tribe and all the settlement sing it".

With the best human qualities the epos endows simple shepherds, cattlemen, hunters, because the ordinary people express national aspirations and expectations! But the authors of the epic legends are ruthless to the Kurdish aristocracy. They, as a rule, are represented as the characters artful, severe, knowing neither pity, nor compassion to relatives.

And wherever the Kurds lived, they were never reconciled with oppression and inequality. Therefore they also took part in different



sorts of revolts, mutinies and uprisings. Historians Sharaf-khan Bitlisi, Iskander Munshi, Arakel Davrizhitsi in detail enough and impartially tell about extreme poverty in which the Iranian and Turkish peasants in the 16<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> centuries stayed. Revolts flashed continuously and everywhere. The leader of the revolt Kyor-ogly is sung with love by people. He was sung in legends, verses and songs, even lullabies. Struggle which conducted by Kyor-ogly against Shahs and Pashas, his defence of peasants, have won respect of people which was expressed in the epos created by them. The flame of revolt covered also the places entirely occupied by the Kurds.

About one of such revolts in fortress Dymdym constructed at the top of unapproachable mountain Tergavera in the Iranian Kurdistan, on border with Turkey, also tells the same epos.

The hero had wandered long, until he was taken on service to Shah Abbas as a horse-herd. Robbers intended to steal the Shah's horses, but the courageous young man has rescued them, having lost a hand in fight with thieves. For fidelity and courage the governor allows him to get a piece of the ground in size of the oxen skin. There unapproachable fortress Dymdym was erected. The fortress was intended for the people saved from enslavers.

Then the hearer of the epos learns about unequal battle between kyzylbashy and the Kurds besieged in a fortress under the leadership of Abdal-khan called Gold-handed. Unequal fight was finished tragically for the defenders of the fortress: all of them up died on the battlefield. The winners have offered the survived women:

*We take the siege off, we shall go home,  
But with ourselves we shall withdraw beauties of yours.*

The daughter of Abdal-khan, worthy her brave father, has made a huge fire, in which both the blown up fortress, and brave defenders of the Kurdish stronghold were lost.

*Above a precipice, at a edge,  
Dymdym marked by destiny.  
Explosion has turned a fortress into fragments,  
And nobody has escaped alive.*

This folklore story about the defeat, full of alive informal conversation, with the intense dialogues, military and feudal-knightly lexicon,



calls for an opposition by all means, teaches not to be frightened of the enemy no matter how numerous and well armed he may be.

And yet the epos finishes optimistically. The wife of Golden-handed khan has remained alive, has escaped in a smoke and fire. She is pregnant, and she leaves the place of tragedy and soon gives birth to a son. Descendants of Golden-handed khan are alive and they still struggle for the freedom of people. In "Golden-handed khan" the century-old dream of unitary, independent and free Kurdistan has been embodied.

### The written literature

Some researchers consider that the Kurds have no written original literature at all. The erroneous opinion till now has the supporters. Nevertheless, by the diligence of serious scientists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century a lot of monuments of the Kurdish written literature were found.

Collecting the necessary materials, laboriously, on grains should create the picture of the consecutive development of the classical Kurdish literature. While it is still not enough of them, therefore in our book the Kurdish literature is represented by the brightest names, which have left an appreciable trace in the history of the Kurdish literature. The reader can make an idea about the stages and the periods, passed by the Kurdish prose and poetry.

It is necessary to recognize as the first written monument of the Kurdish literature the poem of the unknown author written on a piece of leather in the 8<sup>th</sup> century of our era about the Arabian invasion, about the misfortune that has fallen upon the Kurds. The poem was found in Suleimania (South Kurdistan).

The name of the first Kurdish poet is **Pire Shariar** (the 8<sup>th</sup> c.). Numerous parables, quatrains and the neat aphorisms reminding sayings of legendary in the East folklore figure Mullah Nasreddin, very long time ago became widespread Kurdish proverbs and sayings:

*"A soul inside the trees and silk of green  
leaves are the appearance, persons.  
From foxes comes a fox from the wolves  
comes a wolf. And from whom are an  
egg and a bird?"*

## Kurdish Alphabet

№	Kurdish alphabet	Cyrillic	English transcription
1	Aa	Аа	[a] after
2	Bb	Бб	[b] book
3	Cc	Цц	[-] sch
4	Çç	Чч	as in child
5	Dd	Дд	[d] desk
6	Ee	Ээ	[e] set
7	Êê	Ээ	as in man
8	Ff	Фф	[f] flag
9	Gg	Гг	[g] go
10	Hh	Нн/Н'н'	[h] house
11	Îi	Ьь	[y] story
12	Îî	Ии	[i] sit
13	Jj	Жж	[ʒ] pleasure
14	Kk	Кк/К'к'	[k] case
15	Ll	Лл	[l] love
16	Mm	Мм	[m]my
17	Nn	Нн	[n] no
18	Oo	Оо	[o] pot
19	Pp	Пп/П'п'	[p] pen
20	Qq	Qq	[kw] queen
21	Rr	Рр	[r] round
22	Ss	Сс	[s] sing
23	Şş	Шш	as in show
24	Tt	Тт/Т'т'	[t] take
25	Ûû	Уу	[u] good
26	Uu	ÛÛ	[ju] huge
27	Vv	Вв	[v] very
28	Ww	Ww	[w] well
29	Xx	Хх	[ks] box
30	Yy	-	[j] boy
31	Zz	Зз	[z] zoo

Pire Shariar wrote on Gorani dialect, one of four basic dialects of the Kurdish language. Other three are Kurmandzhi, Sorani and Mukri. On the same dialect wrote Abdul Kadyr Gilani whose nickname was Pire Shariar Sani (Second), and also Baba Takhir Khamadani.

Let's name also the first author writing on Kurmandzhi dialect. His name is **Ali Teremakhi** (the 10<sup>th</sup> 11<sup>th</sup> cc.). The biography of the medieval

writer is poor. We know that the poet was born in a Turkish village of Teremakh. Educated in Baghdad, Mosul, Bakhdinani and Soan, diligently studied linguistic compositions of his time. Ali Teremakhi has written the first grammatic treatise in the Kurdish language and some poems.

**Ali Khariri** is the younger contemporary of Ali Teremakhi. The years of his life are 1009-1078.

The poet's Native Land is the village of Kharir. His literary heritage is a divan of lyrical gazelles. After the death of the poet has passed almost millennium, but the language of the poetic production written on Kurmandzhi dialect is clear also to our contemporaries.

The dialect Kurmandzhi became the basic lexical file of the Kurdish literary language. Akhmed Mullah Dzheziri aspired to connect language and images of the national poetry created by his predecessors, and the court poetry. He himself was a court poet at governor Umad-ad-din. Favourite poetic forms of Dzheziri's productions are gazelles and kasyds. The poet sang of the beauty of his beloved, the sister of Umad - ad - din.

In opinion of researchers **Melaye Dzheziri** is the founder of the first literary school, which is characterized by a harmonious combination of traditions of the classical Persian literature with the original Kurdish folklore canons. The followers of the remarkable poet belonging to his school have selected a pseudonym "Mela" as a common name. Here is an amusing detail. In Dzheziri's collected works those where he writes about the beauty of the sister of Dzheziri's governor, there is a poetic dialogue between Mela and Faki Teiran; however "interlocutor" is two centuries younger than Dzheziri.

Let's say some words about him.

The years of life of **Faki Teiran** are 1307-1370 A.D. This poet really belongs to the school Dzheziri. But his verses are syllabic he has remained indifferent to the Arabian-Persian classical meter. The extensive arch of the Kurdish lyrical songs and verses people call "Faki Teiran". Originally in the collection there were only F. Teiran's works. Later imitations and rehashes increased; verses of the poet were supplemented with those of anonymous authors; improvisations of national storytellers "dangbezhi" were included.

The source of poetic inspiration for Faki Teiran was the folklore. But in due course his productions began to nourish the national poetry.



Among the Kurdish people the name of Faki Teiran is in an aura of legends. Legends have given the poet supernatural qualities. He understood the language of birds and animals, for him there were no secrets in the lifeless nature. By the way, the name of the poet is meant also "the pupil of birds". "Faki Teiran" is the name of folklore poetic cycle. People read and re-read his works the entire life; they do not part with him. Modern writers and poets quite often create their works, based on F. Teiran's verses, put into verse legends about the poet.

The native of Moks Hekkari Mohammed Faki Teiran signed his compositions by the name Mim Hai. He is the first recognized master of large literary forms. These are the poems "Sheikh Sanaan", "The Story about Barsisa," "The Story about a Black Horse".

The history how sheikh Sanaan has fallen in love with a young Christian maiden is well-known both in the Near East, and in Transcaucasia. They assume that the narration has developed in the Iranian-speaking environment, in the epoch of the appearance of the Sufi doctrines. In the course of centuries for literary processing of a plot about sheikh Sanaan many poets were taken from **Farid ad-Din Attar** (1119-1193) up to **Gusein Dzhavid** (1882-1941). In the centre of Attar's poem "Conversation of birds" is the story about sheikh Sanaan and the Christian maiden. This story though it is connected by subject strings to the rest of the narration, is quite independent. It was included in various literary collections as the completed work.

The peoples of Transcaucasia have a different view on the history of sheikh Sanaan. The mystical Sufi love gives up the place to quite terrestrial feeling.

The poem of Azerbaijani poet Gusein Dzhavid represents not a seventy-year-old man, decrepit and ailing, but the young man full of health and youthful energy. And the main idea of the Azerbaijan poem: the love is stronger than religion, moreover, it is a true belief; it does not recognize any barrier, including a difference of creeds. The Kurdish variants, keeping some details and paints of the Persian versions, all the same are closer to the treatment accepted in Transcaucasia.

The simple everyday plot, with all the numerous variants from time immemorial existing in the Kurdish folklore, has given life to many outstanding works of the poets of different peoples. **Kurd Faki Teiran**, Persian **Farad ad-Din**, Uzbek **Alisher Navoi** were captivated by the

beauty of the simple and transparent national legend, so subtly and so skillfully processed by Faki Teiran. Lively informal conversation of a folklore narration and unusually figurative, with set of magnificent comparisons the language of literary variants invariably involves the hearts of people sensitive in poetry even today, as well as it was a lot of centuries ago. The modern reader cannot know the seven steps of mystical Sufi perfection, but the sanguineous history executed to the original vital truth about the sheikh in love involves him always, whether he gets acquainted with the popular version, or he reads the most complicated poem of Navoi, who has added to the known poem of the highly esteemed Attar a lot of his inspiration, his own bright and ardent imagination.

And the Kurdish people can be proud, that in the basis of the story about Sheikh Sanaan, repeatedly advanced and altered, the simple folklore story about the "Georgian maiden" is put.

The historian **Sharaf-khan Bidlisi** lists seven feudal princedoms - Emirates and sixteen hereditary destinies, which have made the territory of Kurdistan in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Governors of princedoms and owners of destinies had the donation letters given by the Iranian and Turkish authorities. These letters protected the rights of the emirs and the appanage princes. Depending on circumstances the Kurdish governors recognized the authority of Iran or Turkey above themselves. But, generally, nominally, practically all of them were independent. Some princedoms even minted their own coins.

Historians are to be engaged in badly investigated circumstances of social, economic and cultural life of the Kurdish princedoms of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. But also now we can say that many governors indefatigably cared of culture. Best of all the things were in princedoms **Bidlisi, Dzhézire and Darzini**. Under the testimony of "Sharaf-nameh", Badrbek, the governor of Dzhézire has gathered many "scientists and perfect persons". The treatise lists such names as **Abu Bakr, Khasan Surchi, Zaineddin Baba, Said Ali...**

Glory of Yakubbek, the Supreme Darzinian governor was widely distributed in the East. The head of the princedom not only generously and constantly patronized science and poetry. He quite often took a pen in his hand and composed the whole divan of philosophical verses. Primary language of the talented author became Kurdish.

It is natural, that the author of the chronicle, who comes from Bidlisi,



most of all paid attention to his principedom. And it is completely fair. The other governors of Bidlisi have constructed some mosque and five medreses. Here the most educated teachers taught astronomy, logic, metaphysics, poetics, rhetoric, certainly, Muslim divinity, trained their pupils in the interpretation of the Koran. The principedom has become famous also for poet Shukri, the big master of a verse who came from here. In his poem "Salimnameh" he has told about the events of his time, the thoughtful and attentive witness of which he was.

Unfortunately, the history of the Kurdish literature of the 16<sup>th</sup> century up to now is a white spot. We do not know much about that time, about its literary phenomena. The most outstanding work of the Kurdish verbal art in this epoch was created - the poem "Yusuf and Zelikha" by **Selim Sleman**.

As the basis of the unique poetic production of the Kurdish poet served the Bible legend about Joseph the Fine, which is "the oldest, but not growing old romance," as Renan has put it. This is the most favourite biblical legend both in the West and in the East. Muslim poets, starting to the next processing of the eternal plot, were based on the Koran versions of the legend that is on the XII sura of the Koran "Yusuf". The pages of the Koran devoted to the burdensome ordeals of Yusuf, artfully betrayed by his brothers, kept as well the story about the passionate love of the wife of an Egyptian grandee to the fine young man. In the ledger of the Moslems she has received the name of Zuleikha. The earliest, Syrian version of Narsaya is written more than one and a half thousand years back.

Modern writers also do not neglect an opportunity to use unusual circumstances of an ancient plot: "Joseph and his brothers" - novelistic tetralogy of Thomas Mann, "The Human Comedy" by **Nazim Khikmet**...

Immortal charm of the story about Joseph Fine is explained by orientalist E.E.Bertel: "Motley change of episodes: the serene childhood, contention in family, a terrible picture of sale in the slavery, a planned opportunity of clearing, even more terrible falling, horrors of the prison, new dizzy rise - all this has made the legend one of those literary works which experience not centuries, but millennia".

But no matter how motley was the outline, no matter how dizzily replaced each other unexpected, now awful and now happy events, all this yet does not promise a plot long life. Open any work about Joseph



the Fine, and you will plunge into the boiling sea of human feelings and passions. All of them with the same force excite people as excited our far ancestors many centuries and even millenia ago. Yes, numerous poetic productions reproduce the legendary plot, but its details respond the real life. In the history about Joseph the Fine is both envy, and rage - about how they dry and harden a heart! There is here also a violent, passionate love, in the furious blindness ready on a crime. There is here and all-forgiving fatherly love, in infinite mercy asking the God and the people about indulgence to unreasonable sons who criminally doomed their brother on death. Times vary, languages vary, but as well as in the times of pharaohs, readers again and again continue to be indignant, calm down, be pleased, suffer, admire and be horrified... .

Researchers have defined, that Muslim poetic variants can be divided into two groups. For the first group as primary source the poem by Firdousi has served; here in the centre is the tragic destiny of Jacob (Iakov), who knew nothing about his favourite son being missing for many years. The other group of poems, most likely, has selected as a source of inspiration the work of Dzhami who most of all was interested in love of Zuleikha to Yusuf. Many authors treated the feeling of the Egyptian woman mystically, they considered the mad passion of the woman in love as the fidelity to the divine principle up to full disappearance of the own "I".

The Kurdish poet Selim Sleman, also took the well-known plot, but he is equitably anxious both about the love of Zelikha - so the name of the heroine is spelled in Kurdish, and by sufferings of Yakub, the father of Yusuf. Two themes exist in production in parallel.

S. Sleman passes as insignificant, a mention of what sources he used, however does not overlook to say:

*"Again I shall begin a parable,  
Again I shall write the story".*

So the reader cannot consider the Kurdish author the inventor of an ingenious plot. Modesty and recognition of merits of predecessors is above all. But in many cases S. Sleman tries and, it is necessary to recognize, not without success, to be independent.

The beginning of the Kurdish poem is prophetic dream of Yusuf. He tells his father about the strange dream. Yakub warns the son not to tell his brothers about the dream Jusuf's sister overheard the conver-

sation between the father and the son, and immediately informed her brothers about it. They threw Yusuf into the well in and bring Yakub the shirt stained with blood so that father could believe that a wolf pack tore Yusuf to pieces.

Having examined a shirt, Yakub has not found even a trace of the wolf's teeth. The Father orders to his sons to call the wolves - he is going to interrogate the animals to find out the truth. Carrying out the fatherly order, brothers drag a tied wolf's cub. The wolf's cub calls on interrogation of Yakub all the wolves of the area. And it becomes clear, that the wolves are not guilty, that Yusuf's artful brothers Jusufa have made up wrongful accusation on them. Yakub lets the animal off for home.

In the meantime a merchant of a caravan passing by the place of Yusuf's imprisonment gets the captive out of the well dungeon. The brothers, who did not find Yusuf in the well, rush in a chase, on the traces of the past caravan. Having caught up a caravan, they at the beginning insist, that the merchant should return the brother, but eventually sell him in slavery for an insignificant sum.

The caravan goes to Mysyr, its way lies through a country of the infidels. Yusuf becomes the Muslim missionary -he converts the "Kafirs" to the Islam. On slaveholding market of Mysyr Jusuf is deduced in a chain of slaves. S.Sleman introduces a character, which we shall not find at Firdousi a rich pagan beauty Baziga who has not remained indifferent to the unusual beauty of Yusuf. She is the first woman in a poem, who was badly wounded by a very handsome young man.

Having left for some time the market in Mysyr, Yusuf and Baziga, S.Sleman narrates about Zelikha, the daughter of shah Teimus. The favourite of the governor has dreamed about Yusuf and has fatally fallen in love with him. The fine phantom declared to the girl, that by he is Aziz of Mysyr. Not shelving the affair, Selikha begs the father to ask to let her marriage to one of the courtiers of the Mysyr shah, Aziz by name.

Just imagine the despair of deceived Zelikha, meeting in the marriage bed of the person, who had nothing in common with the image which has becomed her. The force and depth of this despair can be compared with the force and depth of the excitement when she saw at the market alive Yusuf, the embodiment of her dream! Zelikha asks the husband to buy the fine slave.

Zelikha starts every possible female charm however Yusuf does not



yield to his temptress. The offended woman tries to slander the innocent young man showing the broken off shirt - again a shirt! However the testimony of the baby denies spiteful calumny. S.Sleman does not omit a well-known scene when the girlfriends of the Shah's daughter being shocked by a dazzling beauty of Yusuf cut their fingers with sharp knives with which they cleaned peaches.

Yusuf did not manage to avoid imprisonment. Aziz did not want to part with the slave, but the wife did not give in. The dungeon has not broken Yusuf: he is an acute interpreter of dreams of the cupbearer, the baker, and the shah. Ingenuities of Yusuf gave him his due: he gets out of imprisonment, Zelikha is sent into exile, the Shah of Mysyr appoints the former prisoner his governor-general.

Time flew, Zelikha, having grown old and become blind from sufferings, according to Allah's design, not only again obtains her former beauty, but also her youth comes back to her. She leaves pagan deities and converts herself to the Moslem. The foresight at last connects destinies of Yusuf and Zelikha. The description of their happy marriage night finishes a part devoted to misadventures of beautiful Zelikha.

In the meantime a new eventual cycle begins. Yusuf's brothers come to Mysyr for the grain. Yusuf recognizes his brothers, but they do not recognize him. Yusuf invites the visitors to a feast and the walls of the palace hall on his order are painted with the pictures, telling what had happened to him on a malicious arbitrariness of his brothers. Yusuf puts a silver bowl, as if stolen, into the knapsack of Ibn Yamin (Veniamin) and insists that he should be left as a pledge.

Brothers try to get out Ibn Yamin by force, but they fail to do that.

And to the aged father in dream Angel Azrael comes to their aged father in a dream and tells him everything about Yusuf. The old man again sends brothers with a letter to Mysyr. He asks to release Ibn Yamin - a consolation of his old age. Yusuf sends his shirt to the father, and it cures Yakub, who has become blind from tears: he begins to see clearly. It remained nothing to the brothers but to confess in the crime once committed by them. Father suffers from it but nevertheless asks the Allah that he granted a pardon to criminals. Having arrived to the son in the country of prosperity, Yakub lives there during forty years, but in the prediction of a death hour he comes back home, to Kanan. The death of Yusuf and Zelikha finishes the S. Sleman's poem.



The production of the Kurdish poet as it is possible to be convinced treats freely the similar poem by Dzhami. As it is obvious, S. Sleman knew rather well other Persian and Turkic versions and numerous variants.

Crying of Yakub over the shirt, stained with blood, interrogation of the wolf pack, the oath of wolves not to eat meat in Kanan is all close to folklore poetics. The fantastic motives of the Kurdish version are of a folklore origin: a flame, which comes out from the lips of Zelikha, magic transformation of the blind and old woman into a fourteen-year beauty. We find in S. Slemana's poem and the traces of early Muslim legends: Yakub orders that his sons enter Mysyr through different gates, so that to avoid the evil eye.

To frighten his brothers, Yusuf makes supernatural acts...

Selim Sleman aspired to uncover the force of love. It is a source of perfection of the person; sufferings, passions, defects all burn down in the pure fire of great love, it changes souls and hearts. Zelikha, who at the beginning appears before us as a capricious, immoral and the despotic beauty, capable to slander an innocent, to persecute him, later amazes Yusuf with patience, selflessness, fidelity to the unshared feeling.

Similar changes occur to his brothers. They have severely and brutally treated the younger brother, having thrown him into the well, and by that dooming him on death. They have ruthlessly deceived the old father, not caring at all about what heavy emotional wound they cause to the old man. But what despair they have tested, when have they learned about the imprisonment of Ibn Yamin, how they are anxious about the left father; they even are ready to remain in hostages if only not to deprive old Yakub of his last consolation - favourite Ibn Jamin. And Yusuf is very sensitive to this awakening moral feeling. He forgets the endured sufferings; he does not remember the bitter wanderings and disasters; he refuses from the revenge and he forgives his brothers. After the sincere repentance in the old crime, in the hearts of Yusuf's brothers there are no more places to rage, envy and hatred.

Mildness and spiritual perfection of Yusuf have restrained the envious and cruel Yakhud, intending to ruin the brother. When the time came, it was Yakhud, who risking his own life, protected Yusuf. Precisely as the black slave who being convinced of the impunity, struck Yusuf on the face, having realized, that before him is the person of pure heart and the unusual spiritual superiority, falls before the offended on knees and begs to forgive him.

On each page of the epos "Yusuf and Zelikha" the reader will find many examples of spiritual perfection of the person. The person is capable and, consequently, should change for the better, become more moral.

In general the Kurdish version of the ancient and so widespread plot is the deification of love. Feelings terrestrial in which is not present a drop of mysticism. It is a feeling of the woman to the elect of her heart, care of the father to the son, brotherly love. The elements of mystical and magic for the Kurdish author are a thing minor.

The author of "Yusuf and Zelikha" is rather sensitive to the real truth of life. He is not declined to one-dimensionality and straightforwardness. Old Yakub at all his righteousness and sublimity is suspicious and mistrustful he is not inclined to take on belief the message on imaginary destruction of Yusuf. Shocked by the beauty of the dreamed young men, Zelikha pretends to be ill and declines father Teymus to deceive match-makers and to send them back. And the sample of mildness and amnesty Yusuf too as appeared, can be vindictive. He refuses to interpret the shah's dream until Zelikha is punished severely for slandering him.

By the way, from this episode it is possible to judge, with what constant respect Kurdish men treated the woman. They in practice recognized her equality; that is why she could be revenged, considering her worthy and not less serious opponent, than man. As to Zelikha herself, for the Kurds she is the same, as Tatyana Larina and Natasha Rostova for the Russian people. The strong and imperious nature, the person of constant courage whatever misfortunes and sufferings she should go through, she keeps fidelity of the love through all the obstacles and barriers. Her acts are marked with boldness; doubts and fluctuations are not typical of her; it is to Zelikha that her irresolute father Tejmus and weak-willed husband Aziz, as a rule, in the uneasy circumstances, address for the help and for a piece of advice.

Researchers mark, that the image of Yusuf is pale and schematic in the majority of versions of the poetic development of the Bible story. For the Kurdish poet Selim Sleman Yusuf is not only an embodiment of amnesty, mildness and chastity, but also the person seized by ardent passion of the loving woman, lighting up in response he is capable of threats, he is ready to revenge for the insult and humiliation.

After Yusuf and Zelikha the author most of all is interested in Yakub. For Selim Sleman he is the embodiment of the fatherly love; he does



not remember insult, he is not going to reproach and pursue anybody. Yes, he knows that the mean crime of severe sons for long years has taken away his favourite son from him and has deprived him of quiet old age. And still he addresses with assiduous entreaty to the God. He asks Allah to forgive his unreasonable sons he asks about that the Divine punishment has not fallen on their heads.

The affinity to life of the image of Yakub makes us to compare the biblical Jacob to the father of Yusuf in the Koran. That is what Jacob has said when Joseph has told him, that the sun, the moon and eleven heavenly bodies were low declined before him: "Do you mean that I, your mother and brothers will bow to you?" Yakub behaves differently. Having comprehended the secret sense of the prophetic dream, carefully warns the son: "Look, only do not tell the dream to your brothers, so that they will not ruin you out of the rage and envy." Jacob knew well, that brothers fiercely hated Joseph, envied him and only thought how to get rid of him. And still father sends the son to Sykhem to brothers - shepherds, as if deliberately dooming him on any misfortune. Yakub did not agree for a long time when sons persistently asked him to release Yusuf with them. He aspires to rescue the favourite son from the concealed human rage and envy, he understands, that the son is threatened with danger of death and up to the last moment he wishes to save Yusuf from it.

The sanctity of Jacob, the pureness of his righteous soul explains his angry, strict, haughty and disdainful answer to the son. The patriarch aspired to expel the arrogance from Joseph's young soul, believing also, that his obstinacy will restrain spiteful envy of brothers. The content of Jacob's thoughts is care of perfection of the soul, of high cleanliness of the spirit; Yakub is carried away with the terrestrial well-being of the person.

The attitude of the author to incidental and minor characters of the literary production is not the same. Some of them are represented schematically, with pale paints S.Sleman has paid much more attention to the others. The picturesque, multilateral image of Aziz, the husband of Zelikha is well remembered. He is both kind, and trustful, but he is also weak-willed and characterless. He is too cautious too timid therefore he cannot realize his true and noble impulses. Aziz knows that Yusuf is slandered by Zelikha. It would seem that the mercenary deceiver en-



dures the deserved punishment: Aziz's justice, his intolerance to the evil are known. But the spineless husband only mutters: "How low you are Zelikha! What a pity that I love you so strongly!" Moreover, it is Aziz carries out the severe requirement of the malicious wife and sends Yusuf to a dungeon. The violence over his own soul, intimate torments do not pass in vain. Repented Aziz at a secret prison appointment asks Yusuf's pardons, promises to release him soon, however the weak heart of Aziz does not bear the cargo of emotional torments and he dies.

It was not for nothing that the Kurdish author was excited by this worldly authentic duel between the Good and the Evil. Inactivity and humility of people of the weak or weak-willed character are so dangerous and bloody, as the actions of inveterate criminals; they will result in a celebration of injustice and destruction of the innocent persons.

The specificity of the poem "Yusuf and Zelikha" is in aspiration of the author to the psychological analysis, and it in its turn is based on the authentic image of the reality. S.Sleman keeps away from "literature" and on the contrary - comes nearer to life. He replaces trite features of the idealized characters in the literary productions of the predecessors with the alive, terrestrial details. The followers of S.Sleman selected the same way, among whom the star of Akhmed Khani, the coryphaeus of the Medieval Kurdish poetry shines most brightly.

Let's add that "Yusuf and Zeleikha" is a work of art, which is openly and constantly supporting the Islamic dogma, against the pagans and those belonging to different creed.

### **A literary criticism of the poem "Yusuf and Zelikha"**

S.Sleman well knowing the Arabian and Persian poetry includes words both of that and the other language in the text of the poem. And still it is necessary to consider as a remarkable feature of poetic handwriting of the Kurdish author laconism and clearness of style; S. Sleman reject the floridity, multistage metaphors of the Persian stylistic canon.

Graphic stamps "eyebrows are like an arch of a bow", "eyes are like intoxicating almonds", "the maiden cheeks are petals of a rose", "torso is like a svelte cypress" are excluded from S.Slemana's stylistic

arsenal. He chooses another manner of graphic skill: through an expressive trait, an elected detail he depicts the entire image of the character. And the extraordinary beauty and charm of the hero is shown not directly but indirectly: the author tells how the hero's associates perceive him.

East poets devoted hundreds of beits to the rare, amazing beauty of Yusuf; it is enough to Kurdish author to tell: "Everyone who saw Yusuf was ready to part with his own soul". Father, not seeing Yusuf, "has lost desire to live". And describing the attractiveness, perfection of the shape of Baziga S. Sleman has done without the extensive laudatory speeches: "Baziga is the favourite of our century, the treasury of wisdom... She is lovely and fine"...

Simplicity raises limiting expressiveness of the poetic language of S. Sleman. Natural informal conversation of the Kurdish author reaches tops of poetry. It is possible to consider Jacob's crying over the son who has not come back home as a sample of high poetic speech,

S. Sleman masterly uses the repetitions of one and the same word, thus creating a certain mood, a certain colouring of the episode. In the scene of the preparations to the wedding of Aziz and Zelikha you will not find the hyperboles and traditionally high-flown comparisons. But the magnificence and the significance of the event is represented completely:

*"Five hundred quick true servants,  
Five hundred dressed up  
girlfriends, Five hundred affable  
friends,  
Five hundred glorified princes,  
Five hundred beauties,  
Five hundred great chiefs  
Five hundred security shaved  
foreheads, Five hundred obliging  
slaves".*

S. Sleman besides has proved to be the uncommon master of genre scenes.

They are written with deep humour, remembered by affinity to household folklore, keep the value as an authentic narration about cus-

toms of people living some centuries back, and to this day. But, certainly, most of all both the contemporaries of S. Sleman, and the present readers are attracted by the poetic art of the author in creation of developed tragic episodes, the whole story, beginning from the episode when malicious brothers have thrown Yusuf who was the favourite son of Yakub into a well on a former caravan track.

Skilfully S.Sleman uses recurrence of the same word, creating necessary mood, emotional colouring of an episode. He does not present heaps of hyperboles and traditionally florid, grandiloquent comparisons in a picture of preparation for wedding of Aziz and Zeleikha. But the grandness of forthcoming celebration is described to the full.

The ardent sermons of Yusuf convert into the Islam both the merchant that has pulled him out of the well and Baziga, a girl from the pagan tribe, and shah Reyan. At last, the main heroine of the poem under the influence of incontestable argument of Yusuf breaks a pagan sculpture that was in her palace. The worship for the power of the Islamic dogma is so strong, that idols themselves condemn the pagan belief; recognize the validity of belief in the unique God.

The fervent adherent of the Islam, S.Sleman has told in his poem about his political views, too, in particular, his dream of the educated monarch, the king - philosopher, the wise and fair governor, for which well-being and peace life of citizens is above all. These are in the poem "Yusuf and Zeleikha" the shah of the country of the Kafirs Reian and the shah of Mysyr (the pharaoh of Egypt).

### **THE KURDISH LITERATURE OF 17<sup>TH</sup>CENTURY**

The Kurdish classical poetry has reached unique perfection in the times, especially hard for the unfortunate people. Battles lasted continuously; troubles and inescapable misfortunes went on a trace of the Kurdish people, driven from grounds primordially belonging to them. But the poetry scooped inspiration in stability of immortal national soul, actually, it forced to write the truth, not to hide and conceal anything. Patriotic motives, precepts of the enlighteners, full recognition of the rights of the language to literary status were the contents of the tops of



the Kurdish classical poetry of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, in particular, a well-known poem "Mam and Zin".

Little is known about its author **Akhmed Khani** (1591-1652), and to what is known, not always it is possible to consider with final trust. Akhmed Khani comes from the tribe of Khaniyan. It has removed to Bayazid where the future poet - humanist was born, - this area A.Khani has most of all lived in native Bayazid. Here he on his own means has constructed a mosque in which he taught.

A.Khani, a well - educated and patriotically adjusted person, did not wish to be reconciled with the fact that his people, "having talents and valour", is oppressed with lawlessness and ignorance, vegetates in obscurity. And as the creation of national culture is impossible without the native language, A.Khani the best task of the life believes introduction of "contemptible" Kurdish in the system of literary languages of that time - Arabian, Persian and Turkish. The poet teaches the Kurdish language in medrese and even composes the Arabian-Kurdish dictionary "Nubar" ("the first fruit", "the first-born of a garden"). This dictionary was intended "not for the glorified husbands, but for the clever kids."

However, in national memory and in the history of the world literature A.Khani is known most of all as the author of a well-known poem "Mam and Zin".

Basing on the subject situations of the known poetic masterpieces, such as "Yusuf and Zelikha", "Sheikh Sanaan", "Leila and Medzhnun", A.Khani composes the original version of the popular national legend about tragical love of Mam and Zin. These names for the Kurds are the designation of sad destiny of the unfortunate lovers.

From the very beginning the poet speaks about originality and national uniqueness of this brilliant work:

*"The syllable, beginning, and outcome of the song of love I did not find in the books of other poets. It is from the common people that I heard this legend, and filled with the heated silver and the dark red gold and turned diamonds on sixteen sides, and with the sapphire inserted in the Kurdish legend for edification of the clever*

*ones. The executor of the debt, I worked long. It is possible to hide in the ground, yet I do not see the sense... "*

The plot of the poem by A.Khani is simple and authentic.

The sworn brothers the son of military leader Tadzhdin and the son court clerk Mam - are in love with two sisters of the Kurdish emir Zéin-ad-Din. And the destiny of Tadzhdin and Sit, who received the consent on the marriage, develops brightly and serenely. And the rage and artful intrigues of the emir's adviser Bekir doomed Mam and Zin on separation, on infinite sufferings. As they could not bear the separation they had to part with their life.

The transparent simplicity of the plot has not prevented A. Khani to tell about the interlacing of human relations, about the opposition of characters. The poet has penetrated into secret depths of human soul, for him there were no secrets in the reasons of the acts of the characters, in the explanation of what occurs to the heroes of the poem. Most of all A.Khani appreciates self-denying love, fidelity of the lovers:

*"The world without the Love is crippled by violence, by the perfection of feelings only elected is marked. How much I have thought over and have searched for... The purpose of mine is in verses to immortalize the Love".*

The Persian authors have extremely taken a great interest in refined sensuality, however, quite often having the mystical implication. The Kurdish author here is independent he prefers the love, which is chaste and highly moral. Like his Georgian colleague Shota Rustaveli, A.Khani distinguishes true, self-denying love that is created by the relationship of souls, and superficial short passion:

*"Love and Desire are not sisters: the Love is disinterested, Desire is artful. The Love begins sacrificing, in order to help you; contemptible benefit is searched by the other".*

And self-denying love is not always the same. The safe feeling of Tadzhdin and Sit, not saddened with the sufferings, not tested by human rage and envy, has not lived through the lovers. The love of Mam and Zin is immortal, let them and have not found happiness in embraces

each other, let love torments have covered with wounds their souls, let eventually their life has broken them, because they could not be together with each other. Self-sacrifice in love, infinite sufferings - that ennobles the person, forces him to leave vainglory, to part with isolation on himself. Only then carnal pleasures and worldly joys lose the value for him. The main idea of the poem by A.Khani is that the sufferings and the love are inseparable. They are so inseparable as "a rose and thorns", as "the magic treasure and the snake guarding it". But the compensation to all the troubles and sorrows in unfortunate love is the immortality of the tested feeling. That is why Mam and Zin are obedient to destiny; that is why they do not resist in any way to infinite and heavy everyday impacts.

A. Khani is not less attentive to the devoted friendship. It excites him, he writes with admiration about the sworn brothers Tadzhdin and Mam. The young men are true and devoted to each other; they are ready to offer everything, even life for the sake of getting the comrade out of trouble, resolutely to help him.

*"The false words will kill one's own brother;  
so check up your soul before the oath".*

Execution of the debt of friendship and love is not such a simple matter. Sometimes a person faces the choice of what to prefer the love and friendship or to keep fidelity to the master. Knightly fidelity to the seigneur among the Kurds was considered sacred. Mam, trying to rescue the honour and the reputation of the beloved, has not constrained the oath of fidelity. It is in the consciousness of the Kurds, "True Knights of the East" an unworthy act, deserving extreme condemnation. But the same Kurds are higher than the cult of fidelity to the master recognize knightly service to the woman: they forgive Mam.

Almost under the same circumstances Tadzhdin behaves completely differently. Life has demanded a severe choice: to keep fidelity either to the friend, or to the master. Tadzhdin does not dare to break the oath. He knows, that this treachery is inexcusable and will cause a shame and infamy; and national contempt will touch not only him, but also all his tribe.

A. Khani's skill has had an effect, in particular, in how he has represented such a character as Bekir in the poem. This name is a



synonym of rage, envy and treachery - became nominal among the Kurds. Such people destroy happiness and well being of everyone whom they meet in life. They hate nobleness, magnanimity, sincerity and mercy. By the way, Bekir is far from being mean to everyone. This villain chooses the victims rather circumspectly. He puts crushing blows only on mild and ingenuous people; he is convinced that his punishment will pass over.

Having planned to make a victim of Mam, Bekir informs the emir that Tadzhdin is going to connect destinies of Mam and Zin only to displace him and to seize power in the principedom. The emir imprisons the imaginary contender Mam. Tadzhdin and his brothers stand up for slandered Mam. The entire military power of the principedom is against Bekir. But the envious person and the slanderer is not so simple. He advises to emir to agree to the marriage of Mam and Zin:

*"To kill with a knife and famine is not difficult, But to keep your spirit innocent, oh, Emir...show publicly your magnanimity: give the consent to wedding of these two. As soon as Zin enters the prison, the weakened Mam of pleasure will die".*

And it is not clear to anybody that Bekir is moved not by repentance and nobleness, but by exact calculation of the rascal: Mam being strongly weakened in the dungeon will not go through the slightest excitement and the sudden permission simply will kill him. And so it happened. Folklore versions quite often explain Bekir's behaviour by his desire to marry to Mam his ugly daughter. A. Khani takes away from his Bekir even an opportunity to justify himself in this way or another. No, this evil is radical, it aspires to crush and destroy all that is kind and fine.

Emir padishah Zein-ad-Din is psychologically a complex figure. He is not absolutely similar to the so familiar to us from many works of the poets of the East. Zein-ad-Din is not a severe tyrant with iron will, a powerful master not knowing doubts and responsible for everything that occurs in his state. He is rather a narrow-minded person; he is not capable to operate independently because of obvious lack of talent. He is not malicious sometimes a sort of a kind impulse appears

in his soul. But his weak point is arrogance; that is why he is in the hands of his artful adviser Bekir. Emir, as a matter of fact, is deeply indifferent to everything, which does not concern the prestige of his high person, his glory and external attributes of authority. He sympathizes with Mam and Zin but it is he who is guilty that the lovers tragically perish. Mourning over the victims, the emir is not at all going to bear an excessive consciousness of his own fault. He hurries up to accuse any person, but not himself.

A.Khani ironically opposes magnificent and vast panegyrics to the "brightest torch-bearer of reason" with sad consequences of his unreasoned acts. This exposes the silly vainglory of the stupid emir, who has become a dangerous toy in the hands of the malicious and severe adviser.

A.Khani does not conceal the system of his political and philosophical views, his patriotic attitude from the reader. The pictures of the political life of then Kurdistan are represented truly and impartially. The author of the poem "Mam and Zin" has described the military opposition of Iran and Turkey. Kurdish tribes were participants of bloody battles; moreover, they were driven by the opposite armies in the front lines and served for them like a shield. Describing this picture, A. Khani says: "And thus my poor people bleed profusely"... The poet opposes against the dissociation of the Kurdish tribes; against the incessant civil strifes. Infinite discords and strifes the poet explains by the fact that the Kurds are people of excessive moral independence, of indomitable love for freedom; they "avoid a cargo of obedience". Disagreement ruins people of Kurdistan. The savior can become only the sovereign governor. Then fratricidal wars will be stopped; sciences, crafts and arts under the canopy of peaceful Kurdistan will open the era of unknown blossoming.

*"Without unity is the end to us.  
There is no head to accept a wreath.  
The belief is hidden in ruins. We  
are all children and who is the  
father? A wise mind has not been  
found, and the terrible Rum  
appeared in order to lodge owls in*

*human jacks. The God above has become savage; the crazy enemy has come. Oh, my song, serve as an alarm! Valour sleeps - a lazy lion".*

A.Khani insisted that the Kurdish language is equal to the other literary languages of classical poetry of the East. To emphasize the value of the native speech, A.Khani resorts to comparison, so clear for the commoner. For the poet Kurdish is wine grounds. This deposit at the bottom of wine flasks was considered the strongest, the tastiest and the most fragrant part of the old, well matured drink...

A.Khani has applied huge diligence that his poem has not got lost among other masterpieces of the Kurdish literature, he aspired, that a poem "Mam and Zin", and, and the Kurdish poetry as a whole was recognized on the level with the verses of the Arabian and Persian authors. A.Khani has rejected the stereotyped comparisons, so commonly used by the numerous imitators to classical samples of the Arabian-Persian poetic heritage. The excellent expert of the Kurdish folklore, in it A.Khani scooped the unique, earlier unknown images, comparisons, metaphors just in the native Kurdish language. The riches of the language of A.Khani's poems are also in the fact, that the nature for the poet is not something minor; it helps us to understand an emotional condition of heroes more deeply. Quite often they directly address to the nature; these ardent monologue - favourite stylistic method of A.Khani. Mam suffers from the separation from his beloved, and he addresses to the Tigris reproachfully, why the great river is caught with anxiety and this excitement forces the hero to choke with tears:

*"Tigris water, why are you sobbing? You undividedly possess of the city of Dzhezire. Why are you sobbing, predicting a stormy weather? You are not me. I am separated from my beloved, I, the lonely captive in the mountain".*

Not only is the river Tigris the addressee of reproaches and complaints. Such silent "interlocutors" in the poem are the morning wind, a lonely candle burning at night and the yellow roses in the garden.



A. Khani represented the life of his time with such correctness and accuracy, that the poet was idolized during his lifetime. And besides he has expressed universal feelings that always excited people. That is why the readers of the present epoch, opening the pages of the poem "Mam and Zin", continue to be indignant, calm down, pleased, suffer, to admire and being horrified .

So in the 17<sup>th</sup> century the Kurdish literature has obtained the psychological truth, has particularly and authentically displayed the original historical reality. The then characters and situations are multilaterally depicted. In all voice the patriotic motives sounded in those times, the Kurdish literary language has firmly become current. This century is the epoch of the maximum blossoming of the Kurdish literature. The next century, unfortunately, became the period of stagnation and decline. And only at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century glorious revival of the Kurdish poetry and prose, revival, which does not stop up to these days, was designated.

### The Poetic Circle

Then, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, on the other end of Kurdistan, in Western Iran, in the district of Avroman of the independent Kurdish principdom a literary association was established: at a court yard of the governor there was a poetic circle. Its participants wrote verses on the dialect of Gorani. The hand-written divan in which the poems of twenty-seven poets are collected has remained. They are Sheikh Ahmede Takhti, Mela Takhir Avromani, Muhammad Kuli Sleman, Mazhzuni, Farrukh Palagani, Yusuf Yask (bricked up alive by Khan Ahmed), Mustafa Basarani...

The Avromanian poets were masters of landscape lyrics. The pictures of the nature by all means corresponded to the emotional mood of the authors. Sometimes it was one, the precisely found detail, or an epithet amazing with the unexpected boldness that in memory of the reader forever the image of autumn will remain:

*"The autumn embroidered with  
gold closes lips to the irascible  
water".*

The Avromanian masters especially loved the autumn:

*"We in the exile, a new autumn, and the clouds have been dressed in grief. And, without dropping a single tear, they depart to the faraway countries. We have found but not what we searched for: granites, clefts and rocks... Streams from eyes flow and flow, watering them a thousand time".*

The condition of an autumn nature fully corresponds to the emotional condition of the poet. Muhammad Kuli Slemanan perceives crimson marks on the leaves of trees as if they were bloody wounds, and circulation of the seasons forces him just in this way experience the sad changes. The court poets were not limited to only landscape verses. They achieved remarkable perfection in the love lyrics entirely penetrated with mystical outlook. Here the Beloved meant the supreme Deity, the Creator. The admirer and the singer of the Beloved under the same mystical code is the possessor of the secret knowledge of the God; an appointment with the Beloved is the moment of mystical reunion of the soul of the believer with the Creator.

The occurrence of such poetry was preceded by an abundance of the religious literature of the sect "People of the truth" to which the majority of the population belonged. These productions of the spiritual teaching were created for many centuries. Among the written monuments are Lives of the Muslim Saints, religious hymns, collections of prayers; extensive poems about the creation of the world.

The Avromanian poets highly esteemed Baba Tazhir Uryan Hamadani, who wrote on the Lur dialect, which still remains near his native city Hamadan. The quatrains of the poet became a handbook for the Avromanian poets, a constant source of inspiration.

Speaking about the Avromanian poetry, it is necessary to mention, that among popular plots was a cycle of legends on outstanding feats of a legendary hero of Medieval Iran, whose name was Rostem, romantic narrations "Farkhad and Shirin", "Baram and Golan-dam."

Numerous versions on the Gurani dialect were read and re-read by the people.

The simplicity of the language and clearness of style attract the readers greatly even nowadays.

### KURDISH LITERATURE IN THE 18<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURIES

To understand how little know about the Kurdish literature in general, and that of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in particular, it is sufficient to mention the name of great **Dzhafarkuli**, known only to the Kurds of Turkmenia and Khurasan. Sextriars and Quatriars by Dzhafarkuli were not collected and written down during his lifetime, however people do not esteem anybody so deeply as the storytellers bakhshi that are able to sing unusually expressive and fine in their briefness and originality verses of "the wanderer, the skilful creator of words".

And also about the life of the poet it is known only from oral legends. The village of Bimgan in the area of the city of Kuchan is the birthplace of Dzhafarkuli who composed verses and sang, accompanying his singing by playing the dutar since he was young. To his cost he met Melvary, the daughter of the rich tradesman Karval Guli. As Nizami wrote: "I repeat with a sigh at the only thought about you: "Let the God mark nobody with such a passion!" But the God marked Dzhafarkuli. Melvari's father, did not want even to hear, that the beauty, unequaled not only in the native village, but also in the entire Khorasan, would become the wife of the ragamuffin. And Melvary's intention to go after the beloved to the world's end was of no use. The everlasting separation instead of happy life under one roof is what the destiny has prepared for the young lovers. The young man's parents have hurried to marry the son to the girl from their native settlement.

But the family ties appeared to be fragile. Dzhafarkuli left his native places, and went away to wander. Long years of never-ending wandering began. there was neither a village, nor a city in Iran where people would not hear the songs of the wandering poet about fine Melvari, about his eternal "sweet disease", which tormented the heart of the poet.

Once on one rural market a friend of his youth, the person rather of an old age, heard a voice of the singer, near whom a crowd of



listeners gathered. The voice seemed familiar to the traveler. He approached nearer and saw a gray-bearded old man, hunched and wrinkled, but with bright eyes and strongly holding the dutar in his hands. Having looked narrowly, the passer-by recognized in the singer the fellow villager once dear to the heart.

- Dzhafar, dear, isn't it time you finished with wandering, the hour when the Allah calls you is close, do come back home.

- No, brother, I shall do that by no means until I achieve the purpose that was dear to me in the youth. Until Melvari becomes mine, there is no way for me to come back.

- Come on, Dzhafar, you are an old man, your gray hair advises you to reconcile and understand that now there is no need to you to aspire to the youthful purpose.

When I meet Melvari and I achieve of what I have been dreaming all my life, we shall become young again. Farewell, my friend, and transfer my respectful bow to the native places and everyone who still remembers me.

And it is not known where the Earth's days of great Dzhafarkuli were terminated. And the Kurds of Khurasan and on each holiday sing his songs; again and again verses about the incomparable Melvari and who was loved truly and hopelessly by the poet sound. The unrequited love, the tragic passion, as well as is necessary, has become immortal.

*"- Oh, my God!*

*I have not received Melvari.*

*Neither chains, nor the oppressive fear,*

*Nor a captivity, nor an execution, nor my songs to  
the God*

*Will help me to forget her".*

*"It is said that spring is coming,*

*I am told: "Just go out to the field*

*And see how rubies fly down from the heavens,*

*And the world is full of other miracles.*

*Pearls in a cap,*

*so you may even catch pearls with your cap".*

*"They are useless for me without love.  
In the life, deprived of feelings,  
There are lots of expensive trifles,  
And the God has too many miracles,  
They are useless for me without love".*

*"Oh, people listen! I do not know  
how many moons I cry like  
Medzhnun, being as mad as  
Medzhnun.*

*To ask for pennies in the market they  
allocated a place for Dzhafarkuli.  
Melvari's life goes differently: she is  
taken to Mamedabad. Seeking in  
marriage Persian is rich. To booze on  
wedding the beggar is glad, for  
unexpectedly good luck may drop out".*

*Oh, heart, what are you proud of? Shah-  
Abbas himself is on the heavens. And even  
Mohammed, the prophet of prophets, has left  
without finishing the Koran...Any other  
lessons are necessary?"*

**Kharisi Bitlisi** is a classic of the Kurdish literature, the author of poems "Leila and Medzhnun" and «Yusuf and Zelikha» and many poems written on the basis of the rich national folklore in various poetic forms.

The poet declines to use the Arabian-Persian lexicon; his predecessors did not neglect this lexical layer. The poem "Leila and Medzhnun" served as the textbook of the Kurdish language in medrese during two centuries. We shall add that, as a rule, the classics of the east literatures devoted their works to shahs or their sons. H.Bitlisi here again impudently receded from tradition. As the inscription on the original poem testifies, it is devoted to the beloved of the poet.

On the boundary of the 18<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> centuries created **Petraf bek Khakari**. About the life of the poet, unfortunately, till now it is not known sufficiently. The future researchers of the Kurdish literature can be more lucky than we are, the more so because if earlier Petraf bek Khakari was considered the author of only several poems, in 1976 in Baghdad in the Arabian language the whole "Divan" of the poet which "the bridge between two centuries" was printed.

That was the time when there was a whole galaxy of Kurdish poets. The most outstanding were **Sheh Khalid** and **Siyapush**. Kamuran Badirkhan, the known scientist and the educator in "Grammar of the Kurdish language" writes about them. Sheh Khalid was born in the city of Suleimania (Iranian Kurdistan). The date of his birth is still unknown. It is known, however, that he died in Damascus in 1823. The collection of his works consisted of the verses written in the Arabian, the Persian and the Kurdish languages.

Only one poem of **Mevlad sheikh Samed** reached our time. It is about the beauty who has struck a look and heart of the poet. The experts on the Kurdish poetry name this small product by Samed a psychologically subtle glorification of the beloved. It served as an example for the poets who followed Samed.

About Kurdish poet **Nali** (1797-1885) it is said, that the main thing in his creativity there always was a sympathy and compassion for the troubles of his people. The poet was born in the village of Karadah. Having finished his education, he travels in Turkey, had a close relation with the intellectuals. In verses he passionately, with anger and hatred, condemns the laws which are violating the rights of the Kurdish people. He devotes his verses to the leader of national-liberation movement of the Kurds Ahmed pasha Baban. The poet has chosen the pseudonym "Nali", which in Kurmandzhi means "groaning" because the tragical destiny of his people perceived as the grief, leaving him in the rest neither in the daytime, nor at night. The life for Nali is a struggle, and he writes about it in each poem.

The pseudonym of the poet **Kurdi** (1809-1849) means "the poet of the people". And his verses are about restless, confusing and complex struggle, which is closely connected with alarms and tragedies of the



national-liberation struggle. Contemporaries recognized themselves, their ideas and cares in ardent poems, written by Kurdi.

And the real name of Kurdi is **Mustafa bek**, the son of Mehmed bek, the son of Akhmed bek. The native land of the poet was Iraqi Kurdistan where he was born in 1809. Kurdi began to compose his verse in his youth, started to travel early. In general, he was a vigorous, purposeful person. As a person highly educated he was invited to bring up the son of the Shah in Taran. The poet's adherents, the participants of the national-liberation movement rallied around the poet. Kurdi continued Nali's traditions. He writes verses in the Arabian, the Turkish and the Kurdish languages, and each poetic line is the mutinous appeal, internally collected, strong-willed poetry.

The village of Koisendzhak is the native land of poet **Khadzhi Kader Koyi** (1815-1892). After the death of his father the family has got over to the settlement Koy. When the clever boy has grown up, his mother has addressed with the request to relatives, and also to the sheikhs so that they help the young man to receive a good education. His persistence and diligence, practical quickness and inborn cleverness have been noticed and highly estimated.

Traveling a lot after the finishing of his study, the poet eventually has lodged in Istanbul. Serving as the teacher of the son of Badyrhan pasha, he got in touch with the statesmen, the creative intellectuals who have supported the fair struggle of the Kurdish people.

The reference book of the poet became the poem "Mam and Zin" by Akhmed Khani. Kader Koyi like his predecessor, believed, that freedom will not come all by itself, that it is necessary to struggle for it.

**Avrahman, son of Ahmad bel Sayid Sakhid** being born in Iranian Kurdistan, having a reputation for the skilful doctor, has received among people the name of Salim (1805-1869). The poet was forty years old when his poems were printed in Baghdad. Salim, recklessly trusting in the victory of the hero of his poetry, wrote about the courage of the brave sons of Kurdistan. He wrote that the flower of freedom is sprinkled with the blood of the Kurds, is crushed by soldier's boots of strangers, that the soul of the poet is immersed in the sea of grief. And still sooner or later on a battle-field the Kurdish people will win the independence taken away from them. About unshakable belief of the

poet in a celebration of the just cause poems are written "What the Destiny Has Done to us?", "Return to me", and "Pleasure of my Soul".

The native land of **Talabani** (1842-1910) is the village of Chikhra. His father has given him initial education. Later he studied in Istanbul - here he has lived for two years. Talabani diligently studied languages: Arabian, Turkish, Persian and the modern literature.

In Istanbul "the first attempt at writing" of this Kurdish writer took place. Homecoming appeared sad: his father died, and his brother Talabani deceived him and deprived him of the inheritance. Many verses of the poet are written about injustice. In general, the poet was excited not by abstract themes, but by daily events. He knew the modernity well and wrote much about it. The works of Talabani are a true patriotism, love to Man and the firm belief in his moral victory. Two divans of poems are familiar to the reader. The first has been published at once after his death, the second - thirty years later, in 1940.

**Adep Abdulla**, the son of Abdulla bek, the son of Rustam bey was born in 1862, in the village of Ermanibulahi. His passion to languages was combined with passion to writing, to studying modern poetry. The love lyrics of the poet can be explained by his falling in love with Nisrat-hanum, the daughter of the rural head Izat-khan. The young woman was married, but for the sake of beloved has divorced from the first husband, and got married to the poet. The reader is attracted by the optimistic, major tonality of the verses, the sincerity and calmness of feelings, free - joyful mood.

**Mela Mohammed Koyi** was born in 1876. His father taught him the basic knowledge. In Istanbul Mela Mohammed has got acquainted and has made friends with Kadyr Koyi. In medrese Mela Mohammed, having thoroughly mastered the Arabian, the Kurdish, the Persian languages, studied the bases of the Islam. After the death of the father Mela Mohammed replaces him on the state service, simultaneously becomes the recognized leader of the city intellectuals. The seminary students and linguists from the entire Kurdistan visited him. The further career is as follows: 1912 - mufti, 1919 - judge, 1924 - is elected in parliament of Iraq, where he and his adherents fought for the rights of the Kurds.

He takes part in the creation of the Kurdish schools and textbooks in the native language.

It is known, that Mela Mohammed is the author of fifteen books on natural sciences, theology and philosophy. Not all of them, unfortunately, are published. The book "Ideas of the Islam and the Updated Mosque" up to now is in the manuscript. The verses enjoy a happier destiny: they are printed, known and loved. The death of Mela Mohammed has shaken all the people; for each Kurd this sad event became a personal grief.

Unduly the modern reader knows but a little of poet **Vafayi**. Only in the latest years his verses are issued, literary critics have engaged in research of his life and creativity. And meanwhile today to everyone who reads, it is clear that his compositions are "the most perfect poetry", that is the poetic top of the Makhabad.

His domestic education **Kharik**, the native of the village of Zeve (1851-1907) has continued in Sebilakh under Sheikh Burgani. The poet was extremely interested in the history of art of the Kurdish people. And he wrote verses mainly about love. In his opinion, the love is the unique display of humanity, and a person in love is a creature of the superior order. He resists to harm aspires to live his life in the full consent with laws of morals. And the love helps to endure any torments, and it teaches the person to be kind, disinterested and fearless. And even suffering in love is the highest pleasure, allowing learning the terrestrial happiness, that is the completeness of life, the pleasure of communication with the nature and the contemplation of fine works of art, including verbal one.

## THE KURDISH LITERATURE OF THE 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

**Bekhud** (1878-1955) wrote much about a noble purpose that raises the person, about battling for freedom. He was born in Suleimania, in the family of the mullah. In the same place he received the initial Muslim education. Later Bekhud held the post of a judge in the city of Halabadzhi, and in Suleimania headed national assembly. The reader



has got acquainted with the fullest edition of verses of the poet in 1960. The author of "The Divan of Bekhud" writes much about the national-liberation struggle of the Kurds. The hero of the verses is not frightened by dangers, he is courageous and brave fights only temper his will to the victory. The poet describes how the enemies of the Kurdish freedom try to put people on knees by the fire and the sword. But nobody can break the will of the fearless Kurds in their aspiration to national independence, in their aspiration to banish the conquerors and the tyrants from the native land.

**Zivar** (1875-1948) is the son of mullah Rasul, the son of Moham-med; the native land of the poet is Suleimania. At the age of 7 Zivar began studying at medrese. Having finished his training, he became the teacher at a military school. "Pilgrims of freedom" are the favourite heroes of Zivar.

The poet wrote about his own participation in the struggle of the Kurdish people for freedom. The heroic lyrics of the author are collected in the "Divan," published in Baghdad, in 1948.

Poet **Osman Sabri** (1905-1993) has come from an aristocratic family of sheikhs. Having received excellent domestic education, having mastered in perfection the Arabian, the Persian, the Turkish languages, he traveled over Kurdistan much and everywhere ardently preached the Islam. He himself zealously followed the laws of the Muslim dogma. And yet not only the religion was a source of poetic inspiration.

Freedom, the native ground, nature - those poetic roots of creativity, which were to the full embodied in his poems. Through the general problems he looks at personal ones because in his poetry the poet and freedom, the poet and the land are inseparable. His poems are a history of people which has incorporated everything: the smoke of the native center, the smoke of gunpowder and fire, the smell of the mountain flowers, and a gentle touch of hands of the beloved.

With inexpressible skill the poet described the alarms and pleasures of the loving heart. Poems "The Bird of My Heart" and "Galavnedzhi" marked by the subtle truth of feelings, accuracy in the description of the validity

Polyphony is the distinctive feature of his poetry. It is realized extremely evidently and completely. In his poems the place is given to all: to the enemies and to the friends; intimate painful execution and reckless aspirations; to thirst of mad life and death; to the disgraceful fight which is not promising victories and a shame of a withdrawal from it; to rises and fallings; to road thorny and ooze of dirty thoughts, mean passions; to all the national foes - exulting, idly chattering, hands in blood of the adherents of national struggle for clearing of Kurdistan, perishing for the great cause of love for their native land; uselessness of the broken life and the heroic death. In his poetry the combination of different, frequently of opposite, antagonistic values, is determined each time by the given context. Sabri's words receive additional, secret meanings. For example, love. It is not only love for the beloved, but also love for the native people, to be exact to its representatives whose moral is healthy, who are strong and consequently fine people.

About courage, about valorous belief in a just cause of struggle for freedom are the verses of **Salam** (1852-1959). Having been born in the family of Sheikh Ahmad in Suleimania, he received his education, joined his fellow tribesmen so that together with them to battle for the freedom of his people. With a pain in heart the poet writes about the Kurdistan broken off in some parts. Salam trusts that a fiery poetic word is the best assistant in the fight for the freedom of the native land. He trusts, that sooner or later the Kurdish land, the Kurdish people will find independence.

The original name of **Gani Mukhtar** (1898-1960) is Mohammed. A native of Sulejmaniya, he writes verses since his youth. The hard life of people is well familiar to the poet. He writes about it and about the Muslim clergy whom he does not favour. And, certainly, he writes about love for the native Land, about national freedom. Most famous are the poems "Kurdistan", "I Am a Son of the Kurd", "My Merivan" "In My Dream"...

The son of Asman pasha **Akhmed Mukhtarbey** (1896-1935) was not in the childhood a diligent pupil. But the attitude to obtaining the knowledge has changed, when he started studying the Arabian and the Persian languages. Akhmed Mukhtarbey wrote his first verses at the age of 20; contemporaries consider him a clever and fair person.

Since 1922, down to the destruction in the mountains Navari in 1935, he holds important state posts. His works were published in the newspaper "Life", in magazine "Dawn of Kurmandzhi". Two divans of verses have been issued in Suleimania (1960), one in Navlar (1969). Ardent lines of the poet - patriot are devoted to favourite Kurdistan. His dream is to see his Fatherland free and incorporated in one country.

Suleimania is the native land of poet **Piramerd** (1868-1959), whose real name is Tofik. Mullah Hussein is the first teacher Piramerd. The inquisitive teenager easily joining to knowledge has independently studied Persian and all life admired of the ingenious heritage of Khafiz. Piramerd has undertaken some travels over Kurdistan; at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century carried out different state assignments. Good poetic school which Piramerd has passed, reading compositions of the Persian classics have helped him to create the lyrical arch using the big popularity even today.

The childhood of **Abdullah Goran** (1904 - 1962) passed in Turkish Kurdistan. Having finished pedagogical college, A.Goran for twelve years taught the Kurdish language and the literature in Iraq Kurdistan. As well as his many compatriots, for many years he stayed under public and private supervision of police, bodies of the government, censorship. At the beginning of the 60s he headed the Committee of "Ashitia Dzhahani".

A.Goran is one of few Kurdish poets of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, whose creativity is studied all over the world at the level with the classics of the oriental literature. Kurdish scholar-orientalist G. Alshanov wrote: "After the second world war the realism in the Kurdish literature even more amplifies. In this period the public attention is mostly drawn to A.Goran's creativity. As artist - innovator Goran today has been risen on the highest level of development of modern Kurdish poetry".

Goran is known all over the world as the author of four divans "Bakhadh u Yadigar", "Fyrmask u Khunar," "Syrush u Darun", "Lavyk u Payam". The Master of the perfected verse, A.Goran is skilful in selecting necessary details to transfer originality of a landscape, its especial colour. The love, landscape and political lyrics of the poet is extremely interesting. Verses "Witness" and "Crying on the road" (1930) are devoted to heroes of emancipating struggle of the Kurdish people.



About destiny of distressful unsubdued Kurdistan writes A. Goran in an ardent poem "The Kurdish appeal."

Mussa Khasan, subsequently **Shekhmus Dzhigarkhun** (1903 - 1984), overcoming the difficult conditions of his childhood, has entered a religious school, but soon left it and began to wander over Kurdistan in searches of knowledge. In an initial stage of the creativity the poet calls people to stir a united front to action for the independence. Dzhigarkhun in his "Honourable Epopee of the Perished" sings of a feat and heroism of famous heroes of the Kurdish revolts, their deep belief in a victory of freedom and independence of Kurdistan. In some of his fables with the help of metaphors on behalf of wise old man Dzhigarkhun will carry out a red string idea about monolithic unity of all the Kurds. This idea is best defined in the fable "The Ant Hill and a sentry lion of wise Solomon".

The poet, as a mirror, reflected realities of the Kurdish validity. As the true educator of time, he has called one of the first on struggle the Kurdish girls and guys on protection of the sacred native land. In the poem "The Anthem of the Girls", or "The March of the Youth" the poet calls:

*"I hear groans, I know  
That those groans are of my native Land.  
Fire pierces my heart.  
What's the sun? - a spark on that fire!  
Such pain compresses a breast!  
And on shoulders I carry a heavy cargo.  
Oh, so heavy is the cargo, and you be restrained,  
All the pain and all the trouble have merged in it.  
Whose is the voice? Whose groan I hear?  
I hear it from all sides.  
It's the native Land shouts and calls:  
"Cheer up, be rallied, oh my people!  
Listen oh Kurd, Zaza and Dzhhalali,  
You are sprouts of one ground,  
So rise all - you are not slaves,  
The time for struggle has come!"*

Kurdish literary critics, investigating poetic creativity of Dzhigarkhun consider that his creativity for many reasons is without exaggeration the entire epoch.

First, from the times of Akhmed Khani none of the poets writing on the dialect of Kurmandzhi raised the problem of the Kurdish national liberation on such high level, as Dzhigarkhun. Second, he is, perhaps one of last poets of such scale whose verses are written in classical style. Thirdly, whatever themes Dzhigarkhun's poems were devoted to, they are distinguished by sincerity, call of the heart, fidelity to cause of people, boldness that should get general national love and respect for the poet:

*"No river from the rivers of my country  
I shall not give for the waters of Zamzam, for the life and  
nectar.*

*No stone from the rocks of my country  
I shall give for diamonds, rubies, gold and pearls.  
Girls, brides, women and old women of Kurdistan  
I shall not give for the paradise, for pleasure and for all  
taken together".*

Among modern Kurdish poets a special place occupies brilliant **Khazhar** ("Poor man"), whose real name is **Abdul Rakhman Sharafkandi**. The poet was born in June, 1920 in Makhabad. His father who received religious education but did not become a mullah, who loved poetry and knew it well, gave his son the initial education. His worthy successor began to write verses at twelve-year age. Khazhar's first poetic collection "Alakok" ("Edelweiss") was published in Tabriz in 1945. Later others have joined the first book of verses, and also works on literary criticism in which he investigated the "Divan of gazelles" of M. Dzheziri), translations from A. Hani Khazhar translated "Mam and Zin" from Kurmandzhi into his own native dialect Mukri; also translated from Persian the classical book on the history of the Kurds "Sheref-Nameh".

Khazhar wrote gazelles, fables, poems, plays, lampoons, art dialogues. We hope, that curriculum vita, which is a fascinating narration, where there are a lot of sad and cheerful pages, a narration philosophical and truthful, sooner or later will be completely issued. While the

curriculum vita, which original is kept in the Institute of Oriental Studies, in Saint Petersburg, published only in part.

It is much created by Khazhar during his long creative life, but the most known product most favourite by people is the poem "Me and a nightingale". It is a gentle, tender declaration of love to the native land, the story of its nature, history, about folk customs and traditions.

The Beloved of the Nightingale is a Rose; the Beloved of the Poet is the Native Land. Also for the poet there is nothing more beautiful than Kurdistan:

*"Everything, that is the most desired,  
the most fine, from here up to  
Paradise is in the service to the beauty  
of Kurdistan. The Sky bows to its  
proud mountains... Kurdistan, oh my  
Native Land, force of my heart, peace  
of my soul... While I am alive - only  
you are my dream, I like, I idolize  
you".*

There are many significant symbols in the poem: "New Life" for which the poet hopes together with his people; "Wanderer", for the poet is a Kurd, a real and symbolical wanderer simultaneously; "Belief in immortality of the Soul and resettlement to the Homeland after death already on an eternal settlement".

Here is a fragment of the poem "Me and a Nightingale":

*"Oh, nightingale!  
Your rose is red and fragrant,  
Its lifetime is shorter than yours.  
Oh, mortal, you will fall lifeless,  
Who will sing all night about it?  
Who will regret of you, my dear,  
When the new life will appear?  
Mortal, I fall lifeless and I shall see, the sky-  
blue Whimsicality of sea bends, the beauty  
of snow Mountains and rivers, fields, and  
gardens, and they will cure my soul.*



*Everything of what I dreamed above the  
Rose, Above the unique Native land.  
Everything, over which I, wandering, Spilled  
my tears in boundless foreign land, All will  
return to me, will start again in the  
memory of bitter vagabond days. «The Poor  
wanderer», - be spilled the Whisper of my  
immortal Rose”.*

Predilection for scientific work since young years distinguished **Amine Avdal** (1906-1964). He was born in 1906 in the village of Yamanchair in Kars area of Turkish Kurdistan. As well as many Kurdish families because of excessive oppression of local authorities his relatives were compelled to leave the native land and to move to Armenia. Having finished in 1936 the historical faculty of the Yerevan University, he worked as the senior scientific research officer in the Historical Museum of the Armenian Academy of Sciences. In 1944 he was the senior scientific research officer at the Institute of History, where protected the candidate dissertation concerning the problems of the Kurdish woman, her position, her rights in a society before the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, on examples of oral folklore and the written literature.

A. Avdal's most popular works are: "Spring", "Three brothers", "Parishan", "Gyulizar". These and other products of the talented writer came as desirable to everyone who values riches of the national literature. A. Avdal has translated into the Armenian language the Kurdish national fairy tales (1957). This collection has filled up a folklore treasury of peoples of the Caucasus and the Near East.

In 1956 in the Armenian State Publishing House the book "the Soviet Kurdish poets" in the translation of Nina Alibegova has been published. Amine Avdalit is submitted not only with verses, but also with several poetic interpretations of national legends. The folklore plot of the legend "Makhmud bek and Muso" is artless, and national morals and character are well displayed in it. Makhmud bek made up his mind to kill the popular favourite bogatyr Muso. Under the pretext of checking the quality of damask steel he asks Muso to give him a dagger, and one of the court villains sticks it into Muso's back. Muso says:

*"That dagger seems to be bad,  
Strongly I stand  
On my legs.  
Well, I shall take another one"...*

Being wounded, Muso becomes even stronger. Bek and his henchmen in horror run up, and the hero hears prophecies on long powerful life from the lips of the fine girl:

*"You are brave, Muso," she  
says,- Your hand is as firm as  
steel. You will live for  
centuries: for you serve to the  
Truth"...*

The chivalrous attitude to the woman is significant among the Kurds, she becomes equal to the bogatyr and her prophecy becomes even more valuable. The unique combination in A.Avdal's verses of public and personal elements, philosophical reflections and love recognitions distinguishes his bright lyrics.

The sharp sight of the poet notices contradictions in the places where another person may see nothing. Indisputable truths not subject to revision for A.Avdal do not exist. He prefers to do without the ready-made and imposed by someone decisions. The intensely reflecting hero is a sign of inconsistent epoch, in which without the profound analysis, without the constant check of the ideas and acts, you will just go down the stream.

The works of Amine Avdal attract the reader with multi-coloured art fabric. The stylistic system of the poet is full of aphoristic statements, allegories and symbols.

Turkish Kurdistan is the native land of the brilliant master of the Kurdish poetry **Vezire Nadiri** (1911-1946). Having been made an orphan at an early age, young Vezir began to help in many respects to his mother. The rural priest introduced him to the reading of the Koran. His uncle Makhmade Nado helped the boy to receive initial education. Due to uncle's intellectual trusteeship the boy read in the original he immortal creations of Firdousi, Khayam, Rudaki, Nizami, Melaye Dzhezi-ri, Akhmed Khani. The poet knew, besides Kurdish, such languages as Arabian, Persian, Turkish, Russian, French, Armenian and Azerbaijan.

In 1926 fifteen-year-old teenager Vezire was compelled together with his family to leave the native land, to move to Nakhichevan, an Azerbaijan area near Armenia. He taught the Kurdish language in the village of Shavalika, in due course becomes the director of this school. Then he moves to Yerevan, studies in the Transcaucasian Kurdish pedagogical technical school. After finishing the technical school as an excellent pupil and a talented young expert of the Kurdish modern literary language Vezire Nadiri was recommended to teach Kurdish in the same technical school.

Then in 1935 he entered the philological faculty of the Yerevan Pedagogical Institute studying at the same time at the similar faculty of the Russian Pedagogical Institute after V. Bryusov, which he successfully finished in 1939. Since 1939-1940 he works at the Yerevan State University at the faculty of Oriental Studies as a teacher of the Persian language. And at the same time he enters the postgraduate courses where under the direction of the known linguist - orientalist G.Acharjan he studies creativity of the Kurdish poet of the 12<sup>th</sup> century Akhmed Mullah Dzheziri. Abilities of the young scientist simultaneously allowed him to read to students a rate of lectures on the oriental literature and languages. All sides of his talent were most brightly showed when he equally successfully combined the scientific activity with art. He writes fine verses, published the poetic collection "Nubar". Many researchers of the oriental literature consider him the founder of the modern Kurdish drama; the play composed by him "Rava Zhyne" (The Abduction of the Woman) up to this day is considered the first Kurdish dramatic work.

The characters of this play Nadyr, Khadzhi Musa, Dilbar and others in searches of the painful truth of life pass set of tests, make acts, at times rash, but in many respects sincere. Their ideas and words testify about their wish to the struggle against the feudal attitudes to woman. Here is everything both the true love and treachery, both meanness and insidiousness, both devoted friendship and sincere fidelity, but nevertheless at the end of the play for the first time triumphs an idea on the free right of the woman, her own choice.

The skills of the playwright debutant are amazing: behind the monologues of the characters of the play, behind the detailed notes we feel



the hidden author's presence, we guess, what his predilections and sympathies are. The reader is very grateful to the author, because with his help gets acquainted with the characters, each of which is unique and individual, outlined sharply, has its own biography, has precisely depicted shape and emotional - psychological type.

The most remarkable thing is that in many of V.Nadiri's works the reader feels the whole artistic and philosophical world much more surpassing the occasion that has formed a basis and the reason of work of the poetic imagination of the author: V. Nadiri's idea is both the consequence of the phenomena of the reality, and its thin, deep explanation. Through particularly represented situation «sprouts» the outlook of the big artist, the pride of the modern Kurdish literature.

Encyclopaedic knowledge of Vezire Nadiri, his vigorous intellectual activity allow to name him an original educator of Kurdish people. Unfortunately, the destiny of the genius and Vezire Nadiri deserves to be called the founder of the Kurdish cultural Renaissance - has developed tragically. His bright and brief life reminds the life and early death of his favourite poet Alexander Griboedov. Vezire Nadiri worked for the sake of prosperity of Iranian Kurdistan where in 1946 the Mekhadian independent Kurdish statehood was proclaimed. However, soon the leaders of the Kurdish independence were executed. Among them was V. Nadiri The body of the poet killed in Teheran was transferred to Tbilisi. He was a magnificent translator he made poetic transpositions of the poem "The Knight in the Tiger's Skin" by Shota Rustaveli, "Shahnameh" by Firdousi, many poems by Alexandre Pushkin and Michael Lermontov. Much in V.Nadiri's vital destiny still remains unknown. It may be so, that in due course all of us shall read the big biographic novel in which about this light person, the true and selfless patriot of the Kurdish people, it will be told as about the national hero whose name is sacred for all the Kurds.

Art creativity is wonderful already for the fact that it not only quickly responds to any event, but is capable to express the most complex problems brightly and emotionally. It is quite typical of creativity of **Arab Shamilov (Arabe Shamo)** (1897-1978) - the known Kurdish writer, the Honoured Artist of Armenia, a Member of the Union of Writers of the USSR.

Shamilov was born on January 23, 1897 in Kars area, Turkish Kurdistan. In the childhood he was a shepherd. Then his family was compelled to move to the village of Alexandrovsk in Kars area, and there he received an elementary education at the local Russian school. In 1924 he finishes the Lazarev Institute in Moscow. Here he actively started to be engaged in the questions of development of the Kurdish culture and the literature. Arabe Shamo together with Isaak Margulov, the Assyrian, in 1929 on the basis of the Latin script has created the first Kurdish alphabet. In the 30-s he works in the publishing house of the newspaper "Rya Taza", then enters the postgraduate courses of the Institute of Oriental Studies at the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. His master's thesis was written under the direction of Academician I.A.Orbeli.

In the numerous works he brightly described the life of the Kurdish people, the originality of their national customs, the rich folklore and the heroic struggle for the national independence.

Heroes of his work "The Road to the Happiness" are close to spirit and destiny of their people. Some of them are the carriers of the high properties of national character. Best of them are of pure heart, sensitive to goods and harm.

His first art book "The Kurdish Shepherd" was published in 1931 in Moscow in Russian. The author using examples from his own life shows tragic destiny of the distressful Kurdish people in Turkey. In 1935 this book was issued in the Kurdish language. The space and time in this known work, translated into many languages of the world (including Russian, Georgian, French, German, and English) are concrete and exact. More often his characters are attached to the certain household and social environment. The author aspires to characterize the private world of his characters, conditions of their life, and the life itself is connected, first of all, with his epoch. The images of his characters are various. The connections of the characters with the reality are not semi-mechanical association, but are conditioned by real life.

His creative activity was interrupted by political reprisals of the 30-s. In this hard period he worked as a loader, a watchman, and also performed any kind of work. During all this time practically the only outlet for him was his creativity.



After rehabilitation Arabe Shamilov has come back to Armenia and again with all tireless creative enthusiasm continued his literary life. He published his historical novel "Dawn" in the Kurdish language. The theme of the heroic struggle of the Kurdish people against the Turkish enslavers is in detail covered in the novel "Happy life" (1959).

In his work "Dym-dym" written on the basis of the Kurdish folklore with unusual sense of an art reception of oral folklore creativity and its epic attitude to the people is reproduced. The author amazingly manages to avoid artificial stylization. The penetration into the atmosphere of national poetry and at the same time the skill to overcome an imitation and to add to this atmosphere some household details and psychological skill, not breaking its spirit and style, has helped the author to avoid of decorative effects in the most interesting product of old time.

Arabe Shamo is not only a widely known writer, but also a scientist. He is the author of the Kurdish grammar, which already during many years serves as the reference book for teachers of the Kurdish language. His noble activity was highly estimated in Soviet Armenia.

Many remarkable writers have come from Turkish Kurdistan, including the outstanding master of word **Adzhiye Dzhndy** (Dzhavari) who was born in 1908. Having finished in 1929 the Pedagogical technical school of Leninakan, 10 years later he graduated from the Yerevan State University, over 20 years he worked in the Institute of Literature at the Academy of Sciences of Armenia, cooperated in the Kurdish newspaper "Rya Taza," was the manager of the department of the Kurdish Study of the Institute of Oriental Studies at the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. In 1946 the degree of Doctor of Philology "honoris causa" was awarded to him such serious and conclusive were Adzhiye Dzhndi's merits in the field of studying of the Kurdish folklore.

A. Dzhndi's prose and poetry are original. Reading his best poems "New morning," "Calling to the aid" we see that they are emotional and frank. Naturally, in A. Dzhndi's prose there is his own point of view; he also allows us, his readers to feel in his stories and stories something dear and close to our hearts, as if all this were an intimate conversation of a relative or a good friend. The pictures of life represented by A. Dzhndi, find a sympathetic response in the depths of our



hearts. Moreover, getting acquainted with them, you begin to forget about their author, all this by virtue of A. Dzhndi's talent receives independence and moral sovereignty.

Poetic works of Adzhiye Dzhndi have very simple and laconic plots. Generally it is a sincere story of the lyrical hero about himself, about meetings with people, about the experiences caused by intense reflections about life. At times the author briefly, not pressing into details, designates a contour of a situation, any part of the validity, not being tempted with scale, "wide scope." But the poet's skill is so great that using only one detail, a unique emotional paint he can stir our imagination. Our fancy is warmed up by the talent of the author. The author's idea is present at all structure of his work. So the thinnest runaway of associations are born, there appear and stay in a field of our psychological sight an implication, an internal theme. So the represented validity starts to speak in poetic language of the author's soul.

The validity and private world of the author are closely connected in his many-sided prose, as for example in his work "And there has come the spring". Here submit spontaneity of the unique instant, caught by A.Dzhndi's sharp personal sight; and at a glance an ordinary and not remarkable vital event becomes a mark of the spiritual biography of the author.

Adzhiye Dzhndi's merits are great in the field of development of the Kurdish folklore. For more than five decades he managed to collect, write down and study carefully a rich material on the Kurdish folklore. He is the author of such basic researches, as "Grammar of the Kurdish language (in the co-authorship with Prof. A. Khachatryan), "The Kurdish Folklore" (issued together with Àmine Avdal). In 1941 he published the book "The Kurdish Epos: "Kar at Kulyke Slemane Slivy", in 1957 the collection "Kurdish folklore", in 1959 - "Kurdish national stories", in 1977 Kurdish Tales of the Epos "Rostam Zal". Long laborious research on the Kurdish folklore was finished by voluminous scientific work "The Kurdish proverbs and sayings" (1985). Works of Adzhiye Dzhndi are issued in Kurdish, Russian and Armenian languages.

Even today many scientists base in their researches of the technique of translation on A.Dzhndi's works. Thanks to his translations

from Armenian the Kurdish readers can read A. Isaakyan's novel "Kurd Amo" (1963), Gabriel Sundugyan's "Sayat Nova" and "Pâpî", A. Shirvanzade's novel "Namus" ("Honour"), D. Demirchyan "Kach Nâzâr" ("Brave Nazar") and many others. He has a number of works devoted to Armenian and Kurdish cultural relations. Adzhiye Dzhndi was one of the creators of the Kurdish alphabet based on Russian system of writing and was one of the founders of textbooks in the Kurdish language.

For many years Adzhiye Dzhndi had been a member of the Board of the Union of Writers of Armenia. He was elected the delegate of the first congress of the Union of writers of the USSR.

**Dzhardoye Gendzho** is rightfully considered one of the Kurdish pioneers of

the education of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was born in 1904 in Kars vilayet in the village of Yaman-Chayir. In the 30 - 40s together with Arabe Shamilov, Vezire Nadiri, Adzhiye Dzhndi, Dzhasme Dzhhalil, Amine Avdal he worked not sparing himself for the development and prosperity of national culture. It was he who organized the edition of "Rya taza" newspaper. During some time he was the director of the Alagyaz Kurdish theatre.

The basic problem of story "Aparan" is the destiny of the Kurds living after October revolution in the area of Aparan (Armenia). The hero of this story at once draws attention of the reader as a person of strong passions. And the hero of the story "New village" with characteristic features of the contemporary of the writer - the same violent passion, thirst of the truth, readiness for self-sacrifice for the sake of the people's cause. Such heroes, as a rule, outstrip their time; deny an existing social order, calling to the high ideals of freedom and radical restructuring of life. Creative intuition, an insight and subtle sensation of time are distinctive features of his prose.

Since 1934 Dzhardoye Gendzho becomes a member of the Union of writers of the USSR. He put much energy into translations Russian writers. Due to his translation many Kurds could read D. Furmanov's novel "Mutiny" and feel all dramatism of that time.

Life and creativity **Nado Makhmudov** (1907 - 1989) is bright event in the history of the Soviet Kurds. An important subject basis in

the prose of Nado Makhmudov is usual daily life. Such life interests the writer and he represents it plastically. It is brilliantly represented in the story "The Heart of the Pigeon" (1961). Characters live in such household environment which they create for themselves.

In the "Road notes" (1971) in front of us pass various periods of life of his heroes.

**Dzhasme Dzhilil** is the name without which it is impossible to imagine the modern Kurdish literature. One of the most talented representatives of the Kurdish culture, a remarkable poet and an educator he is the author of more than twenty books among which there are poetic collections and original textbooks. He had a subtle, non-ordinary thinking, and conversations with him- and I personally have had a luck to know the poet - always became fascinating travel to the history, to our reality. Quite often we selected as a theme of the next conversation the verses of my interlocutor, whose charm consisted in love of the author to people, in generous application of all the riches of our native language. Yes, Dzhasme Dzhilil knew life well; he knew its dark and light sides, the details of daily life, and all this precisely and for ever has embodied in his verses.

Since the first years of his independent life Dzhasme Dzhilil was known as the person of huge energy. In the 30s he headed the Transcaucasian Kurdish Pedagogical Nollege, supervised over a department of the Kurdish literature in the Publishing House "Aipetrat", created clubs on liquidations of illiteracy, folklore ensembles. So, for example, in 1955 when he was appointed the Editor - in - Chief of the Kurdish broadcasts on the Armenian radio he has made improbable: during a very short period he created a gold musical fund consisting of more than 700 unique songs and melodies. These numerous affairs and cares, however, did not prevent D.Dzhilil from writing verses. A poetic heritage of the talented Kurdish writer made up the collections "My Days", "My Mother's Kofi," "Alagyaz", "My Center", "My Mother's Spring", "Mountain songs"...

*"When the Kurdish women along the bushes are moving in single file for the spring water they look like flowers among flowers and they merge with*



*your own beauty”.*

*“To my Alagyaz”*

This picture is not limited by any certain time, it is for ages.

In the legend “Nadeh” which was worked upon by the poet, the holy dervish says:

*«I see that strangely our world is arranged:  
apparently there is no truth in it. All people  
are born by the unique law, yet not all in it  
are equal”.*

In D.Dzhalil's verses there is a lot that is connected to the Kurdish folklore. From here we find the alive, sanguineous intonation, from here we find generous figurative speech. Sincere and full of authenticity of feelings poetry executed selfless belief in the best destiny of the Kurdish people. The poetry was not D.Dzhalil's single passion. He wrote ardent publicist responses to what the persecutors made with the Kurdish people in Iran, Iraq and Turkey.

Kurdish readers highly appreciate the creativity of **Aliye Abdulrahman** (1920-1994). He takes an honoured place in the national literature, as one of the most outstanding prose writers and poets. He is the worthy continuer of the ancient Kurdish classical literary tradition, which roots date from the depth of centuries.

Being the native of the Van area of Turkish Kurdistan, he moved to Armenia in 1926. Here A.Abdurahman finishes the Yerevan Kurdish Pedagogical Technical School. After finishing the school he works as a teacher, then he is called up for military service, participates in military operations, battles in guerrilla group against the enemy. After the war he graduates from the Azerbaijan State Pedagogical Institute, for many years he works in the newspaper “Rya Taza”.

His first book was published in 1959 under the name “Khate Kh-anym”. The author uses a rich material from the Kurdish folklore and the archive-chronological documents.

Aliye Abdulrahman for the first time in the history of the modern Kurdish literature creates an image of the Kurdish courageous woman who shoulder to shoulder with the father, the husband, and the brother - struggles for independence of her people and her Motherland.

The struggle of the Kurdish people for independence is the leitmotif of this work.

In the novel "War in the Mountains" the author describes the historical events of 20-30-s of the twentieth century in Turkish Kurdistan. At this time the Kurdish people has stirred to active actions for freedom and independence. In the book "Gunde Merkhasa" ("Village of heroes") the author on an example of the insurgents of one Kurdish village has shown the heroes becoming the rescue and hope of each Kurd.

His verses and poems "De" ("Mother"), "Gulistan", "Khasrata Myn", "My Dream", "Respect" were published in separate books, and translated into other languages. Both A. Abdurahman's prose and his poetry attract the reader by the pathetic image of national life, high humanity and the acuteness of the independent idea. A. Abdurahman invariably describes the life of the simple people in a humanistic key though he never admits any embellishment of the reality he does not flatter his characters.

**Mikaele Rashid** (1925-1984) was born in Tbilisi. In 1948 finished the Yerevan Pedagogical School. The same year he entered the State Pedagogical Institute after H. Abovyan. Having shown abilities in the field of the literature and having some published works he was sent in to study in Moscow in 1950. After graduating from the Literary Institute after Gorky he returns to Armenia. There he indefatigably works first in the regional newspaper, and then in the Republican "Rya Taza". Since 1961 he has been working in the editorial board of the State Committee on TV and Broadcasting of Armenia.

As literary critics mark, he equally well wrote in the Kurdish, Russian and Armenian languages. The first poem in the Kurdish language he printed in 1948. The first collection of poems "On the Roads of Motherland" (1958) was a lyrical confession of love to the Native Land. In collections "My Heart" (1960), "Time" (1966), "Window" (1974), "On the way" (1985) the poet is subtle in representing the feelings, ideas, experiences. Thus, for example, in the poem "Conscience" the author with psychological accuracy describes the condition of soul of a person:

*"If you turn off the road even once  
(the worthy way I mean), the*

*conscience will wake at the same  
moment, and from its blinding eyes  
you won't be able either to leave or  
to disappear".*

The poet transfers tenderness of feelings, their touchingness in the following lines:

*"Neither telegrams, nor letters,  
And the phone is silent wearily...  
And I almost go mad...  
But unexpectedly  
The hope itself has played in my heart".*

**Kavad (Karame Bagirovich) Rash** (1936 one of bright representatives Modern Kurdish prose, the secretary of the Union of Writers of Russia, the winner of Literary awards of N.A.Ostrovsky, "Stalingrad" and of Andrey Platonov. The author of the stories "Summer On an Isthmus", "Siberians against SS", "An Invitation to Fighting" and a collections of sketches "Army and Culture". The Kurds are born soldiers, they are strong, courageous and brave. Not for one century they protected the native ground from enemies, having got love of friends and respect of foes. As memory about the past in the veins of each Kurd flows the blood of his ancestors-fighters calling for freedom. Each work of Karame Rash is penetrated with pride of feats of fathers.

**Yilmaz Gunei** has enriched modern art with his multilattreal talent. He was born on April 1, 1937 in the village of Yenidzhe near Adan. The destiny has measured to this talented person 47 years, and the life was covered with more thorns, than with roses. From 26 released for him on creativity of years one can subtract 11, when he lived behind the walls of prisons, half-year of the exile, 2 years of penalty detachment in the Turkish army and 3 years of emigration. Despite of all this, Yilmaz Gunei managed to be taken off in 110 films, to write scripts for 53 art tapes, as director could take off 17 films, publish 4 novels and hundreds of stories.

His most known novel is "Died, but not bowed their head" has found reader and in territory of the USSR (in Russian translation the



novel referred to as "The Ruined Lives"). One year after the writer has received for this novel Premium of Orkhan Kemal of the Union of Writers of Turkey. From 17 tapes taken off by him more half was included in gold fund of Turkish cinema. From 25 prizes and awards by which Yilmaz Gunei was nominated, 23 were handed for his cinema works. At All-Turkish Festival of 1971 in Adan for the first time in the history of the Turkish cinema. he has received 6 of 7 prizes.

Since 1952 Yilmaz Gunei wrote sketches, stories which were periodically published in newspapers and magazines. The first success on a literary field, in his own opinion, became stories "Death calls me" and "Humiliations do not have the end" which were published in 1956 in magazine "Yeni ufuklar" ("New horizons"). But the most sensational story which predetermined all his life became the "Three latent factors of a social inequality", published in October 1956. Authorities were horrified by "sedition" containing in it and have forbidden the issue.

From 1972 to 1975, being in prison, he writes novels "Wishy-washy Person" and "Accused", and also "My Prison Cell" and "Letters from "Selimia".

Certainly, it is necessary to mention the person which name during several years was voice of the Kurdish national-liberation movement **Sherko Bek**. He was born in 1940 in Suleimania (Southern Kurdistan). He has published the first verses already at the age of 16 - 17 years in weekly newspaper "Zhin", and in 1968 has issued the first divan "Trifayi Khalbast" ("The Poem is like a moonlight"). In 1961 - 1975 he took an active part in popular uprisings. In 1984 - 1986 he was in guarilla groups. And during all this time he did not cease to write verses. In 1987 he has received the premium of Tokholksi. It is pleasant to note, that exactly with this premium the club of the Swedish writers "PEN" marks creativity of the writers who have appeared in emigration for the political reasons.

**Kamuran Badyrkhan** who is the author of the capital "Grammar of Kurdish language", was born in Istanbul in 1895. 30 years later, as well as many Kurdish families he had to immigrate to Syria. There he received higher education. In 1940 K. Badyrhan he published a new Kurdish magazine "Rozha nu" ("New day"). Many of the publisher's

articles about Kurdish language, folklore, the literature were printed in that magazine.

K. Badyrhan has received recognition not only as an outstanding linguist (during the second world war in Paris the doctor's degree was given to him). In 1932 K. Badyrhan has issued the collection of verses "Dyle Kure Myn" ("The Heart of My Son"). Some years later this collection added with new verses was published in Germany in translation into the German language.

About **Kadrzhane**, born in 1917, it is possible to say, that a bowl of sorrow and troubles he drank to the bottom. Many years have stayed in an imprisonment. But heavy vital circumstances did not extinguish ardent Kadrzhane's love to people. His hatred is directed against evil and violence, against unjust wars. He angrily discloses enslavers of the Kurdish people, those who take away the ground from fellow tribesmen of the poet, deprive of the opportunity to live and work to bring up children, to build peace quiet life.

**Karlene Chachani** was born in 1929 on the legendary, glorified in Armenian and Kurdish poetry the land of Alagjaz. In 1958 the collection of his children's verses "Akhmed Agid" ("Hero Ahmed") has been issued. Some verses from this collection were included in school readers on the Kurdish literature. Books "Gul" ("Flower"), "Sher u Kau" ("The Lion and the Pigeon"), "Barbanga valate myn", ("The Dawn of My Native Land") later were printed. In total more than ten editions of poetic products of K. Chachani has been published, including

"Selected Works" in Russian (M.: Raduga. 1986).

Chachani writes about real value of life which is inextricably related with immense open spaces of Kurdistan, with the big world in which the place sooner or later will occupy a free and independent Kurdish people who will sing his songs:

*As alarm in eyes,  
As a star in a spring,  
The national share  
Is reflected in songs,-  
Even the bird sings in the mother tongue,  
Even the voice keeps a smell of the fields.  
Songs of the Kurds are simple,*

*But the sons  
They Glorify highly and lingeringly,-  
So the crane sobs,  
So the nightingale sings,  
The Blue star calling bravely.*

.....  
*The Earth is alive as far as it sings about stars!  
The more brighter the tune-  
The more silent is the trouble!  
You will be happy again, my sad  
People!  
Keeping a spring song!"*

The lyrical hero of verses by **Symoye Shamo** (1928-2000) is the ardent patriot of Kurdistan. Deep reflections of the poet about the love winning death in S. Shamo's books capture the reader. Life can break at any moment, between lovers years and years of separation can run, but the love has no limitation period, its fire is unextinguishable.

**Faik Bekas**, born in 1948, as the fine poet, has opened in prison where he was imprisoned in his 32 years. His best, most famous poems "Dara azadiye" ("The Tree of Freedom") and "Ai, Vatam!" ("O Fatherland!"). F. Bekas does not curse destiny, does not try to cause the reader's pity to himself or to the hero, he is proud of courage of the Kurdish fighters, ready to sacrifice life for the sake of happiness of the free Native land.

**Kachakhe M'rad** (1914 - 1979) was born in the village of Tandurek in Kars area. K. M'rad's poetic heritage is popular. Time is not imperious above verses, deeply patriotic on mood, universal on sense. The poet avoided airs and graces, concentration on the personal experiences. To his style is peculiar frankness, openness, capacity of simple metaphors. K. M'rad's best verses are "Shav" "Bakhara taza", "Gava chara", "Gulpari". It is lyrics of the human heart, open to good and beauty.

Modern Kurds honour the name of **Mukhammed Emin** (was born in 1921) so high as the names of Khazhar and Kazi Mukhammed. The founder of committee "Zhiani Kurdi", he participated in creation of



Mehabadian Republic. Poetry of Emin is the appreciable phenomenon not only of the epoch when it was created: its creativity affects the development of the modern Kurdish literature. Quite often Emin wrote in the Azerbaijan language. The final collection of Emin's lyrics "Tari u ronai" is issued in Baghdad in 1976. Sincere kindness, ease of relations, an openness of the kind hearts is an atmosphere of Emin's lyrics.

The life of **Dil'dar** began in 1918. His best-known poem, the hymn "Ay, Ragip!" has instantly flown about many areas of Kurdistan, and unusually popular poem "Kurdistan" became a national song. Angry, fearless, it is executed by the effective love which was inextricably related with hatred to the enemies of the Kurdish people.

Widely known outside Kurdistan **Dzhaladet Badyrkhan** almost all his life has devoted to creation of the modern Kurdish alphabet, at the beginning on the basis of Latin, later Russian letters. He was born in Istanbul in 1897. D.Badyrkhan well knew the Arabian, Persian, German, French, Greek and English languages. He is the author of many popular poems, in particular "Bariya Botan". They are dear to national heart as a confession of the person never remaining indifferent to most secret expectations of the native people.

**Shykoje Gasan** (1928 - 1971). Having left school in the village of Alagyaz, he has entered the faculty of oriental studies at the Yerevan University. But then as the honoured pupil he was recommended for continuation of study at the Leningrad University where he has finished the branch of the Kurdish study of Orientalist faculty. Then he came back to Yerevan, worked on radio and soon issued the first book. Some years later S.Gasan's second book of "Tambour of the Kurd" was published. The collection "Parvaza Vatan" was issued after the death of the poet in 1975.

More often in S.Gasan's products it is possible to meet words "treasured" and "memory". By "treasured" the poet understood not only as heart-felt, but more often as piously stored, preserved, especially valued and secret. As to the "memory" we must say that in many of S.Gasan's poems he recollects the childhood, his relatives, close friends of youth and maturity, addressing to the sacred memory of those who has given life for the right of the compatriots to be free on the native land.

The first poetic lines have appeared under feather of Abdullah Pashevi when to the boy was 14 years old. He was born in 1947 in the village of Barkok, near Erbil. Poetic heritage of Abdullah Pashevi is great, but so far only some collections - divans, in particular "Brin" and "Kumyni shikasi" are published.

By A.Pashevi's verses it is possible to judge that for the poet the history is first of all centuries-old battle for freedom and independence of his native people. A.Pashevi understands that life is all the same tragic, that any person is trapped with death, at times violent, but the real man should be courageous, useful and necessary to the people and to his native land.

Our book is not the special monography about the Kurdish literature though we tried to give the reader the fullest representation concerning riches of the Kurdish literature during centuries. Besides those writers whom we have mentioned in this book, it is necessary to name also writers and poets whose books play an important role both in Kurdistan, and behind its limits. These names are Abdulla Pashevi, Saide Ibo, Azize Isko, Shamil Askerov, Ferike Usyv, Charkaze Rash, Askare Boik, Agite Shamsi, Djardoe Asad, Azize Isko, Barie Bala, Akhmede Apo, Salekh Sayadi, Azize Dzavo and many others.

We hope that in our following monography we shall fill this blank in full.

Taking into consideration that at all variety of their creative manners and stylistics of product modern Kurdish writers are united with ardent love to the distressful Motherland, high morals, respect for any people, for the culture of the whole world. From the books of modern Kurdish writers and poets written both in the native language and in languages of other peoples in many countries of the world - readers learn about the life of the Kurds, about outstanding sons and daughters of the Kurdish people, about their national-liberation struggle.

## POSTFACE

On reading K. Mirzoyev's book on the history, culture and literature of the Kurdish people, you cannot help but meditate on the nation's morality and self-respect. The people who long Before Christ were mentioned by ancient Greek historians Herodotus and Xenophon, people, who, despite not having so far gained their own statehood, have nevertheless for centuries maintained their will, determination and ability to sacrifice their lives for the sake of independence and patriotism.

Isolated by unfair destiny people lived and still live in the primordial territory. Kurds can be proud of the great commander of Middle Ages Sultan Salah-ad-Din (Saladin), who has been glorified not only by accurate historians, but by poets and writers, starting from the French minstrels to Marina Tsvetaeva. The poetry of the Kurds is fine. One example is the Azerbaijani poet Nizami, whose mother was a Kurdish woman, another Akhmed Mollah Dzheziri, the coeval and colleague of Firdousi and Shota Rustaveli, to whom many pages of this remarkable book are devoted.

In the history of the Kurdish people one injustice has followed another. In connection with this, it is necessary to mention the tragic deportation of the Kurds in 1937 and 1944 from the areas of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia that border with Turkey. Kazakhstan has mercifully sheltered the unfortunate exiles. As moslems-sunnis they share close on similar ideas and are linked by the heritage of their ancient civilizations.

I want to draw the reader's attention to the fact that in this book "The Kurds. Essays on History and Culture" an important emphasis is placed on Kurdish literature. This literature is conscience of people, that supreme beauty which generously and gratuitously is shared with entire world. And I find a lot of familiar to me in witty, flashing, optimistic Kurdish folklore as our proverbs and sayings are similar.

In the last years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century much was written and spoken about the Kurds including momentary, from time to time simply incorrect information. The present monograph by K. Mirzoyev for the first



time answers many questions frequently arising among people who are interested both in modern life, and an ancient history of the Kurds. The book thus contains both factual substantiation and the independent point of view of the author.

The explanation of the national unity of the Kurds which has been maintained over such a long period in fine words of Professor M.S.Lazarev is that: "Despite all the difficulties of harsh historical destiny, the Kurds not only have maintained attributes of their nationality, but, have even built upon and accentuated these national characteristics. The frontiers dividing Kurdistan have always been easily penetrated and did not interfere with mutual dialogue between the tribes. Distinctions in languages, dialects, religions were not absolute, and did not prevent mutual enrichment and understanding, creation of an original, advanced culture. Finally, the factor from time immemorial rallying the Kurds, the emancipating movements which have created proof of a political tradition in a society, have imposed an indelible print on the psychological shape of a people." ("Asia and Africa today". 1990. <sup>1</sup> 11. P. 12).

Gratitude, honour, conscientiousness and decency are integral traits of the Kurdish people. This book by Doctor of Philology Knyaz Ibraghimovich Mirzoyev, has enabled us to find out about the culture and experiences of a noble ancient people and to my mind deserved the reader's avid attention.

**A. Sh. ALTAYEV, Doctor  
of History Science**

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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K.I.Mirzoyev's fundamental monographic research "The Problems of interliterary communications and succession" (Almaty, 1995) is one of the first perspective scientific elaborations on the problems of oriental sciences. He is the author of more than a hundred scientific research papers and methodological works: "From the history of Azerbaijani-Kurdish literary communications" (1975), "National literatures and literary interrelations" (1985), "Literary horizons" (1986), "The Bridge of Friendship" (1989), "Nizami and the literature of peoples of the East" (1995), "Poetry of Abai: Peer into the heart"...(1995), "Historical destinies of the Kurdish literature" (1996), "The Kurdish Literature in Russia" (Moscow, "Friendship" magazine (1997), "The Kurds: Concise Encyclopaedia" Almaty, 2001, "Literary ties between the Kazakhs and the Kurds (Moscow, "Friendship" magazine, 2002), "The Kurds of Kazakhstan" ("The History of Kazakhstan" magazine, 1 5,

2002), "The Knowledge of Foreign Languages as a Factor of National Security ("Higher Education in Kazakhstan" magazine, Almaty, 2003, №3). "The Essays on the History of the Kazakh Literature" in Kurdish is at the printer's.

These and other works are distinguished by a high professionalism, scientific novelty, the saturation with the facts, the present day criteria in the analyses of historical and literary phenomena, the combination of the width of critical approach to literature with broad-mindedness.

K.I.Mirzoyev has supervised more than ten master's theses. He is scientific adviser of several Ph.D theses. K.I. Mirzoyev is a member of academic councils in Kazakhstan and in a number of foreign higher schools and scientific research institutes (Paris, Berlin, Brussels etc.), he is an active participant in many international scientific-theoretical and practical conferences in Almaty, Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Baku, Yerevan, Tbilisi, Paris, Berlin, Amsterdam, Brussels and Istanbul.

K.I.Mirzoyev is a prominent public figure. He was a member of the Union of Writers of the USSR (1985), a member of Board of the Union of Writers of Armenia and the Chairman of the Section of the Azerbaijan literature at the Board of the Union of Writers of Armenia, the Editor - in - Chief of the almanac "Edebi Ermenistan" ("Literary Armenia") (1985 - 2000). Now he is a member of the Union of Writers and the Union of Journalists of Kazakhstan, Editor - in - Chief of literary and art magazine "Nubar" (Almaty).

On October 22, 1998, by the Decree of the President of Republic of Kazakhstan for the merits before the Republic and fruitful activity in the spheres of science and education he was awarded with one of the highest decoration the Order "Kurmet".

He dedicates his creative scientific activity, his organizational talent, and his rich life experience to the development of science, education and literature.

K. I. Mirzoyev is married; he has two daughters and three sons.

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## THE CONTENTS

Author's Foreword .....	3
From the Editor .....	4
Legends about Kurdistan .....	6
<b>The Kurds</b> .....	7
The historical and literary theories of the origin of the Kurds .....	8
V.Minorsky's linguistic theory on Median-Scythian origin of the Kurds .....	14
N. Marr's linguistic theory on the Kurd's origin .....	16
Notes on the History of the Kurds .....	18
The Knight of the East .....	19
The revolt of the Badyrkhans (1842-1848) .....	27
<b>Settlements</b> .....	39
Kurds of Kazakhstan .....	57
Kurdistan .....	65
Minerals .....	66
Socio-economic structure .....	70
<b>The position of the Kurds today</b> .....	80
The Southern Kurdistan .....	80
The Northwest Kurdistan .....	87
<b>Abdullah Ocalan</b> .....	90
The Eastern Kurdistan .....	101
Mekhabadian republic .....	107
Modern position of the Kurds in Iran .....	113
The Southwest Kurdistan .....	121
<b>Religion</b> .....	130
Cosmogonic .....	130
Magic Views and Customs .....	131

<b>Culture</b> .....	141
Dwelling .....	141
The Family customs .....	148
Weddings .....	151
Funerals .....	154
National clothes of the Kurds. Lady's wear .....	157
National clothes of the Kurds. Men's wear .....	165
National Kurdish food .....	168
<b>The Kurdish Language and the literature</b> .....	201
The Language .....	201
The Literature .....	203
Language and style of the Kurdish lamentations .....	209
Proverbs and sayings .....	212
Entertaining stories .....	216
The Kurdish Epos .....	220
The written literature .....	223
A literary criticism of "Yusuf and Zuleikha" .....	235
Kurdish literature of the 17 <sup>th</sup> century .....	237
The Poetic circle .....	244
Kurdish literature of the 18 <sup>th</sup> - 19 <sup>th</sup> centuries .....	246
Kurdish literature of the 20 <sup>th</sup> century .....	252
<b>Postface</b> .....	276
<b>About the author</b> .....	278
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	280



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## TURKEY

At least 250,000 Kurdish refugees are massed along the Turkey-Iraq border.

## KURDISTAN

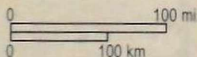
## SYRIA

## IRAN

Nearly 200,000 Kurdish refugees may have crossed the Iranian border in the past two weeks. More than 1 million refugees could follow.

## IRAQ

★ Baghdad



Source: The Kurdish Library  
TIME Map by Paul J. Pugliese