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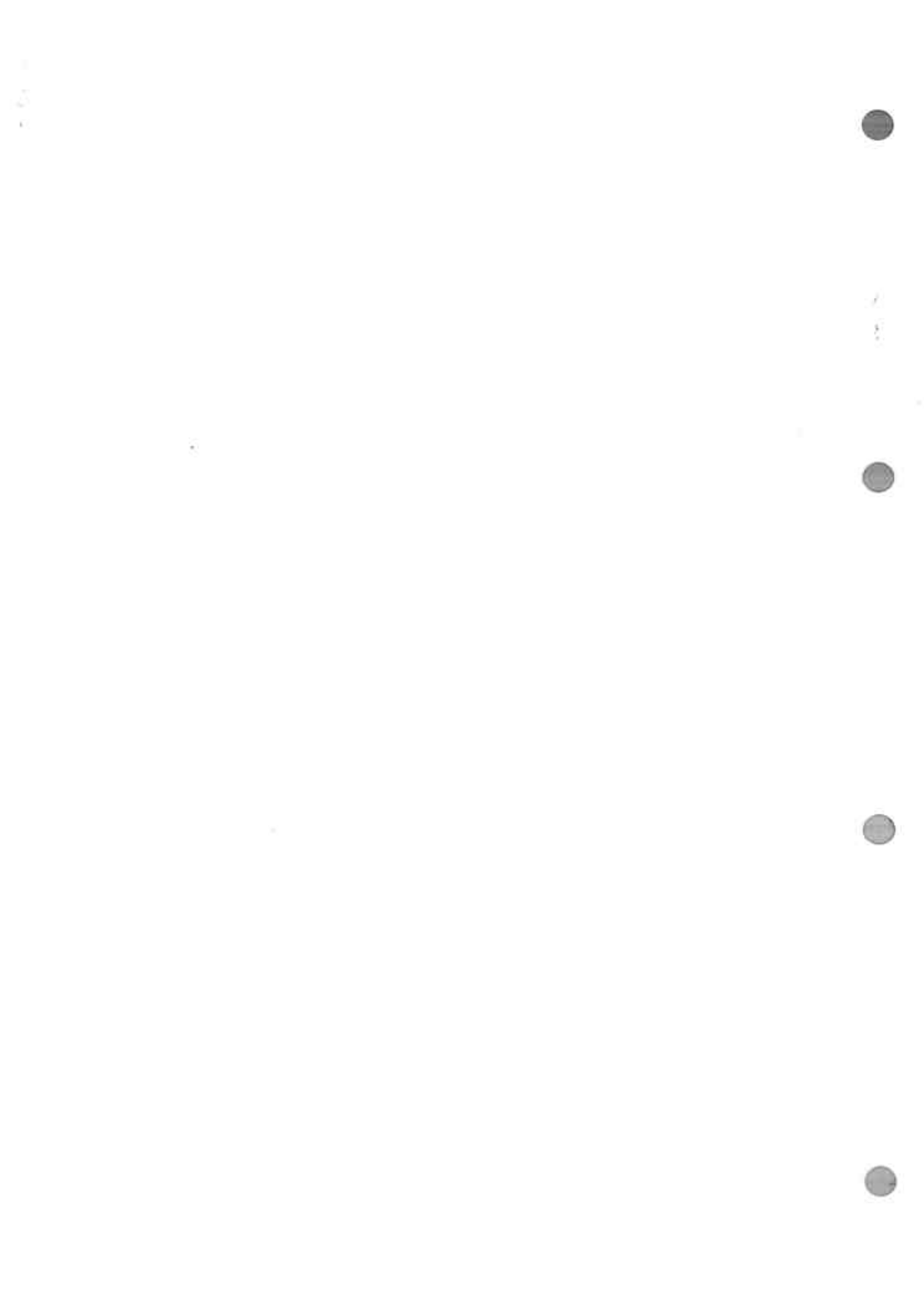


SYRIA



Ulkomaalaisviraston tutkimuksia 1

Utlänningsverkets studier 1 - Directorate of Immigration studies 1



KURDISTAN



Directorate of Immigration Publications 1

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· PL92
FIN-00531 Helsinki
FINLAND

Ulkomaalaisviraston julkaisuja 1
Utlänningsverkets publikationer 1
Directorate of Immigration Publications 1

ISSN

ISBN 951-53-2015-1 (suom. painos)
ISBN 951-53-2016-X (English edition)

Printed in
Tummavuoren kirjapaino, Vantaa, Finland, 1999.

FOREWORD

One of the Directorate of Immigration's special concerns has been to develop and maintain a high standard of expertise in refugee issues. In particular, familiarity with the conditions in the countries the asylum seekers and refugees originate from - their history, culture and, most importantly, the political developments - demand continual and broad ranging monitoring of events. The Directorate of Immigration has delegated this task to its Country Information Unit. Materials produced by its staff are also utilised in the decision making process of asylum applications.

The report at hand is the result of the work of Antero Leitzinger, a researcher with the Directorate of Immigration's Country Information Unit. Its topic, Kurdistan and the Kurds, is one of the central refugee issues of today. This report also starts the series of the Directorate of Immigration Publications. In the future, further reports containing country of origin information will be published via this series.

It is my hope that this report on Kurdistan, as well as published future reports, will satisfy the vast need for knowledge in connection with conflict prone geographical areas of the world.

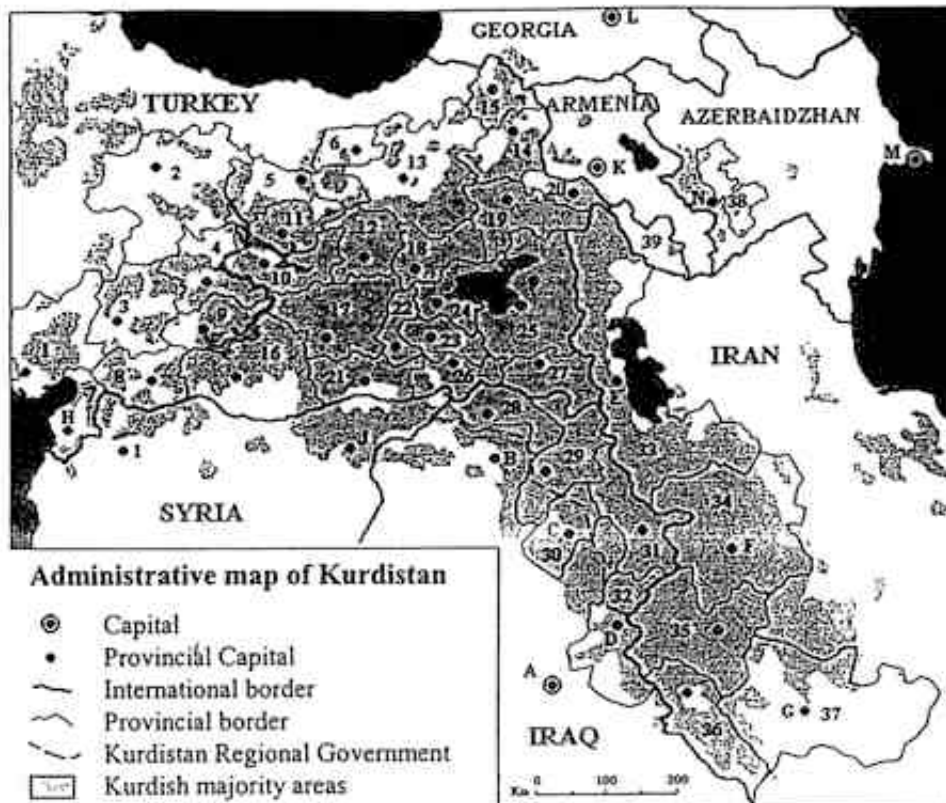
Helsinki 5.8.1999

Matti Saarelainen

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PROVINCES:

Turkey:

- 1 Adana
- 2 Sivas
- 3 Kahramanmaraş
- 4 Malatya
- 5 Erzincan
- 6 Bayburt
- 7 Hatay
- 8 Gaziantep
- 9 Adiyaman
- 10 Elazığ
- 11 Tunceli
- 12 Bingöl
- 13 Erzurum
- 14 Kars
- 15 Ardahan
- 16 Şanlıurfa
- 17 Diyarbakır
- 18 Muş
- 19 Ağrı
- 20 Iğdır
- 21 Mardin
- 22 Batman
- 23 Siirt

- 24 Bitlis
- 25 Van
- 26 Şırnak
- 27 Hakkari

Iraq:

- 28 Dahuk
- 29 Arbil
- 30 Ta'mim
- 31 Sulaymaniah
- 32 Diyala

Iran:

- 33 West Azerbaidzhan
- 34 Kordestan
- 35 Kermanshah
- 36 Ilam
- 37 Luristan

Azerbaidzhan:

- 38 Mountainous Karabakh
- 39 Nakhichevan

CITIES:

- A Baghdad (IRQ)
- B Mosul (IRQ)
- C Kirkuk (IRQ)
- D Khanaqin (IRQ)
- E Orumiyeh (IRN)
- F Sanandaj (IRN)
- G Khorramabad (IRN)
- H Antakya (TUR)
- I Aleppo (SYR)
- J Hasakah (SYR)
- K Yerevan (ARM)
- L Tbilisi (GEO)
- M Baku (AZR)
- N Lachin (AZR)

Where is Kurdistan? Who are the Kurds and what are their living conditions like? Who represents them? Simple answers to these questions may be popular, but they do not necessarily prove to be the right ones. The purpose of this research, which is based on the material available to the Finnish Directorate of Immigration up till the date of June the 30th, 1999, is to show the complicity of the issue, to encourage further research and to adduce sound arguments for government officials and other quarters taking an interest in the subject.

1. POPULATION

The estimates on the number of Kurds vary considerably, depending on the methods employed for counting and on how the Kurdish identity is defined. According to the average estimate there are 20-30 million Kurds, half of which live in Turkey, with one quarter of them in Iran. Consequently almost every fourth citizen in Turkey and Iraq would be a Kurd; in Iran the ratio of Kurdish citizens against the population as a whole would be one in eight and in Syria one in ten. (Compare Appendix 1: Population Statistics!)

The question is, does the Kurdish population actually form a clearly defined nation based on language, religion or other cultural factors? What defines a nation on the whole? Why do Norwegians and Swedes feel that they are separate nations, rather than tribal offshoots of one, i.e. Scandinavian nation? Why do Bavarian people feel that they belong to the German nation, although their dialect differs from High German as much as Swiss German does? Besides language, what significance do other factors carry to the formation of nationhood? Americans, for example, escape definition based on language and religion, or skin colour to that matter. Similarly, an unambiguous definition of the Kurdish identity is difficult to reach.

The Kurds are divided into several tribal groups speaking various dialects, belonging to different religions or religious subgroups. A great deal of assimilation with the neighbouring nations has also taken place, a factor which has greatly been encouraged by the governments in the area over time. The national identity of the Kurds, on the other hand, is a fairly modern concept, with several aspects of it still in the process of being formed.

1.1. Language

Due to the fact that most Kurds are bilingual, defining their mother tongue is a complex task. In the various census operations carried out in Turkey, the last time mother tongue was included as one of the factors was in 1965. Even then, only non-bilingual Kurds were separated as a category of their own. Their number was largest in the provinces of Siirt, (67,8%), Mardin (66,4%)⁹ and Diyarbakır (61,8%). (HUMAN RIGHTS...pg. 180) After that a whole generation of Kurds in Turkey has undergone a significant amount of forced Turkish language influence, which indicates that the number of non-bilingual Kurds is probably considerably less nowadays.

Likewise the Kurds in Iran speak Persian, and the Kurds in Iraq and Syria speak Arabic, often even as their mother tongue. In Iran, Syria and Turkey the teaching of Kurdish language and other public use of the language has been banned from time to time. For this reason illiteracy among the Kurds is higher than average. This again has reflected negatively on their educational and job opportunities and consequently on their living standards.

Kurdish is an Iranian language, or a group of languages, which the Iranian government considers to be almost a dialect of Farsi. Due to some mediating dialects the language boundary in the east is indeed unclear (A gradual slide from Farsi to Kurdish); the western dialects on their behalf include numerous loanwords from both Arabic and Turkish. Consequently the Kurdish dialects differ greatly from one another, and not all Kurds understand each other's speech. (MCDOWALL 1992 pg. 3 and 12)

The oldest written language of the Kurds is **Sorani**, also called South Kurdish or Southern Kurmandzhi.¹ It is spoken around the town of Sulaymaniah in Iraq² and in the area that borders it on the Iranian side³. Sorani is written with the Arabic script, and it is the second official language of Iraq. Forty years ago 38% of the Kurds spoke Sorani (excluding Zaza and Gurani speakers) but their number seems to have declined, for nowadays Sorani is spoken by six million people only (at the most). (KARABUDA S. 80)

The majority dialect of the Kurds is **Kurmandzhi**, which the Iraqi Kurds call *Badini*. It is spoken in the northern parts of Iraq and Iran, in Syria, Turkey and also in the Caucasian countries. In Iraq, Kurmandzhi is spoken in Zakho, Aqrah and Amadiyah; in Iran, in addition to the Khurasan tribes the Herks, Milans, Shekaks, Jelali and Heydari also speak Kurmandzhi. "*Mem u Zin*", the national epos of the Kurds, was written in the Kurmandzhi language in the 17th Century.

Nowadays Kurmandzhi is written either in the Latin or (in the former Soviet Union) in the Cyrillic alphabet. The Latin alphabet for Kurmandzhi was developed separately in the Soviet Union in the late 1920's (when it was decided

¹ For example, "A Kurdish - English Dictionary" (Oxford 1966) is compiled "on the basis of the Southern-Kirmanji dialect"; on the other hand, the cover page of the only Kurdish - Finnish dictionary in existence refers to the Sorani language in parenthesis after the main title.

² In addition to that, Sorani is also spoken in Kirkuk, Mosul, Arbil and Rawandiz.

³ Sorani is spoken in Sanandaj and Mahabad. However, the variety of Sorani spoken in Mahabad is based on the slightly differing Mukri dialect.

to start using the Latin alphabet also for the languages of Turkic origin for the time being). Syria employed the Latin alphabet for Kurmandzhi in 1932, following the example of Turkey. The Soviet Union discarded the latinisation scheme for the Kurdish alphabet after the Second World War and changed over to the Cyrillic alphabet. (The Cyrillic alphabet had been used there for the Turkic languages already by the end of the 1930's.) In contrast with this, the Latin alphabet developed for the Kurmandzhi in Syria is still in use. (<http://www.lmp.ucla.edu/profiles/profk04.htm>; <http://www.cogsci.ed.ac.uk/~siamnkr>; AKINER s. 214)

The differences between the main Kurdish dialects have been compared with the differences between English, German and Dutch, or to those between Spanish and Portuguese. (THE KURDS pg. 71; MEYER-INGWERSEN pg. 37; MCDOWALL 1996 pg. 9) Apart from the vocabulary, there are also grammatical differences. In situations like these political motives decide, whether the language forms are described as completely separate languages or as dialectical variations - those claiming to be one nation say they speak one language and play down the dialectical differences, which are due to tribal differences. The Chinese and Georgian languages, for example, are often considered to be uniform languages, although both of them are actually language groups - the Cantonese speakers do not understand Mandarin Chinese and neither do the Svanetians understand the Kartvelian Georgian.

Often the attitude is asymmetric: Among the southernmost dialects of Kurdish there is an inability or an unwillingness to understand Kurmandzhi, although the Kurmandzhi speaking Kurds sometimes claim to understand Sorani. This is partly due to the strong sense of self-esteem on behalf of those who use the older written language (Sorani) and partly because of the Kurmandzhi speakers' desire to emphasise national unity. In like manner the Zaza and the Gurani speakers learn to understand Kurmandzhi, but not vice versa. (Kurdistan Report 16/1993; LEEZENBERG)

In the Tunceli (Dersim in Kurdish) area around five million people speak the **Dimili** dialect, which is also called **Zaza**. They do not necessarily classify themselves as Kurds at all, but have fostered an idea of a separate state of Zazakistan. (VORHOFF pg. 111; Martin van Bruinessen: 'Aslîni înkâr eden haramzadedit!' - The Debate on Ethnic Identity of the Kurdish Alevis, <http://www.deakin.edu.au/~kstudyg7alevikrd.html>).

Surprisingly enough, the closest related dialect with Zaza is **Gurani**^{*}, which is spoken around Kermanshah by about four million people. It flourished in the 18th Century as the court language of the Khanate of Ardalan. The Iranian government has favoured the use of Gurani in radio broadcasting since the late 1950's.

The researchers are not united in their opinion on whether the Zaza and Gurani languages are representations of a single original language which was common to the area prior to the westward spread of the Kurmandzhi speakers, or whether the Zaza speakers are just descendants of the sprinkling of Guranis who spread westwards later on. Both of these dialect areas also contain a sectarian religious identity ("Yazdanism"), although language and religion do not form a

^{*} Also known as *Gorani*, *Hawrami* or *Hawramani*

perfect match here. This has caused a rift in the unity of the Kurds in the region, but on the other hand, their joint separateness from the main population surrounding them has served as a uniting factor for them. Although the Zaza and Gurani speakers were actually not considered genuinely Kurdish from a purely linguistic point of view, their joint destiny with them has often created in them a Kurdish identity. (LEEZENBERG)

Those Kurds that live the deepest inside the Iranian borders speak the Luri language, which is at least as close to Farsi as what it is to Kurmandzhi. Thus the Luri are not usually considered Kurds and they themselves call their area Luristan. (MCDOWALL 1992 pg.8)

1.2. Religion

As far as the Kurdish identity is concerned, traditionally religion has been a more important factor than language. Approximately a quarter of the Kurds still define themselves first and foremost on the basis of their religion. (According to another estimate the number is only 4%) (WORLD DIRECTORY... pg. 381; GUNTER pg. 127-130)

Bassam Tibi, a Syrian born professor of the University of Göttingen, has described the religious trends among the Turkish immigrant population in Germany with the terms "ghettoislam" and "euroislam". (SPIEGEL 31/27.7.1998) Likewise among the Kurds religion can function either to strengthen the separate identity of the community or to help integrate the members into the wider society around them.

1.2.1. Conventional Islam

Most Kurds (approximately 15-18 million people) and almost all of the Kurmandzhi speakers are Sunni Muslims, belonging to its **Shaafi** school. This does not, however, have any practical implications for the practice of their religion in the overall Sunni environment of Northern Iraq, Syria and Turkey.

Apart from the Sunni Muslims, there are also several Shiite groups among the Kurds. The conventional Shia Muslims among them are found in Iran, but the Feyli Kurds moved from there to south Iraqi towns some time back. In 1921 and in 1980 Iraq expelled their remnants back to Iran, and nowadays neither state wants to acknowledge them as their citizens. On the account of their religion, the Feylis have assimilated into Iranian society much better than other Kurds. (MCDOWALL, 1996 pg.11)

1.2.2. Unorthodox Islam; 'Yazdanism'

Among the Kurds, there are several sects that deviate from the Shiite tradition, but it is practical to group them together with it, although in fact they may have a different origin, being the descendants of Zoroastrianism, the main religion of ancient Persia. (CEVİZ pg. 63-65). These sects have obvious syncretistic elements from early Christianity, for they emphasise the meaning of the fourth caliph Ali, Mohammed's nephew, in a way reminiscent of the Christian doctrine of trinity. In its extreme form, this means worshipping Ali as the incarnation of God. These sects are called "the extreme (ghulat) Shiites". Their common features include the belief in the transmigration of souls and the permission to drink wine, for example, for which reason other Muslims have often questioned whether they should be classified as Islamic at all.

Approximately one third of the Kurds represent an unorthodox form of Islam called Yazdanism, a name that refers to angel cult.

The Islamic Republic of Iran recognises the "Religions of the Book" (including Christianity and Judaism) mentioned in the Koran, but it does not accept paganism or new religious orders that deviate from them. Although in principal Turkey is a secular state with a freedom of religion, in practice Islam is the main religion and the less common religions are given the cold shoulder, especially in the more remote areas of the country. The Yezidi have been the most prone to experience persecution everywhere. (Who is a Refugee? pt. 250 and 270; MCDOWALL 1992 pg. 14)

The Yezidis have sometimes mistakenly been called "Satan worshippers", but in reality they are an old syncretistic group that has combined elements from various different religions. Its members are solely Kurds. It is difficult to describe the Yezidi religion, because it has combined almost every possible element from the various religious traditions that have had an influence in the area, and has somehow reinterpreted them in the process. It includes, among other things, elements from the Jewish kosher laws, including the permission to drink wine, the practice of circumcision, the equivalents of Christian baptism and communion, a three day fast in the middle of the winter, the New Year festival in the beginning of April, prayers to the direction of the sun, the annual autumn pilgrimage to the grave of sheikh Adi, who lived in the 12th century, and the Manichean way or reckoning time. Their festive day is Wednesday, but their day of rest is Saturday. The Yezidis believe in incarnation. There is no hell, because Satan (a fallen angel) has repented of his sin and helps the believers to be saved - the animal symbolising him is peacock.

The language of the Yezidis is a dialect of Kurmandzhi, but they can barely understand the other Kurmandzhi dialects. The separation of the Yezidis from the other Kurds has been highlighted by their religion, according to which they descend directly from the seed of Adam, and they do not consider Eve to be their

³ Nowadays "extreme Shiite" is a difficult definition, as it implies political conservatism. The Islamic government of Iran, however, does not represent the wide variety found within the Shiite tradition, which has included rather individualistic, and often quite liberal, groupings.

ancestress. Thus, a person cannot convert to Yezidism. One has to be born a Yezidi.

Nowadays there are perhaps only a couple of hundreds Yezidis left in Turkey, but they have their own religious societies in Syria and Iraq, where there are presently around 50-150 000 Yezidis. (ANNUAL REPORT pg. 61; <http://home3.swipnet.se/~w-31006/Kurd.htm>) In addition there is a sizeable Yezidi community in Armenia. They arrived there by the 18th century the latest - up till the First World War there were more Yezidis in the Caucasus than what there were in the region of the Ottoman Empire. (GUEST pg. xvii). Part of the Armenian Yezidis (Armenian Yezidi National Union) have vehemently denied being Kurds at all, because by Kurds they mean only Muslims.

The traditional centre for the Yezidis is around the town of Shaykhan in the Iraqi Kurdistan. However, most Yezidis live on the other side of the border, on the mountain of Sinjar (Jabal Sinjar), in the area controlled by the Iraqi government (NZZ 28.4.1993)

A corresponding religious sect in Iran is known by the name of **Ahl-i Haqq**⁶ ("The people of Truth") and their representatives in Iran are called by the name **Kakai**⁷. They originate from Luristan, but their holy Scriptures are written in Gurani. Ahl-i Haqq was at its strongest in the khanate of Ardalan, from where it spread to Azerbaidzhan and possibly formed into Alevism.

Ahl-i Haqq believes in the transmigration of souls. From God himself there are believed to be seven incarnations, from whom the second was Ali and the fourth was sultan Sohak, who was born in Barzindja either in the 11th or 12th century. The Kakai consider themselves his descendants. The seventh incarnation of God was Atash Khan, who lived at the beginning of the 18th century.

Ahl-i Haqq is a heterogeneous collection of Zoroastrianism, Manicheism and other religions of Middle-Eastern origin. Its religious practices include joint meetings, animal sacrifices and ecstatic dances. Women are considered equal to men.

Nowadays the main support area of Ahl-i Haqq movement is around the Kermanshah region, where its followers number around one million, which is about one third of the population. (IZADY pg. 132) Only part of them are Kurds, but these have always been on fairly good terms with the Iranian government (BRUINESSEN pg. 23 and 125; KÜCHLER pg. 130-131; MCDOWALL 1996 pg. 36 and 278; WORLD DIRECTORY... pg. 341; <http://home3.swipnet.se/~w-31006/Kurd.htm>).

⁶ They are also known by the names *Ahl-i Hakk*, *Ehlhak*, "Alhakians" or *Ali-ilahi*, *Aliullahi* ("Ali-deists"). The latest English language sources use the term *Yarsan*. The form Ahl-i-Haqq is the most commonly used, though not the best possible option.

⁷ Kakai is actually a name of a tribe. The representatives of Ahl-i-Haqq are also called by other, more restricted and often tribe specific names, such as *Sarli* (near Kalak, half way between Mosul and Kirkuk), *Shebek* or *Shabak* (on the Sinjar mountain and in the Mosul region), *Bajalan*, *Bajoran* or *Bacuwan* (in the Khanaqin region and north of Mosul) and *Zengana* or *Zangana* (near Khanaqin and to the southwest of Kirkuk.) Formally some of them are identified with the Sunni tradition and the others with the Shiites, but they are all united by some deviant religious customs and by specific distinguishing features, such as the prohibition to shave off the mustache, binding all males or sheikhs. Part of the followers of Ahl-i Haqq in Iraq speak Gurani (the Kakais, Bajalans and Zenganas) or Zaza (Shebeks), while some of them speak either Sorani, Arabic or Turkish. (Michael Leezenberg: Gorani Influence on central Kurdish, <http://www.cogsci.ed.ac.uk/~siamakr/>; IZADY pg. 173-174).

The estimates concerning the Alevi⁸ living in Turkey vary greatly. From the population of Turkey, there are 10-20 million Alevis (especially in the Sivas region), so even among them the Kurds remain a minority⁹. Besides, most Alevi Kurds speak Zaza and feel much closer kindred ties with their Turkish coreligionists than with the Sunni Kurds who speak a different dialect. The Alevism came to Turkey from Azerbaïdžhan at the end of the 15th century¹⁰. (<http://home3.swipnet.se/~w-31006/Kurd.htm>; MCDOWALL 1996 pg. 25-27 and 397; LAIZER, pg. 160)

The Alevis guard their own group strictly against mixed marriages, but they are liberal in their religious views (women are considered equal to men) and have traditionally supported the moderate left-wing parties that are the offshoot of Atatürk's Republican party. (NISAN p. 99-100; NZZ 24.-25.2.1996, <http://home3.swipnet.se/~w-31006/Kurd.htm>)

From time to time there have been skirmishes with the Sunni Islamists, but the army that controls the non-religious form of government in Turkey is on the Alevi side. Despite of this there was an influx of Alevi refugees to Britain in the months of May and June of 1989. (MCDOWALL 1992 pg. 60) Finland got its share of them with a two-year delay effect.¹¹ Both enterprising refugees and the extreme left wing have taken advantage of the possibility of appealing to persecution based on religion, although this does not take place on a national level anywhere. An extremist group that calls itself "The Red Way" (*Kızıl Yol*) has been active in trying to form a special homeland for the Alevis called Alevistan. PKK has displaced all Alevis from the leading positions in the organisation, yet has started to publish a magazine called *Zülfikar*, which is aimed at the Alevis and founded a special Kurdish Alevi Union (*Kürt Alevi Birliği*), which is led by Ali Haydar Celasun. Alevis are also found in other political parties (for example Kemal Burkay and Ibrahim Aksoy). (STOKES pg. 200, BARKAY & FULLER pg. 70;

⁸ The forms 'Alevi' or 'Alewives' have also been used for the Turkish Alevis. The word stem employed for the term is the name of Mohammed's son-in-law Ali. In addition to that the Alevis are often divided into two groups: the Kurds belong to the sect called *kizilbaş* ('redhead'), which is derived from the traditional headgear. Many of those Alevis that are ethnic Turks belong to the Bektashi brotherhood. Syria's president Hafez al-Assad belongs to an influential Alawite subgroup. In practice it can be considered an Arabic variety of Turkish Alevism, although researchers are generally quick to warn against getting these two mixed up. The Alawites have the clearest concept of the deity of Ali. The sect was founded in the 9th Century in Iraq by Ibn Nusayr, and up till the First World War the sect was known as 'the Nusayrians', like the Kurds, Alewives also celebrate Nevruz, but ethnically they are Arabs.

⁹ The estimates about the proportion of the Alevis vary between 10-40%. According to one estimate they form the majority in the Tunceli province (87%) and a considerable minority (20-40%) in the provinces of Hatay, Sivas, Amasya, Malatya, Adana, Tokat, Adıyaman, Kahramanmaraş and probably also in the districts of Gaziantep and Şanlıurfa. (IZADY pg. 132-133) The number of Kurds among the Alevis is even more difficult to determine, the total probably being around 5 million, which means one third of all the Alevis. According to some researchers their number has been exaggerated and a more realistic figure would be under 20%. The Kurdish speaking Alevis live in the provinces of Sivas, Tunceli, Elazığ, Muş, Erzincan and Bingöl. (VORHOFF pg. 32-33 and 58).

¹⁰ The Alevis have retained some remnants from their Iranian origin. The Alevis of Gaziantep, for example, still recognize the spiritual leadership of Ahl-i Haqq.

¹¹ The onrush into Britain of the Alevis from the provinces of Sivas and Kahramanmaraş led to an obligatory visa being imposed on the Turkish nationals. Foreign Minister Douglas Hurd based this decision on the fact that it was mostly unemployed young men who were arriving in Britain from Turkey. Östen Wahlbeck, who interviewed the Kurds both in Finland and in Britain, notes that some of the Finnish Kurds had connections with the Kurds in Britain, yet he found no evidence of chain migration. (Wahlbeck pg. 84). The information gathered by the Directorate of Immigration in Finland however strongly suggests that as far as Finland is concerned, this has indeed been the case in the 1990's.

1.3. Culture

The position of women among the Kurds has traditionally been better than among the Arabs and Persians - at least on the outside. The women do not generally use, and never have used, the veil. (KINNER pg. 351; FRAZER pg. 193; RICH I pg. 284-285; NISSAN pg. 28; NERWEYI pg. 44-45 and 66) This is also true of the Alevi and Ahl-i Haqq, among which the status of women has always been especially good. (KEDDIE pg. 252)

The use of the **Kurdish national costume** has occasionally been considered a provocative action and banned, or it has been claimed that it was banned in Iran (1930), Iraq (1961) Syria (1986) and Turkey. On the other hand a BBC journalist John Simpson, who wrote a prologue to David McDowall's book (1992), claimed for example that there is a law forbidding the Kurdish national costume to be worn in Turkey. However, the same book tells how the Iraqi refugees in their Kurdish costumes attracted general attention in Diyarbakır, yet no one thought of accusing them of breaking the law. (ROOSEVELT pg. 251; KÜCHLER pg. 193; KINNANE pg. 66; THE KURDS; MCDOWALL 1992)

The most important annual event for the Kurds is **Nevruz**, the New Year festival held during the spring equinox¹⁴. Originally it is an Iranian festival, which is also celebrated among the Turkic peoples of Central Asia. The celebration includes various customs, such as the burning of bonfires for example. During the past few years the Turkish government has attempted to organise joint Newruz celebrations for the Turkish and Kurdish factions of the population, in order to lessen its nationalistic and revolutionary character for the Kurds. The time around Newruz has been the most volatile for skirmishes to break out due to the very fact that the outset of the summer is the easiest time for the guerrillas to start their activities. Certain religious minorities (for ex. part of the Alevis) celebrate Newruz at a slightly different time. (KEHL-BODROGI, p.220). The main festival of the Yezidis probably shares in the same origins.

It is general among the minority groups that the cultural traits emphasising national identity are created in immigrant communities. For example many Assyrians have started to learn their folk dances only having moved abroad. (BJÖRKLUND pg. 151). Likewise the Kurdish culture is nurtured and developed first and foremost in Germany, rather than in the traditional Kurdish areas. This is partly a natural phenomenon, and sometimes it is difficult to differentiate, which cultural traits are original and which are just romanticised images or politically motivated creations of the immigrant communities.

¹⁴ Iran follows the Islamic way of reckoning time (it starts from the year 622 A.D.) barring the Arabic lunar calendar. thus the 21.3.1991 was the first day of the year 1378 in Iran, although the Arabic countries are already living in the 15th Century, with the start of the year being moved back over a week annually.

1.4. Identity

In his studies of the Kurds, Martin van Bruinessen, presently an assistant professor at the Utrecht University became desperate while trying to question certain Kurds concerning their identity, for not any one answer was unambiguous, excluding other possible identities. (BRUIJESSEN pg. 45-46). It is not just a question of assimilation into the mainstream cultures, but a continual interaction and mixing of languages, religions and other distinctive features. If a Kurd is asked to define his identity, he has to make some difficult choices that may vary according to his education, political affiliation and mood or according to the expectations of the surrounding situation.

Martin van Bruinessen had to conclude that the Western mindset is ill fitted to the oriental reality:

"The concept of 'Kurdishness' has never had an unambiguous denotation. Depending on the context and the speaker, it could refer to groups differently demarcated...The concept of the nation as we know it in Europe was foreign to the Middle East." (BRUIJESSEN pg. 268)

In general Kurdishness is connected with - mistakenly so in part - to nomadism, banditry and backwardness. For that reason the Kurds in Turkey for example held it a matter of honour to deny their Kurdishness in front of outsiders. (BLAU pg. 595) The Kurds strove to derive their ancestry from the Arabs, who were held in higher esteem by Islamic standards.

Despite the poorly developed national self-esteem, the Kurds have not assimilated as quickly as expected. Already in the middle of the 19th century a German researcher predicted:

"Thus sink all of these tribes...to the level of a mixed race that is oppressed, stripped off their nationhood, robbed off their independence, and one cannot help but notice that the administrative measures of the Turkish government towards the Kurds will have an increasing effect of assimilating them totally..."

In the 19th century Turkey was still a multinational Islamic nation, but as the above quote points out, the efforts to assimilate the Kurds is not - as is often claimed - only an idea of the nation-state mindset ("Kemalism"), which is the basis of the present day secular republic of Turkey. Neither has the Kurdish identity dramatically weakened in any way during the 20th century.

One indicator of the complexity of the Kurdish identity is exemplified by those Kurdish asylum seekers in Finland who are also Arab Christians but originate from Turkey. They were a religious minority in that country, but it did not prevent them from supporting an atheistic Kurdish organisation in principle. As was said, their mother tongue is Arabic and they are Turkish citizens, yet they still considered themselves to be Kurds first and foremost, at least when applying for political asylum. To them, Kurdishness was a more expedient choice for the exact reason that as an identity, it is a more loosely defined concept compared with the Turkish, Arabic or Armenian identities.

MARTIN VAN BRUINESSEN: 'Aslini inkar eden haramzadedir!' - The Debate on Ethnic Identity of the Kurdish Alevis, <http://www.deakin.edu.au/~kstudyg/alevikrd.html>

On the other hand the Kurds have also had the reputation of being religious extremists, for the **Dervishes**¹², who sometimes go to the extreme of practising self-torture, have been very popular in Kurdistan. However, the religious practices of the Dervishes are individualistic and prone to mysticism, neither do they carry out religious persecution. However, Turkey expelled the Dervishes in the 1920's, because they have been in the habit of committing themselves blindly to the commands of their religious leaders, i.e. the descendants of Mohammed (the Sheikhs), forming close knit brotherhoods reminiscent of secret societies. (KARABUDA s. 73-74). Over the past few years these brotherhoods have revived and have become popular, especially among the Islamists living abroad.

1.2.3. Non-Islamic religions

At least up till the 1950's there were a number of **Jewish** Kurds in Iraq. They fled to Israel¹³ to escape the government oppression. The Kurds helped them to escape, and as pay back Israel helped arm the Kurdish rebels between 1965-1975 (NISAN pg. 240-241, MCDOWALL 1996 pg. 320 and 331).

Traditionally there have also been **Christian** groupings living among the Kurds: Assyrians (Nestorians), Chaldeans (The Iraqi Uniates), Jacobites (Monophysites), Syrian Uniates and Armenians. Sometimes they identify themselves with Kurds, but generally they define themselves as their own, separate groups on the basis of their religion. From among the above-mentioned groups, the Nestorians are the ones closest to Islam, which tolerates the traditional religions.

Even the **Bahai** religion that originated in Iran has found a couple of thousand supporters among the Kurds. Their position is especially difficult, because in Iran to join the Bahai is interpreted to mean denouncing Islam. (<http://home3.swipnet.se/~w-31006/Kurd.htm>, EPP pg. 9, IZADY pg. 165-166)

¹² The Dervishes are members of the Sufi brotherhood, who are found both among the Shiites and Sunnis.

¹³ The Christian missionaries took note of the Jews of Northern Iraq in the beginning of the 19th century and concluded they they - as well as the Nestorians - belonged to "The lost tribes of Israel."

At least in one case an asylum seeker had understood, that anything deviating from Turkish is to be considered Kurdish. Thus he mixed the Kurds and the Armenians together. The ethnic Turks, who cannot differentiate between the various minority groups, may on one hand adopt this kind of thinking. On the other hand it may also be used by those persons who have adopted the Marxist doctrine of class struggle, to whom "the Kurds" are a synonym for all oppressed.

The Swiss ethnographer Heinz Käufeler in his article "Wer ist Kurde, wer ist Türke?" is of the opinion that the Kurdish nationalism is an idea of the foreign educated intelligentsia:

"The idea of ethno-national principle is a new concept in the Near East...and a phenomenon of foreign import...Very many Kurds also speak Turkish at home...The new nationalistic Kurdish movement is 'progressive', it is supported by the representatives of the intelligentsia and European Diaspora, and it was carried from there to the tribal villages of south-east Anatolia." (NZZ 28.11.93)

The first expressions of Kurdish nationalism date from the year 1880 and they were directed mainly towards the European public to counter the Armenian nationalism, which the Kurds saw as a threat. According to David McDowall they Kurds can be spoken of as a nation only since the year 1918. (MCDOWALL, 1996 pg. 4)

During the two world wars the foreign powers fomented the national ethos of the Kurds for the purpose of furthering their own interests and since the 1940's especially the political left wing has been in the habit of formulating their goals in the name of the Kurdish issue. It is historically ironical that nowadays the Kurdish activists like to compare themselves to the Armenians and belittle the significance of religion in public.

A survey conducted in August 1995 among the Turkish Kurds showed that 22% of the Kurds as a matter of fact identified themselves as Turkish and only 42% felt any separate ethnic identity as Kurds. Despite of that, 46% accepted the activities of PKK for "the Kurdish cause". From those participating in the survey, 15% spoke Turkish at home, 6% spoke Zaza and almost 4% spoke Arabic. In like manner with the ethnic Turks, over 13 % belonged to the Hanafi school of the Sunni tradition. Only 2% declared themselves to be Alevis - it has always been one of the main features of this sect to hide one's membership in it. (GÜNTHER pg. 127-130). A typical Kurd in Turkey is thus a Kurmandzhi speaking Muslim of the Shaaafi school, one who hardly feels that he is an ethnic Kurd. PKK does not represent the majority of the Kurds and it also gets support from the ethnic Turks with extreme left-wing orientation. The representatives of the organisation usually converse with each other in Turkish. Also, the Turkish Kurds applying for political asylum almost invariably write their applications in Turkish.

When the idea of ethnic identity is a subjective, voluntary matter and a mainly political manifesto, it is difficult to arrive at an objective definition. A person may declare oneself a Kurd regardless of his or her language competence, religion or native place. Political problems may be identified as persecution based on nationality. A political party may present itself as a national liberation

movement. Dissidents can be branded as defectors and a conciliatory disposition can be seen as assimilation. This has obvious advantages when aspirations for power need to be presented to the world as a struggle for the rights of the ethnic minorities.

If the idea of ethnicity were accepted as a subjective concept of one's own identity, on that basis anybody wanting to call himself a Kurd should be accepted as one. However, a non-Kurdish speaking person could hardly pass as a credible language and culture activist for the Kurds. If a person makes reference to persecution based on one's ethnicity, there needs to be especially clear proof, that the persecution is indeed based on that, not on political opinion or some other factor. As far as the Kurds are concerned, it is extremely difficult to make distinctive differentiation between these factors. Individual differences are great, and one cannot reliably evaluate the strength of the individual's identity based on the general, i.e. average ethnic identity.

Discussions on ethnic identity quickly lead to a dead end, for it is near impossible to define it in scientific terms. Yet its use as a criteria for political asylum, for example, would lose its meaning, if a definition were not even attempted at. Thus the only right answer has to be a lengthy one, where all the different factors need to be carefully accounted for. Martin van Bruinessen has stated:

"To sum up, ethnicity is a fluid concept and, at least to some extent, also voluntary. It is not nature-given; one does not necessarily belong unambiguously to a specific ethnic group. Everyone has a number of partially overlapping identities, and it depends on the situation which ones he or she will emphasise or de-emphasise."
(BRUINESSEN pg. 47).

2. REGION

What is Kurdistan? Do the Kurds have a country of their own? An ethnic demarcation should be based on the fact that Kurds should form a majority in the said area; geographic demarcation lines ought to follow some mountain ranges or watersheds. In the administrative sense however, an independent state called Kurdistan has never existed. That is the reason why defining Kurdistan and making maps of it is extremely difficult.

The maps of the area that are publicly available are often unclear copies. Furthermore, those who have copied them have no idea anymore, or do not seem to care, about the basis of the demarcation lines. A typical overstatement is for example to declare that: "*Kurdistan begins from the Bay of Iskenderun...*" when in fact the map on the next page shows differently. (NERWEYI pg. 8-9) On the other hand, in some more modern maps the demarcation line has been brought up all the way to the base of the Mediterranean Sea without any grounds - while at the same time it has been realigned in the Armenian region so that the Armenians would not be upset. (<http://www.kurdistan.org/>)

2.1. Ethnic Kurdistan

Undoubtedly there is an area where the Kurds form the majority of the population. However, in most regions the Kurds have coexisted with other nations (for example the Armenians in the valleys and the Kurds on the mountains, or the Arabs in the towns and the Kurds in the neighbouring villages), for which reason it is impossible to delineate an ethnically uniform area.

After the ethnic cleansings that took place during the First World War many areas of the region were desolated. Also later on many Kurds have been forcibly deported. Thus today's reality does not reflect the situation as it was at the turn of the century. The situation is still changing almost daily.

All the countries of the region have forcibly deported the Kurds at one point or another: The Soviet Union had Kurds deported from the Caucasus to Central Asia in the years of 1937-1938; Turkey deported Kurds to the central regions of Anatolia (to the areas surrounding Ankara and Konya) in the 1930's and in the 1990's there have been deportations from the border villages especially to the region of Adana. Likewise Syria was preparing for some deportation activities at the beginning of the 1960's. Some Syrian Kurds have fled to Lebanon, where Syria also has moved some PKK supporters that have arrived there (to Syria) from Turkey; Iraq destroyed Kurdish villages with the aid of chemical weapons during the late 1980's and over the past few years the Iraqi government has attempted to rid the cities of Kirkuk and Khanaqin of the Kurdish population. Iran for its part has destroyed Kurdish villages along the borders during the 1990's according to a plan that originated already during the reign of the Shah.

2.1.1. The Iranian Kurds

There are approximately seven million Kurds in Iran, of which around one million represents the Ahl-i Haqq religion, with the rest being either Shiites, which is the main religion of the country, or Sunnis. 400 000 Kurds live in the Khurasan region in the eastern part of Iran, but the majority of the Kurdish population reside in their traditional home ground on the mountains of the western border of the country.

2.1.2. The Iraqi Kurds

In Iraq, in the 1950's the Kurds still formed the majority of the population in the provinces of Sulaymaniah (100%), Arbil (91%) and Kirkuk (52%) and a considerable minority (35%) in the Mosul province. At that time the Kurds were also the majority in the provinces of Khanaqin and Mandali near the Iranian border. The almost continual 40-year long war against the Kurds with its periodic genocidal actions and the war against Iran have changed the population profile to a certain extent. The Kurds of Northern Iraq were planning to carry out a census in the summer of 1999.

According to the estimates available at the present time there are about 4,5 million Kurds living in Iraq, of which a small minority belongs to the Yezidis or other religious minorities.

2.1.3. The Syrian Kurds

In Syria, there are over one million Kurds, with half of them residing in the northwestern province of Hasakah (the old Jazirah province) where they form the majority of the population. Also the "Kurd mountain" (Kurd Dağ, with a population of 350 000 in the Afrin region) on the northwestern side of Aleppo and Ayn al-Arab (with 80 000 inhabitants) near the Euphrates are traditional Kurdish areas right on the Turkish border.

2.1.4. The Turkish Kurds

The total population of Turkey in the 1935 census was 17,6 million, of which the Kurds numbered 1,48 million (8,4%). At that point in time, the minorities were differentiated according to the mother tongue, with bilinguals classified as Turks. The number of Kurds was the largest in the provinces of Siirt (79,4%), Diyarbakır (72,8%), Van (72,4%), Ağrı (72,1%), Muş (69,1%), Mardin (63,8%) and Şanlıurfa (48,6%) (BIRGE pg. 33-34)

The Turkish census statistics differentiated between various mother tongues up till the year 1965, but these statistics have not been considered representative enough from the point of view of the Kurds.

The migratory movements have partly been voluntary in nature, and it would not be fair to call as Kurdistan every single place where Kurds have ever lived. Approximately half of the Kurds in Turkey live outside the traditional Kurdistan area and Istanbul is the world's largest Kurdish city. There are over one million Kurds living in Western Europe. (MCDOWALL 1992 pg. 55)

2.1.5. The Caucasian Kurds

In the 1920's, when Stalin was rearranging the borders of the Caucasian countries, Mountainous Karabakh (part of the province of Karabakh, *Artasakh* in Armenian) which was mainly inhabited by Armenians, remained as an autonomous state within Azerbaidzhan, a fact which has continued to maintain the tension between the different population factions for generations. In between Armenia proper and Mountainous Karabakh there remained a strip of land (5200 square kilometres) belonging to Azerbaidzhan, which in the 1920's was an autonomous area of the Kurds.

The capital city of the Kurdish area was Lachin. The following population centres of Karakushlak, Kelbadzhar, Koturli, Kubtali, Kurdhadzhi, Muradkhanli and Zangelan were also in this area. To the Armenian side were left the Kurdish centres of Aparan, Artashat, Ashtarak, Basargechar, Huktemberia, Kotayk, Talin and Vedi in addition to which many Kurds also lived in Echmiadzin, which is the seat of the Armenian church, or in the Georgian capital Tbilisi.

A fair number of the Kurds living in Turkey fled to the Soviet side of the border during the 1920's. They were placed in special military units, which were supposed to be deployed in a war against Turkey. (AKHMEDOV pg. 105) Even at the beginning of 1931, the military intelligence of the Soviet Union GRU was actively gathering information about the conditions in Kurdistan. (AKHMEDOV, PG. 108)¹⁵. However, during the last Turkish uprising something made Stalin change his mind. Part of the population of the "Red Kurdistan" was deported to Central Asia between the years of 1937-1938; the Kurds in Georgia were deported in 1944.¹⁶ Towards the latter end of the 1940's, Barzani's group was allowed to

¹⁵ The role of the Soviet intelligence has been described by a Tatar called Ismail Akhmedov in his memoirs: "My unit had helped some of those Kurds (those having taken part of the Ararat uprising some time earlier) to flee from Turkey to the Soviet Armenia. All of these refugees were placed in special military units, which had proved their worth in guerrilla combat, so that these persons could be used against the Turks possibly sometime in the future...it was my task to obtain detailed and accurate information concerning the background and the character of the Kurdish chiefs, about the caravan routes, footpaths, watering places for the animals, local history and folklore, about the origins and the present day reasons of the numerous disagreements separating many of the nations and tribes in the Middle East, as well as information about the fighting between the various political parties. We devised for instance detailed procedures, which were then transformed into written instructions, about how to cook meat under the ground, how to maintain communication links, how the Soviet expert should appeal to people's nationalistic and religious feelings and to the local customs in order to utilize them for the Soviet ends." (AKHMEDOV pg. 105 and 108)

¹⁶ In the same token the Turkic people (the Meshets) and the Armenian Muslims (Khemshils) were also. The footnotes are continued on the next page

settle in these traditional Kurdish parts only for a little while, until they too were transferred to Central Asia. (ARFA pg. 101-102, MEI 544)

In the 1979 census the number of Armenian Kurds was almost triple compared to the 1926 census, but the census statistics of Soviet Azerbaidzhan had total lack of information on any Kurds, although there should have been about 140 000 of them. The position of Kurds was no better in Soviet Armenia, where they were hated for having taken part in the earlier massacres of the Armenian population.

"The Kurds in Armenia were not eligible for political or social jobs and they were not recruited for professional positions. Neither were the Kurdish peasants organised into collective communes like the rest of the peasants were. In 1936 the central government of the Soviet Union strongly criticised the Armenian communists for allowing their nationalistic hatred to influence their policies towards the Kurds." (KOLARZ pg. 251)

David McDowall has remarked that after Stalin got upset with the Kurds, the Soviet Union banned Kurdish publications and in practice the Kurds disappeared from the official statistics. All Kurdish publications were abolished during the 1937/1938 and were only allowed again in Armenia either in 1946, or in 1954-1955. (KURDISTAN UND DIE KURDEN I pg. 422; AKINER pg. 214) On the other hand, the *Kurdistan Report* (11/1992), which is a PKK publication, has claimed that the *Riya Taza* ("New Way") magazine of the Armenian Kurds has been published without interruption since 1930's.¹⁷ There are approximately 60 000 - 75 000 Yezidis in Armenia, with a number of them having been made to settle in the city of Lachin, which is occupied by Armenia. (NZZ 28.4.1993) There is not even one mosque in operation, but the mosque in Yerevan is presently being renovated with the help of Iranian funding. The Muslim Kurds that have remained in Armenia nowadays mostly live in the areas of Abovian, Sevan or Dilidzhan.¹⁸

deported from Georgia to Central Asia. (POHL pg. 119-121)

¹⁷ Aramk Sardarian, the chief editor of the said magazine, has told that he has worked for the magazine since 1952, but has admitted that the publication was halted in between the years 1937-1954! (an interview by Onnik Krikorian, 12.6.98, http://www.freepress.org/oneworld/yezidi/yezidi_articles.htm)

¹⁸ The Armenians themselves seem to be unclear about whether there are any Muslim Kurds left in the country. Vladimir Chadoyev, the director of the Union of Armenian Ethnic Minorities admitted that there were no more Muslim Kurds left there. He also told that the Yezidi Kurds live in 34 villages altogether. The chief editor of a Yezidi magazine, however, told that there are 21 Yezidi villages in Armenia (most of them in the region of Alagyaz) and that the Muslim population of Armenia left the country already at the start of the Karabakh skirmishes, in the years of 1989-1990. The professor of the Islamic studies in the University of Yerevan estimates the number of Muslim Kurds who have stayed in Armenia to be around 100, but according to another estimate the number may even be as high as 2000-5000. (interviews by Onnik Krikorian, 8/12/14.6.98, http://www.freepress.org/oneworld/yezidi/yezidi_articles.htm)

2.2. Geographical Kurdistan

The name Kurdistan has been used since the Middle Ages, largely in the geographical sense of the word. An approximate denotation of the term is "on the mountain ranges". It is quite an appropriate term, for the area traditionally known as Kurdistan coincides with the mountainous region that separates the Anatolian plain from the Arabian deserts. In the Arabic sources "Kurds" denoted mountain people in general, regardless of ethnic origins. A similar idea was reflected in the terms offered in the 1970's, such as "Sons of the mountain" (Iraq) "Mountain Persians" (Iran) and "Mountain Turks" (Turkey), none of which became accepted in public use." (KÖCHLER pg. 533)

As far as Turkey is concerned, Kurdistan can be delineated along the watersheds that flow to the Persian Gulf or along the river Euphrates. The most common concept is probably that Kurdistan exists east of the Euphrates. (KARABUDA pg. 39) In the travel books from the middle of the last century, however, Kurdistan only started from behind the river Tigris after Diyarbakır. (BADGER pg. 46, RÖDIGER & POTT pg.3) From the other directions Kurdistan is even more difficult to define and generally one came across the Kurds only when the mountains began to loom in the horizon.

2.3. Administrative Kurdistan

In the political literature of the Kurds, Kurdistan is divided along the cardinal points of the compass according to the "occupying nations" in the following manner: east Kurdistan (Iran), south Kurdistan (Iraq), southwest Kurdistan (Syria) and northwest or north Kurdistan (Turkey). Historiography does not recognise a unified Kurdistan, however.

Before the First World War Kurdistan was divided between the Shah of Persia, the Sultan of Turkey and the Czar of Russia. After the war Iraq and Syria were sectioned off from Turkey and Russia became the Soviet Union. When it disintegrated, three Caucasian nations gained their independence.

The estimates of the researchers and the Kurdish activists concerning the total land area of Kurdistan as a whole vary from 392 000 to 550 500 square kilometres. In these estimates about half of it (190 000 - 255 500 square kilometres) lies within the Turkish borders. On the basis of the map presented by the Kurds to the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 one arrives at much more moderate figures. Accordingly, the whole of the Kurdistan area would only be about 240 000 square kilometres in size, of which 130 000 square kilometres are in Turkey.

¹⁹ The claim that in Turkey the Kurds are called "Mountain Turks" has grown into a myth. Such a euphemism can not be found at least in the literature distributed by the Turkish government in the 1990's. Turkey is by no means the only country where some private sectors have sometimes tried to develop concepts such as these. Anyhow, in PKK-minded political writing they started a life of their own, which has continued to the present day.

2.3.1. Iranian Kurdistan

In Iran there is a province by the name of Kordestan, but it is only one third of the Kurdish area in the country as a whole. (BRUINESSEN pg. 11) Earlier on in the very same area there existed the khanate of Ardalan. It occupied a larger land area than Kordestan and it had a central role in the history of the Kurds.

After the Second World War a short-lived state by the name of People's Republic of Kurdistan was formed within an 80-kilometre radius of the town of Mahabad. It has been considered the first independent Kurdish state.

According to an estimate dating back to the time of the Shah from the 5 1/2 million inhabitants of the western provinces of Iran only 12% are non-Kurds.

Nowadays, the Iranian Kurdistan is considered to comprise of the three westernmost provinces: West Azerbaidzhan, Kordestan and Kermanshah. Their total land area is 164 800 square kilometres. In the Kurds own estimates the land area of the Iranian Kurdistan has fluctuated between 124 950 - 190 000 square kilometres, but in the map that was presented to the Paris Peace Conference in the year of 1919, it was recorded to be 60 000 square kilometres.

2.3.2. Iraqi Kurdistan

In Iraq the name Kurdistan can be afforded to the United Nations protectorate that was formed in 1991. This however excludes the city of Kirkuk and the town of Khanaqin, for which the Kurds have a long-standing claim.

Already in 1943 the Kurds had demanded the provinces of Kirkuk, Dohuk, Arbil, Sulaymaniah and Khanaqin to be included in their autonomous region. (KÜCHLER pg. 198) The province of Kirkuk had Kurdish majority, but the city itself has always been populated mainly by Arabs. The region demanded by the Kurds of Iraq would have covered a land area of about 65 000 - 105 900 square kilometres.

In the 1970's, Iraq granted autonomy to the Kurds only in three provinces (Dohuk, Arbil and Sulaymaniah), their total land area being 37 062 square kilometres. The external borders of the said area were made to snake along in a manner that made its military defence cumbersome. The area was expanded into 42 138 square kilometres by annexing into it the districts of Chamchamal and Kalar, both of which had been separated from Kirkuk.

When the United Nations took the Kurds under its protection, the Iraqi government agreed to observe the autonomy decree it had itself legislated, but the negotiations concerning the strengthening of the borders of this autonomous region have so far been unsuccessful.

The present UN protection zone covers under a half of the area originally demanded by the Kurds. Over one million Kurds still live in areas controlled by the Iraqi government. The border of the protection zone is straightforward, running southwest of Chamchamal, coinciding with the border of the Kurdish region as it was established already in the beginning of the 19th century. (RICH pg. 51)

2.3.3. Syrian Kurdistan

The Kurdish population in Syria has mainly established itself only in the 19th century, when the Kurds moved westward. The Syrian Kurds live near the Turkish and Iraqi borders, but there are also isolated settlements of Kurds among the Arabic populace. The land area of the Syrian Kurdistan is 30 000 square kilometres at the most.

2.3.4. Turkish Kurdistan

The Turkish Kurdistan thus was considered to consist of the four eastern provinces of Mamuret el-Aziz, Diyarbakır, Van and Mosul, last mentioned of which nowadays belongs to Iraq. In addition to this, it was noted that the Kurds also live in parts of the Aleppo (present day Syria) and Erzurum provinces.

According to another definition, at the end of the 19th Century the Turkish Kurdistan consisted of the countryside which was left between the towns of Diyarbakır, Mardin, Nusaybin, Cizre, Van, Muş, Palu, Darende, Kahramanmaraş and Adiyaman. Even the largest Kurdish majority towns were quite small: Bitlis, Siirt, Hasankeyf, Şirnak, Pertek and Zakho (which is on the Iraqi side at the present time. In the larger towns of Malatya and Kharput the Kurdish population formed only a minority of the total population. (MOLTKE pg. 407)

What was meant by Kurdistan in Turkey during the last century, was often just the region of Diyarbakır of that time by itself, or possibly the regions of Dersim (the present Tunceli) and Muş or just some undefined areas that were left between Armenia and Arabia. (BRUINSEN pg. 11) Armenia was often seen as consisting of six eastern districts, which covered the present Kurdish areas in Turkey, i.e. Erzurum, Sivas, Van, Bitlis, Diyarbakır and Mamuret el-Aziz (the present Elazığ, which is Kharput in Kurdish.¹⁰ According to an extreme Christian view, between Armenia and Arabia there was only Assyria, whose rightful populace was considered in the 1830's to have been the remnants of the ancient Christian Nestorians.

In the aftermath of the First World War the Armenians demanded for themselves the six eastern provinces of Turkey. According to the calculations made by the Armenians in 1912, from the population of this area about 40% were Armenian, 30% at the most were Kurds and at least 25% were Turkish. The map presented in 1919 by the Kurds did not, however, totally match with the previous conception of Kurdistan, for the Kurds were willing to compromise in their demands for the benefit of the Armenians: The towns of Malatya and Muş had been left outside of the area designated as Kurdistan.

Leaving out such tactical manoeuvring of borders as what was mentioned above, the attached map of Kurdistan (14 modern provinces) roughly corresponds with the conception of Turkish Kurdistan as it stood before the First

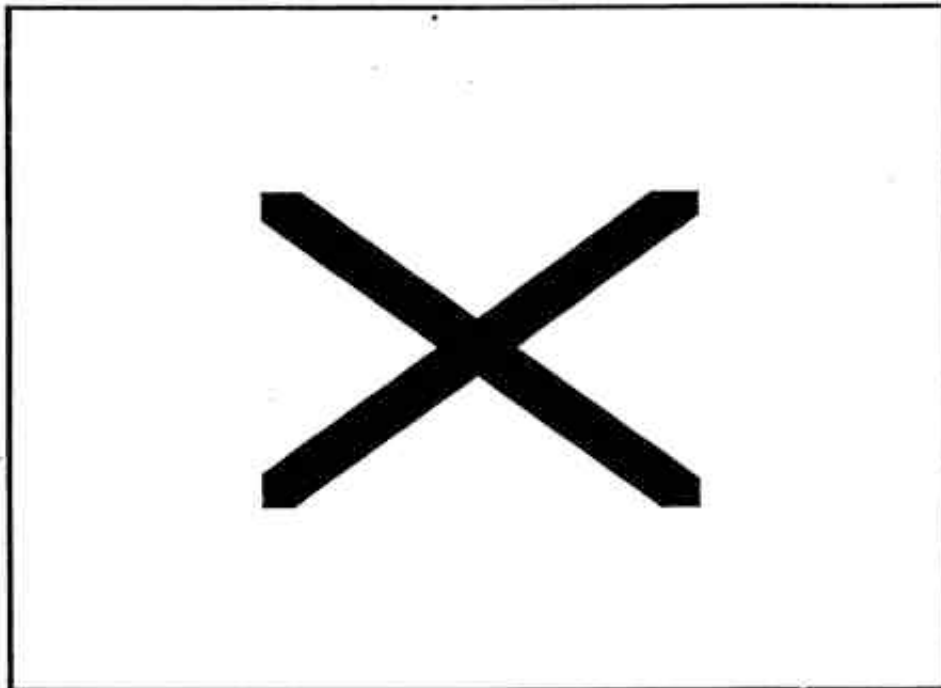
¹⁰ The old town of Kharput is actually situated about 10 kilometres north of the present site of Elazığ.

World War and in 1919. The total land area of the said provinces is 127 590 square kilometres and in 1997 there lived altogether 6,7 million people there.

According to this interpretation the following provinces form the core area of the Turkish Kurdistan: Adiyaman, Batman, Bingöl, Bitlis, Diyarbakır, Elazığ, Hakkari, Malatya, Mardin, Muş, Siirt, Şirnak, Tunceli and Van. In addition to that one could add to it the following areas marked out in the attached map: the province of Ağrı, the southern part of the province of Erzincan (the municipalities of Iliç and Kemah), the eastern part of the province of Kahramanmaraş (i.e. the Elbistan county) and the eastern part of the province of Şanlıurfa (Urfa) (meaning the Siverek and Viranşehir counties). In this area the Kurds probably form a clear majority of the population. All the ten provinces where the emergency rule has been enforced within the last ten years also fall within this area.

Nowadays Turkey has been divided into much larger entities based on geographic criteria, with Kurdistan corresponding roughly with the areas of eastern and southeastern Anatolia. According to McDowall there is mostly over 60% Kurdish majority in the core area of Kurdistan, but in the western regions (Adiyaman, Malatya, Elazığ and Tunceli) the proportion of Kurds is less than that.

According to the widest interpretation the Turkish Kurdistan also includes nine other provinces in their totality: Ardahan, Erzincan, Erzurum, Gaziantep (Antep), Iğdır, Kahramanmaraş (Maraş), Kars and Şanlıurfa (Urfa). In addition to that, the southwestern part of the provinces of Sivas is also included as part of



Kurdistan according to this interpretation. The total population of this area is actually even as large as 12,7 million, among which the Kurds are probably left in minority. The area in question has been marked in the attached map with a broken line.

The skirmishes between the Turkish army and the PKK have concentrated in the southeastern provinces of Turkey, and at its height thirteen of them were under martial law at the same time. At present, martial law still remains in force in six provinces.²¹ These can be considered the core area of the political Kurdistan in Turkey. According to an outside estimate less than one third of the Kurds live in the core area of Kurdistan anymore, with over half of them living in Western Turkey.

2.3.5. Caucasian Kurdistan

In Azerbaidzhan the Kurds had their own autonomous region in the 1920's ("Red Kurdistan"). It was situated on that narrow strip of land between Karabach and Armenia, which the Armenians occupied in the early 1990's. The main bulk of the Kurdish population in the area fled elsewhere to Azerbaidzhan or to Russia.

²¹ The martial law was abolished last in the provinces of Batman, Bingöl and Bitlis on the 2.10.1997.

3. HISTORY

In the course of history, the Kurds have been caught between three powerful nations (the Persians, the Arabs and the Turks), for which reason their own history is less well known. Also, the Kurds themselves know so little of their own background that it has been easy to create myths according to political expediency,²⁷ and generally speaking historiography has actively forgotten about the Kurds.

3.1. Background

The Kurds own nationalistic historiography likes to trace the Kurds from the Medians that founded an empire 2600 years ago. Nevertheless, this theory has not gained the support of the linguists, although it has been backed with a "national anthem" *Ey, Reqib* ("Hear, O enemy"). (MCDOWALL 1992 s. 11) The most probable ancestors of the Kurds were the Kardukhs, whom Xenophon met around the year 400 BC south of the Buhtan river:

"These were said to live high on the mountains, to be of warlike disposition and not subject to the king. It is told that once the kings troops, 120 000 men in strength, invaded the area of the Kharduks, but owing to the dangerous terrain not even one soldier from among them ever returned." (XENOPHON pg. 6)

It took seven days for the Greek soldiers to pass through the region of the Kardukhs. (XENOPHON pg. 116) Kardukhs also gave their name to the province of Corduene or Gordyene (Korduk in Armenian), that the Romans attached to the province of Adiabene (former Assyria) and to the kingdom of Armenia. The core area of the Kurds was thus alternately under the Roman and Parthian/Persian overlordship, but in the 7th century it became under the Arabic rule and by the 9th century it had detached itself from Armenia.²⁸

The Kurds appeared in the Arabic annals as nomads, mercenaries and as semi-independent tribal chiefs, who were not very clearly differentiated from

²⁷ One of the latest myths is the belief that the roots of the Kurds may be in the north, somewhere around Finland. This is probably based on a theory that the the Turks like to propagate, according to which the Uralic and Altaic ('Turanic') languages are related to each other. Some notions about the ancient connections between the Uralic and Iranian cultures may also have been added to this myth. The political incentive for the formation of this new myth is without a doubt the position of the Swedish speaking minority in Finland.

²⁸ Strabon, a geographer of the classical period, told that "in "Gordyaea" there were plenty of natural resources, clever builders of equipment for laying siege and lions. On the other hand Strabon also makes separate mention of the Cyrti tribe, who lived a nomadic life in Southern Persia. They may be the ancestors of either the Zaza and the Gorani speaking Kurds, who have spread over a wide area, or those of the Sorani speaking Kurds, who migrated from Persia to the present day Iraq from the east only some time between 1400-1700 A.D. From the ancient Armenian chroniclers, Moses Khorenats'i and T'oyrna (Thomas) Artsruni mention the mountains of Korduk to the south of Armenia. According to the local tradition that was the place where Noah's Ark ran aground (on present day Cudi Dağ), and its remnants were in safekeeping in a Christian monastery there. (RICH pg. 123-125)

their Arabic, Persian and Turkish neighbours. Kurds have never been considered as possessing certain distinctive physical features, and therefore it has not been possible to persecute them on the basis of race, neither on the basis of their livelihood. For a long time (in the studies of the Russian orientalist Oleg Vilchevski in 1961 for example) they were actually considered to be a mixed race of varied origins. (WAGNER I pg. 272; KÜCHLER pg. 93 and 537)

Kurdish led emirates were formed after the first half of the 10th century. The most famous Kurd in history was Saladin, who led the troops of the Caliphate against the Crusaders. Around that time (in 1157) an area by the name of Kurdistan appears for the first time in the sources. It corresponded with the present day area populated by the Sorani speaking Kurds in the border areas of Iran and Iraq. During the 14th century it became the khanate of Ardalan.

At the crumbling of the Arab Empire the Sultan of Turkey and the Shah of Persia annexed the Kurdish emirates to their own empires mostly during the 16th century; the Kurds of Hakkari managed to keep their independence all the way to the 19th century.

At the end of the 19th century the Kurds on the whole were still faithful subjects of the sultan or the shah respectively. They were mainly worried about the support given to the Armenian and other Christians of the region by the European Crusaders who had pushed their way to the Middle East. (OLSON pg. 5) The Imperial Russia was in contact with the Kurds every time it warred against Turkey, in the years 1829, 1853-55 and 1877, but it considered the Armenians to be more trustworthy allies, as it was trying to present itself as the "Protector of the eastern Christians". (MCDOWALL 1992 pg. 136) France, on the other hand, cast its friendship with the Catholics (the Uniate churches of Syria and Iraq) while Britain was friends with the Nestorians, facts which turned the Kurds against all the Christian minorities.

3.2. The Fight for freedom

The Kurdish aspirations for independence, with the consequent acts of persecution and persistent guerrilla warfare are only part of the 20th century history. These took place as a result of the Turkish and Iranian revolutions, which in turn were influenced by the 'cold war' that was waged between the super powers.

3.2.1. The Turkish revolution

During the First World War Turkey and Russia incited the Kurds and the Armenians against each other, as a result of which over one million Kurds and half a million Armenians lost their lives. (OLSON pg. 20-21) According to one estimation the number of victims in the Armenian genocide was actually only 200 000 at the most, while the number of Turkish and Kurdish dead was two

million. (SHAW & SHAW pg. 316). In any case, the plain of Eastern Anatolia became void of population as a result - the province of Van alone lost most of its Muslim population. (IZADY pg. 115-116). The relations between the Armenians and the Kurds remained extremely strained even at the beginning of the 1920's, for at that time there were plans for both an independent Armenia and for a special Kurdish state to be formed in the same area. This overlap threatened to lead to a repeated genocide. (MCDOWALL 1922 pg. 2)

The Kurds presented a memorandum to the Paris Peace Conference, dated 22.3.1919, where the borders for the state of Kurdistan were defined for the first time. The claim for the land area presented in the memorandum was fairly modest, as it tried to take into accounts the needs of an independent Armenia.

Apart from the Armenians and the Kurds, the Assyrians were also poised to divide up the spoils after the First World War. In the Paris Peace Conference they demanded for the revival of an independent Assyrian state, which would have reached all the way to Diyarbakır, Mosul and Orumiyah, bordering with Armenia in the north. In practice, this would have totally prevented the formation of the state of Kurdistan. (WIGRAM pg. 221-222, 225-226 and 236; NISAN pg. 163)

In the treaty of Sèvres in 1920, the Western Entente Powers laid down the terms of peace for government of the Sultan of Turkey. According to them Turkey was committed to offering autonomy to the Kurds and in a years time, the right to become independent. However, the province of Mosul was placed under "temporary" British protection and was soon annexed to the new state of Iraq created by the British, against the opinion of Winston Churchill for example. (OLSON pg. 59) David McDowall, who has studied the subject widely, has drawn the conclusion that Britain acted on this matter according to its strategic military interests. Later on the king of Iraq remarked, that the Shiite population would have formed a majority in Iraq, had the ethnically mixed province of Mosul been ceded to the Kurds.

Thus Britain soon lost its interest in the Kurds. All undertakings for independence failed and finally the Turkish borders were renegotiated with the government of the new republican government by the time of the Lausanne Peace Conference in 1923. Turkey also made agreements with Soviet Russia and with France concerning its new borders. As a consequence, the Kurds were split between different states.

The Sultan of Turkey had also been the Caliph of all the Sunni Muslims and the fact that he was exiled into France aroused a rebellion by the religious conservatives, which the Turkish government crushed with bloody violence in 1925. There were a good number of Sunni Muslims amongst the conservative rebels, whereas the Alevite Kurds were on the side of the government. These Kurdish uprisings have later on been interpreted as being ethnic and even "progressive" in nature, but in the 1930's religious fury was still a more relevant motive than budding nationalistic ethos. (ARFA pg.38)

The Christian Armenians, Assyrians and Chaldeans were surprisingly quick to forget their animosity with the Kurds. They felt that they would rather be Kurds than Turks or Arabs.²⁴

In a situation where literature in the native tongue, objective research and free flow of information are a rare luxury, even memories of a genocide can be erased from the minds of the people with a moderate ease - or alternately be brought to their minds at any one time, according to political expediency.²⁵

3.2.2. The Cold War

During the Second World War, the communist ideology spread by the Soviet Union replaced the tradition of religious resistance. In Turkey, the next couple of decades were quite peaceful, as the centre of the Kurdish rebel activities moved to Iraq and Iran, the north part of which the Soviet Union occupied temporarily. This signified a turning point, after which the Kurdish uprisings were part of the world revolution, and not attempts at returning the Caliphate anymore.

After the Soviet Union had withdrawn its troops from Iran, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP/KDPI), founded at the behest of the communists in 1945, declared the People's Republic of Kurdistan in the town of Mahabad on the 21.1.1946 (so called Mahabad Republic).²⁶ It has often been called the only independent Kurdish state in history, although it never enjoyed neither international recognition nor wide support even among the Iranian Kurds themselves. A specific Kurdish flag was used as a national emblem in Mahabad by December 1945 the very latest. (compare Appendix 2: the Flags!)

The dependency of the People's Republic of Kurdistan from the Soviet Union has generally never been denied. On the other hand, it is doubtful whether many of the Kurds really understood the communist ideology or the motives behind the Great Power politics of the Soviet Union. In a theatre production by nationalistic Kurds, staged in April 1945, the spectators were encouraged by the slogan "Long live Stalin, the liberator of small nations!" (MCDOWALL 1966 pg. 240).

By spring 1946, the Soviet Union's aspirations to power in the direction of Iran and Turkey had waned. The government of Iran suppressed the independence of Kurdistan within a year and had its president, Qazi Muhammed, hanged. The leadership of the Kurdish rebel movement now passed on to Mulla

²⁴ In the name of general solidarity, the Assyrian Democratic Movement (ADM) nowadays is in close co-operation with KDP; PKK for its part operates under the protection of the Armenians, although they still ostracize their own Kurdish minority. Political interests for power cause "unholy alliances" to be formed (the latest one being in 1996 between the Iraqi government and KDP), and quick changes in the turns of events are not uncommon in the Middle Eastern context.

²⁵ There was a representative of the Armenian Kurds already present in the founding meeting of a Kurdish party in Lebanon in 1927. Ten years later, Turkey accused the Soviet Union for the fact that the Dersim uprising was prolonged till October 1938, because the Soviets had infiltrated both the Armenian and Kurdish nationalistic parties. In Dersim, on the other hand, the Alevis fought against the Turkish government, while the Sunni Muslims sided with the government (Kurdistan und die Kurden I pg. 114 and 181; IZADY pg. 215.)

²⁶ The state called itself *Dawlati Jundi Kurdistan* (Republic of Kurdistan and *Hukmati Milli Kurdistan* (National Government of Kurdistan). (Kurdistan und die Kurden I, pg. 205). English literature, however, prefers the expression *People's Republic*.

Mustapha Barzani (1903-1979),²⁷ who had taken part in the earlier battles, but then withdrawn with his troops to the Soviet side of the border - after having first unsuccessfully applied for political asylum in the United States. (KÜCHLER pg. 216)

His successful escape through a difficult terrain while being pursued by the enemy made Barzani a legend, not only among his own tribe, but also among the outsiders. In the beginning the Soviet Union was quite suspicious of him, considering him a possible British agent, but later on they started to train his troops into a communist Commando group. Barzani stayed over ten years in the Soviet Union before he was sent to Iraq. (KINNANE pg. 50; SUDOPLATOV pg. 372-378; ARFA pg. 101-102)

Barzani became the leader of KDP, which had settled into Iraq. Anyhow, he disappointed the expectations of his Soviet sponsors by detaching KDP from communism at the beginning of 1960's. The first symptoms of Barzani's irritation with the unreliability of the communists (Soviet Union began to establish relationships with the new leaders of Iraq) were evident already upon his return from Moscow in March 1961. However, the breaking off of their relationship only became final by the year 1966. Those holding fast to the original idea of socialism later founded a separate party called the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). (BRUINSEN pg. 2; IZADY pg. 212-213)

During the years of 1961-75, Barzani led the Kurdish resistance movement against the government of Iraq, making known in the West the popular Kurdish term "*peshmerga*" (*pesh merga* = "against the death") used of the rebels. The *peshmergas* received support from the Shah of Iran and the United States among others; Soviet Union for its part supported the socialist Baath-governments of Iraq and Syria. (NAAMANI pg. 283 and 285)

On the 11.3.1970, the Iraqi government passed a law concerning the autonomy of the Kurds, which was supposed to come into force by mutual agreement within four years. Negotiations concerning the content of the autonomy and especially concerning the intended borders did not satisfy the Kurds however. Thus on the 11.3.1974, Iraq declared a unilateral nominal autonomy to the Kurds in three provinces, made peace with the shah and crushed Barzani's troops. Barzani himself died in the United States due to an illness.

3.2.3. The Iranian revolution with its repercussions

Soon the Islamic revolution and the Iraq-Iran war gave the Kurds a new opportunity to demand real autonomy. In Iran the battles raged at their fiercest up till the year 1984. According to KDPI who took the most active part in the fighting, between the years of 1979-1993 in Iran the death toll totalled over 40 000 civilian Kurds and 5000 guerrillas, but according to other Kurdish estimates the total loss of human lives was as high as 60 000 persons; according

²⁷ Contrary to what is generally assumed, Barzani was not a Muslim priest (mullah), but the word "Mulla" was part of his name.

to the Iranian government KDPI murdered over 16 550 Kurds. (UN Economic and Social Council Commission on Human Rights report, 2.2.1994, pg.40; HS 15.2.99)

Just as the international media began to lose its interest in the Iranian Kurds, in the very same above mentioned year of 1984, there began a flow of news concerning the Kurds in Turkey, due to the attacks of the PKK, coupled with the counterattacks of the Turkish army. As a result of this fighting, according to one report 4472 civilians, 1225 village guards, 247 policemen and 3874 soldiers are said to have died by the 22.2.1999. According to another estimate, already by the year 1998 altogether 5555 soldiers and policemen and 23 638 guerrillas had been killed.²⁸ According to PKK estimates, by the year 1996 approximately 10 000 civilians, 5000-6000 guerrillas and 9000 soldiers had died in Turkey. According to the highest estimates, a total number of 37 000 people have been killed in the Kurdish areas of Turkey over the last 14 years, which in any case is a smaller figure compared with Iran over the same length of time. (Kurdistan rapport 22/1996)

Interspersed with the news from Turkey, in the 1980's there were only occasional news flashes from the Iraqi governments measures against the Kurds, first and foremost concerning the use of chemical weapons in the town of Halabja in 1988 - which was not the first time. In the so-called Anfal attacks carried out by the Iraqi government in the same year approx. 50 000 - 500 000 Kurds were killed!²⁹

3.3. Recent political developments

During the Iraq-Iran war the Iranian government mediated between the Kurdish parties of Iraq and got them to form the Iraqi Kurdistan Front (IKF) in July 1987. The co-operation lasted for five years.

The Gulf War offered the Iraqi Kurds an opportunity to revenge the deeds of the Iraqi government. The uprising of the Kurds in the spring of 1991 was quite successful at first, but surprisingly quickly Iraq retook the city of Kirkuk among others. Suddenly tens of thousands of Kurds fled to the Turkish border before the United Nations stopped the Iraqi troops from advancing and ordered a protection zone to be formed for the Kurds in the northern part of the country,

²⁸ Since August 1984 PKK has carried out 6036 armed attacks and captured 1046 persons. Year 1998 was the most peaceful in Turkey since 1991. During the first four months of 1999, in the six provinces where martial law is still being enforced, the Turkish security forces killed 213 PKK guerrillas, while the number of soldiers or policemen killed was 20. In addition to that 59 PKK guerrillas lost their lives in the skirmishes that took place on the Iraqi side of the border. (TDN 6.5.99)

²⁹ Human Rights conservative estimate gives the number of victims to be between 70 000 - 150 000, while Amnesty quotes the figure as over 100 000 people. Saddam Husseins cousin, who was in charge of the genocide, commented curtly at a later date that there were less than 100 000 Kurds who died. According to a PUK representative, Saddam Hussein is responsible for the deaths of a quarter of a million Kurds during his reign thus far. In spite of that, Serdar Celik has persistently claimed in his booklet "Jetzt kann ich auch laufen" (Bochum 1993), pg.9: "The world believes that Saddam has killed the most Kurds, but that is a mistaken notion, for the government of Turkey has passed him by in this respect already a long time ago." In Germany, punishment is meted out to those denying the Jewish genocide, but obviously the criteria for truth concerning the literature on the Kurds is somewhat less exacting.

north of the 36 degrees northern latitude. ('Operation Provide Comfort') The Iraqi government withdrew from the area in the autumn of 1991. With this, a de facto independent autonomous region of Kurdistan was formed.

Bitterly aware of the unwillingness of the foreign powers to alter the boundaries of their region, the Kurds have not attempted to demand for international recognition, but have kept a low profile instead, recognising the autonomous region of Kurdistan as being formally a part of Iraq.

To start with, the two main parties of the Iraqi Kurds, i.e. KDP and PUK, took jointly part in the governing of Kurdistan and organised the first ever parliamentary elections, where both parties garnered almost a 50% support. The stalemate situation paralysed the working of the parliament and escalated into sporadic civil war starting from May 1994.³⁰ Kurdistan also divided geographically into two sections; to the KDP controlled North Kurdistan and to the PUK controlled South Kurdistan. The capital city of Arbil was narrowly left on the PUK side, which gave PUK the opportunity for hogging most of the central government. KDP for its part kept for itself the income from the tolls and customs accrued by the lorry traffic from Turkey, which in turn drove PUK into economic difficulties, forcing it to agree on co-operation with Iran.

The infighting between the Kurdish parties culminated when PUK allowed Iran to attack the KDPI strongholds on Iraqi territory in July 1996. After that KDP for its part allowed the Iraqi army to stage a counter attack at the end of August. It conquered Arbil and some other previously PUK controlled towns. For a time it seemed that KDP would manage, with the help of Iran, to liquidate PUK totally and dense crowds of refugees followed the PUK troops to the Iranian border. After the Iraqi army withdrew, PUK with the help of Iran managed however to retake Sulaymāniah again in October 1996.

The fighting in Kurdistan shocked the friends of the Kurds everywhere in the world. Most of them accused KDP, but according to an independent evaluation put forward in the spring of 1997, the more aggressive partner was actually PUK, whose interests it served to shake the balance of power between the two parties. PUK and PKK made a joint attack against the KDP lines on the 15.7.1997. The latest cease-fire between the PUK and KDP was agreed to on the 24.11.1997. In September 1998, the leaders of the parties met in Washington and promised to strive towards peaceful coexistence again. The goal is to choose a new parliament in the summer of 1999.

The constant infighting among the Kurds has raised doubts about their ability to take care of their affairs in a peaceful manner. On one hand, we must remember that the foreign powers still meddle in the affairs of the Kurds; on the other hand we must recognise that also the Kurds themselves tend to use the foreign powers to their own advantage. When KDP temporarily allied itself with its arch-enemy, Saddam Hussein, it was as a response to the closing of ties between Iran and PUK, but it also wanted to test the reactions of the West. KDP wanted to send a message, especially to the United States, that the situation in

³⁰ In principle, KDP had gained a one seat majority in the Kurdistan parliament, but as a conciliatory measure had ceded it to the minor parties and had postponed the election of the president.

Kurdistan was by no means stable, and that the Kurds will not agree to do the "dirty work" for the western countries, particularly if the price was going to be the sufferings caused to the Kurds by the sanctions laid against Iraq, coupled with the expectation of subsequent revenge against the Kurds by Saddam Hussein. The possible re-establishment of Saddam Hussein's regime to Kurdistan in one way or another is a option that the western countries should weigh carefully when deciding about the level of their commitment to the autonomy of the Kurds.

Turkey, who supports KDP, but has also co-operated with PUK from time to time, has further complicated the situation in Kurdistan. With the permission of these two parties, and sometimes even without it, the army of the Turkish government has launched attacks on the PKK bases situated on the Iraqi side. PKK took over the supervision of the Atrush camps that were set up for the Kurds that had fled from Turkey to Iraq, preventing the refugees free return to Turkey, and using them as human shields, for which reason UNHCR was forced to withdraw from the camps in January 1997.

In March 1998 Semdin Sakik, the top ranking military officer of the PKK - the movement's leader, Abdullah Öcalan, has never engaged in the actual military operations himself - defected to KDP's side, betraying at least one PKK terrorist attack being planned in Turkey at the time, and gave himself up to the Turkish authorities. According to some newspaper reports Sakik had again confirmed the theory according to which PKK would have planned the assassination of the Swedish prime minister Olof Palme 12 years earlier, but Sakik quickly reneged on his words.²¹ (AFP 28.4.1998; HS 29.4.1998; HBL 9.5.1998)

The defection of Sakik had already convinced the doubters that PKK may be finished.

"Even in the Kurdish tea houses of the larger cities, where hardly anyone hides their PKK sympathies, many are whispering, that it was 'surprisingly accurate' what the government and the military leaders are declaring, that PKK is finished as an organisation and as a military force, only capable of blind terrorism anymore." (Der Spiegel 17/20.4.1998)

²¹ According to Sakik, he had no detailed proof of the matter, but he considered the information accurate. Most probably PKK has spread rumors, which have been fanned to intimidate the members. On the other hand, there is no reason to doubt, that Sakik's possible testimony is not of voluntary nature. The hints put forward in the newspapers, according to which Sakik may be tortured in Turkey, are totally confounded both due to his media value and against his hardline guerrilla background. Unlike Öcalan, Sakik has actually spent time on the mountains and cut off his own finger for example. The motive for the defection is most probably the dwindling numbers of the guerillas and Öcalan's despotism. Sakik has had reason to fear that he will be made the scapegoat for the poor success of the guerilla warfare lately. In addition to that, he has had the opportunity to exchange views with the more moderate Kurdish party of KDP. It is reported that Sakik has uncovered several Turkish journalists and human rights activists as being PKK supporters. The lawyers hired by his family had to be changed to new ones before the start of the trial in September 1998, because the previously hired ones got tired of their clients statements, which were inconsistent and negative towards PKK. (Kurdistan Rundbrief 19/1998) After the arrest of Öcalan, Sakik has been reported to have sworn that he had received orders from Öcalan to kill the unarmed servicemen murdered while travelling in a bus that was stopped by the PKK in the spring of 1993. The incident became famous, as it was considered to be a signal for ending the unilateral cease fire proclaimed by the PKK earlier on. The Sakik trial, however, has received much less international attention after he began to vent his anger towards the leadership of PKK. In May 1999, the two brothers Semdin and Arif Sakik were condemned to death, but Sakik announced that he wants to testify against Öcalan, who had given the order to kill the unarmed servicemen against Sakik's will. (REUTERS &ap 20.5.99)

Öcalan's expulsion from Syria in the autumn of 1998 and his arrest in Kenya at the end of a four month detour gave undisputed evidence of PKK's present plight. After Turkey had threatened Syria with war, Syria expelled Öcalan, who first flew to Moscow. The Russian officials denied knowing anything about it. On the 12.11.1998 Öcalan was arrested at the airport in Rome. According to PKK representative Yaşar Kaya, Öcalan chose Italy, because

"Europe's strongest communist party is in Italy and we had always enjoyed good relationships with the Italian parliamentarians and politicians." (Turkish Daily News 19.11.1998)

Also, for the first time in history, Italy had a former communist as Prime Minister. In addition, despite the fact that Italy had just signed an antiterrorist co-operation agreement with Turkey, it had in its constitution a clause preventing the extradition of a foreign national to a country whose law formally provides for a death sentence.¹²

Turkey has not exercised the death sentence provided by its law for over 14 years and immediately after Öcalan's arrest the government tried to propose to the parliament the abolishment of the death sentence. The parliament had rejected similar proposals earlier on and things were made more difficult by the fact that at same time than Öcalan was arrested, the country was in the middle of a governmental crisis. *Human Rights Watch* made note of PKK's crimes and asked Italy to reject Öcalan's request for political asylum. *Amnesty International* was content just to demand that Italy should ask Turkey to provide *"the strongest possible guarantees for Öcalan's physical safety and for fair trial that he has a right to."* (AI News Release 20.11.1998)

Italian authorities took a harder line than what the international human rights organisations expected. They would have handed Öcalan over to Germany, where there was an indictment against him with a warrant for his arrest. However, the newly elected government of Germany, fearing riots, refused to make a request for extradition. Italy freed Öcalan on the 16.1.1999 and he disappeared into Moscow again. After his attempts to request entrance to other EU countries failed, Öcalan flew in his private jet to Greece, from where he was sent into hiding in the Greek embassy in Nairobi. Neither the Kenyan officials nor the Nato or EU allies of Greece had any knowledge of this having taken place. However, Turkey found out about the location of his hideout and on the 16.2.1999 the Kenyan officials handed Öcalan over to the Turkish officials. In Europe, this caused an immediate wave of riots, occupation of embassy buildings, hostage taking and acts of self-immolation. On the 28th of June 1999, Öcalan was expectedly sentenced to death, but the execution still has to be confirmed by the Turkish parliament and signed by the president.¹³

¹² The addition made to the Constitution Act of Finland (§7, 1995) would also have prevented Öcalan - or a Texan serial killer to that matter - from being handed back to his home country for a trial. To quote the said Article: "A foreigner may not be expelled, extradited or returned, if he by this act will face a death penalty, torture or other inhuman or degrading treatment" This subsection has been transferred unchanged into the new constitution(9§).

¹³ It is noteworthy, that most unrest was experienced by Germany, a country that feared them the most in the world.
The footnotes are continued on the next page

Whether PKK really loses the international attention and the financial support it enjoys, the focus of the Kurdish politics is once again moving over to Iraq and becoming polarised between KDP and PUK. These two parties will compete over the PKK legacy also in Turkey and abroad and will try to direct the attention of the world from the situation of the Kurds in Turkey to the future of the Iraqi Kurdistan. However, many quarters claiming to work for the Kurds do not want to give up criticising Turkey, because the anti-Turkish sentiment may actually been their main modus operandi, serving their ultimate goals better than the furthering of the Kurdish cause in itself.³⁴ Thus the grace period for Turkey to solve the Kurdish issue for its part may end up being fairly short. The Kurds of different countries each keep on taking their turn in the political limelight. In this respect, the 21st century may very well turn out to be just a repeat of the second half of the 20th century.

3.4. Differences of views

The views and the historical interpretations of the Kurdish parties and those of the governments that almost without exception consider them to be illegal, vary from one another. All the Kurdish parties stress the suffering and oppression, they experience in their own countries. Only PKK claims in principle to represent all the Kurds, but in practice it is only interested in the affairs of Turkey. Its massive media hegemony in relation to the other Kurdish parties filters all too easily through the opinions of foreign researchers.

The views of those politicians and journalists who have defended PKK actions - including İsmet G. İmset, who consider Öcalan to have become more moderate in his views already in 1989 (STEIN pg. 69) - have recently met with an interesting contrast in the accounts of many of the Kurds applying for political

first place. In Berlin, the PKK supporters tried to occupy the Israeli embassy, because they suspected that Israel had played a part in Öcalan's arrest. This suspicion was unfounded, but it served to unite the forces of PKK, the traditional Palestinian organisations and those of the Islamist terrorists. The security forces of the Israeli embassy shot at the persons attempting to occupy the embassy building. There were also several incidences in Switzerland and France. The unrest in other European countries was concentrated in the capital cities. In Canada and Australia the PKK was slower to take action and in the United States Öcalan's arrest went without any incidents, although in addition to Israel, PKK had also leveled accusation against the U.S.A. (Michael Radu: the PKK Strategy in Europe to place Turkey on trial, Foreign Policy Research Institute 26.2.1999)

³⁴ Öcalan's imprisonment and trial in Turkey aroused a disproportionate stir in Europe, causing great damage to Turkey's tourism industry. Öcalan had over a hundred "defense lawyers", some of whom rushed to give press conferences, toured extensively abroad and then ostentatiously gave up defending their client at the very outset of the trial. The main focus of their complaints was the Turkish media that did not want to accept Öcalan's innocence proved otherwise by the trial. A Netherland based German lawyer, who had gained fame as a defense lawyer for the Red Army terrorists, filed a complaint on Öcalan's behalf with the European Human Rights Court, although at the same time it was deplored that Öcalan was not allowed to keep contact with the outside world. While Öcalan complained of heart palpitations, at the same time PKK was praising Öcalan's health and accused Turkey of torture, although Öcalan had suffered from the self same symptoms already while in Rome. Öcalan's main lawyer sang the praises of his clients alertness to the Spiegel magazine while at the same time complaining to the members of the European parliament that Öcalan had been lethargic and "apparently drugged". On one hand the lawyers were demanding for stricter security measures for themselves, while at the same token they were also demanding for Öcalan's transfer to an ordinary prison, away from the solitude of his private island prison.

asylum in Finland, and in the statements by Selim Cürükkaya, one of the founding members of PKK who stays in hiding in Germany. According to Cürükkaya, in the year 1992 alone PKK condemned to death 141 of its members having deviated from the party line. The inner cleansings in the party caused almost as many casualties as the military fighting did. (CÜRÜKKAYA pg. 114 and 125)

Sheri Laizer, an American writer, has detected grounds for defending the actions of PKK:

"For all their self-confessed faults, PKK have never exhibited the sadistic brutality characteristic of the Turkish security forces." (LAIZER pg. 93)

This type of wishful thinking is unfortunately in steep contrast with Cürükkaya's accounts concerning the torture of those whom the guerrillas suspect of being traitors, but from which the international human rights organisations have never told any details. (CÜRÜKKAYA pg. 11)

Cürükkaya's book has been well publicised in Sweden, though it is fairly unknown in Finland. (DN 2.3.1997) Günter Wallraff, the editor of the German rendition of the book, has stated that:

"With the overlordship of the present Kurdish leader it is not possible to build any kind of Kurdish society that is really free."

and that because of that many Kurds wish for:

"rather no free Kurdistan than Kurdistan under the dictatorship of PKK." (CÜRÜKKAYA pg. 11)

Sometimes the statements of the Kurdish representatives have been contrary to what the western public has expected to hear. For example Jalal Talabani, a PUK leader, gave The Independent a statement on the 25.7.1997 in order to placate the Turkish government, saying:

*"I am not taking Turkey as an ideal. I am taking it as relative to Iraq and Iran. Here there are newspapers that openly support the PKK. Here you can speak and shout. There is a democratic process."*¹⁵ (MCDOWALL 1996 pg. 384)

Iran, Iraq, Syria, Turkey, Armenia and Azerbaidzhan all stress that their general right of citizenship covers all citizens regardless of their mother tongue or ethnic background. In Syria, only some of the Kurds are without civil rights, having been robbed of their citizenship in the 1960's. Nowhere are the Kurds persecuted solely on the basis of ethnicity, but the nationalistic Kurdish parties are banned as separatist movements. Everywhere in the region there are also politically passive or moderate Kurds who are not interested in the aspirations for independence. Thus the setting can be likened to a civil war among the

¹⁵ Talabani has given just as flattering a statement concerning his traditional supporter, Syria: "No Kurd has so far been prevented from exercising his civil rights just because he is a Kurd." (Armenian News Network 30.11.1998)

Kurds, where the governments of the region see themselves as defending the silent majority of the Kurds against the terrorism of the extremist groups. There is a certain parallelism here with the situation of the Basques at the face of the activities of the terrorist organisation ETA in Spain.

What one person considers a freedom fight, may to another person be extremist thinking that stirs up violence. Many Kurds may even accept the idea of national independence as a distant ideal, but owing to practical problems give priority to cultural autonomy. Firstly, an independent Kurdistan would have no sea connection and no friendly neighbours. Secondly, most of the Kurds would live outside its borders anyway. Against this background it is understandable that the nationalistic Kurdish parties only represent part of the Kurdish population as long as general human rights are respected and democratic means of influencing their affairs are also available to Kurds. In this respect there is still a lot to be hoped for, but at the same time some progress has also been made.

From Iran's point of view the Kurds are an Iranian tribe - similarly to the main tribe of Persians - and the Kurdish language is just a divergent dialect of Farsi, the official written language. The Islamic republic stresses equality of the ethnic groups and considers separatism as an anti-Islamic disruptive action by the foreign powers (Iraq, Israel and the western countries). The good Kurds (PKK and PUK) are considered to be kinsmen.

From the point of view of Iraq, the autonomy of the Kurds has already been declared once and the aspirations for its realisation in practice are likewise connected with the disruptive actions of the archenemies (Iran, Israel and the western nations). The good Kurds are those who are internationalists and work in co-operation with Mujaheddin, the main Iranian resistance movement, based in Baghdad. On a short time span, the Kurdish policy of Iraq has showed itself to be very uneven. Barbro Karabuda from Sweden showered enthusiastic praise upon it in 1960 by declaring:

"May Qassim's regime stand as an example on how the governments of the other countries should handle the Kurdish problem." (KARABUDA pg. 27).

In the following year, the Iraqi Kurds ended up fighting a guerrilla war against the very same regime!

Many others, who have been observing the happenings in Iraq on a surface level, have been guilty of the same misjudgement. When viewed on a long time span however, Iraq has been the most dangerous home country for the Kurds and its capacity to produce weapons of mass destruction pose a permanent threat to the existence of the Kurds. The flowery rhetoric aside, in Saddam Hussein's mind there are no more good Kurds left, for even the collaborators joined the guerrillas in the spring of 1991.

From Syria's point of view, their domestic Kurds are foreigners to a great extent. The government, led by the Alawite minority, tolerates them in order to maintain the balance of terror between the Sunni Arab majority and the various minority groups. The good Kurds (PKK and PUK) operate from Damascus.

In the Syrian controlled Lebanon the Kurds form a fairly small minority, but it has been a handy location for politically sensitive undertakings, such as PKK training camps for example.

In the opinion of the Turkish government, those Kurds living in Turkey are considered Turks (i.e. Turkish citizens) while all other Kurds are considered foreigners. The good Kurds in Turkey operate within the parliamentary system and exert their influence within legal parties, while the bad Kurds (PKK) are considered to be communist terrorists of extreme notion, using Kurdishness as an excuse only for the spreading of violent revolution. In August 1998, the oldest party in Turkey, the People's Republic Party (CHP), published a report about the Kurdish problem criticising the government for its human rights violations and demanded that the village guard system be abolished.³⁶

From the point of view of the Soviet Union, the Kurds were the victims of colonialism, with the most "class-conscious" of them operating through the Marxist parties founded under the tutelage of Kremlin, or in close co-operation with the "progressive forces". "The reactionary feudal lords" did not understand any of this. The Kurds living the Caucasus region were treated just like the other Soviet citizens - some of them were transferred to Central Asia as "Kulaks", the rest were allowed to present folk dances to the foreign dignitaries visiting Yerevan and Baku. The present day independent Armenia has inherited the attitude of the former Soviet rule; Azerbaidzhan for its part probably tries to adopt its policy towards the Kurds from their sister nation of Turkey; in the inner turmoil of Georgia, the Kurds have been one of the least troublesome minority.

The Great Power policy perspective on the Kurds can quite easily be tested from the basic suppositions; such as by the number of countries the Kurds are said to live in. In serious academic works before the fall of the Soviet Union it was stated that Kurdistan includes areas from five different countries (Iran, Iraq, Syria, Turkey and Soviet Union). In some other books only four countries were included, with a brief mention that the Soviet part of Kurdistan was only marginal in size. The books and articles published after the fall of the Soviet Union replace the "Soviet Union" with "CIS", or remark that the fifth Kurdish community is mainly situated in the Armenian region. A type of "neo-Brezhnevist" view is presented by a claim according to which the Kurds are again said to habit the areas of five states: Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Syria - and Azerbaidzhan. (Rauha kurdeille, 1997, pg.3. (the name of the title means 'Peace for the Kurds' in English))

³⁶ In the April 1999 elections CHP was left without a seat in the Parliament. The party has internal factions and some of its representatives may very well get closer to HaDeP over the next few years.

4. INTEREST GROUPS

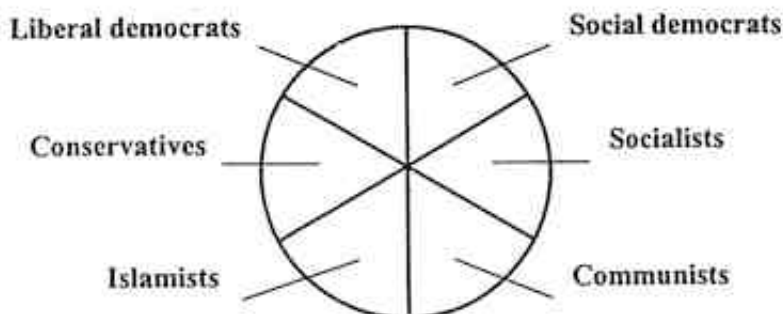
In between the time of the old tribal thinking and that of the modern ethnic identity the Kurds have developed a strong party mentality. According to the Kurdish researcher Omar Sheikmous, the multiplicity of organisational activities dates back to the Communist era. The first modern organisations of the Kurds have all been linked to politics in one way or another. (WAHLBECK pg. 43)

Because all the significant Kurdish parties have their respective armies, schools, hospitals and radio stations, they have replaced the missing state and assume a similar kind of loyalty than what states do from their subjects or tribal groups with their members. Resigning from the party without permission in practice means exile. The formation of parties has always been especially active among the Iraqi Kurds. This is due to their autonomy, which in principle has also been recognised by the Iraqi government.

According to the European model, the simplest way of perceiving the distinctions between political parties is on the traditional right-wing left-wing axle. On the other hand, that is an all too linear a model to suit the eastern, oriental circumstances. It normally assumes the division of attitudes in a way where most parties compete for support somewhere in the ideological middle, with only the marginal extremist groups positioned on both ends of the axle. This kind of setting is natural in societies with a long history of parliamentary tradition.

In the Orient there is not a long tradition of parliamentarism. This manifests itself in extremes of opinion and in "fanaticism", but at the same time in constant fluctuation and flexibility. The setting is better described as a circular diagram, where the opposite ends of the pole meet. If one goes to the extreme left position, one ends up at the right pole, and vice versa. A western researcher is easily taken over by despair, like someone attempting to measure an object, where all lines converge and nothing stays stable or straight.

In the present study the parties have been divided first of all to the left and right wings, with each side subdivided into three parallel sections. At the same time, one must bear in mind that the extreme right wing (the Islamists) and the corresponding left wing (the communists) are actually fairly close to each other. Although the diagram is a simplified one, and does not take into account certain strategic factors, (like the typical principal that the neighbour's enemy is one's friend) it still gives a basic picture of the party groupings.



4.1 The Right wing

The right-wing Kurds are conservative and nurture their Islamic traditions. To them, tribal identity is a crucial factor, for which reason they mainly operate on the local level, not gaining much attention in the western media. Only in the autonomous region of Northern Iraq (Kurdistan) have they organised themselves into clearly defined Islamicist or conservative parties. In Turkey, the independence of the Kurdish Islamists from the state's security structure has been doubted, and some of the most important interest groups have been the paramilitary village guards, that are apolitical as such.

In principle, conservatism and Islamic fundamentalism are not the same thing. A conservative Muslim aspires to hold on to the traditions of his ancestors and to the prevailing situation. Actually the Kurdish brand of Islam has traditionally been fairly liberal. Contrary to this, in the name of religion the Islamists spread new doctrines originating in Iran, in the Wahhabism of Saudi-Arabia and in the teachings of the Muslim Brotherhood based in Egypt. Islamic fundamentalism can be compared to the political extreme right-wing movement that spread in Europe in the 1930's creating a uniform pattern in several countries (the Fascism of Italy, the National Socialism of Germany and so on.) Both movements also applied extreme left-wing rhetoric and recruited especially the less educated and the poor for their supporters. Extremist movements also share a strong belief in authority. For this reason the Dervish brotherhoods of the Kurds are potentially very prone to Islamic fundamentalism.

The right-wing Kurds could be divided into three sections: those nearest to the ideological centre, which are a rare commodity in the Near East; the main bulk consists of the conservatives, who have no special ideology; the extreme right is represented by the Islamists. So far, the most logical way to differentiate them is to separate the collaborators (in Iraq and Iran) and the village guards (Turkey) from the Islamists of Iraq and Turkey.

4.1.1. The Collaborators

The conservative Kurds are more or less content with the prevailing situation, for which reason they often even co-operate actively with their respective governments. In Iran and in Iraq the collaborators nickname *jash* ("donkey's foal") has become so common, that it has by now lost its original derogative sense. (BRUINESSEN pg. 29)

The collaborators are presenting themselves to an increasing extent as Islamists, as far as they actually have any kind of ideological grounds, but in the opinion of their opponents, they act as opportunist mercenaries. The government of Iraq has been accused of wanton acts of terrorism (bomb explosions in the Kurdish region); Iran has promised rewards for the heads of Kurdish leaders and also succeeded in assassinating a series of KDPI leaders. On the other hand, it is wrong to generalise from this that all collaborators are criminals recruited by the governments. Generally it involves people who are genuinely worried about the

fate of their own tribe, and who, when the opportunity arises, may occasionally align themselves with the guerrillas. This is what happened in Iraq in March 1991, when it was exactly the collaborators who stopped supporting Saddam Hussein and started an uprising.

In some instances the collaborators, or people suspected of being such, have felt their situation uncomfortable and have fled abroad to apply for a political asylum. The present government of Iraq remembers their defection in the spring of 1991 with bitterness, so the collaborators are a group that has special reason to fear revenge.

For a long time the collaborators among the Iraqi Kurds were only organised along the tribal lines, but they have also expressed themselves through ideological parties:

The **Kurdistan Revolutionary Party**, (*Parti Shorishgeri Kurdistan*) was founded at the beginning of the 1970's, and soon allied itself with Saddam Hussein, as did the **Movement of the Progress-loving Kurds** (*Bizutnewey Peshkewtin-Xiwazani Kurd*), which was founded around the same time.

In the 1970's, the Iraqi government represented the extreme left, although nowadays it has made a smooth switchover to tow the Islamic line. Likewise the former collaborators have created a new image for themselves:

The **Association of Kurdistan Clans** (*Komelgay Ashayri Kurdistan*) was founded in August 1991 by Hussain Surchi, with Shaqlawa as its base. Ideologically it was near KDP. Hussain's brother, Umar Khadi Surchi, detached himself from the said party and founded the **Kurdistan Conservative Party** (*Parti Parezgarani Kurdistan*), which in turn aligned itself with PUK.

The name of the Kurdish publication supporting the Iraqi government is *Hawkari*.

4.1.2. The Islamists of Iraq

Up till the Islamic revolution in Iran the conservative Muslims in most countries shunned all party politics. Since then the Islamic movement has become organised and especially after the fall of the socialist camp the traditional fundamentalist interpretations of Islam have found their political home in a whole array of parties.

The **Kurdistan Islamic Union** (*YIK*) represents the worldwide Muslim brotherhood, which has been receiving support from Saudi Arabia. In June 1998 it was a party to the anti-PKK declaration.

The **Kurdish Hizbullah**¹⁷ (*Hizbullahi Kurdi*) is an Islamist party that was founded by Sheikh Muhammad Khaled Barzani, the cousin of the present leader of the KDP in Iran in 1982. In 1988, a breakaway section of it was founded by Adham Barzani. It is called the **Revolutionary Kurdish Hizbullah** (*Hizbullahi Kurdi Shorishger*) and has its base in Diyana.

¹⁷ The Arabic phrase *Hizb Allah* means "God's party". The main party was founded in Iran and it has sister parties in many countries, in Lebanon and Turkey among others.

The **Islamic Movement of (Iraqi) Kurdistan** (Bizutnewey Islami li Kurdistanî Iraq, IMIK or IMK) was founded in 1986. Its formal head has been the over 80-year old Sheikh Osman Abd al-Aziz, with Ibrahim Tahir as the actual leader. Although IMIK only garnered under 5% of the vote in the 1992 elections, with the help of Iran it rapidly raised its support, and in the winter of 1993-1994, it took over the towns of Halabja, Penjwin and Khurmali, all of which had been left in between the KDP and PUK controlled areas. In the early summer of 1994 IMIK temporarily co-operated with KDP and fought against Komala's Iranian Kurds.

The region of Raniya especially, and the town of Salahaddin to a certain extent, have been the main strongholds of the IMIK. Over the past few years the movement has weakened, but the mayor of Halabja belongs to it and it has its own radio station called "*Voice of Islam*". The troops are divided into three according to whether they have leanings towards Iran, Saudi-Arabia or Turkey.

The **United Islamic Movement of Kurdistan** is in good terms with the extreme left and has raised its support possibly to 12%. The **Islamic Awakening** and the illegal **Hamas-group**, which modelled after the Palestinian example, have their headquarters in Sulaymaniah. (MCDOWALL 1996 pg. 386-387; Phebe Marrin: A discussion on the Kurds of Northern Iraq 6.10.98, Woodrow Wilson Centre, Division of International Studies)

The **Islamic Kurdish League** was founded in 1988, and it operates under the protection of KDP. (<http://www.ite.mh.se/~abdsu97/ikl>)

4.1.3. The Village guards

The Turkish village guard system was founded by the change in the Village Law on the 4.4.1985. Officially, the village guard (*korucu*, "protector") is a voluntary member of the village, chosen by the village head and authorised by the government to protect the village against the PKK attacks. He is equipped with a radio and an automatic weapon and he is paid a high salary, which is equivalent to the starting wages of a primary school teacher. In practice, it is difficult to refuse the office, as those doing so are branded as PKK sympathisers. At the same time, those who accept the job are put on the PKK hit list. Many Kurds, who have been chosen to be village guards, have fled their home village in order to avoid taking up the office. (HRW: Turkey - Forced displacement of ethnic Kurds from southeastern Turkey, pg. 25; Human Rights in Turkey...pg. 11-12)

On the other hand, certain Kurdish tribes, such as the Jirki, Gevdani, Mamguani, Giravi and Goyani from the provinces of Hakkari and Şirnak have willingly taken part in the village guard system.

Nowadays there are already 92 000 village guards. (NZZ 2.9.97) Often the task has been taken up, or held, by persons who are prone to recklessness or who easily misuse their power, who commit human rights violations and settle their personal quarrels with the help of government issued weapons. The Turkish intelligence service has already suggested the dissolving of the village guard system before that too changes into organised crime. (IPS 27.12.96)

4.1.4. The Islamists and the main parties of Turkey

In Turkey the situation is somewhat different, as the country has enjoyed - unlike the other countries where there are Kurds - democracy, multiparty system and free elections for over 50 years. The interruptions caused by the military coups have been shorter than the terms of parliaments, spanning three years at the most. Their aim has been to arrange new elections as soon as the situation has calmed down. In addition, the military coups in Turkey have always been widely supported by the population. However, they did not succeed in permanently changing the party scene and thus did not manage to break the long term political lines in Turkey - at the most, the parties have just changed their names. The present president, Süleyman Demirel was the prime minister during the previous military coup and was placed under house arrest, but staged a successful comeback into politics; Demirel's main opponent Bülent Ecevit likewise was a prime minister already in the 1970's and is now leading a new left-wing party.

Owing to the overall democratic framework operating in Turkey, the Kurdish right wing has integrated into the government via several legal parties. In public the impression often given is that in 1991 was "the first time" when a Kurdish representative was elected to the Turkish parliament, but that refers only to the representatives of one single party. In actual fact the Kurds are represented in all the main parties.

According to some experts estimates even one third of the members of parliament in Turkey could be of Kurdish origin. Also, according to the PKK supporters, in the previous Turkish parliament there were about 120 Kurds, whom it considers as assimilated defectors however. (TS 11.6.97) This is due to the fact that the members of the parliament consider their ethnic identity and mother tongue to be a private matter in the same way as religion is. It would be just as wrong to state that in the parliament there is such and such a number of Muslims, if what is meant by it is only the representatives of the Islamist parties.

The strong position of the Kurds in the politics of Turkey is mirrored by the fact that even the previous presidents İsmet İnönü, Fehmi Korutürk, Kenan Evren and Turgut Özal were Kurds at least according to some criteria. The most serious contender to the present president in the 1993 elections was the Kurdish minister Kamran İnan.³⁸ Likewise the former Minister for Foreign Affairs and Speaker of the parliament Hikmet Çetin, who was also the acting president in the spring of 1997, is also a full-blooded Kurd. (Turkin ihmisoikeudet... pg. 12; STEIN pg. 11 and 17; MCDOWALL 1996 pg. 405 and 415-416; BARKEY & FULLER pg. 82; Izady pg. 110)

All the governments of Turkey have had Kurdish ministers, sometimes even seven or eight of them. However, it has not been to the advantage of the right-wing Kurds to emphasise their separate ethnicity. To them, religion has borne greater significance. The left-wing moderates like Çetin, have seen no reason to emphasise either their ethnic identity or their religiousness. However, this does

³⁸ The setting was characterised by the fact that the members of parliament representing the "Kurdish party" HaDeP rather left an empty ballot than voted for the moderate left wing Kurd İnan (MEİ 450)

not make them any 'worse' as Kurds or Muslims, in comparison to other people claiming the said identity and religious affiliation.

The political division of Turkey on the right-wing left-wing axle was defined in relation to the caliphate which was discontinued in the 1920's, and to the nationalistic ethos which was elevated to its place, pushing religion aside and striving for societal reforms. Since 1925, many Kurds supported the resistance movement of the traditionalist forces for the return of the caliphate, because they wanted to belong to a multinational Islamic empire, not to a Turkish national state.

Thus most Kurds in Turkey (excluding the Alevis) in the 1950's supported the right-wing Democratic Party, which in the 1954 parliamentary elections gained 85% of its elected members from the Kurdistan area. The Justice Party and the still existing Right Way Party (DYP) founded by Demirel were the heirs of the above mentioned Democratic Party. (MCDOWALL 1996 pg. 398 and 400).

The Turkish right wing has always tried to reinstate the position of religion in the state and has before long come to be at odds with the army that watches of the legacy of the secular and nationalistic (Kemalist) legacy. All the military coups in Turkey have been directed against the ruling right wing of the time or against the strong threat of Islamic fundamentalism on the rise. Thus the military coups also always weakened the opportunities of the Kurds to exert their influence. This is because during the reign of the right wing, the Kurds have always enjoyed a noticeable representation in the parliament and as ministers. Most Kurdish members of parliament were either sheikhs or related to them. (KARABUDA pg. 85; MCDOWALL 1992 pg. 39) For example, the Stockholm office of ERNK in a pamphlet it published, called "Turkey - A Criminal Mafia State", pointed out the traditional right-wing sympathies of the large Bucak tribe from the Siverek district, together with its connections with the Turkish security bodies.

Thus it is a very one-sided claim that most of the Kurds in the 1960's drifted into the Marxist camp of the Turkish Labour Party. (NERWEYI pg. 30) It was the radical students, who got the seeds for their ethnic awakening from the extreme left wing of the Turkish politics, unlike the majority of the Kurds. Pireh Babi Loghman has admitted as much by saying the following in the summary of his thesis for the Licentiate in Political Science for Helsinki University:

"In Turkey the main body of the Kurdish urban middle class and landlord strata were interested in integration rather than in separation...because in the 80s Kurdish nationalism was never a pan-class national movement in Turkey."

According to Loghman (LOGHMAN, pg. 133 and 134) the change in this state of affairs only happened in the 1990's.

The support of the extreme right wing in the Kurdish areas during the 1970's and the 1980's was 20%, in other words twice the national average. (BEŞİKÇİ pg. 104-105.) The elections in April 1999 showed that the support for the Islamists had weakened and that the protest of the extreme right wing was instead channelled to the National Action party (MHP) in the western and central parts of Turkey, while in the eastern parts of the country the Islamists lost their support in the

form of protest votes given to HaDeP, which however was unable to garner the required national threshold of 10% of the votes.

The most extremist of the right-wing Kurds came into the limelight at the beginning of the 1990's in the name of the **Kurdistan Islamic Party (PIK)** and that of the **Kurdistan Islamic Movement**. They were vying for the favour of Iran and founded their own mosques in Germany. (GUNTER PG. 36) PKK, who fights against the government of Turkey, has supported these groups. (MCDOWALL 1996 pg. 432-433)

Recently the Kurdistan Islamic Movement, the **Kurdistan Islamic National Movement** and the **Islamic Revival Movement** have, however, all three made an anti-PKK public stance.²⁹

The left wing has accused the government of favouring the extreme right-wing **Hizbullah** organisation, which was founded in 1987 in Batman and which idolises Khomeini. Hizbullah has assassinated several Kurdish left-wing politicians and journalists, for which reason it has been suspected that it does duty as a "death patrol" under police protection. On the other hand, it has been reported that the organisation has drifted into inner conflicts concerning its attitude towards the government of Turkey. After 1991, the Hizbullah split into the more moderate wing called Menzil and into the more radical wing called Ilim, only the latter of which has been suspected of co-operation with the police anymore. Since 1994, the two wings of Hizbullah have fought with each other more than against the PKK. Some members of the party were arrested in Turkey in May 1998 and 82 of its members have been indicted for 113 murders. This has removed some earlier doubts concerning its possible co-operation with the Turkish officials. It is claimed that in the raids conducted in March 1999 revealed evidence of connections between Hizbullah and PKK, altogether 400 members of Hizbullah were arrested. (HS 26.6.92; NZZ 7.-8.2.93; ANNUAL REPORT pg. 4-5; AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL: TURKEY A POLICY OF DENIAL pg. 14; Kurdistan News 33-34/1997 pg. 5, Jordan Times 20.5.1998; U.S. Department of State: Turkey Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1998; AP & BBC 31.3.99)

In Istanbul the **Islamic Action Organisation** has presented itself alongside Hizbullah. (MEI 444)

4.2. The Left wing

The nationalistic interest groups of the Kurds in all the Kurdish countries are leftist at least in their rhetoric, with the ideological field spanning the length from an undefined social democracy through the "scientific" Soviet style socialism all the way to the most extreme Maoist communism.

The Kurdish nationalistic movement has split into parties not only along the ideological lines but also along the national borders among other things. The

²⁹ Osman Öcalan, who is the brother of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, has for a long time been active in Iran, furthering the organisation's infiltration into the Islamic movement. The more senior leaders Cemil Bayik and Murat Karayılan have been more sceptical of both Iran and Islamism.

setting can be clarified by cross-referencing the three states that are most important to the Kurds (Iran, Iraq and Turkey) with three ideological foundations: Social Democracy, Socialism and Communism (in forms favoured by Stalin and Mao).

In all the significant Kurdish countries (first in Iran and Iraq, then in Syria and finally in Turkey) the first Kurdish party was nominally "democratic". In the language used at the time, this meant openly socialistic in the Marxist-Leninist way as accepted by the Soviet Union. With time, these parties expanded into genuine nationalistic movements and nowadays they aspire to apply a kind of western social democracy in their programmes. In all of these parties, there remained a small minority with socialist inclinations. They remained loyal to the original ideology much longer, and were also most probably under the tutelage of Kremlin up till the collapse of the Soviet Union.⁴⁰

The democratic parties gained their independence at a different rate: Barzani took over KDP at the beginning of 1960's, but KDPI stayed along the Kremlin lines up till the 1980's. In between this time period the relations between KDP and KDPI were extremely strained and KDPI was in co-operation with PUK. In Turkey, the inner power struggle within the party ended in the socialists' victory, with the party support sliding more and more towards the left wing.

The third group of parties was formed by the extreme left wing, which applied their own particular brand of Communism that imitated Maoism. They became bitter with the obvious non-independence of the Soviet-minded communist parties and with their willingness to co-operate with their governments. Especially the order given by the Soviet Union to the Iranian communists to fraternise with the Islamistic government drove many of the more extreme supporters away from the socialist parties. These extreme groups (PKK being the best known of them) modelled themselves with the Cultural Revolution of the Maoist China, with the Albania of Enver Hoxha, with Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge regime and with the terrorist organisations of Peru. In difference to the above-mentioned movements though, the Kurdish communists have divided into fractions that put greater emphasis either on the ethnic identity (Kurdishness) or the ideology (Communism) respectively.

4.2.1. Iran: KDPI

The underground faction of the **Kurdistan Democratic Party** (Hizbi Demokrati Kurdistan), founded in November 1945, which remained in Iran, was for a long time in practice the Kurdish section of the communist Tudeh party. (MCDOWALL 1996 pg. 249-250, 253 and 260) Its leaders, who had been languishing in prisons, were freed at the time of the Iranian revolution and they set as their goal "the autonomous Kurdistan in Iran". KDP (Iran) - henceforth KDPI for the sake of simplicity - and the government of Iran had their fiercest fighting between the

⁴⁰ According to Loghman's classification the left wing parties were divided into the supporters of either 'scientific socialism' or those of 'Marxism-Leninism'. (LOGHMAN pg. 125)

years of 1982-1984; according to the figures released by KDPI, it lost over 5000 guerrillas during the time of 1980-1983. (BRUINESSEN pg. 34; SMYTH PG. 24-25)

The most famous KDPI leader (from the year 1973 onwards) was a former Tudeh member, doctor Abdulrahman Qasimlu (Ghassemlou), who for years had lived in Czechoslovakia, but after his return to Iran steered the party along more moderate lines, expanding it ideologically and detaching KDPI from the tutelage of Tudeh. Iranian agents murdered him in Vienna in 1989. His successor, doctor Said Sharifkhandi, was also murdered by the agents of the Iranian government in Germany in 1992;⁴¹ other KDPI leaders have been murdered by Iranian agents in Turkey. The present leader is Mustafa Hijri in addition to which the party leadership comprises of Abdullah Husseinazadeh, Hasan Sherefi, Selam Azizi and Baba Ali.

The KDPI of today is wide-based nationalistic freedom movement, which is striving for the formation of an autonomous Kurdistan within Iraq preferably through negotiations. In between the years 1983-85, KDPI belonged to the Mojaheddin-led alliance of Iranian resistance movements by the name of National Resistance Council (NRC), but resigned, or was expelled from it, after it began to negotiate with the Iranian government. (<http://www.iran-e-azad.org/english/special/chp10.htm>) Owing to repeated assassinations the negotiations have been discontinued. KDPI is an observer member of the Socialist International.

KDPI strongholds in Iran up till the 1990's have been the Mahabad, Kermanshah and Sar Dasht regions. In the 1980 elections the party gained an overwhelming majority in Mahabad, but in Bowkan and Saqqez it only obtained the majority by a very narrow margin. (MCDOWALL 1996 pg. 281) The party's support has depended particularly on the Sorani speaking Kurds, for which reason it was natural for it to flee to the fold of the PUK in 1984. KDPI fought with Komala during the years of 1984-1988 and, according to NRC was guilty of murdering both Komala members and other captives of war, as well as committing acts of violence against the Iraqi members of the KDP. (MCDOWALL 1996 pg. 275; <http://www.iran-e-azad.org/english/special/chap10.html>) In addition to that, KDPI has been told to ostracise the deviationist Ahl-i Haqq believers.

Since 1988, by the very latest, the KDP bases were Kandil, Boleh, Qala Diza and Koi Sanjaq, all of which are situated on the Iraqi side of the border. The KDPI radio station is *'The Voice of Iranian Kurdistan'* which finally had to be moved to Kirkuk. In the 1990's, the Iranian government's attacks against the KDPI bases, performed with the consent of the PUK, have driven KDPI to severe difficulties, and of late, there has been no news of its own activities.

In 1988 a minority faction (approximately 40% of the party membership) called the KDPI's **Revolutionary Leadership**, or **Revolutionary Command** (KDP-RL or KDP-RC) separated itself from the main party. It adhered to Marxism and presupposed a relentless fight against the government of Iran. It was led by Jalil Ghardani. Its bases were Raniya and Qala Seyda, which are

⁴¹ The modus operandi of the Iranian agents was so predictable by then that Izady was able to predict the fate of Sharifkhandi in his book published slightly before the assassination. (IZADY pg. 211) Owing to the incidence the European Union severed its relationships with Iran for a period of almost one year (1997-1998).

situated on the Iraqi side. Its main support base, as with the KDPI, was in the Mahabad and Sar Dasht regions, for the party did not divide on a geographical basis.

KDP-RL first approached Komala and took part as an observer in the PKK-organised "Kurdish parliament", which it recognised as being the representative of the Kurds in Turkey. (Kurdistan Report [English] 22/1995) In the spring of 1991, KDP-RL had refused to support the uprising of the Iraqi Kurds, for which reason it lost many of its supporters. Nowadays KDP-RL has once again united itself with KDPI. (http://www.humanrights.de/~kurdweb/index_d.html)

4.2.2. Iran: Komala

The first Komala ("Committee, Society") was the predecessor of KDPI, having been founded already in the autumn of 1942 under the tutelage of the Soviet Union. The party also had divisions in Iraq and Turkey at the time. (KINNANE pg. 49; ROOSEVELT pg. 250)

The present **Komala Yeksani**⁴² claims to have been formed during the latter half of the 1960's, but only came into public consciousness in 1978, patterning itself after the Maoist Albania of the time. (MOUSTAFA pg. 103) Komala expanded its activities in 1983 by founding the Communist Party of Iran (CPI), functioning as its Kurdish section. The Ethnic nature of Komala has become more emphasised with time. From the refugees included in the special quota that were accepted to Finland, the Kurds from the Sanandaj region without exception favoured Komala, but Komala also garnered a slight majority among the Kurds from the Marivan, Bowkan and Saqqez regions.

The present leader of Komala is Ibrahim Alizade. The Komala resistance collapsed at the end of the 1980's, causing a flood of refugees into Iraq and Europe.⁴³ Neither did the party take part in the Kurdish uprising in Iraq, for it had enjoyed the special protection of the Iraqi government. The main military base of Komala in 1995 was in Saqqez, but its offices were in Sweden. Komala's radio station is 'The Voice of the Communist party of Iran'. (<http://www.cpiran.org>)

In October 1991, Komala became divided as Mansur Hikmet preferred co-operation with the Iranian government. The **Workers' Communist Party of Iran** (WCPI or IWCP) founded by Hikmet, is ideologically even more extreme than the mother organisation, but in the name of internationalism, it was less interested in the special position of the Kurds.

Hikmet's views are critical of the western values:

"Worker-communism must be a powerful intellectual force in society against the bourgeois's basic trends of thought such as liberalism, democracy, nationalism, humanism, social democracy and the like...Thus, worker-socialism and democracy

⁴² There is uncertainty even amongst the researchers and the Kurdish activists as to the precise form of the official name of the party. (IZADY pg. 211)

⁴³ A flood of refugees is generally speaking more of a proof of the collapse of a resistance movement, rather than reflecting intensification of a conflict.

movements are not complementary, but stand in struggle with each other." (<http://www.wpiran.org>)

WCPI and its counterpart in Iraq were born around the time of the demise of the Soviet Communist Party. The party has a radio station by the name of '*Voice of the Worker*'.

4.2.3. Iraq: KDP and its allies

In line with the Iranian example, the Kurdish Democratic Party founded in Iraq on the 16.7.1946 changed its name in the beginning of the 1950's to be The **Kurdistan Democratic Party** (Partiya Demokrata Kurdistanê, KDP) in order to attract even the non-Kurdish population living in Kurdistan. Under the direction of the Barzani family, it grew into a broad-based nationalistic freedom movement, with the object of forming an autonomous Kurdistan within Iraq. In 1991 this goal was achieved in practice.

After some internal dissension KDP was re-established in 1976 under the leadership of Masud Barzani, the son of Mulla Mustafa Barzani. At different points of time, he had been able to enter into negotiations with the leaders of Iraq, Iran and Turkey respectively. He had also managed to cultivate good relationships with the Christian minorities of Kurdistan. KDP has also been active in the Hakkari province on the Turkish side of the border, where Turkey allowed it to maintain its bases already in the 1970's.⁴⁴ (MCDOWALL 1996 pg. 344)

International human rights organisations, in their commitment to impartial reporting, have levelled criticism on Kurdish parties for violations of human rights, but those refugees who have ended up in Finland have not accused KDP of anything more serious than of the maliciousness of certain individual party activists. According to these asylum seekers the intelligence service of the KDP, '*Parastên*' (officially *Rekhistîni Taybetî*) has harassed mostly those suspected of being collaborators by interrogations and threats.

The relations between the Yezidis and KDP have been tight from time to time. On the other hand, The **Movement of Islamic Feyli Kurds** (*Bizutnewey Islami Kurda Feyliyakan*) founded by Jalil Feyli at the beginning of the 1980's and the **Kurdistan Democratic Union** (*Yekîti Dimukrati Kurdistan*) founded by Ali Sinjar in 1978 merged with KDP in 1993. From the religious groups, The **Democratic Christian Movement** and the **United Kurdistan Christians** have worked closely with KDP.

Since 1993, the KDP daily newspaper has been called *Brayit* ('Brotherhood') and the Arabic weekly has been called *Khabat* ('The Fight'). Its radio station since 1963 has been '*The Voice of Iraqi Kurdistan*'. Since 1992 the KDP controlled area has also had its own TV station '*Kurdistan Television Network*', which has started satellite transmissions in 1999. For the sake of fairness, the

⁴⁴ Faik Nerweyi, who has written a book on Kurds in the Finnish language, has been KDP representative in Ankara for at least two years.

director of the company is the leader of another party, "Sami" Abd al-Rahman.⁴³ (RFE/RL 2.4.99; <http://www.kdp.pp.se>)

In August 1993, KDP joined with the **Kurdish Unity Party**, which was founded by minor parties the year before, after which the official name for the united party has been the **United Kurdistan Democratic Party (PKD-Yekgirtu)**, but the English-based anagram of KDP is still in general use.

4.2.4. Iraq: PUK and its allies

By the year 1964, Jalal Talabani, who had studied together with Qasimlu in Czechoslovakia, had developed serious quarrels with the Barzani family. Ideologically, he was more left wing, originally aligning himself with the Baath party. Talabani's opportunity came in the summer of 1975, when Barzani had suffered defeat in the hands of the Iraqi government. At that time, on the 1.6.1975 he founded in Damascus the **Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (Yekati Nishtimani Kurdistan, PUK)**. (IDAZY pg. 210; MCDOWALL 1992 pg. 101 and 105)

Talabani is renowned for his unpredictability. (LAIZER pg. 129) In the Iraq - Iran war PUK first joined with the Iraqi government, which broke the PUK ties with the communists.⁴⁴ From this, Barzani got a reason to accuse Talabani of being a collaborator. (BRUINESSEN pg. 29)

Nowadays PUK is in practice the party for the Sorani speaking Kurds and highly dependent of the favour of the Iranian government. Since 1988 it has mainly co-operated also with PKK. The PUK newspaper is called *Kurdistanî Niwe*; PUK's radio station, situated in its headquarters in Sulaymaniah, is '*the Voice of the People of Kurdistan*'. The party also has its own TV station, '*PUK-TV*'. (MCDOWALL 1996 pg. 426; <http://www.puk.org>)

International human rights organisations and also those refugees who have ended up in Finland have accused Kurdish officials as also being responsible for human rights violations. The target of these accusations have been namely PUK and those Islamists, who have co-operated with it most lately, both of whom have harassed the supporters of KDP and the communists. The intelligence service of the PUK, "Dezgal Zanyeri", captures and assassinates Iranian Kurds at the behest of the Iranian government, as far the accusations of several of the refugees in Finland can be trusted.

Behind the Kurdish United Party were three minor political parties. Each of these became further split into two factions, with the splinter group parties preferring co-operation with PUK:

- **Kurdistan Democratic People's Party** (Parti Geli Dimukrati Kurdistan, KDPP⁴⁵), which was founded by the infamous guerrilla leader Sami Abd al-Rahman around 1980; The party has its headquarters in Arbil and a newspaper is called *Gel* (IZADY pg. 215)

⁴³ At the start of its operations, KTV got technical help from Turkey and it utilises a Bosnian satellite.

⁴⁴ Rather KDPP than any other English abbreviation in use: KPDP, or DPPK.

- **Kurdish Socialist Party** (Parti Sosyalisti Kurd), which was founded in 1975. It was led by Azad Mustafa and Abdullah Agrin. The party headquarters are situated in Raniya and its newspaper is called *Newroz*.

- **Kurdistan Socialist Party of Iraq** (Parti Sosyalisti Kurdistan - Iraq, KSPI)⁴⁷, which was founded towards the end of 1970's. From the leaders of the party, Muhammad Haji Mahmud and the late Rasul Mamand changed over to PUK in the end. The party headquarters are in Raniya. (BRUINESSEN pg. 32 and 38)

- **Kurdistan Social Democratic Party** (Parti Sosyalisti Dimokrati Kurdistan), founded in 1994, is descendent from the last mentioned party (KSPI). It has a joint radio station, '*Voice of Independence*' together with the Kurdistan Conservative Party.

- **Kurdistan Liberation Party** (Parti Rizgari Kurdistan), founded in 1993, was formed from the remnants of KSPI and KDPP. It operates in Arbil.

In 1992, another breakaway segment of the KSPI joined together with the **Revolutionary Banner** (Alay Shorish), founded by Hikmat Karim ("Mullah Bakhtiar"), who himself later joined up with PUK. The new party was called the **Kurdistan Toilers Party** (Hizbi Zāhmātkeshani Kurdistan, KTP). It is led by Qadir Aziz. PUK with its allies have been considered representing Syrian interests in the Iraqi Kurdistan.

4.2.5. Iraq: The Communists

In 1988, a faction of ICP, led by Aziz Muhammad, joined with the opposition Iraqi Kurdistan Front, which disintegrated in 1993. Representatives of its more moderate wing, under the leadership of Hussain Hallaqi and Rafiq Sabir, founded the **Kurdistan Independent Labour Party** (Partiya Kari Serxwebuna Kurdistan), which likewise has been a PKK ally, yet in 1998 it signed the anti-PKK declaration.

Karim Ahmad resigned from ICP and in 1993 founded the **Kurdistan Communist Party** (Hizbi Kommunisti Kurdistan), which has sided with PUK in the inter-Kurdish skirmishes, but it too joined in the anti-PUK declaration in 1998. The party headquarters are situated in Shaqlawa and its newspaper is called *Regay*. The party also has its own radio station called '*Voice of the Communist party of Iraqi Kurdistan*'.

The Maoist brand in Iraqi communism is represented by the **Kurdistan Workers' Struggle Organisation** (Rekhravi Tekoshani Rendyerani Kurdistan), founded in 1978, known as *Tekoshin* for short. All the while it has co-operated

⁴⁷ Sometimes it is also called by the shorter name of Kurdistan Socialist Party or United Socialist Party of Kurdistan. (IZADY pg. 214)

with PUK, KTP and PKK and apparently it has its own small counterpart in Turkey.

In the spring of 1991, PKK founded and trained a sister organisation to the former, called the **Kurdistan Liberty Party**, (Parti Azadi Kurdistan, KLP) the registration of which was not accepted by KDP. Many KLP activists gave up their intentions after they underwent the harsh treatment of the PKK training camps. (CÜRÜKKAYA pg. 118-120) The party had to be re-established by Aziz Aqrawi in 1992 under the name of **Kurdistan National Democratic Union** (Hawpeymaneti Dimukrati bo Serbekhoy Kurdistan). Surprisingly, it too was party to the anti-PKK declaration of 1998.⁴⁸

A new group by the name of **Rewti Komunist** appeared at the end of the 1980's into the ranks of the Iraqi communist parties. Its name was often interpreted in the French fashion to be *Route Communiste*. Its members were accused of spying for Syria. On the 21.7.1993, apparently through an example provided by the extreme wing of the Iranian Komala, they founded the **Iraqi Workers' Communist Party (WCP)**, which gained the attention of the public through the feminist movement. It got into the bad books with both the KDP and the PUK and especially so with the Islamists.

The support of the WCP centred on the town of Sulaymaniah, from where a considerable number of the party members have ended up in Finland. The communist workers' parties of Iraq and Iran seem to be in active co-operation at least via Internet and the Iraqi WCP has managed to get its voice heard fairly well in the international human rights organisations. The party has a section in Finland and it has connections with a splinter group of the Finnish communist Party, which has used the name of Communist Workers' Party. WCP's radio station, *'Voice of the Iraqi Communist Workers' Party'*, operates from Sulaymaniah. (Comp. <http://www.wpiraq.org>)

The ethos of the Iraqi communists can be inferred from the Kominform statement in the Internet:

"The military hostilities between Iraq and Kuwait in 1990 can be seen as a pre-planned continuation to the war between Iraq and Iran. From the Iraqi refugees living in Western Europe, new and authentic information has been gained concerning the progress and the background of the happenings of that time...The war was started by the Iraqi president Saddam Hussein. According to Iraqi sources he acted under the protection of the U.S.A. and reported directly to CIA, ...It is probably a matter of theatre on a grand scale." (<http://personal.eunet.fi/pp/kominf>)

⁴⁸ Aqrawi had earlier on led the **Kurdistan Independent Democratic Party**. The name of this party is a misnomer, for in 1980, together with ICP and KSPI it formed the National Democratic Front in co-operation with the Iraqi government

4.2.6. The Kurdish parties in Syria

The Kurdish parties in Syria can operate with relative freedom, as long as they stay small and in their names use rather the ethnic adjectives "Kurds" or "Kurdish" than the geographical term "Kurdistan".

The **Kurdish Democratic Party of Syria (KDPS)** was founded in the 1950's, under the influence of Talabani, who at the time was still representing the Iraqi KDP. Periodically, the party had to operate underground, but nowadays the Syrian government tolerates its presence. The party was split into two, when Osman Sabri, who represented a more critical view, founded his own fraction almost with the same name (in the English translations the names of the two parties are identical). Barzani tried to mediate between the two Syrian communist parties at the beginning of the 1970's, but he could not prevent the movement from splitting continually. Barzani supporters regrouped again under the leadership of Darham Miro in 1972, but became divided in 1981. At present, KDPS is led by Kamal Ahmad. His rival Ismail Omar allied himself with the Kurdish Labour Party of Syria in 1990.

The left-wing faction of the KDPS, which was loyal to the Syrian government and to the Iraqi PUK founded by Talabani, in 1970 again split into two:

Under the leadership of Abdulhamid Darwish the **Kurdish Democratic Progress Party of Syria** was formed. It has declared itself social democratic.

The **Kurdish National Union**, led by Salih Badr ed-Din, was organised in 1982. It modelled its actions with the KDPI. In 1991, it split into two. One faction was led by Sheikh Bak and took for itself the versatile name of KDPS. The other faction, led by Fuad Ali Kuh, eventually merged with other smaller groups and formed itself into the **United Kurdish Democratic Party of Syria**. This alliance is known by the Kurdish term Yeketi, implying close connections with PUK. The supporters of Ismail Omar are members of this alliance also, as well as the following three minor parties:

1. **Kurdish Leftist Party of Syria**, founded in 1977, and led by Yusuf Dibo. A subgroup has since separated itself from it under the leadership of Murad Hair ed-Din.
2. **Kurdish Workers' Party of Syria**, founded in 1983
3. **Kurdish Labour Party of Syria**, led by Sheikh Ali.

The **Kurdish Socialist Party of Syria**, led by Sali Kado, is yet another small Kurdish party in Syria, but very little is known about it. The **Kurdistan Democratic Union of Syria** was founded in Germany in 1995.⁴⁹ The late leader

⁴⁹ The Kurdish parties operating in Syria do not dare to use the term Kurdistan, because the Syrian government opposes the idea of the existence of an area called Kurdistan (should it include areas of Syria), although it accepts the Kurds as a separate nationality.

of the **Communist Party of Syria**, Halid Bakdash, was a Kurd. At present moment his widow, Wisal Fahrhan, is the leader of this legal party.

The area of Kurd Dağ is in practice dominated by the PKK of Turkish Kurds, but in the northeastern part of the country all parties shun it.

4.2.7. The Turkish KDP with its descendants³⁰

Since the political right wing of the Turkish Kurds was satisfied with gaining a representation equal to the Kurdish population in the governance of the state, the left wing was given the chance to form its profile through a nationalistic ethos. As the moderate left-wing parties in Turkey were the ones that had aligned themselves the closest with the idea of the secular state, the Kurdish nationalism was driven to the sidelines of the political field and became prone to the doctrines of revolutionary violence.

The **Kurdistan Democratic Party of Turkey** (*Partiya Demokrat a Kurdistan*, PDKT, or TKDP in Turkish) was founded in December 1965 at the behest of Iraqi KDP and Barzani.³¹ It was an illegal party, which gained influence in Siverek, which is the home area of its founder, Faik Bucak. He died, however, already in July 1966 and his successor Sait Elçi had to defend himself both against the Turkish government and the pressure of the left wing of his own party. When Elçi had to flee to Iraq in 1971, his rival Sait Kırmızıtoprak ("Dr Shivan") had him murdered! Barzani was angered by this treachery and, as a counter measure, had Kırmızıtoprak executed. Despite of this, his followers managed to take hold of the party³². (BRUINSEN, pg. 32; MCDOWALL 1996 pg. 406 and 412; IZADY pg. 215)

In this connection it is appropriate to remind the reader about the ongoing hostilities in the Siverek region between the Bucak clan and PKK, the last mentioned of which monopolises the Kurdish issue totally! Since 1969 the PDKT left wing was infiltrated by Kurds (and non-Kurds alike) who had been trained in the Palestinian al-Fatah camps and who got their weaponry via the Syrians. (OLSON 1973, pg. 197)

Like its model, PDKT may otherwise have developed along more moderate lines, except that the general intense atmosphere of the 1970's raised rivals of a more radical nature, causing the party to split by the year 1979. One wing founded a party by the name of **Kurdistan Workers' Party** in 1977, which is not to be confused with its better-known namesake. In order to avoid confusion it changed its name to be the **Kurdistan Progressive Workers' Party** (*Partiya Resenga Karkaren Kurdistan*, PRKK). The party newspapers were *Armanç*, *Jina Nu and Tirej*. (MCDOWALL 1996 pg. 412 and 417, LAIZER pg. 98-99; Kurdistan und die Kurden II pg. 74 and 75)

³⁰ It is apparently these parties that Loghman talks about as having leanings towards 'scientific socialism', but not towards 'marxism-leninism' (LOGHMAN pg. 125)

³¹ At times, the party was also called 'KDP in Turkey'.

³² Only Loghman claims, without any source reference, the Turkish Intelligence Service having killed both of these Kurdish leaders. (LOGHMAN pg. 120)

Around the year 1978 the youth wing of PRKK founded a party by the name of **Kurdistan National Liberators** (RNK, or KUK in Turkish) or simply **Rizgari** ('The Liberators'). It promoted violent revolution and aligned itself with the Soviet Union. The organisation published newspapers, which were called *Zevai* and *Nishtiman*, and in addition to that, between the years 1979-1981 it also published in Stockholm a newspaper by the name *Rizgariya Kurdistan*. RNK, as well as its splinter group, the **Kurdistan Liberation Party** (PRK) have begun co-operating with PKK. Another breakaway section of RNK joined with the groups called **KAK** and **Pesheng** to form the **Kurdistan People's Unity Party** (Yekbun), which nowadays is known by as the **Kurdistan Socialist Unity Party** (PYSK). (LAIZER pg. 98-99; Kurdistan und die Kurden II, pg. 68-69)

The following are apparently fractional Maoist parties split from the above mentioned groups and working in co-operation with PKK: the **Kurdistan Communist Party Kawa** (KKP) that has published the *Yekiti* newspaper since 1983, the **Patriotic Agenda** (Hewgirtin Welatparez) and the **Socialist Struggle** (Tekoshina Socyalist). PKK had gathered many of the minor parties into various co-operating organisations. (LAIZER pg. 98-99, Kurdistan und die Kurden II, pg. 72-74; Kurdistan Rundbrief 3/10.2.1999)

A previously unknown organisation by the name **Revenge Teams of Nationalistic Kurds** ('Milliyetçi Kürt Intikam Timleri' in Turkish) claimed responsibility for the Istanbul car bombing that took place on the 10.3.1999. (Med-TV 10.3.99)³³

The **(Turkish) Kurdistan Socialist Party** (Partiya Sosyalista Kurdistanê Türkiye, PSKT or PSK, or TKSP or KSP in Turkish), founded in 1974, originated from the Turkish Labour Party. Its leader Kemal Burkay lives in Sweden. The best known member of the party residing in Turkey is the former mayor of Diyarbakır Mehdi Zana. The party openly supports communism, but its relationship with PKK has fluctuated from hostility to an alliance in the spring of 1993 and again at the time of Öcalan's escapades on the 26.1.1999. When 33 Kurdish writers living in Sweden had criticised Öcalan publicly, to which PKK's newspaper *Özgür Politika* replied by levelling severe criticism against PSK. The party has enjoyed better relationships with KDPI. The party has published the following newspapers: *Roja Welat*, *Riya Azadi* (*Özgürlük Yolu* in Turkish), *Deng* and *Denge Azadi*. (<http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/8572/xxxiii.htm>; MCDOWALL 1996 pg. 412; LAIZER pg. 95 and 97; STEIN pg. 60; GUNTER pg. 24; BARKEY & FULLER pg.80; Kurdistan und die Kurden II pg. 64-65; Kurdistan Rundbrief 3/10.2.1999)

From the associations of Turkish Kurds that had formed around PSK in Germany since 1973 a union of workers' associations was formed in 1979. It was called **Föderation der Arbeitervereine Kurdistans in der BRD**. Since 1992 a less worker oriented name of **Verband der Vereine aus Kurdistan** was adopted, for which the Kurdish anagram **KomKar** is still generally used. It consists of 35 member associations, with a total membership of around 40 000 - including representatives of other minorities, ethnic Turks and German friends. The umbrella organisation is located in Cologne. It puts out a publication called

³³ As far as the various Lebanese terrorist organisations are concerned, it is known that they are in the habit of developing several names in order to create an impression of widespread activities, although in reality there may only be one centrally commanded group operating in the background.

Informationsbulletin Kurdistan. The **Kurdistan People's Party** (Mala Geli Kurd, MGK) has separated itself from the PSK. (*Kurdistan und die Kurden II*, pg. 75)

Şerafettin Elçi was a founding member of PDKT and later on, in the 1970's, he acted as a minister for CHP. He was the first ever minister to openly proclaim himself to be a Kurd, for which he was sentenced to prison during the martial law at the beginning of the 80's. For a long time this was considered to be the model example of how the Kurdish rights were trampled upon in Turkey. In January 1997 Elçi founded the **Democratic Mass Party** (Demokratik Kitle Partisi, DKP), which strove for a Catalanian type self-rule. The party was abolished in February 1999. However, there has not been a lot written about this in the foreign media, for PKK rejected Elçi's designs. It slanderously called DKP a mere continuation of the 'fascist' Iraqi KDP and a 'village guard party' advancing the interests of the Turkish government. PKK caused a disturbance to interrupt Elçi's public address as PSK's guest speaker in Stockholm on the 25.5.1997. Not even the human rights organisation IHD bothered to campaign for DKP with the same enthusiasm as in general. (*Kurdistan rapport 16-17/1995*; <http://www.gfbv.de/voelker/nahost/elci.htm>; <http://www.dkp.org.tr>)

The most vehement public protests against the dissolving of DKP have been levelled by the representatives of the "northern" (**Bakur**) section of KDP. In addition to condemning the human rights violations in Turkey, they also condemn trends leading to despotism within the Kurdish community. (<http://www.pdk-bakur.com>)

4.2.8. The Turkish extreme left wing in the 1990's

Between the years of 1980-1983, military rule in Turkey put a final stop to the activities of several parties. Of the Kurdish organisation, PKK, who earlier had fought against the above-mentioned rivals, managed to survive the best, as it kept itself in Lebanon at the time. It was not until in the 1991 elections that the representatives of the Kurdish extreme left were seen participating again, having formed an election pact with the social democratic SHP, predecessor of contemporary CHP. During the past decade the situation has begun to be reminiscent of the political turmoil of the 1979's, when parties vying for the right to the heritage of PDKT had to try to keep a delicate balance between parliamentarism and the temptations of terrorism.

On the 7.6.1990, those Kurdish members of parliament who were ousted from the SHP founded the **People's Labour Party** (Halkın Emek Partisi, HEP). This party got the support of PKK and it became to be considered as its political wing in the same manner as Sinn Féin is with IRA and Herri Batasuna with ETA respectively. At least the PKK members themselves thought that they had had a considerable influence in the formation of the party. (*CÜRÜKKAYA* pg. 76)

The banning of HEP as the political wing of PKK, on the 14th of July 1993, does not prove that all its members would have been involved in the activities of PKK. On the other hand, neither does it prove that all its members are victims of political persecution. A person with an active involvement in these parties may be under government surveillance either on the basis of membership of the

party itself or that of the PKK or on the basis of assistance to the above two. In most cases these are interconnected, as the Turkish courts have proved, in which case the possible political persecution is intertwined with suspicions concerning criminal activity.

While those members of parliament who had to answer the charges of treason on behalf of HEP (the most well known of them was Leyla Zana, the wife of the former mayor of Diyarbakır, who as a matter of principle refused the amnesty promised to her), claimed their independence from PKK, those leaders of the party who had fled abroad acknowledged the PKK authority, a fact which caused astonishment and disapproval among HEP supporters. (SD 26.3.1992; HS 1.7.92)

Already on the 19th of October 1992, the **Free Democratic Party (ÖzDeP)** was founded as HEP's successor. However, it was closed very shortly after, on the 23rd of November 1993.

The **Democratic Party (Demokrasi Partisi; DeP)** was founded on the 7th of May 1993, and closed down on the 16th of June 1994, after Hatip Dicle, who represented the radical left, had been chosen as the leader of the party in December 1993. He was the owner of the newspaper *Özgür Gündem*, which, due to its pro-PKK stance was targeted by the authorities via harassment, confiscation of issues of the said newspaper and assassinations of its journalists. It continued to be published up till 1995 with the name *Özgür Ülke*.⁵⁴

The **People's Democratic Party (Halk Demokrasi Partisi, HaDeP)** was founded as a successor to DeP. It was compromised during a meeting held on the 23rd of June 1996, when, in front of TV cameras the PKK flag was all of a sudden exchanged with the Turkish flag without the objection of the presiding party officials. Instead, they tried to protect the protesting PKK activists. In autumn 1998, the leader of the party, Murat Bozlak, was released for a short while, and the party was allowed to participate in the spring 1999 elections, even though banned flags were discovered in the HaDeP meeting held in Istanbul on August 8th, 1998. Bozlak and some other leaders of the party were arrested again due to a hunger strike coupled with an appeal campaign, both of which were organised in support of Öcalan in November of that year. The deputy chairman of the party is Mehmet Satan and the general secretary is Hamit Geylani.

The support for HaDeP in the 1995 elections reached locally (in Hakkari, Diyarbakır and Batman) over the 30% mark, but nationally it reached hardly over 4% of the votes⁵⁵. (Kurdistan rapport 20/1996; Kurdistan Report 23/1996; Hbl 8.12.96; Pogrom

⁵⁴ Hatip Dicle received a long prison sentence, but for years he denied his membership in PKK. However, on the 12th of March 1999 the Ankara Central prison released a press statement, according to which Dicle declared that since the date of Öcalan's arrest he is "...a PKK activist both in thought and deed." He was agitated by the "United States led conspiracy directed against the PKK."

⁵⁵ There has been great variance in the numbers quoted in public, with some apparent contradictions and miscalculations in the numbers quoted. For example, according to one journalist HaDeP garnered 30% of the votes in the Kurdish provinces. The proportion of Kurds in the Turkish voting population as a whole is under 25%, but locally over 80%. This corresponds with the estimate, according to which both HEP and HaDeP garnered about 18% of the votes given in Kurdistan. (<http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/8572/i.htm>). On the other hand, if the estimate of the American researcher Sheri Laizer, according to which the extreme left wing enjoys the majority support in Kurdistan, is correct, the Kurdish areas could not form a very large part of Turkey! (LAIZER pg 210)

187/1996; LOGHMAN pg. 139) In the spring 1999 parliamentary elections, in most of the Kurdish provinces HaDeP improved its positions at the expense of the Islamists. First and foremost the party had great success in the elections for Mayor, capturing the position of the Mayor in seven provincial capitals and in over 30 towns that are district centres.

As HaDeP is under a constant threat of being banned, the circles supporting it have already founded a successor for it, called the **Democratic People's Party** (Demokratik Halk Partisi, DeHaP). (<http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/ambas/partiler/partiler.htm>)

4.2.9. Turkey: PKK

The **Kurdistan Workers' Party** (Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan, PKK) was founded possibly in November 1978, but it had budding activities at least since the year 1974. (CÜRÜKKAYA pg. 32 and 36). Its roots were in the demonstrations organised by the Kurdish members of the Turkish Labour Party in the late 1960's and in DDKO, their revolutionary youth organisation, which expressed "*sharp criticism against the Turkish colonialism and against the Kurdish collaborators of this power structure.*" (Bis... pg. 19). Faithful to its original goals, in its fifth party congress PKK declared itself to be 'the vanguard of the world wide socialist movement'. Since 1984, it has belonged to a Maoist organisation for co-operation called the 'Revolutionary International Movement' as one of its founding members. The Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso) of Peru is the most famous of its member organisations. (Michael RADU: Who is Abdullah Öcalan? Foreign Policy Research Institute 1998)

Abdullah 'Apo' Öcalan, who himself does not even speak Kurdish, took PKK under his control and organised combat training for it by the Palestinian al-Fatah, or PFLP, and the Armenian ASALA, in the Bekaa valley (Lebanon, controlled by Syria) and in Cyprus, and according to persistent rumours, even in Greece.³⁶ (MCDOWALL 1996 pg. 417-418; Democracy at gunpoint pg. 27; STEIN pg. 67; Der Spiegel 21.10.1996)

It has been told that Syria has recruited 11 000 Syrian Kurds into the ranks of PKK, which means that they form almost a half of the PKK guerrilla force. For 20 years Syria denied its support to PKK, although all the while the opposite was quite obvious.

Syria's ally Iran has also used PKK in its fight against KDPI. It has been estimated that there are around 16, or even as many as 50, training camps and altogether around 1500 guerrillas around Orumiyah. This is said to make the local Turkish population quite nervous.

Iraq for its part is said to have handed guns to the PKK guerrillas in May 1998 in order for them to be able to weaken the KDP. At the end of August

³⁶ PKK's guerrilla warfare began soon after ASALA had disappeared from the public eye. The contact person for both of these organisations is assumed to be Karen Brutents. He is an Armenian KGB officer from the Soviet-Azerbaijan and an official of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union since the year 1961. He prepared a memo concerning the Kurdish issue for the Central Committee, although according to his own words the document mainly centred on the situation in Iraq. (Moscow news 10.3.99)

1998, an Arabic newspaper, quoting American sources, wrote that the government of Iraq had purportedly established new headquarters for PKK in the town of Makhmur and that it was supplying weapons to the said organisation, which had been forced to move out of Syria and Lebanon. (MCDOWALL 1996 pg. 417-418; Democracy at gunpoint pg. 27; STEIN pg. 67; Der Spiegel 21.10.1996; GUNTER PG. 26,28, 108-112 AND 113; BARKEY & FULLER pg. 90; TDN 26.6.98 & 22.12.98; Kurdistan Observer 29.8.1998; RFE/RL Iraq Report 27.11.98)

PKK is an organisation with connections to international terrorism. Germany and France banned its activities in their territory in November 1993. Britain also expelled its PKK representative to Germany to be tried in court there.²⁷ Although Germany has concluded its PKK trials for the present time, 18 arrest warrants still remain in force. (HS 1.12.93; NZZ 21.8.97; Die Welt 12.2.1998)

From the over half million Kurds in Germany, according to some estimates about 10% are PKK sympathisers with 11 000 being supporters of the organisation. This number is about 1/5 of all the representatives of extreme foreign movements active in Germany. However, the intensity of its activity is so great that it is responsible for half of the acts of political violence committed by foreigners. The German officials have also referred to the role of PKK in the international drug business and in the systematic extortion of the Kurds living in Europe. (Landesamt für verfassungsschutz, Behörde für Inneres, Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg; Verfassungsschutzbericht 1996 & 1997; Time 5.7.1993; die Welt 31.1. & 5.4.1997; Kurdistan rapport 23/1997; GUNTER PG. 54)

According to an opinion poll conducted in 1992, 29% of the population in the southwest of Turkey and 28% of the Turkish population as a whole held PKK to be the representative of the Kurds (<http://eee.geocities.com/CapitolHill/8572.xxx1.htm>). This may be due to the fact that at least the ethnic Turks among those who took part in the poll have not heard much about any other representatives of the Kurds. According to an opinion poll held three years later, 46% of the Kurds accepted the actions of PKK, although a majority of them did not directly support PKK's objectives. (GUNTER PG. 127-130)

Although PKK considers itself to represent all the Kurds, the main Iraqi Kurdish party KDP fought against PKK from the very start and cancelled its temporary co-operation with PKK in 1987 after PKK had murdered in the village of Pinarçik 31 people, 19 of which were children. (LAIZER pg. 63; MCDOWALL 1992 pg. 46, GUNTER pg. 116)

In the spring of 1997, KDP accused PKK of forcing the population to grow drug plants, extorting donations, ruling the area via terror, executing its opponents, storing its weapons in hospitals and for kidnapping over 300 children to its camps over the past seven years. (Kurdistan News 27-38/1997 pg. 3)

On the 11th of December 1998, when Italy was pondering on the case of Öcalan, the Minister of Justice for (Iraqi) Kurdistan presented the Italian

²⁷ Faysal Dunlayici (better known by his pseudonym Kani Yılmaz) was arrested in London on the 26th of October 1994 and tried in Germany on the 11th of February 1998 for several cases of arson, among other things. It is rumoured that while still on probation he fled via Armenia to Northern Iraq, where PKK purportedly executed him due to his failures. (BBC, 20th of March 99). The internal power struggle waged in the beginning of March 1999 was won by Cemil Bayik, who was officially chosen as the head of PKK for the duration of Öcalan's imprisonment. According to Turkish mediareports, Bayik has been arrested by Syrian authorities. (Armenian News network, 28.6.1999)

government with a memorandum citing all the terrorist acts of PKK over the past 12 months; there were long lists about the acts of sabotage and the names of the 46 persons kidnapped, the 36 people murdered and those of the 17 persons who were killed by PKK placed land mines - most of them Kurds. The memorandum also listed the 47 villages evacuated because of PKK activities and the 417 previously destroyed villages whose reconstruction had been postponed solely due to terrorism practised by PKK.

The KDP rival PUK has exercised sporadic co-operation with PKK since 1988, but in the meeting of the Socialist International in 1991 Talabani accused PKK of co-operation with the government of Iraq. (MCDOWALL 1992 pg. 47) In the wake of Öcalan's arrest, in Sulaymaniah there was a demonstration, with PKK acting as the restraining force.⁵⁴

The PKK guerrillas belong to the **Kurdistan People's Liberation Army** (Artesen Rizgariya Gelli Kurdistan, ARGK), who have their own uniform. Its ranks boast a sizeable number of young women, and even girls as young as 12 years of age. According to estimates, about half of the guerrillas are children (GUNTER pg. 40-41, HS 12.7.98, IL 6.8.98). There are also foreign "internationalists" fighting among the guerrillas. PKK has repeatedly, and with great pride, cited their solidarity towards the Kurds to those persons they consider to be 'writing-desk socialists' only.⁵⁵ (Kurdistan Report [English] 16/1993; Kurdistan rapport 9-10/1993-1994; Kurdistan Report [German] 83/1997).

"And an increasing number of non-Kurds are therefore actively taking part in the Kurdish freedom fight. The first casualty of war from among the PKK leadership, Kemal Pir, was Turkish. To this day there are many non-Kurds, who fight jointly with the guerrillas, with many Europeans among them." (Kurdistan information 2(1993))

The **Kurdistan Patriotic Womens Union** (Yekitiya Jinen Welatparezen Kurdistan, YJWK), which is the women's organisation of the PKK, was founded in 1987. A broader based women's organisation, which also woos the ethnic Turks, is the **Kurdistan Free Womens Union** (Tevgera/Yekitia Azadia Jinen Kurdistan, TAJK or YAJK). In November 1998 it became a member of the Womens International Democratic Federation (WIDF).⁵⁶ PKK also has its own

⁵⁴ A typical news lapse was the article in Helsingin Sanomat, according to which the 'forces of Iraq' stopped the demonstration by the 'Kurds' - it was impossible for the journalists to comprehend, that not all Kurds were PKK supporters, or that one Kurdish party could go against another. (HS 22.2.99)

⁵⁵ In the autumn of 1998, there was a court case in Turkey against a German lady by the name of Eva Juhnke, who had fought in the mountains for a period of over 4 years. The representative of *Amnesty International* considered her case to be extremely complicated. (Kurdistan Rundbrief 19/1998 and 6/1999, Der Spiegel 39/1998). At the same time KDP was holding as hostage a German PKK guerrilla called J. Ulrich. (Kurdistan Rundbrief 11/1998) Andrea Wolf, who was a member of the Red Army terrorist group, was said to have died while fighting in the ranks of PKK in eastern Turkey. (Die Welt 7.11.1998, Der Spiegel 9.11.1998; Kurdistan Rundbrief 23/1998) A group of their own is formed by those Kurds who have arrived in Turkey from Armenia, Georgia, Russia and Kazakhstan in order to take part in the 'nationalistic freedom fight' (An interview by Onnik Krikorian, 9.6.1998), http://www.freespeech.org/oneworld/yezidi/yezidi_articles.htm)

⁵⁶ Like the other cover organisations for the Soviet Union's intelligence service, the umbrella organisation WIDF was founded in 1945, but was soon chased out of Paris and worked from East Berlin until the time of German unification. In addition to the representatives of the socialist nations, some chosen 'national liberation movements' were also taken into its membership. WIDF as an organisation was revived again in 1994 and subsequently has its headquarters in Paris once again.

youth organisation, called **Kurdistan (Patriotic Revolutionary) Youth Union** (Yekitiya Çiwanen Şoreşgeren Welatparezen Kurdistan, or simply YÇK), a students organisation (YXK) and trade union (YKWK). For the academics there is the **Kurdistan Patriotic Intellectuals Union**, and the **Kurdistan Red Crescent** (Heyva Sor a Kurdistan) is responsible for the medical services of the guerrillas. The PKK radio station is '*Voice of Independent Kurdistan*'.

PKK had the financial means to maintain its publicity base for almost four years in London (since May 1995) via a satellite TV station by the name of **Med-TV** whose resources the less well-equipped local television companies of the Iraqi Kurds could only envy. Med-TV was originally founded in Brussels, but the police expelled it from the country in 1996. The Independent Television Commission, which monitors the impartiality of the British news broadcasting, stopped the activities of Med-TV in the spring of 1999 after repeated warnings. Apparently it plans to continue its broadcasts via a Christian broadcasting corporation called Cultural TV. Med-TV is owned by Belgian Kurdish company Roj SA, which is registered in Great Britain owns it.⁶¹ (<http://www.itec.org.uk/http://www.Med-tv.be/med/www>)

According to unconfirmed intelligence sources the annual turn over of the PKK in Germany and Great Britain alone is at least 200 million Finnish Marks (FIM)⁶². PKK itself has made it known that it has solicited funds from voluntary supporters, but it does not confirm any exact amounts. However, Öcalan has admitted the total turnover of PKK to be over 500 million FIM. (GUNTER pg. 57) Svante E. Cornell, who is a researcher with the Uppsala university in Sweden, has estimated PKK's annual turnover to be 15 thousand million Finnish Marks. (Svante Cornell: beyond Öcalan)

PKK has published the following magazines: *Berxwebun*, *Serxwebun*, *Bawer*, *Welat*, *Welat Me* and *Axina Welat*. It has also considered the Turkish medium newspaper *Yeni Gündem* in practice to be its party organ. After each successive forced closure, this newspaper has changed its name according to a clear-cut pattern: *Yeni Gündem* - *Özgür Gündem* - *Yeni Ülke* - *Özgür Ülke* - *Yeni Politika* - *Özgür Politika* - *Demokrasi* - *Ülkede Gündem*⁶³. Formally these newspapers have been independent, which has guaranteed the attention of the foreign media and human rights organisations regarding the activities of the Turkish officials. The monthly magazine called *Özgür Halk* was still being published in 1997.

⁶¹ The name of the TV station, Med, refers to the ancient Medians, whom the Kurds like to think of being their ancestors. Med-TV's news broadcasts had received repeated warnings and fines from the British authorities on the account of unprofessionalism, for presenting a one sided view of things and on the account of inciting to violence. In February 1999, Med-TV repeatedly broadcasted a message from a guerrilla leader based in Iran, according to which civilian targets were also to be attacked. Typical of the broadcasting style were veiled threats such as: "PKK is not responsible for the dramatic consequences, if..." as if riots and bomb attacks were spontaneous events, which Med-TV somehow always managed to cover on the spot in good time.

⁶² Six FIM is about 1 Euro.

⁶³ This series began in 1992 with the name of the newspaper being changed almost on a yearly basis. *Yeni Politika* began to be published in 1995, *Demokrasi* was published from September 1995 till May 1997 and *Ülkede Gündem* from July 1997 till the autumn of 1998, when its publication was ordered to be suspended temporarily. The *Özgür Politika* newspaper is printed in Neu-Isenberg in Germany, for the reason of being banned in Turkey. (GUNTER pg. 12)

Through its information network, PKK has also obtained press cards for its activists, which means that according to statistics there are more journalists imprisoned in Turkey than in any other country of the world.⁴⁴

4.3. Kurdish communities abroad

The competition of the great powers after the First World War, 'the cold war' and in the 60's the migratory movement, especially from Turkey to Germany and Sweden, brought the Kurdish issue also to Europe. Various organisations representing the Kurdish parties sprung up in different countries. In the recent past, ERNK, which is the political wing of the PKK, and the 'Kurdish parliament' or 'Kurdistan Parliament in Exile' which was founded around its fringes, have been the most effective among the Kurdish organisations in their research activities and information campaigns. The Kurds started arriving in Finland in greater numbers only in the beginning of this decade.

4.3.1. The internationalisation of the Kurdish issue

At the end of the First World War the winning powers of Britain and France divided amongst themselves some areas of the defeated Turkish Empire. For this reason, London and Paris became the most important centres for Kurdish activists.

The Kurdish delegation had presented its memorandum, dated 22nd of March 1919, in the Paris Peace Conference. The next visible international performance of the Kurds was the presentation of a similar memorandum in the founding meeting of the United Nations in San Francisco on the 30th of March 1945. It was drawn by the **Kurdish League**, which was founded in Paris in 1942, while the city was still occupied by the Germans. The League was apparently led by a Kurdish family expelled from Syria. (KARABUDA pg. 24 and 29)

The Kurdish students from Iraq based in London founded the **Cultural Society of Kurdish Students in Europe**, which in 1956 called together a Kurdish congress in Wiesbaden. It was supposed to hold annual meetings. The third congress, which was held in Munich in October 1958, dropped the word 'cultural' from the name of the society. The ninth congress was held in Hannover in August 1965. With the disintegration of KDP, those Kurds who had been active in this society while studying abroad, aligned with Talabani, having become more radical in line with the spirit of the time. Their society developed into a new organisation called the **Association of Kurdish Students Abroad (AKSA)**. It publishes a newsletter called *Kurdish Facts*. The publication of the

⁴⁴ In Germany there are 2,1 million Turkish nationals, of which 600 000 are estimated to be Kurds. The number of Kurds in the other European countries approximately 200 000. (HS 19.11.98)

Kurdish Student Organisation in the United States is called *Kurdish Journal* (EDMONDS 1959 pg. 8 KARABUDA pg. 28)

The **Organisation of the Revolutionary Kurds of Turkey in Europe** (Hevra), was founded in the same spirit. It published Ismet Sheriff Vanly's book in 1976. Vanly acted as the KDP representative in Switzerland as late as 1976, but nowadays he is a PKK supporter. Vanly, the KDP leader Qasilmu and Gérard Chaliand, yet another Marxist researcher, were amongst those who already in 1970 established a society for the endangered peoples, called **Gesellschaft für Bedrochte Völker** in German. It has its own newsletter called *Pogrom* and it also publishes literature about the Kurds and other persecuted minority groups.⁴⁵ (GUNTER pg. 44)

The **Kurdish National Congress** was founded in North America in 1988 at the influence of PUK. The views of KDP are represented mainly by the *Kurdistan Observer*, although it is formally an independent publication. In Germany KDP has an information office that concentrates on issues concerning the Iraqi Kurds.

The influence of these traditional Kurdish activists is probably the basis of the birth of the following organisations: The oldest London based Kurdish organisation called the **Kurdish Cultural Centre**, the **Kurdish Human Rights Project**, which was established in 1985, and **Internationaler Verein für Menschenrechte in Kurdistan** (*International Society for Human Rights in Kurdistan*, located in Bonn), which publishes the English-medium *Kurdistan News* magazine. Of late, the activities and news reports of these organisations have concentrated rather one-sidedly on the situation in Turkey only, although their original intent may have been serious research and unbiased reporting.

The **Kurdish Human Rights Watch** has one of its offices in Sweden. It was founded in 1989 by Mustafa Al Karadaghi, who is an Iraqi Kurd. This organisation publishes a biannual newsletter called *Kurdistan Times*. The editorial board has a PO Box address in the United States.

Already before PKK started its guerrilla warfare in Turkey, it strengthened the base of its information hegemony by establishing 'scientific-cultural' information centres amongst the European immigrant communities. These were found either openly under the protection of ERNK, the political wing of PKK, or under some more covert names. In practice, **Yek-Kom** has continued the work of PKK in Germany, with **Kon-Kurd** doing the same in the rest of Europe. There is a vast assortment of societies and enterprises that are connected with these two organisations in various ways, albeit some of them may have a formally separate existence.

The Paris-based **Institut Kurde**, which was found in 1983 by Kendal Nezan, lost the financial support of the French government after the activities of PKK were banned in that country. (MEI 471) Despite of this it has continued its activities

⁴⁵ The society supported the independence movements of Biafra, Southern Sudan and Eritrea, but it has not shown any interest for any of the Turkic nations. The members of the society criticised the European left-wing politicians in the 1980's for being pro-Iraq to the extreme. In addition to that, they criticised the *Tudeh* party for sympathising with those who held the power in Iran. Chaliand was also active in an organisation called *Association France Kurdistan*, which has a PO Box address in Finland (PL 129, 00170 Helsinki).

by trying to take the role of a mediator in the quarrels between KDP and PUK. The most well known researcher of this institute has been Martin van Bruinessen. He represents the Marxist view of history, as does the director of the institute Ismet Sheriff Vanly.

The hard line communists lend support to PKK via **Arm the Spirit (ATS)** organisation in Canada and via the **Informationsbüro Türkei und Kurdistan** operating in Essen, Germany. The last-mentioned one has a publication called *Widerstand*. Its Internet links lead to a Turkish human rights organisation and to the *Kurdistan Rundbrief* publication among others.

4.3.2. ERNK network

In 1982, PKK founded a political wing, which three years later took the name new name of the **Kurdistan National Liberation Union** (Eniya Rizgariya Netava Kurdistanê, ERNK). From the very start it adopted military activities to its agenda and even in the 1989 division of labour it was to be the task of ERNK to recruit new guerrillas, solicit funds and obtain weapons. The difference between PKK and ERNK is purely tactical. (STEIN pg. 87)

Öcalan described the task of ERNK militants openly in his newspaper *Serxwebun* in 1991 as follows:

"A guerrilla can not go into the cities with his guns. But a militant can carry a bomb in his bag, wear ordinary clothes and administer attacks everywhere unidentified."
(STEIN pg. 26)

The ARGK guerrillas wear a uniform, but members of the ERNK do not wear one. They may obtain a membership card however, whereas the PKK members do not use one at all. The full members of PKK can never resign from the organisation, and they use pseudonyms. PKK members and candidates are bound by a strict conduct of rules, for example the prohibition against consuming alcohol and smoking. Most ERNK members are only supporting members of PKK. According to one estimate 10% of the Kurds in Germany belong to these kind of supporters of PKK, but the number of actual PKK members is probably quite minimal. (STEIN pg. 93-94 and 100)

Acting as the representatives of the ERNK are the "**Kurdistan Committees**", working in various countries. The first one of them was founded in Paris in 1984; but it was banned for being a cover organisation for PKK nine years later.⁶⁶ (MCDOWALL 1996 pg. 424; HS 1.12.93) It moved its headquarters to Brussels (Comite du Kurdistan, Avenue Louise 459 - the **Kurdistan Solidarity Committee** works out of the same address).

⁶⁶ 'Kurdistan committees' are also found in Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Austria, Spain and Greece. However, in the spring of 1998 Greece denied the U.S. Department of suspicions, that PKK had opened an office in Athens. (Jordan Times 9.5.1998) In addition to that, ERNK has 'information centres' in Germany (Cologne), Netherlands, Britain, France and Italy, and a 'Kurdish house' (Mala Kurd) in Moscow.

In Canada, the **Kurdish Information Network** works for ERNK and PKK and in the United States the same is done by the **American Kurdish Information Network**, whose leader Kani Xulam was arrested in January 1997. Alongside these was established the **Washington Kurdish Institute** in 1996. It publishes a news bulletin called *Zagros*. There is a pro-PKK Kurdish organisation in existence also in Australia.

ERNK distributes a magazine with a top class, glossy layout. The English language edition is called *Kurdistan Report*. This publication also has German, Dutch, French, Greek, Russian and Swedish language (called *Kurdistan rapport*) versions. They are all allegedly edited independently of each other.

4.3.3. "The Kurdish parliament"

Neither the KDP of the Iraqi Kurds nor the PSK of Burkay recognise the PKK led "Kurdish parliament", which the DeP members of parliament called together in Hague in April 1995. It continued its meetings within a year in Russia, Austria, Denmark and Italy, and held its sixth meeting again in Moscow in November 1996 and again in Italy in the autumn of 1998.

In addition to the PKK organisations, the Kurdish Alevi Union, the Kurdistan Yezidi Union, the Kurdistan Islamic Movement and the Kurdistan Assyrian Association attended the meetings. The representatives of the religious minorities do not by any means represent their communities as a whole, but only their PKK-minded fractions. The opponents of PKK were not able to take part in the 'elections' carried out amongst the Kurdish communities living abroad. The seats in the Kurdish parliament were divided according to quotas: 12 seats for ERNK, 11 for DeP, 5 for the womens organisations, 13 for the religious organisations mentioned above, 5 for the professional bodies and 5 for the Caucasian Kurds, with 14 seats left over for others.

Yaşar Kaya, the spokesman for the Kurdish parliament and a former DEP Member of Parliament, compared Öcalan as a statesman to George Washington, Yasser Arafat and to Nelson Mandela (IPS 11.4.95) In a Med-TV broadcast a representative of the "refugee parliament" called Öcalan the legal representative of the Kurdish nation.

Greece is the country that has shown great interest towards PKK's "Kurdish parliament". In the spring of 1997, its members of parliament suggested that Öcalan be invited as a guest of honour to Athens. (MEI 553; Kurdistan rapport 25/1997). It has been claimed that Öcalan has apparently visited Greece and Cyprus, although he normally does not leave Damascus. (STEIN pg. 69)

On the 24th of May 1999, a PKK led "**Kurdistan National Congress**" was established in Amsterdam. The plan is that its seats are to be divided into quotas along the "refugee parliament's" organisational lines.

4.3.4. The Kurds in Sweden

Among the first Kurdish organisations in Sweden were the **Kurdish Refugees in Sweden**, founded in 1965 and the **Kurdistan Fighters' Association**, founded in 1968, both of which had connections with Barzani. At present, KDP has a PO Box address in Norsborg and the party puts out a newsletter called *Pesh Merga*. (KÜCHLER pg. 397-398).

There has been an influx of Turkish Kurds immigrating to Sweden starting from the middle of the 1960's. They mainly originated from the district of Kulu. At the end of the 1970's, 36% of those with Turkish citizenship living in Stockholm came from there. Originally they did not consider themselves to be refugees. From the people interviewed by a Turkish researcher working on his doctoral thesis, 6% had Kurdish as their mother tongue, with 3% being Armenians or Assyrians. (ALPAY pg. 91 and 93-95; CLASON & BAKSI pg. 223 and 226)

Sweden became a notable centre for the Kurdish refugees, from where both Burkay and Cetin Güngör criticised Öcalan publicly. In his trial, Öcalan has suspected the PKK opposition in Sweden of being responsible for Palme's murder. Güngör was shot to death in Stockholm in 1985. A PKK critic by the name of Enver Ata also met with the same fate. Yet another PKK critic, Hüseyin Yildirim, was very vocal in Sweden in 1988 with anti-PKK views. It is of interest to note that even Öcalan's long standing mistress fled to him. (STEIN pg. 33-34 and 139; GUNTER pg.30-31; CÖRÜKKAYA pg. 220-221, 228 and 230)

Enraged by his Sweden-based opposition, Öcalan is said to have planned the assassination of the Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme. A booklet published by the PKK in the late 1980's indeed declared Sweden to be the enemy of the Kurds.

"It was Sweden that as the first imperialist state started the open attacks. ... With these intentions, Sweden opened its doors to the bourgeois reformists...The Swedish imperialism has arrested and persecuted countless PKK supporters." (Deutsch-Türkische ...pg. 79)

In the summer of 1998, it was widely publicised around the world that teen age Kurds had disappeared from a summer camp in Sweden at the end of June. A similar incident had taken place already three years earlier, but at that time the parents of the children had not dared to make a great fuss about it. This time, however, it caused a stir, making PKK nervously deny any responsibility in the matter to start with. Later on it reneged, promising to return the children to Sweden, but two months later most of them were still missing. Some of these minors, who had reportedly left voluntarily, were found in Germany and Netherlands. (DN 10.7., 8.8. and 13.9.98; HS 11.-12.7., 19.-20.7. and 25.7.98; Hbl 20.7.98; IL6.8.98)

In February 1996, a new Kurdish library was established in Stockholm. In the Internet it goes by the name **Kurdish Culture Network**.

4.4. The Kurds in Finland

According to newspaper reports, in 1996-1997 there were purportedly 1400 Kurdish refugees in Finland, with half of them being children. (TS 14.9.96; HS 7.4.97) On the other hand, the number of Kurds in the country has also been estimated to be 2000, a number which most probably includes also those Kurds who have not applied for political asylum. (HS 15.2.99) At the end of 1996, according to the Statistical Yearbook of Finland there lived 1670 Kurdish speaking people in the country, in addition to which some Kurds may have declared some other language as their mother tongue. At the above-mentioned point in time, were at least 425 Iraqi Kurds and 150 Iranian Kurds in Finland as quota refugees. In addition to that, there were also 840 political asylum seekers with a Kurdish background, 600 of whom came from Turkey.⁴⁷

The reason behind the lack of exact figures for the Kurds in Finland is that the official statistics and the databases of the Directorate of Immigration do not differentiate either the foreigners living in Finland, or the Finnish citizens born abroad to that matter, according to their ethnic background. Thus, there are no accurate figures available about the number of Kurds in Finland. At the end of 1996, the combined number of Iraqi, Iranian and Turkish nationals living in Finland was over 4700. In September 1998 the corresponding figure was already 5958 persons. (Suomen tilastollinen vuosikirja 1997, pg. 86 and 88; Väestökeskuksen tilasto ulkomaan kansalaisista). If the number of Kurds from this total figure were proportionate to their respective numbers in their three home countries, indeed their number in Finland would have been 1400, as quoted above. In reality the number is higher though, the reason being that the number of Kurds is higher among the refugees than what it is among the immigrant population. It also seems that the proportion of Kurds among the immigrants coming from Turkey is greater than what it is on the average in Turkey itself, or in Germany.

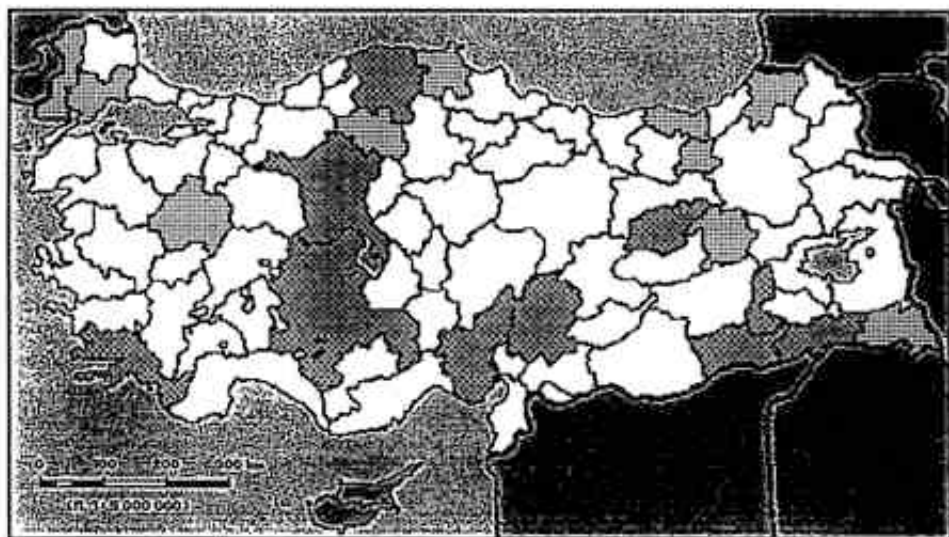
In order to clarify the matter, the situation of asylum seekers and quota refugees in Finland was looked at in more detail. It was done by going through all the decisions concerning asylum applications from 1990 till 1997 and by studying the interviews of the Kurdish candidates conducted between 1993-1997 during the Finnish Immigration officials selection trips for quota refugees. In addition to that, a selected number of asylum applications and decisions of both the Asylum Board and those of its successor, the Supreme Administrative Court, were also studied.

⁴⁷ Östen Wahlbeck, a researcher with the Åbo Akademi and the Institute of Immigration studies, conducted interviews with the Kurds in Finland in 1994, and in Britain in 1995. In his deserving study he estimated the number of Kurds in Finland in the beginning of 1995 to be 1250-2000. Of the total number, 300-500 came from Turkey, with 550-800 having come from Iraq, and 400-600 having arrived from Iran. However, this information is based on the statistical data base on the foreign nationals living in Finland.

4.4.1. Where do they come from?

From among Turkish citizens included in the aliens' registration database, the largest groups are those born in the provinces of Konya, Ankara and Mardin. The political asylum seekers also come from the same region, although they only form a small fraction of the Turkish - and Kurdish - population in Finland. This leads to the conclusion that Turkey cannot be divided clearly into "safe" and "unsafe" areas. Family reunifications usually follow in the wake of the political asylum cases, or alternatively, immigrants are followed by political asylum seekers, because applying for political asylum is often perceived as the simplest way to proceed with family reunification.

Finland has received a fair number of asylum seekers from the Kulu area and from certain other regions, which do not belong to Kurdistan proper via any logical definition. From the Turkish citizens applying for political asylum in Finland during the 1990's, 45% originate from Kurdistan, 45% from Inner Anatolia (for example from the Kulu area), with only 10% representing the rest of Turkey. Both in absolute numbers and in relation to their relative number from the total population most people have left from the Konya, Mardin and Ankara provinces (65% total), from which only Mardin belongs to Kurdistan.



-  The home areas of the Finnish Kurds (according to birth place and province)
-  The provinces of Turkey with the least migration to Finland in proportion to their population.

By far the most popular municipalities have been Cihanbeyli and Yunak, which is situated close to Kulu in the district of Konya. The motives of the asylum seekers originating from these areas has presumably been migration that has taken place in chain reaction effect.⁴⁸

From the Iraqi Kurds who have ended up Finland, a bit over one third comes from the province of Sulaymaniah, less than one fifth originating from the province of Kirkuk, and with one sixth coming from the province of Arbil. From the Iranian Kurds in Finland, less than one fifth originate from the province of Mahabad; one in every eight come from Sanandaj and Sar Dasht provinces each.

4.4.2. When did they arrive?

The Kurdish migration into Finland reached its peak in the beginning of 1991 with the Turkish Kurds and in the beginning of 1993 as far as the Iraqi Kurds are concerned, if the quota refugees are not taken into consideration. The number of Kurdish asylum seekers and quota refugees is distributed according to arrival in the country in the following way:

Year	submitted asylum applications ⁴⁹	quota refugees
1989	16 (decisions made already in 1989)	-
1990	62	-
1991	173	-
1992	85	-
1993	86	98
1994	40	235
1995	87	87
1996	approx. 72	71
Total:	approx. 620	491

In 1997, the number of Kurds who arrived in Finland was around 150, mainly from Iraq. (Keskisuomalainen 20.2.1998) The largest number of Kurds arriving in

⁴⁸ Although Mardin belongs to Kurdistan, it is not one of the most Kurdish provinces as far as population statistics are concerned. Neither does it belong to those provinces, where Martial Law has still been in force even after the autumn of 1996, and the villages there have not been destroyed or evacuated with the same intensity as what has happened in the provinces of Siirt and Diyarbakir. The migration from the provinces of Mardin and Kahramanmaraş to Finland in practice got started in the Helsinki-Vantaa airport on the 28th of February 1991, and even eight years later on, most of the political asylum seekers from Turkey come from the same villages. Tunceli is another district, from where there has arrived a proportionately very high number of migrants and political asylum seekers, considering the size of the said province. Yet Hakkari, which is the most Kurdish of all the Turkish provinces, seems to be the only province of Turkey by any knowledge from where no one has moved to Finland so far.

⁴⁹ Excluding the cases that have been withdrawn, those cases for which a decision was made already in 1989, and those cases that were still pending at the time of this study in 1998. The multiplicity of grounds used in the compilation of the statistical data also makes it very difficult to compare the figures - people do not necessarily apply for political asylum immediately in connection with their arrival in the country for example.

Finland at any one time has been February 1993 (108 persons). In 1994, the number of asylum seekers dropped drastically in Finland, as it did in most European countries.

4.4.3. Why do they come?

From the 575 quota refugees studied (84 from the year 1997), 425 were Iraqi citizens, with 150 being Iranian citizens. As far the quota refugees are concerned, their motives have already been screened by UNHCR in the refugee camps, from where the Finnish immigration authorities choose refugees according to a pre-set quota. During the selection trips, some additional screening still takes place to ascertain that those persons chosen to come to Finland are indeed deemed to be in need of a political asylum both in the eyes of UNHCR and by the Finnish authorities. Still, UNHCR grants a refugee status much easier than most states, including Finland.

The asylum seekers find their own way to Finland and present various kinds of documentary evidence for the persecution that they have suffered. There is considerable variation in the standard of these documents. From the Iraqi asylum seekers, 30% told that they had been arrested and 20% told that they had experienced violence or torture. The Iraqis who had fled from the Kurdistan area feared for the revenge of PUK at least four times more than they feared for the revenge of KDP. Half of the Turkish asylum applicants told that they had been arrested, generally on the account of their relatives, or alternatively for some other reason which they could fathom themselves. Only 20% said that they had experienced violence or torture; only in a couple of cases was there an attempt at presenting credible evidence for this kind of treatment, but the evidence given was not convincing enough in any of them.

In a class of their own are those asylum seekers who say they have experienced discrimination in the army, in the government offices, in their jobs, at school or in the foot ball club they were members of; or those who are afraid to return to their home country after having destroyed their travel documents, those who are not allowed to watch TV programmes in their own (Kurdish) language; the one who felt he lost his Kurdish bride, because the parents of his girlfriend did not accept an atheist as their son-in-law, those who are fleeing a warrant of arrest or a blood feud, or those not able to pay their traffic fines or pension payments... Among the Turkish Kurds there are several who arrived in Finland with the intent of marrying a Finn and persons according to whom the human rights situation in Finland is much better than in Norway, or in Turkey to that matter, because here the state supports the unemployed.

Especially among the political asylum applications of the Turkish Kurds there have been several cases clearly without any grounds, which however get encouragement from some well meaning Finns due to either political or personal reasons. One asylum seeker made it known, that

"There are no human rights in Turkey, and no guaranteed employment. ...I do not have a political opinion, because I am afraid of taking part in politics. If I take part

in politics, I am afraid I might be jailed and for that reason I want to apply for a political asylum in Finland and for the Finnish citizenship."

Over a month later the same applicant announced that he had applied for a political asylum, because he had had a disagreement with his Finnish lady friend:

"After that the woman began to ask me, if I still wanted to stay in Finland and after I answered in the affirmative, she took me to the police station in order to apply for a political asylum. Before going to the police station, after our little argument I had told the woman that I was planning to return to Turkey, but the woman then began to tell me about the possibility of applying for a political asylum in Finland. I myself have not been in any way aware of this political asylum thing, and I still do not understand why the woman in question acted in this manner with me. I myself have done particularly nothing connected with applying for a political asylum, all this while the woman has done it all on my behalf. I do not want to be in touch with this lady any more in any way, although she keeps calling me, suggesting we should meet."

From the citizens of both Turkey and Iraq, only less than 5% had been imprisoned for more than 3 months. In both groups there were several draft evaders and army deserters. In both groups only 3% of the Kurds proved to be unable to speak any Kurdish, a fact which in some cases was used as grounds for discrimination against the Kurdish language. However, language skills were not tested with credible methods, and there has been little choice between interpreters.

Finnish authorities consider that the credibility of the asylum seeker suffers on account of the following reasons: if the account given by the asylum seeker is contradictory, or varies between different hearings; if the travel documents have been destroyed on purpose (for example, buried in a field that has since been ploughed over and the mother can no longer remember the exact spot used for hiding the said document); or, if the applicant claims there is a warrant for his arrest, but nevertheless has exited the country with his own legal passport.

Old prison sentences can not be used as evidence of continuing persecution, if, after having suffered his prison term, the person has been freed and been able to live in peace; or, if he has been arrested but no charges have been levelled against him owing to lack of evidence.

From the 623 asylum seekers 370 were Turkish, 226 Iraqis, 14 Iranian, 8 Syrian and 5 Albanian citizens. (These figures include 66 persons from the year 1996 and 9 from the year 1997 - the applications that became cancelled due to voluntary exit from the country are not included).

The official figures of granting political asylum, 1990-1997
(according to citizenship, without ethnic distinctions):

	A8	A9+A10	other A	rejected	total
Iran	10	147	3	132	292
Iraq	7	341	8	14	370
Turkey	2	79	44	257	382
others	0	8	0	0	8
total	86	5346	280	3823	9535
Kurds	3	96	77	203	379
(%)	0,8%	25,3%	20,3%	53,6%	

Only five Kurds have been granted a political asylum in Finland (A8) with 53,6% of the applications being rejected. The rest received a residence permit either on the grounds of needing protection (A9), on humanitarian grounds (A10), or for some other reasons (marriage to a Finn for example).

In 1995, there were altogether 320 000 applications for political asylum filed in Europe, with 52% of them in Germany. Asylum was granted to 48 000 persons, with 23 500 of them again in Germany. Belgium granted political asylum to 30% of the applicants, but the point average for the EU countries as a whole was 11%, and in Finland the figure is 1%. In addition to that the EU countries granted residence permits on humanitarian grounds to 38 000 applicants, of which 10% were in Germany. Compared to the German practice, Finland seems to practice an especially strict refugee policy, but the number of asylum seekers is fairly small, as it is in all the other EU countries that are located in the border areas of the European Union. Many asylum seekers only end up in Finland after their application has been refused elsewhere. Yet, from the persons applying for political asylum in Finland, almost 60% (46% of the Kurds) received a residence permit on some grounds. The differences are great, depending on what country the applicants are arriving from. Finland has granted residence permits to the Turkish citizens much easier than other EU countries do. They had started to take a stricter stance already by 1995. During the first half of 1998 Finland granted residence permits to the Iranian, Iraqi and Turkish citizens somewhat easier than Sweden did.

From the Iraqi refugees applying for a political asylum in the EU countries (in 1996) over 70% were Kurds. In the whole of EU, 27% were granted asylum and approximately 23% were granted a residence permit on humanitarian grounds. No one was deported to Iraq. However, the total and comparative numbers of the nationalities of the asylum seekers, as well as their treatment, varies greatly within the different EU countries.

4.4.4. Kurdish associations in Finland

In the interviews with the quota refugees and with the applicants for political asylum, special attention has been paid to political views and membership in political parties. However, these things have not been considered to be so significant as to warrant dividing the quota between the supporters of certain political parties in the name of political equality for example.

Yet, political affiliation could be meaningful for example in evaluating the nature of political persecution, for there is not always necessarily a great deal of difference between the acceptance of terrorism and revolutionary activity. For this reason the act of supporting marginal groups makes one vulnerable for arrests, interrogations and discrimination also under democratic conditions (for example the German system of the ban from entering a public office). Furthermore, a politically active community that has one sided views and supports extremist groups may pose a security risk to the other refugees first of all.

The quota refugees have demonstrated a much clearer political activity than the asylum seekers. From the Iranian Kurds 88% of the quota refugees had been active in some political party, but the corresponding figure among the political asylum seekers was only 42%. In Iraq the difference was smaller: 69% of the quota refugees and 59% of the political asylum seekers belonged to some political party. This is due to the fact that in Iraq the parties are mainly tribal based and a membership in them is not as clearly an ideological choice than what it is in Iraq. From the Turkish political asylum seekers 44% were politically active, being divided into PKK supporters and those of some other communist groupings.

Half of the quota refugees and political asylum seekers who have remained in Finland are communists, one fifth are socialists and one third are social democrats. From the Iraqi Kurds who have applied for a political asylum in Finland, 48% were KDP supporters, with 35% supporting PUK.

All the significant Kurdish parties are represented amongst the quota refugees and the asylum seekers who have stayed in Finland, though only a few of the last mentioned ones have actually been granted a refugee status. The seemingly large support of the Iranian parties is explained by a corresponding overrepresentation of the Iranians amongst the quota refugees in Finland. PKK support is particularly difficult to measure, because many of the asylum seekers have denied their membership in the said party or in any of its cover organisations, although in reality they do sympathise with them. Over all, the support for the left-wing parties is higher than what the right wing has managed to garner, because the supporters of the right-wing parties are not as anxious to leave their home countries, or at least not to Finland. Left-wing supporters are probably found also among those Kurds, who have arrived in Finland via other means than by being quota refugees or seeking asylum.

The following table only depicts the background groupings of the Kurdish activists in Finland, not the support of different parties amongst the Kurds

world-wide or even amongst the politically more passive Kurds in Finland.
(Moderate parties - top row, extremists - bottom row)

Turkey	Iraq	Iran
	KDP 8-10%	KDPI 23-24%
	PUK 7-8%	KDP-RL 11-12%
PKK 14-16%	WCP 9-13%	Komala 18-20%

Probably the first Kurdish society in Finland was the **Kurdish Cultural Association**, founded in 1991. The latest information in the Registrar of Societies concerning this organisation is from the year 1993.

The **Kurdish Association of Finland** was registered on the 14th of October 1992. One of its leaders was chosen in Germany to be the representative of the Finnish Kurds in the "Kurdish Parliament".

The **Kurdistan Information Centre** was founded in July 1992 and registered with the Registrar of Societies on the 1st of November 1993. Financial help received from Sweden and a publicity campaign in the newspapers gave the Centre's operation an initial boost. The newspaper articles were based on the Finnish parliament's human rights committee's visit to Turkey and by Leyla Zana's visit to Finland in May 1992. (SD 26.5., AL 7.7. and HS 1.8. and 3.9.92; WAHLBECK pg. 153-154) The office of the Kurdistan Information Centre in Helsinki (Fredrikinkatu 61A) shares premises with the Kurdistan Committee, although in public it has denied having a direct link, such as membership, with PKK. (HS 26.5.96) Their social reception facility is adorned with PKK flags.

The **Kurdish Friendship Society-Kurdistan Association of Finland** has been the most active in promoting the Kurdish cause. It was registered on the 30.9.1993. In the autumn of 1998 it ran a newspaper campaign vicariously through the Finnish Peace Committee against the exporting of air defence equipment to Turkey. The society is led by Finnish persons.

The regional societies followed later. The **Kurdish Cultural Association of Vaasa district** was founded in January 1993 and registered with the Registrar of Societies in 1994. It published a bilingual magazine with the name *Denge Kurd* ("The Voice of the Kurds"), which concentrated in publicising the demonstration organised in Helsinki on the 7.7.1993 and also referred to some riots that had taken place elsewhere in Europe earlier on.

The **Kurdish Association of Turku** was registered two years later. (TS 14.9.96). Possibly a separate association from this is the **Kurdish Cultural Association of Turku Region**, which has also given statements in the newspapers. (SD 22.2.99). In Jyväskylä, a Kurdish cultural society was founded in 1996 and the following year it was registered under the name the **Kurdish Cultural Association of Central Finland**. Around the same time, a parallel organisation by the name of **Kurdish-Finland Association of Jyväskylä-Region** was formed.

The interest of the non-Turkish Kurds in forming political societies was the last to be aroused in Finland. They founded the **Kurdistan Patriotic Association** in Finland in 1996, and a society which is called the **Cultural**

Social Association of Kurdistan in 1998. According to Internet sources, the Finnish division of KDP so far only has a fax number and an Internet address.

Apparently failed attempts at forming above type societies have been the PKK aligned **Kurdish Red Crescent** and the **International Kurdistan Peace and Solidarity Committee**. The Finnish section of the **International Federation of Iraqi Refugees & Immigrant Council** has also pleaded the Kurdish cause in Finland. (HS 17.2.99)

Being active in specific societies could be a way for cultivating the Kurdish culture, for creating mutual understanding between the Kurdish groups and for taking a public stance on behalf of the Kurds. Unfortunately the far too one-sided political activities of the older Kurdish societies caused conflicts and dissension, a fact which in its turn caused disappointment and frustration with the PKK activists in the mid 1990's.

One obvious reason why PKK has not gained a strong foothold among the Kurds in Finland is that they mostly originate from Iraq and Iran. However, it has wielded considerable influence among those Finns who are interested in the Kurdish question - especially among the extreme political left, in the ranks of the Green Party and in the womens organisation of the Swedish People's Party - and thus in the public debate going on in Finland concerning the position of the Kurds. In addition to the newspaper articles, this bias also shows itself in the annual public reporting of tours to Turkey, organised by the human rights groups every spring.

The human rights delegation of the Finnish parliament visited Turkey for the first time in the spring of 1992. Their travel programme with its prearranged meetings was politically one-sided. In addition to that, the impression that was created for the visitors was greatly influenced by the attitude of the interpreter. Since then, there have been asylum seekers arriving in Finland, who have specifically told that they have assisted PKK by seeking the company of western journalists in order to describe to them the position of the Kurds according to PKK's wishes:

"I am not a PKK member, but I am in close co-operation with them. Four years ago PKK gave me the task of informing the outside world about Kurdistan. I got instructions from PKK concerning how to go about it."

"I would classify my own activities as solidarity towards PKK and towards its modes of operation. If PKK or the party would ask me to become a guerrilla, I would immediately agree to go to Turkey to fight. ...Because I am fluent in English, the party uses me rather as a propagandist than an armed fighter. My connections with the foreign journalists I have formed in the following manner: the journalists have come to the office of the Özgür Ülke newspaper and from there they have been directed to me. I personally know the following Finnish journalists for example..."

Especially in connection with the human rights groups' tours the newspapers publish heart-wrenching descriptions about the difficult position of the Kurds in Turkey. Certain myths are going around from one story to another. The Iraqi Kurds, on the other hand, are treated with much more critical view and the Kurds of any other country hardly ever receive even a mention. It is difficult for

the newspaper editors and the readers to estimate to what extent it has been possible to avoid the manipulation of the travel route and those that have been interviewed. As for the actual cases concerning the asylum seekers, often the government officials have conflicting information with that what is presented in the public media. Yet in the name of legal protection, civil servants are not in a position to correct even the grossest of mistakes. This also leaves them unable to defend themselves against the criticism of the citizens' organisations.

When the chairman of a voluntary organisation writes that

"It is well known in Finland, that a political asylum has been granted here for a couple of hundred Turkish Kurds...",

the civil servant would have good reason to correct the hundred fold mistake or question the basis of the "information". (Rauha kurdeille, 1997, pg. 7)

In the autumn of 1997 three Turkish Kurds and their Finnish supporter again held a hunger strike on the steps of the Helsinki Dome Church. These kind of campaigns, which are often accompanied by a totally uncritical media coverage, do not give a realistic picture either from the situation of the Kurds world-wide, or from the operative mode of the Finnish authorities and courts of law to that matter. As the Kurds in Finland have been able to gain enough public attention via various means, there has been no need for them to resort to such extreme forms of protests as occupying churches or self-immolations, both of which are fairly common means of protests elsewhere.

Peace for the Kurds - the Finnish Forum, which was founded in 1995, had planned a Kurdish cultural conference to be held in Helsinki sometime during the first half of 1998, but it only took place on the 12th and 13th of September, with a lot less publicity than what was expected. The conference was able to attract foreign participants from the PEN-meeting held in Finland just prior to it. The Peace Union of Finland - UN was partly responsible for the organisation of the conference.

The cultural work among the Finnish Kurds deserves more publicity than what it gets. The publishing of Sorani dictionaries as self financed publications by Hanko-based Lokman Abbas is a prime example of this type of activity. So far these books have only been sold among the Kurds, although they could certainly be of wider usefulness to various libraries, journalists and researchers of Kurdish issues alike.

The Kurdish groups living in Finland are fairly scattered and few in numbers. Therefore they do not form such cohesive and multifaceted communities as it the case with the Kurds in Britain for example. The Finnish Kurds have been forced to learn the Finnish language and create links to the surrounding society, or to be in contact with the outside world via Internet. The Kurdish magazines published elsewhere in Europe, as well as performing Kurdish artists, are well known by Finnish Kurds, who also pay frequent visits to Kurds (relatives!) living in other countries. On the national level, there is not a lot of joint activity, recreational or otherwise. On the local level, the Finnish Kurds have integrated into the surrounding society much better than the Kurds in Britain. For example, while in London Nevruz is celebrated as an exclusively Kurdish affair, in

Finland Finnish friends are also invited to join in the festivities. (WAHLBECK pg. 137-138 and 147) This may be the reason why the Kurdish associations in Finland are not as political and radical as those in the larger countries.

For most Kurds, their first impression from Finland was stressful - the slowness of the asylum process caused frustration, foreigners were a rare novelty, sometimes causing hostile reactions from the general public, loneliness and uncertainty about the future highlighted mental health problems and everything was strange. In addition, the patronising attitude of some well meaning people sometimes caused added irritation. (WAHLBECK pg. 92, 100, 131-133) However, one should avoid generalisations, for a number of Kurds felt satisfied with the Finnish authorities way of dealing with things. (WAHLBECK pg. 132 and 176) Many Kurds who had come from Turkey tried to look for meaning in life, and a justification for their application for political asylum, by participating in politics, even though they had not done so in their home country:

"For example, without this party I am nothing. Among the Kurds, within PKK, we have connections." (WAHLBECK pg. 164)

With time, some of the Kurds have integrated into Finland and have begun to form a specific identity as Finnish Kurds:

"I feel that I owe Finland and the Finnish people, Finnish society a lot...That is why I will participate in Finnish society, although in the sense that I can be a Kurd, a Kurd in Finland, or no problem to be a Finnish Kurd. And I think that I can somehow unite these things." (WAHLBECK pg.111)

5. HUMAN RIGHTS

Iran, Iraq, Syria, Turkey, Armenia and the Caucasian countries have pledged to respect general human rights, but the actual situation deviates from the principle in places. Regional differences are great, for which reason the internal flight option is possible everywhere in the region. Efforts to hamper the activities of the human rights organisations have taken place everywhere, but often the organisations themselves are partly to blame, as they too may work also from political, and not purely from humanitarian motives.

5.1. Compliance with the International conventions

All other states within Kurdistan, except for Turkey, have approved the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. However, they all have signed the Convention of the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

Turkey has also signed, although not yet ratified, the International Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

Turkey, Iran and the Caucasian countries have signed the convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Only Turkey has signed the Convention on the Political Rights of Women.

Only Turkey and the Caucasian countries have committed themselves to the United Nations Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

Turkey has also signed the Geneva Convention of 1951 concerning the legal rights of refugees with geographic reservation, for which reason the convention does not apply to those refugees who arrive in Turkey from the Asian countries. Iran has also signed the Geneva Convention.

The representatives of the autonomous Kurdistan of Northern Iraq have committed themselves to comply with the international agreements signed by Iraq.

Turkey has been a member of the European Council without interruption for a period of 50 years - unlike Greece, Spain or Portugal. Lately the membership requirements have been relaxed and in 1999 Georgia was accepted as a member state, Armenia and Azerbaidzhan are waiting for their turn.

The government of Turkey has recognised the judiciary power of the European human rights court in 1990 and since 1995 has complied with the decisions made by it concerning Turkey. As far the population in the southeast of Turkey is concerned, both the information concerning their rights and the practical opportunity to appeal is quite limited.

5.2. De-facto respect for human rights

From among the states that divide Kurdistan between themselves, only Turkey is a democracy with a freedom of expression and freedom of assembly. In Turkey, the problem is separating the terrorism practised by PKK from the normal political activity and from the right to express even radical views, as long as they are not used to incite violence or criminal activity. In the other states in the region, the legislation and the actual respect for human rights are far apart. The northern Iraqi protection zone for the Kurds exists in a transition state, which in principle is free, but in practice quite vulnerable.

5.2.1. Iran

The Iranian government has always recognised the Kurds as being one of the Iranian tribes along with the rest. Thus a Kurdish identity as such does not cause problems, unless it is connected with views that are considered anti government or anti-Islam. At present time, guerrilla activities seem to have stopped, as the PUK leader Talabani denied already in October 1995 that there would be any uprising going on anymore in Iran. (LAIZER pg. 158)

The human rights violations against the Iranian Kurds are on an equal footing with those directed against all other Iranian citizens. Political activity is limited, torture is practised in prisons, punishments include the severing of limbs and capital punishment is meted in a number of cases. The Kurds are not in an unequal position as such, and they are not persecuted on ethnic grounds, but members of the religious minorities and political activists among them have been imprisoned and executed. Most Kurds are Sunni Muslims, for which reason they may be discriminated against in a career in the public service for example. Persons whose relatives are suspected of being KPDI supporters have on occasions been prevented from running for public offices, although moderate Kurds have been elected as mayors and appointed as governors.

According to KDPI, women have been raped by forcing them into temporary marriages - a practice which the Sunni Muslims abhor - with soldiers. In March 1998, the KDP of Iraq told that some of their members living in exile in Iran had been arrested, tortured and even executed on account of 'spying for Turkey and Israel'. Iranian agents have also murdered Kurdish leaders abroad.

Teaching in the Kurdish language was forbidden earlier on, but nowadays the local languages are accepted as means of instruction in the elementary schools. Publications and radio broadcasts are also allowed in local languages. Kurdish artists can display their works under supervision in the **Centre for Promoting the Kurdish Culture and Literature**, which is situated in Orumiyah. The attitude of the Iranian government is very inconsistent though. For example, a previously awarded Kurdish historian was arrested in January 1997 on account of the 5th volume of his book series. (ROOSEVELT pg. 267; Human Rights Watch: Iran - Religious and Ethnic Minorities, 1997, pg. 24-26; Human Rights Watch World Report 1998, pg.330)

In February 1999 a pro-PKK demonstration against Turkey, United States and Israel took place in Orumiyah. Komala made use of the situation and the demonstrations escalated beyond the control of the Iranian authorities. According to Kurdish sources three people died in Orumiyah, in Mahabad the demonstrations were dispersed by shooting and in Sanandaj at least 18 people were killed. There were also reports of demonstrations in Sar Dasht, Bowkan and Baneh, but the international news media preferred to concentrate on the Kurds in Turkey and Germany. (<http://www.peg.apc.org/~greenleft>)

President Mohammad Khatami, who is considered to be politically moderate, enjoys the support of the Kurdish regions. Thus, in September 1997 he appointed Kurdish ethnographer Abdollah Ramazanzadeh as the governor of Sanandaj. He also acts as a presidential adviser in ethnic matters. However, Ramazanzadeh has warned against politicising in the name of the Kurdish issues:

"When they talk about cultural issues, they only use them in order to express political demands." (REUTERS 3.5.99)

Usually the Iranian asylum seekers appeal to discrimination or general reasons, which are not dependent on nationality. From the Iranian asylum seekers in Finland in the 1990's, 15% were Kurds, which pretty much corresponds with their proportionate number in the Iranian population as a whole. These Kurds did not differ from the other Iranian asylum seekers in any aspect.

5.2.2. Iraq

The situation of the Kurds in Iraq essentially depends on whether they live in the government-controlled area or in the autonomous Kurdish region in Northern Iraq. In the area controlled by the Iraqi government the treatment of the minorities depends on their political attitudes. Kurds have been driven away from their homes in Kirkuk and Khanaqin, which are in the border area of Kurdistan. In December 1997, the deportations of both Kurds and Turcomans averaged around six families per day.⁷⁰ During late spring in 1998, 1468 Kurdish families were deported. The Kurds of Khanaqin have also been transferred towards south, where their nationality is 'corrected' in their identity cards as being 'Arab'. At this rate, coupled with the facts of large family sizes and many taking the hint and leaving on their own accord, the border area will be cleared of the minority nationalities in a couple of years. Those who resist are harassed with home searches that last for days. Due to the Arabification of the border areas, the situation of the Iraqi Kurds is the weakest there, but elsewhere in Iraq it does not differ from the treatment of other parts of the population. An exception is formed by those Feylis who have been deported to Iran, but who

⁷⁰ According to the Iraqi opposition sources, the Turcomans around Kirkuk were also deported in the spring of 1999, after they had helped the Kurds. (RFE/RL 30.4.99)

despite of that have returned to Iraq, even though it does not even recognise them as Iraqi citizens.

In Iraq, there is an abundance of political prisoners, torture is common and the severing of limbs is used as a form of punishment. In addition to executions, "disappearances" of persons are also quite common. The circumstances and laws change in rapid order, so each evaluation of the human rights situation may be outdated already as it is being prepared.

Over half a million Kurds are living in internal exile in Northern Iraq. Refugees have arrived there also from Iran and Turkey - From the Atrush refugee camps, thousands of PKK supporters have remained in the country. Some of them preferred to move to Makhmur, which is controlled by the Iraqi government, spreading instability in the area. In January 1999 Barzani stated that

*"PKK has committed worse misdeeds against us than what our enemies have. It is a terrible irony, that Kurds today see the Turkish Army as their liberator from the PKK."*⁷¹ (Sinikka Nerwey: Pakolaiset jakamassa Pohjois-Irakin yhteistä puutetta ja kurjuutta, Monitori 1/1999 s. 39-41; U.S. Department of State: Iraq Report on Human Rights practices for 1997)

In the Northern Iraqi protection zone, in other words in the de-facto independent Kurdistan, there is clearly a more liberal, but at the same time almost mildly anarchistic situation. As far as the last mentioned state of affairs is concerned, the situation has improved somewhat over the recent years. The police and the soldiers now have new uniforms, they are being trained in an organised manner and the administration is operating under the leadership of the former guerrillas. The rump parliament has continued to meet in KDP area. Generally speaking, there is a lot of rebuilding activity going on, roads have been repaired and life seems to have normalised. However, the countryside has emptied due to people having moved either to the towns or abroad. Those Kurds who have moved abroad have returned for holidays to their home areas in Northern Iraq and it is hoped that they return permanently, for Kurdistan is in need of experts, economic investments and faith in the future in general.

The security of the area is threatened not only by criminal activity and the land mines that are planted all over the place, but also by the economic boycott placed on the area by the Iraqi government in 1993, which has interrupted the distribution of electricity, water and the plumbing from time to time. The government of Iraq has been able to blackmail for example PUK into accepting schoolbooks that praise Saddam Hussein. (U.S. Department of State: Iraq Report on Human Rights Practices for 1997)

The main party of the Kurds, KDP, has not been guilty of especially significant human rights violations, neither has the PUK, which controls the Sulaymaniah region, persecuted the Kurds on a large scale at its own initiative. The security forces of the Iraqi Ministry of Interior (*Asayish*), the police forces of the competing political parties and the guerrillas have all been accused of

⁷¹ According to a protest published by the German office of KDP, PKK, among other things, trespassed into the KDP controlled area from the PUK controlled area on the 25th and 26th of May 1999, murdering innocent villagers. At the same time the international news agencies reported mainly on the Turkish army's military attacks directed against PKK on the northern Iraq side of the border.

human rights violations, but the accusations are fairly mild and seem to have been put forward mainly by the representatives of WCP and PKK.⁷² Police personnel, who have been accused of torture, have been suspended from their office. A more serious problem is posed by the activities of the Islamists and the collaborators of the Iraqi and Iranian governments, for which reason the area can not be considered to be particularly safe for anybody. Also the economic hardships and the general uncertainty concerning the future is driving both Kurds and other nationalities of the region to become refugees abroad.

In August 1998, there were reports about an incident between KDP and a certain Turcoman organisation in Arbil, but two weeks later the leaders of both KDP and the Turcomans condemned the incident in a joint declaration. The *Turkish Daily News* also criticised the Turcomans' complaints in its articles.

Likewise many Christians (Assyrians) have identified with the Kurds, having suffered under different regimes and on account of the attacks of the Kurdish groups against each other. Since the autumn of 1998, the parties of the Assyrians (ADM for example) have complained of increased violence against them and of the fact that it has become increasingly difficult for the Assyrians to gain entrance into institutes of higher learning. They are saying that these actions are intended to drive them out of Kurdistan. (Assyrian Democratic Organisation News Watch 20.10.1998 and 17.1.1999)

5.2.3. Syria

Although Syria protects Kurdish parties such as PKK and PUK, it has persecuted its own Kurds especially in the beginning of 1960's, for example by withdrawing the Syrian citizenship from 120 000 Kurds.⁷³ As their offspring inherited this stateless status, there are, according to the country's own announcement (from the year 1996) 142 465 Kurds in Syria without citizenship rights. The human rights organisations estimate the number to be between 180 000 - 200 000. According to the Iraqi KDP there may even be 300 000 Kurds without citizenship in Syria.

The persons without Syrian citizenship are officially divided into two categories: the "foreigners" (*ajanib*) with red identification cards and the "unregistered" (*maktoumeen*) without an documentation. In Syria, a foreigner is not allowed to own either property or business companies, neither can he be nominated for a government post nor for a job in a government run company and

⁷² The 1995 report and the contents of a letter published in the spring of 1998 by *Amnesty International* and the general pessimism reflected by them have been criticized widely. It is obvious that once again this human rights organisation believed disinformation spread by marginal groups.

⁷³ In addition to an intense desire for Arabification, the motive was increasingly strained relationships with Turkey. In the 1940's, when Syria was led by the Kurdish colonel Husni al-Za'im, Turkey and Syria enjoyed better relationships with each other than ever before. His defeat, the founding of the state of Israel, Turkey joining NATO and Syria's drifting into socialism ruined the relationship between these two countries so much so that in between 1957-1958 Turkey and Syria were on the verge of war. The border was closed, concentration of troops took place and the trustworthiness of the ethnic minorities became suspect. The atmosphere between the two countries got better in the 1960's, in connection with the tightening of control of citizens that began to take place simultaneously in both countries.

he is also not allowed to work in the profession of a doctor or an engineer. He is not qualified for food aid, is not allowed to use the services of the public hospitals, nor can he legally marry. In addition to the lack of political rights, a foreigner lacks the possibility of obtaining a passport and thus the opportunity to legally travel abroad or to return to Syria.¹⁹ The unregistered aliens are also denied the right for a valid school diploma and consequently, the possibility for any kind of further education.

Syrian citizens are treated equally, and Kurds are not discriminated against on the basis of ethnicity or religion. However, their political activities are kept under close surveillance, and demands for special privileges, not to mention for autonomy or criticism of the government, are not tolerated. A number of those who appealed on behalf of the stateless Kurds were imprisoned in 1992, but some of them have been released since then.

In the 1990's, there has only been a few isolated cases of Syrian asylum seekers arriving in Finland, among whom there have also been some Kurds.

5.2.4. Turkey in general

There are approximately 14 million Kurds in Turkey, of which five million speak the Zaza dialect, with about the same number belonging to the Alevi sect. Because Turkey is officially a secular state, religious persecution does not occur. In spite of that, the asylum seekers have sometimes appealed to religious conflicts:

"I have been persecuted because of religion. I cannot practice my religion freely, because the Turks and the Kurds use the same mosques and we should pray jointly in the same place at the same time, but it does not work out, because there is so much hostility. In the mosques, there are false imams, who speak Turkish only, and in reality they are spies."

To some Kurds even Islam in itself represents Turkish tyranny. The fine line between religion and politics was really tested by the asylum seeker, according to whom the Kurds

"do not on their own accord practice any religion, but due to circumstances they have been forced to take some religion, i.e. Islam."

The human rights violations in Turkey concentrate namely on the Kurds and to the southwestern (Kurdistan) region. From all those people who have arrived in Finland from Turkey and have applied for political asylum in the 1990's, 96% classified themselves as Kurds - some apparently just to be on the safe side. It is possible to deduce from this, that the general human rights situation in Turkey is much better than that of the Kurds in particular.

¹⁹ According to a reliable source, Syria does grant identity documents and aliens passports at least for the purpose of leaving Syria.

Human Rights Watch has noticed the improvement in the situation since 1995, but alongside some advancement in this area there has also been some setbacks. *Amnesty International* has also seen some signs of improvement between the spring of 1997 and November 1998. (Reuters 20.11.98). The annual statistics of IHD show that mysterious disappearances for example have decreased by half during 1997-1998. The security situation has continued to improve and the number terrorist attacks recorded by the Turkish authorities have decreased steadily since the year 1993.²⁵

A similar report on Turkey was published on the 4th of May 1999 by *Reporters Sans Frontiers* organisation. The figures quoted by it showed that the number of arrests and torture of reporters has halved annually.²⁶

In its annual report for 1998, the interest group of the journalists called *Committee to Protect Journalists* lists several countries, where journalists were either killed or imprisoned during the past year. Turkey was not numbered among them, yet Turkish prisons still held the most number of journalists, which reflects on the multifacetedness of political news broadcasting, rather than on a real danger to life. There are less imprisoned journalists in Iran, Iraq and Syria, which does not mean, however, that it is any safer to practice journalism in the neighbouring countries of Turkey.

In 1998 IHD registered 167 unsolved murders, 103 extra judicial killings, 1951 manslaughters in a combat situation, 90 civilian deaths in a cross fire, 27 disappearances, 449 cases of torture, and so on. (Kurdistan Rundbrief 1/13.1.1999) According to another source of information, IHD only registered 9 disappearances in 1998.²⁷ (Kurdistan Rundbrief 11/2.6.1999)

It is easy to use numbers for propaganda purposes, unless they are looked at in proportion to the population figures and earlier human rights record of the country and to the conditions of the neighbouring countries. Also, the information sources are often one-sided in their approach and contradictory to each other. According to the Turkish government, 253 soldiers and police, 114 village guards and 132 civilians were killed in 1998.

The death sentence has not been implemented in Turkey since the autumn of 1984. There have been initiatives concerning the abolishment of death sentence, but so far majority of the parliament have been against it. In April 1999, the chairman of the constitutional committee, Ahmet Necdet Sezer, urged the parliament to abolish the sections of law restricting freedom of speech and freedom of association and the make the strict anti-terrorists laws less severe, as the public prosecutors tend to apply them haphazardly and all too eagerly. All the leading politicians accepted this criticism. (TDN & NT 30.4.99)

People who have been tortured and the inhabitants of villages, which have been evacuated by force, have been paid compensation - albeit often times only

²⁵ 1993: 3993; 1994: 3908; 1995: 2118; 1996: 1941; 1997: 1300; 1998: 977.

²⁶ Claimed cases of torture in 1996: 31; 1997: 16; 1998: 9. The information is gathered by TIHV. The report also states that in 1998 the Turkish police manhandled around 60 journalists, but during the intense first quarter of 1999 the number of journalists thus treated was only 10 (<http://www.rsf.fr/carte/europe/rapport/tortureturquie/turquie.html>, <http://www.ifex.org>)

²⁷ The number of missing persons has decreased since the years 1996 (68 persons) and 1997 (45 persons). Some of the disappearances are due to PKK kidnappings, some of them are explained by migration.

after decisions made by the European Human Rights Court. Police personnel found guilty of misconduct have been sentenced to prison terms, although not with the greatest of vigour. In 1994, there were 314 charges against government officials. One third of them led to sentencing.

The human rights organisations have pointed out, however, that the investigations of the charges of torture and their sentencing has been recalcitrant, slow and quite rare, taken into account the widespread use of torture in the country. Despite the government regulations and government organised human rights courses directed to the police personnel, torture is used especially in the large cities and in the Kurdish areas, where there is an ongoing battle against terrorism.

Torture is typically directed at those victims, who have been arrested for the lengthy period allowed by the emergency law. In contrast to this, torture does not usually take place with common criminals, neither in the smaller towns of Western Turkey or during the last part of the detention, because the torturers are afraid of the marks of torture being revealed and used as evidence against them. (Human Rights Watch: Turkey - Torture and Mistreatment in pre-trial detention by anti-terror-police, 1997)

The European Human Rights Court in its sentence ordered the state of Turkey to pay one quarter of a million FIM as compensation to a Kurdish journalist for damages and legal expenses. The court took the view that he had been assaulted while in police custody in eastern Turkey, but his claims for being tortured were not properly investigated and four other charges raised by him were repealed. (Kurdish Human Rights Project Press Release 9.6.1998)

Between the years 1990 - 1996 the Turkish army has evacuated and destroyed according to a certain source altogether 2614 Kurdish villages. According to some other statistics the number of actual villages is 853, with smaller farming communities numbering in 2332; altogether 364 742 inhabitants had to leave their homes and only 11 032 have managed to return. (Kurdistan News



Destroyed or evacuated villages (according to provinces)

39-40/1998) Villages have been destroyed at least in the provinces of Batman, Bingöl, Bitlis, Diyarbakır, Elazığ, Hakkari, Kars, Mardin, Muş, Siirt, Şırnak, and in the Elbistan district of the Kahramanmaraş province and also in the Çatak district of the Van province. (IHT 9.6.94; <http://www.bellona.no/e/turkey/hamlets.htm>) According to the annual report of IHD, only 30 villagers or farms anymore were destroyed in the course of the year 1998.

In the Amnesty International Annual Reports the provinces in Eastern Turkey most often mentioned as cites for human rights violations are Batman, Diyarbakır, Mardin and Şırnak. During the first five months of 1999, there were reports of guerrilla activity and arrests and searches connected with it also in the provinces of Bingöl, Erzurum, (totally non-Kurdish) Ordu, Siirt, Tunceli and Van; there were violent demonstrations especially in the six largest cities of Turkey.⁷⁸

The emergency law has been enforced since 19th of July 1987 in ten Turkish provinces: Batman, Bingöl, Bitlis, Diyarbakır, Hakkari, Mardin (until 30th of November 1996), Siirt, Şırnak, Tunceli and Van and also partly in Ağrı, Elazığ (until 30th of November 1966) and Muş, which border on some of the above mentioned ten provinces. According to the latest information, at the present time the emergency law is in force only in the provinces of Diyarbakır, Hakkari, Siirt, Şırnak, Tunceli and Van. It has been extended till the end of July 1999 for the time being. (Human Rights Watch World Report 1998, pg. 284; AL 25.3.98)

The situation in Kurdistan has been markedly different from the general human rights situation in the rest of Turkey for the very reason that the emergency law has been enforced there.

"In Turkey, there are two parallel realities and judiciary systems: the one in the emergency rule area and that in the rest of Turkey." (Human Rights in Turkey... pg. 11)

For example, article eight of the anti-terrorism law can be given a wide interpretation. If it is applied in an unduly strict manner, it can be used to ban all verbal and written propaganda for the division of Turkey. For the sake of moderation however, the purpose and scale of the said "propaganda" should also be taken into account. The criminal law of Turkey also contains articles, which can be interpreted in a wide variety of ways.

Many similar articles of law can also be found in the legislature of the western countries, but the criminal courts in Turkey have sometimes interpreted

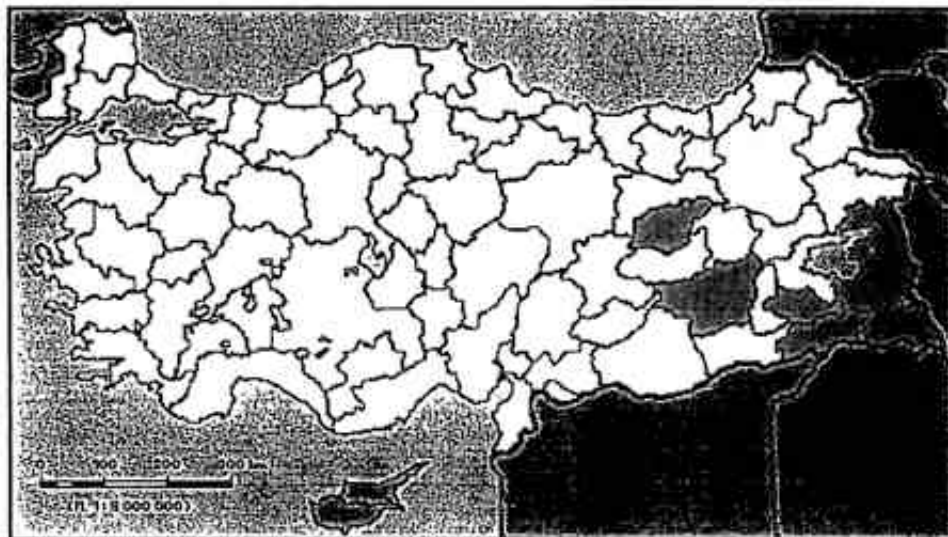
⁷⁸ Istanbul, Ankara, İzmir, Diyarbakır, Adana, and Gaziantep. There were also skirmishes in Ceyhan and in the nearby Mersin in the province of Adana, and in Kızıltepe in the province of Mardin. However, later on in the spring a lady representing HaDeP was elected as Mayor of Kızıltepe. Some German members of PDS, who had been going around the area in the name of some human rights organisations, were arrested in Adana and Nusaybin. According to IHD, in February over a thousand HaDeP members were arrested in Turkey. For the sake of balance it may be added that in Germany, the Nordrhein-Westfalen state alone 633 PKK supporters were arrested, and that the Kurdish demonstrations taking place in many Iranian cities at the time were not reported on at all, although more Kurds were killed in them than in the violence in Turkey. It is calculated that in Switzerland over 20 people died in the internal conflicts of PKK in the winter 1998/1999. In Turkey, as many people died during the two most intensive weeks of violence in the beginning of March 1999, but especially the German travel agents got scared and cancelled their some of their tours to Turkey. During an Islamic sacrificial ceremony alone around the time of Nevruz, 190 people lost their lives in traffic accidents.



Areas where Martial Law has been enforced between 1987-1996



Areas with special rule comparable to Martial Law between 1987-1996



Areas with Martial Law in force in 1998

them in the strictest sense possible and given extremely long prison sentences. In 1996, the Turkish government was especially disturbed about the 2,5-year conditional prison sentence of the Kurdish author Yaşar Kemal, for it aroused embarrassing attention even abroad.

The Turkish law provides for a 2 - 8 year prison sentence for harbouring and feeding guerrillas. Those aware of any criminal activities are duty bound to inform on the criminals, unless they can show to have been caught in extenuating circumstances. One asylum seeker considered this requirement to be unfair:

"In the fall...someone had informed on me concerning the fact that I was hiding in my house nine men, who had escaped from prison, and this was true, I had done so. In Turkey, the facts of committing a crime and helping a criminal are one and same thing. For this reason I had to leave the country."

Turkey aims to have the Kurds perform their military service outside of Kurdistan. (Bundesamt für die Anerkennung Ausländischer Flüchtlinge: Militärdienst in der Türkei; Nürnberg 1997, pg. 12) In spite of that, many people who have evaded the drafting have appealed to their Kurdish background and to their fear of having to fight against other Kurds. Some claim that when performing the military service, they are sent to take part in active fighting due to their Kurdish background, while others claim that they are put in kitchen duty for the same reason.

In evaluating the human rights situation in Turkey, there are two distinctively differing starting points: according to the critical stance Turkey is a police state, where human rights, especially those of the Kurds, are systematically being trampled upon; according to the anti-terrorism stance Turkey on the whole is a justice state, where special police activities and severe anti-terrorism laws are only applied for the stamping out of PKK and some other, clearly violent extremist groups. (Democracy at Gunpoint, 1996)

5.2.5. Turkey from a critical point of view

The Finland office of ERNK published a leaflet called "The Legal and Actual Status of the Kurds with Respect to Domestic and International Law". It includes 14 specific accusations against the judiciary system of Turkey, which deserve to be commented one by one:

1. *"It is forbidden to give Kurdish names to one's children."*

The reason given for this statement is said to be the Family Name Law of Turkey from 1931. However, it does not include any more peculiar articles than the corresponding Finnish Name Act, according to which the family name is assigned on the basis of the parents' name, and the first name can not be contrary to the common conventions of the language. In Turkey, family names came into general use only in the beginning of the 1930's, and people were given suitable names as randomly as what was done in Finland in the 19th Century, when many a Finn received a Swedish name totally independent of his mother tongue. One disadvantage is the fact that apparently the Turkish law does not allow for a change of family name.

There are no greater obstacles in giving a Kurdish name to a child in Turkey than there is in giving a foreign sounding name to a child anywhere else in the world. For example, the word *Nevruz*, which is the Kurdish term for New Year - and which Ahmet Altan for example in his article published in the newspaper *Milliyet* on the 17th of April 1995 held to be a forbidden name in Turkey (*Freedom of Living in Turkey*, pg. 19 GUNTER pg.18) - is included as a Persian man's name in the name directory published already in 1981, during the military rule! (PAR pg. 147)

A large portion of first names and a somewhat smaller number of the family names in use in Turkey have been adopted either from the Persian or the Arabic tradition. As it has been an Islamic practice that a child is given a "Muslim" name, and because the Kurdish dialects are fairly close to Farsi, not to mention the number of loan words, most names can hardly be considered as being especially Kurdish, except for new innovations or spelling forms defying the Turkish alphabet (for example, use of the letter 'x', which is not included in the Turkish alphabet).

Syria has also been criticised - by others than PKK - for the fact that the September 1992 Decree 122 forbids the registering of Kurdish names for one's children.

2. *"The Kurds are not allowed to use Kurdish place names for their towns and villages."*

From the names of towns in Kurdistan, Dersim was changed into Tunceli in the 1930's; Harput, the capital city of the province with the Arabic name of Mamuret el-Aziz became Elazığ, which was an adaptation of the last part of the name of the province itself (el-Aziz). An order for a speedy change of the names of the villages was given in 1949, but this order was never really applied in full force or with consistency. Thus most places are still known by their old names, which reveal their non-Turkish origin.

3. *"The Kurds are not allowed to express their thoughts in Kurdish, which is their mother tongue."*

Turkish law has never denied the use of one's mother tongue in private. The use of foreign languages in public was formally forbidden by law number 2932, dated 19th of October 1983. However, this law was never really implemented and it was abolished on the 12th of April 1991. (MCDOWALL 1996 pg. 429)

4. *"According to the law of Turkey, the language of the Kurds is Turkish, not Kurdish. The Kurds are not allowed to open schools or hold courses which would offer Kurdish medium teaching."*

The Turkish law classifies all of its citizens as being Turkish, and thus does not consider at all their mother tongue or ethnic identity. However, the only official language of Turkey is Turkish.

The former Prime Minister Tansu Çiller promised to put forward the right to establish private Kurdish medium schools (HBL 8.7.94), but the Islamists used the

opportunity to strengthen their religious activities. At that point the army demanded the compulsory education to be lengthened. The universities also are government controlled, which means that the medium of instruction is Turkish. In North Cyprus there are private Turkish universities which also offer instruction in English. Turkey has a state run educational system and school is mandatory.

In April 1992, The **Kurdish Cultural and Research Foundation** (Kürt-KAV), which is politically close to PSK, was established by Ismail Beşikci, among others. Ismail Camlibel is the director of the foundation, which set for itself the goal of organising language courses. In 1997, the authorities forbade the commencement of the language courses and the foundation was closed down. Its directors were arrested at first, but were consequently freed of any charges in the spring of 1998, because the courses had not been started yet. The case showed the fluctuating attitudes of the Turkish authorities.

The former Prime Minister of Turkey, Mesut Yilmaz, has suggested Kurdish to be established as the second official language in Turkey. (Human Rights Watch World Report 1998; MCDOWALL 1996 pg. 428) The initiatives for reforms from within the Turkish government have so far been more daring than the willingness of the parliament to implement them.

5. *"No one in Turkey is allowed to claim that the Kurds exist as a separate ethnic group or minority."*

Turgut Özal, a former president of Turkey, publicly admitted the existence of the Kurds and that he himself has partly Kurdish background. However, the law forbids all efforts of dividing the Turkish citizens on an ethnic basis as a form of racism. This prevents the discrimination of the Kurds, but on the other hand neither does it allow for any kind of positive discrimination, i.e. the granting of special privileges based on ethnicity.

6. *"The Kurds in Turkey are not allowed to produce newspapers or periodicals, neither are they allowed to import to the country publications about the Kurds which are produced abroad."*

At least the bilingual magazine *Medya Güneşi* and the Kurdish Monthly periodical *Deng* had already been published in 1989, before the public use of the Kurdish language was officially allowed, starting from December 1991, the Kurdish newspaper *Rojname* began to be published. (MCDOWALL 1996 pg. 429) In spite of that, it is often claimed in public that the PKK minded newspapers would have been the first, or even the only Kurdish newspapers that were published. (Hb) 22.11.94)

The acts of confiscation and censorship directed at the Kurdish publications by the Turkish government are not due to the language they were published in, but because of their political message. The owner of a Kurdish newspaper called *Azadiya Welat* was fined and a journalist received a prison sentence in January 1999 after the newspaper had published a picture of a PKK organised

demonstration as a cover photo. The said photo was considered to idealise terrorism.

7. *"The Kurds of Turkey are not allowed to produce any theatre productions, video cassettes, music performances, movies, etc."*

The only exception to this mentioned by the ERNK office in Finland is one Kurdish movie, which was non-political in its content. Yet, in Turkey Kurdish music cassettes have been sold openly, as long they do not include any battle songs inciting people to violence. Just recently there was a movie being shown in the theatres, which told about the meeting of a conscript and a guerrilla on the mountains of Kurdistan. The movie aroused a lot of attention, as it pictured the guerrillas in a sympathetic light. Showing the movie in public was not prevented.

It is not a question of the Kurds not being able to take part in any cultural activities in Turkey, nor that Kurds are not allowed to be presented to the general public via cultural channels. The differing interpretations arise from the fact that both among the Kurdish activists (PKK) and among their opponents (the security bodies) the dividing line between cultural, political and terrorist activity is very blurred. For example, is the selling and listening of the taped Turkish-language messages of Öcalan considered to be just an expression of Kurdish culture, or making use of one's political rights, or endangering the national security by propagating rebellion? In one of the most popular songs played on Med-TV it is told, how "the undying guerrillas have gone to look for revenge." (AP 25.2.99)

8. *"The Kurds are not allowed to establish radio or TV stations for programmes in the Kurdish language, neither are Kurdish programmes allowed to be aired in the Turkish radio or TV."*

There are private radio and TV stations in Turkey. According to the law the programmes have to be in the official language of the country, but at least the local radio station "Voice of Dicle" has also aired programmes in Kurdish. Likewise the programmes by 'Söz-TV' have included Kurdish songs in them. According to one estimate, there are 28 radio stations and four TV station in operation in the country, all of which air programmes also in Kurdish dialects.

In Turkey the board of editors is in the habit of setting fines for excessive length in the duration of foreign language programmes. Likewise, a programme is fined if foreign language segments are allotted too great a share in it. When Tansu Çiller was the prime minister, she hinted at allowing Kurdish medium teaching at the elementary level, as well as Kurdish broadcasts in the radio. In September 1997 one of the ministers considered it necessary to have TV broadcasts in the Kurdish language. (KARAVELI pg. 30; Unit Özdağ: PKK and Turkey, WKI's Kurdish Conflict Resolution Forum 28.-29.7.1998; U.S. Department of State: Turkey Country Report on Human Rights practices for 1998; Human Rights Watch World Report 1998, pg. 283)

9. *"The Kurds in Turkey are not allowed to establish cultural organisation or societies that strive to protect the rights of the Kurdish population. The existing organisations are not allowed to engage in any activities of this nature. The*

societies are not allowed to use the Kurdish language while carrying out their affairs."

As the law expects the societies to be open to all Turkish citizens, the official language of the meetings and the language used for documentation have to be Turkish. The cultural and research foundation *Kürt-KAV*, which was founded by Yilmaz Camlibel in October 1995, openly aims to rescind the regulations restricting the use of the Kurdish language in the electronic media and in the schools. On the other hand, other societies that operate on behalf of PKK in the name of Kurdish culture have been banned and their members have been brought to trial. The problem again is the definition of "rights" and the delineation between political activity and extra-parliamentary activities. For example, the **Mesopotamian Cultural Centre (MKM)** in Turkey has been allowed to continue its activities, although a police investigation carried out in Cologne on the 29th of January 1997 revealed that the German publisher using the name Mesopotamia was actually a PKK run company. (U.S. department of State: turkey Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1998; Landesamt für verfassungsschutz, behörde für Inneres, Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg: Verfassungsschutzbericht 1996 & 1997)

10. "The Kurds of Turkey are not allowed to form a political party to defend their rights. The existing political parties are not allowed to claim to be representing the interests of any particular ethnic group or minority. Neither can they take part in any activities for defending the rights of the Kurdish people."

The Turkish law bans ethnic discrimination regardless of the fact, whether the intention is to discriminate against a certain part of the population or to improve its position with special minority rights. In spite of this there have been special Kurdish parties taking part in the Turkish elections in the 1990's. One of the latest among them was DKP, which was active during 1997-1999. The internationally best known pro-Kurdish party, HaDeP, was allowed to participate in the 1999 elections, despite repeated arrests and court cases against them. Its mayors were expected to stay in office less than two weeks, but they remained undisturbed for at least two months. In public, HaDeP is characterised as a Kurdish party, even though its rules and party platforms are independent of any ethnic affiliation, as required by law. The party candidates were partly ethnic Turks and Arabs.

11. "The Kurdish youths in Turkey are forced to become Turkish and Kemalists."

Article 58 of the Turkish constitution defines the Republic of Turkey according to the principles laid out by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. According to article 66 of the constitution Turkishness is not an ethnic definition, but covers all citizens of Turkey. (VORHOFF pg. 29)

The principles of Kemalism do not prevent differing political opinions any more than do the more familiar principles of "western concept of justice" or "Scandinavian welfare state". In practice, they establish fairly loose conditions to

the relationship between state and religion and between the rights and duties of the citizens. In Turkey, "Kemalism" is seen to deflect violent revolutionary doctrines, whether they separated people on the basis of ethnicity and race (racism), social status (communism) or religion (Islamistic movements).

12. *"Kurds can not become civil servants"*

As grounds for this claim is presented the fact that the law concerning civil servants shuts out government positions from certain criminals. There are no objections to being a civil servant based on ethnicity, as is admitted in point 14. Kurds have served in the highest posts both in the government and in the army.

13. *"The Kurds have no passports."*

The ground for this claim is the fact that the Passport Law denies travel documents at a court's decision or on security reasons in certain situations.

It has also happened, that a Kurd who has applied for political asylum in Finland has refused to obtain a passport for himself from the Turkish embassy, because he sees this as a denial of his Kurdishness:

"Why do we not apply for a passport from the Turkish embassy? Because the Turkish embassy writes down our nationality as being Turkish, but we are Kurds."

Another asylum seeker agreed:

"If I take a Turkish passport, that means that I accept Turkish nationality and deny my own nationality, which is Kurdish."

The Turkish identity cards and passports do not, however, include any record denoting ethnicity or mother tongue. They only mark nationality, religion, civil status, blood group and home place.¹⁹

14. *"Kurds can not be elected as members of parliament, town mayors, village elders or members of the provincial government ... Those Turkish Kurds, who deny their identity and accept that there is no Kurdish nation or Kurdish society in Turkey, can become members of parliament, ministers, civil servants..."*

In the Turkish parliament, the Kurds are represented at least in proportion to their number in the population as a whole. In every government there has been Kurdish ministers. On top of that, a Kurd has been an acting president (when the president has been away on a trip) and also been a presidential candidate. Again it is a question of how Kurdishness is defined. If it is a prerequisite that a person has openly declared himself to be a Kurd, accepted the antithesis between itself and the Turkish society and worked for the rights of the Kurds in a manner

¹⁹ Home place is defined on three levels in Turkey: province (*il*), district (*ilçe*) and village (*köy*). A hamlet is denoted with the word *mezra*. The Turkish districts are roughly equivalent in size with the Finnish counties.

accepted by PKK, his chances of staying in a government office are indeed limited. Mehdi Zana, the mayor of Diyarbakır, has been one of the most famous political prisoners in Turkey, but even for him his Kurdishness was not a particular handicap in obtaining the office of a mayor in the first place.

5.2.6. Turkey and terrorism

According to the Finnish Aliens Act (30 §) political asylum may be denied for example *"if...the foreigner has committed...a crime against peace, a war crime or a crime against humanity or some other serious crime, other than a political crime..."*. On the other hand, the law (31 §) allows for residence permit to be granted *"on account of needing protection"*, or if it is *"deemed that it is not safe for him to return to his home country"*. The law (38 § and 41 §) prohibits the refuse of entry or deportation of a foreigner *"to an area, where he may face inhuman treatment...or persecution."* The Constitution of Finland (the old §7, the new § 9) also makes note of this.

Most human rights violations have taken place in the name of the Anti-Terrorism law no. 3713, dated 11th of April 1991. The most criticised part of this law, its article no 8, was changed on the 27th of October 1995, after which 84% of the people imprisoned on the basis of it were released from jail.

Especially among the Kurds of Turkey the most problematic thing has been the delineation between terrorists, criminals and those persecuted purely on political basis. For this reason a more careful analysis of the nature of PKK and its relationship with its supporters is necessary.

How many of the Kurds really take part in the activities of PKK or support it? What is considered to be active support for the aims of PKK and what is the responsibility of the passive supporters?

In the delineation between the guerrillas and the terrorists one can lean for example on the Canadian concept:

"The freedom fighter, or the resistance fighter, attempts to achieve his aim by going after military and government targets primarily, while the terrorist uses the innocent seeking to create chaos by striking out at the most vulnerable." (Who is a Refugee? s. 219).

According to the 6th article of the charter of the International war tribunal a war crime or a crime against humanity is considered to be for example the maltreatment of the prisoners of war or civilian population, murder and the looting of property. Abetting and acting as instigators in these kinds of crimes bring about joint responsibility to those engaged in them. In spite of this, Finland has granted a residence permit, on grounds other than political asylum, to a person who told that he took part in PKK-organised acts of murder:

"Our task was to first negotiate with the inhabitants who had been active against the Kurds, and if the negotiations did not bring any results, we were supposed to conduct an armed attack. ... Akif handled the investigations and tortured the girl by striking her. ...The interrogations went on for one week...my group took the girl... by the

roadside. There the villagers hanged her. I personally was on guard duty with the rest of my group."

After having taken part in a second murder, the hanging of journalist working for a moderate Kurdish newspaper, the asylum seeker realised that he could not accept the PKK procedures any longer.

Should it be required that those asylum seekers who have taken part in criminal activities against their will, or who have knowledge of such activities, ought to co-operate with the police in order to solve the crimes and to trace the remaining culprits? Do the relatives of the murdered girl know what really happened?⁸⁰

Membership in a terrorist organisation does not as such prevent the granting of political asylum, but in cases like this it is possible that the asylum seeker may have understood a normal criminal investigation and sentencing to be purely political persecution. One of the very few cases where an asylum was granted in Finland to a Kurd from Turkey was decided upon in 1997 on the basis of an apparently hasty decision on the part of the asylum board. The applicant was seen to have been a prisoner of conscience. It was not taken into consideration that the asylum seeker was sentenced to prison at the time because in his apartment, there was found, among others, a gun and ammunitions.

Often the grounds for the claimed persecution would be classified as criminal acts even in Finland:

"My activities included distribution of literature and I also stored weapons for the guerrillas in my house. I kept the weapons in working order and delivered them to certain places at the request of the guerrillas. The weapons were mainly hand weapons and hand grenades. The main weapons were Kalashnikov rifles."

Many people assisting PKK have acted as smugglers:

"From the year 1985 I worked within our party as a smuggler in my home area, because I knew the area well. I smuggled people and weapons over the border. The weapons came from the Soviet Union and China and they were meant for the liberation of Kurdistan."

Taking part in the international arms trade has not been an obstacle for granting a permission to stay in Finland on humanitarian grounds.

Sometimes assisting the guerrillas was at least formally involuntary:

"I noticed that sometimes there were weapons hidden among the things that I transported. The weapons were meant for this certain Kurdish group...I knew about the weapons, but I did not care, because I am a Kurd and I wanted to help the Kurds to fight for their independence."

⁸⁰ The asylum application mentions the victim's name, but a Turkish human rights organization only mentions her in its report as being a 23-year old PKK intent. The Finnish authorities could not make closer enquiries in Turkey without endangering the asylum seeker's right to keep his identity concealed. Whose human rights have priority?

The information given in the interview is usually made to suit the purpose. Quota refugees generally understand that they will be chosen as easily into the quota if they confess to armed combat or being too active in politics. Therefore they readily announce that they are disillusioned with politics and have quit it and only want to leave their home country for the sake of the future of their families. (WAHLBECK pg.155) The asylum seekers for their part have a totally opposite strategy: political achievements and needs are exaggerated. It may be more difficult for the District Administrative Court to turn down and deport a person who falsely claims to have a warrant out against him for crimes of violence that he makes out to be as serious as possible. Political activity can also be demonstrated by taking part in showy demonstrations immediately after having arrived in Finland.

A separate group is formed by those persons, who, as far as it is known, have not directly assisted or supported the work of PKK, but who have been questioned, maltreated or threatened by the government officials because they have been suspected of being PKK sympathisers. Often the suspicion has had some justification, as the relatives of the persons in question have indeed been involved with PKK. In cases like these people have indeed been personally subjected to undue persecution. In comparison, Northern Ireland is known for several incidents, where the atmosphere of distrust created by the terrorists has provoked the soldiers to overreact with their counter measures, causing many innocent people to suffer. This has indeed been the very intention of the terrorists.¹¹

According to the Canadian view, a state has the right to legislate generally binding laws to protect itself, for example by banning the membership in an Islamic party. The Netherlands also accepts the rights of the state to legislate laws restricting the freedom of speech, providing they are not discriminatory or unreasonable according to local standards. Article 142 in the Turkish Penal Code can not, according to the Dutch, be considered as necessary for the upkeep of general order and security. (Who is a Refugee? pg. 195 and 500-501)

In evaluating the human rights situation in Turkey, one has to take into consideration the anti-terrorist viewpoint at least with as much seriousness as what it is taken in the EU countries. Otherwise there is the danger of being hypocritical, which is not helpful in instilling any trust in the Turks concerning the sincerity and objectivity of the outside critics. The very EU country that has levelled the harshest criticism against Turkey has itself been guilty of the very types of human rights violations, which are usually connected with Turkey in particular.¹² (WORLD DIRECTORY... pg. 157)

¹¹ Britain and Ireland banned the public expression of IRA opinions, a stance that Britain eventually withdrew from in 1994. Turkey has considered the situation in Kurdistan to be parallel with the one in Northern Ireland, but it considers that for the time being, the prerequisites for a peace agreement are not yet in existence. A better point of comparison is actually the Basque area of Spain. Understandably Britain, Spain and France take a more critical view of PKK terrorism than Germany, Italy and Greece do, as the last mentioned ones have not experienced the same level of violent separatism. It may be worth while to note that terrorism in general has increased lately, particularly in Italy and Greece, bringing up unpleasant memories from the 1970's.

¹² Greece has banned any societies from using in their names the definition "Turkish". Sadik Ahmet, a member of parliament representing the Turkish minority in Greece, was sentenced in court in 1990 for having claimed that there is a Turkish minority in Greece. He died in a car accident later on. There have been repeated

The footnotes are continued on the next page

The Federal Court of Germany that meets in Karlsruhe has interpreted the matter so that even a terrorist can be granted political asylum, if the state directs violence towards the civilian population as part of its anti-terrorist campaign methods. This interpretation halted a deportation of a person who had assisted PKK.

PKK has accused the EU countries for their participation in "state terrorism", because they lend political and economic support to Turkey and sell weapons to the Turkish army. Correspondingly, Turkey interprets that the EU member states condone terrorism, because they allow PKK to operate and in fact encourage immigrants leaving Turkey to register themselves as political asylum seekers, to report on human rights violations and to take part in demonstrations directed against Turkey, all of which actions PKK can easily manipulate for its own purposes or for those of its masters. Both parties are right in their claim that the western countries can no longer bypass the Kurdish issue as a mere Middle East problem.

In the spring of 1999, Prime Minister Ecevit and the former Speaker of the Parliament, Hikmet Cetin, proposed reintroducing the 1995 Amnesty Law. According to it, PKK guerrillas were granted amnesty, if they surrendered, handed in their weapons and helped in preventing new crimes. Prison sentences for guerrillas already tried in court were also shortened. The length of the period shortened depended on whether they surrendered before the Amnesty Law came into force, or within three months after it had begun to be enforced: death sentences were converted into 9 - 20 year prison sentences, life sentences into 6 - 15 year prison sentences. The law was quite effective and helped weaken PKK just when it was at its strongest, in the mid 1990's. However, MHP, which was the new party in power, opposed the idea of including the reintroducing the Amnesty Law into the negotiations for forming the new government.

accusations against the director of a Turkish medium newspaper and radio station. The human rights violations in Greece have indeed been characterised as 'persistent' - with the same word that is used of human rights violations in Turkey. (Human Rights Watch World Report 1998, pg. 258-260 and 283) The relations between Greece and Turkey have remained on a poor footing since the mid 1950's, and there seem to be no improvement with time. In connection with Öcalan's arrest, with great embarrassment to Greece it was revealed that the Greek authorities had: 1) allowed Öcalan into the country although Interpol had issued a warrant for his arrest; 2) arranged an asylum for him in a foreign country (Kenya) on account of his diplomatic immunity; 3) arranged for him a forged passport of another EU member state (Portugal) - in addition to which Öcalan was also found to be in possession of a (South) Cyprus passport; 4) tried to smuggle him to another EU country (the Netherlands), which had already once denied him entry to the country; 5) kept Öcalan's kidnapping a secret from the other EU countries, although it was known that the kidnapping would cause riots; and 6) hastily given political asylum to Öcalan's companions (one of them, who was a Syrian citizen, already had a political asylum in Cyprus; in addition to this, one was a Swedish citizen, and the other a Belgian citizen.) With this, all the assurances of Greece about not allowing PKK activities within its borders lost the last of their credibility. Neither can EU indefinitely pretend neutrality in connection with the continued hostilities between one of its member states and a state that is its unofficial member candidate

5.2.7. The Caucasian countries

The Caucasian Kurds are usually considered to be such a marginal group, that their particular history is not considered worth recounting in the works dealing with this area. One has to hunt for information from various sources.

The Yezidis, who form a vast majority of the Armenian Kurds, are divided into two groups, the Yezidis and the Yezidi Kurds. The Yezidis emphasise their religion and have been allowed to broadcast their own radio programme in Yerevan, but are forced to vehemently deny their Kurdishness and to present themselves as their own, separate nationality. The **Armenian Yezidi National Union** is an association led by Aziz Tamoyan, who considers himself to be the representative of all the Yezidis in the world, which according to his calculations amounts to about 2 million persons. The association has its own newspaper and its own flag. Tamoyan stresses the separateness of Yezidis from the Kurds, accuses PKK of pressurising the Yezidis and criticises Armenia for lack of protection.⁴¹ (NZZ 21.4.94; An interview by Onnik Krikorian 14.6.1998, http://www.freespeech.org/oneworld/yezidi/yezidi_articles.htm)

On the other hand, those Yezidi Kurds who stress their ethnic identity have been forced - or perhaps 'awakened' is a better term - into operating under the banner of the anti-Turkish PKK and since the 20th of March 1993 have published in Yerevan a newspaper by the name of *Botan*. During Öcalan's escapade, demonstrations, parties and hunger strikes fashioned along the lines of the European model were organised in Jerevan (Kurdistan Report, 167/1993; NZZ 21.4.94; RFE/RLN 6.1.99)

According to the Turkish sources there could be even 21 camps and 660 guerrillas operating under the Armenian protection. These guerrillas fight against Azerbaidzhan in the Armenian troops. In the opinion of a *Kurdish Human Rights Project's* journalist who visited the area, PKK practices not only financial soliciting, but also military drafting among the Yezidis. (<http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/8572/xxxvii.htm>; an interview by Onnik Krikorian 14.6.98, http://www.freespeech.org/oneworld/yezidi_articles.htm)

Because PKK runs its training camps under Armenian protection, its representatives abroad do not like to talk about the situation of the Armenian Kurds, but immediately change the topic to Turkey. A certain Kurdish source makes it known, however, that in occupying the "Red Kurdistan" the Armenians in practice destroyed the traditional Kurdish population living there. (<http://home3.swipnet.se/~w-31006/Kurd.htm>)

The massacre of the Hodzhali village carried out by the Armenians in the beginning of 1992 took place in the Lachin corridor, which had belonged to the "Red Kurdistan" in the 1920's and where the Kurdish population had remained in place. This has been later confirmed also by David McDowall in a report "The

⁴¹ In April 1997, 18 Yezidis applied for a political asylum in the United States Bonn embassy after their applications for a political asylum in Germany had been rejected. After this the western media wrote some articles about the purported discrimination of Yezidis in Armenia. The other representatives of the Armenian Kurds have accused Tamoyan for anti-Armenian agitation amongst Yezidis and spoken well for the human rights policy of their country's government. Denmark has received as asylum seekers some Armenian Kurds, who have presented themselves as Iraqi Kurds.

Kurds" (1996), published by the international *Minority Rights Group*. According to it, 18 000 Kurds were deported from Armenia and 2000 Kurds fled from Azerbaidzhan in order to escape conscription already before the refugee wave of 1993. The present Kurdish activists in Armenia probably include in their ranks more people from the group who have come from Turkey than from the traditional Kurdish population of Armenia. Even the name of their magazine, *Botan*, refers to the historic Kurdish region situated in Southern Turkey.

In July 1993, the *Azadi* movement, consisting of the Kurds who had remained in the area or who had moved there from Armenia, founded a new Kurdish republic explaining that it was in fact the Azerbaidzhani Turks who had been guilty of the massacre while evacuating Kelbadzhar and Kubatli in the spring of 1993. (Pogrom 174/1993-1994). However, *Human Rights Watch* has also studied the Kubatli massacre and stated that all of the 30 000 Kurds fled from the Armenians' way together with the Turks. (HRW: Azerbaijan - Seven years of Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, 1994) It has also been claimed, that it was in fact the Yezidis who were guilty of massmurdering the Muslim Kurds. (An interview by Onnik Krikorian 9.6.1998, http://www.freespeech.org/oneworld/yezidi/yezidi_articles.htm)

There are approximately 200 000 Kurds in Azerbaidzhan. They are mainly Sunni Muslims. (WORLD DIRECTORY. ...pg. 268-271) In the official statistics they only number 15 000, because during the Soviet rule the Kurds disappeared totally from Azerbaidzhan's population statistics. In July 1998, Azerbaidzhan censured a newspaper which claimed that the authorities are protecting PKK.

In October 1998, after the presidential elections the opposition in Azerbaidzhan reminded that president Heidar Aliiev's older brother had been paraded in 1934 as the first Kurd in Soviet Union who had received higher education. The former president of Azerbaidzhan, Abulfaz Elçibey, accused Aliiev for the founding of PKK, as Aliiev is a former KGB leader. This caused Elçibey's arrest, but the charges against him were dropped later on. According to an Armenian source there was a flow of weapons to PKK via the Nakhichevan region, which is Aliiev's home area. Öcalan himself also confessed in his trial that PKK receives support from Azerbaidzhan. (BBC 8.6.99) However, Turkey has assumed that Azerbaidzhan duly prevents PKK's activities within its borders as a payback for Turkey's support to it in the Karabakh dispute. Likewise, Turkey has promised Georgia to subdue the activities of the Abkhazians in Turkey, if Georgia will keep PKK away from its area. This leaves Armenia as the only Caucasian country, which can be assumed to protect PKK - especially in Karabakh and in the Lachin corridor, neither one of which belong to Armenia officially.

In Georgia, there is a PKK-minded Kurdish cultural centre led by Orduhan Kashak, and a Kurdish youth organisation. In Tbilisi there is the **Kurdistan Liberation National Front** represented by Ari Shabadi. Kerim Angosi leads the Georgian Yezidis.

At present, there is no direct ethnic persecution of the Kurds residing in the Caucasus region, but it is more a question of the instability of the general situation, the refugee problem caused by the war activities and a possible mild form of religious discrimination. Armenia is a strongly Christian state and Azerbaidzhan is a secularised Shiite state. However, the general human rights situation in all of the Caucasian countries has remained hopeless despite the promised reforms. (Helsinki human Rights Watch World report 1998, pg. 230, 232 and 257)

5.3. The Possibility of avoiding persecution within a state

Denmark has returned some Kurds to the Kurdistan area in Northern Iraq in an experimental fashion in 1994. Two years later three other EU countries (Germany among others) considered it safe to return the Iraqi Kurds to their homeland. However, UNHCR criticised the returning of the Kurds on the basis of the infighting among the Kurds and because of continuing human rights violations.

At least Germany and Switzerland have returned Kurds to Turkey, if they have previously lived in safe areas, or they have relatives there, in which case it can be assumed that they can make a living in an internal flight situation. An additional condition is that they do not have a specifically Kurdish name, which would reveal them. The possible consequences of returning the people to their home countries are being debated in the newspapers and occasionally some Kurds have sought refuge in churches. (Who is a Refugee? pg. 132, 250-251 and 279; *Der Spiegel* 26/22.6.1998). No unambiguous evidence has been produced concerning the persecution of asylum seekers who have been returned to Turkey. Germany in particular has followed the fate of the returnees and continued deportations. In 1998, Germany returned 499 Turkish Citizens. (NZZ 11.3.99) In January 1999, the refugee council of Lower Saxony published a booklet "Von Deutschland in den türkischen Folterkeller", which is said to describe the fate of 11 returnees to Turkey. Unfortunately the e-mail addresses of the said organisation have not been operational. In the German Bundestag, the PDS representatives have protested against the Kurds being returned from Germany into Turkey, an activity which has intensified in pace in the spring of 1999. In addition, the courts have made contradictory rulings. (Kurdistan Rundbrief 5-6/10) Sweden has also returned some Kurds to Southwestern Turkey. (DN 14.1.1996; TDN 15.1.96)

Finland too has returned some Kurds, a fact that was criticised by a Turkish human rights group. (IS 27. and 30.6.1994) Since then, the decisions of the Supreme Administrative Court seem to have put an end to the repatriation as far as the Kurds originating from the southwestern Turkey are concerned. Defining Southeastern Turkey has been haphazard and outdated, for the shrinking of the area where Martial Law is still being enforced, or the ordinary migration from the remote areas to Western Turkey have not been accounted for. Most Finnish Kurds who were born in southeastern Turkey, have for years lived elsewhere in the country, mainly in the tourist centre of Alanya.

Denmark and Greece exclude the possibility of an internal flight in Turkey, in contrast to most EU countries. In the opinion of *Amnesty International*, the following persons should not be returned to Turkey: those persons who are suspected of being members of PKK, inhabitants of the villages that refused the village guard system, members of the banned Kurdish parties or human rights organisations, those who have acted as lawyers on behalf of the Kurds or anyone who has recently been arrested. According to Amnesty, these groups of people can not escape the possibility of persecution through an internal flight option. (Amnesty International's position on asylum-seekers from Turkey, 1994)

In Turkey, Kurdish activists can easily get into difficulties. On the other hand, even a Kurd can live in peace in Turkey, if he does not get involved with

anything in which a refugee living in Finland does not have very good chances to participate either: guerrilla activities, riots, the profitable selling of Kurdish publications... Thus one can ask whether being a refugee is a better option than consenting to the Turkish law, as annoying as it is from the point of view of the Kurdish activists. In a large city like Istanbul the Kurds may feel that they are living as refugees in an internal flight situation, far from their home region. Yet they are not actively persecuted, unless they are involved in the type of activism for which they would not have any better chances engaging in while living abroad either. Emigration is often the worst solution, if it is not supported by financial considerations, by the wish to avoid military service, or other non-political motivation.

Greece has returned Iraqi nationals to Turkey and Turkey on its behalf has returned Kurds to Iran and Northern Iraq, for which reason Turkey can not be considered an absolutely safe country for the Iranian and Iraqi refugees. Yet from 1995 till 1997 Turkey has continuously decreased the number of people returned to its neighbouring countries. (Amnesty International: Turkey - Selective protecting, 1994)

5.4. The Mobility of the citizens

The Kurds have a relative freedom of movement in all of their home countries except in Iraqi government controlled territory, where movements of people are controlled *with the aid of an exceptionally high number of roadblocks*.

The borders of Iraqi Kurdistan are nowadays quite open. Although the legal crossing points may be missing and there can be checkpoints on the unofficial borders (in Iraq), the Kurds can cross all the borders. The national border of Kurdistan with Turkey and Syria is guarded by KDP; Turkey has made an agreement with KDP and a Turcoman organisation as to the daily quota for visas. However, the fee for the visa is quite high, 70-600 US\$.⁴¹

The crossing of the Kurdistan border between Iraq and Iran is possible with the joint consent of the Iranian officials with the PUK or IMIK. This is also the easiest route for entering Turkey illegally. The border between the autonomous region of Kurdistan and the Iraqi government controlled area is mainly occupied by the KDP and PUK guerrillas, for the Iraqi government wants to avoid the impression of there being a border. There are checkpoints on the roads however, but the trading goes on and there are even tourist trips organised from the Iraqi government controlled area to Kurdistan.

The border between Turkey and Armenia is closed and most probably also one of the best-guarded borders. The same is true also with the demarcation line between Armenia and Azerbaidzhan. However, one can leave from Armenia to the other countries by transiting through Georgia first.

⁴¹ The smuggling of a person from Iraq to Turkey costs 200 US\$, whereas an air journey to Europe with a valid passport costs 5000 - 10 000 US\$.

The Kurds of Iraq and Turkey, and the refugees that have arrived from further east often arrange their transport via Istanbul with the smugglers to Greece or via Eastern Europe to Germany. The smuggling of human beings via sea to Italy gained huge publicity in December 1997 and both PKK and the Turkish government were accused of being the culprits. Most probably both were partly responsible for it. PKK gained from the publicity and apparently cashed in on the refugees along the way. (AP 10.8.98)

Kurds arriving in Finland often claim to have come from Russia - by car without border controls, or by a rowing boat from Moscow - but then it is usually a question of people being expelled from Germany, Denmark, and Sweden, for whom Finland is Europe's last outpost. As a general rule, the Kurds are able to obtain passports and travel abroad with them. Exceptions to this rule are criminals, army conscripts and those Syrian-Kurds who are without a citizenship. In Kirkuk and Mosul, the Iraqi passport officials do not grant passports to Kurds, because they do not wish for them to return to their home areas. However, after the 1991 uprising the Kurds were left with empty passports and stamps, with the help of which the officials of the autonomous region prepare photocopied identity cards. These are valid documents in themselves. KDP expects everyone over nine years of age to hold a card proving the Iraqi citizenship.

5.5. The Functioning of the human rights organisations

Human rights issues have gained more publicity and significance in the political decision making than previously. As a consequence, human rights activities have become politicised. Especially in countries, where human rights organisations do not have a long history, both the government and the opposition groups strive to establish their own information units under the label of human rights organisations.

The Iranian government has long prevented the human rights activists and journalists from entering the Kurdish areas in the country. (Human Rights Watch: Iran - Religious and Ethnic Minorities, 1997, pg. 24-26)

The representatives of the **Kurdistan Human Rights Organisation** (RMMK) founded in December 1991 have operated in Arbil, Dahuk, Sulaymaniah and Kirkuk, but they have been quarrelling among themselves. Also, the most important Kurdish parties have their own human rights committees.

There have been accusations levelled against the **Turkish Human Rights Organisation** (IHD), established in 1986, and some of its offices have been closed either permanently or temporarily in 1997 in Balıkesir, Diyarbakır, İzmir, Konya, Malatya, Mardin and Şanlıurfa. This was effected by the political activity of IHD, which goes beyond the usual neutrality of a human rights organisation. For example, the interview of the Diyarbakır section head of IHD in the German-language *Kurdistan Report* Issue 85/1997 criticises the Turkish

government from a clearly ideological point of view, rather than only from the human rights violations perspective."

IHD came into the international consciousness only in 1991, but it already has, depending from the source, either 41, 55 or 57 local divisions and 19 000, 22 000, or even over 200 000 members. Many IHD activists have participated in politics as representatives of HaDeP.

The purported revelations of the jailed Kurdish leader Sakik concerning IHD's support to PKK caused an extreme right-wing group to attack the IHD leader Akin Birdal by shooting him in May 1998. Birdal recovered from his injuries and the shooters were arrested. Since then, Birdal has been imprisoned for his previous statements belittling PKK atrocities.

The **Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (TIHV)** was established at the behest of IHD in 1990. With the help of financial assistance from abroad, the foundation has established rehabilitation centres for the victims of torture in Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir and Adana, but the authorities closed a similar institute in Diyarbakır immediately after it was opened.⁴⁵ The foundation is led by Yavuz Önen.

For some reason the other human rights organisations operating in Turkey have not gained half as much publicity as what IHD has. The Turkish government has a human rights minister, who directs the operations of the human rights commission. It has developed means of educating and training the authorities. In December 1997, it was ordered that those arrested were to have medical checks both at the time of the arrest and in connection with being released. Neither were police personnel allowed to be present while the medical report was being written. Since July 1998 the parliament has been working on the reform to the penal code, which has been drafted by the human rights minister. The suggestions to the new law provide for harsher punishments to those taking part in torture or the doctors who give false evidence in their reports.

The Islamists have their own human rights organisation called **Mazlum-Der**, which has concentrated on the issue of head scarf, but when the opportunity arises it also takes issue with the rights of the Kurds. In the same token the non-political human rights activities have met with suspicion on behalf of the government officials.

The Caucasian countries have tried to present themselves in a positive light in the eyes of the western world and allowed the operation of the human rights organisations. Harassment is mainly practised by private quarters.

⁴⁵ Some idea of the IHD activists world view is offered by the declaration signed by six of its section heads (among others by Hatip Dicle, the head of Diyarbakır section at the time, who later on became a member of parliament and was sentenced to a prison term) after the occupation of Kuwait, dated 17th of September 1990: *"The US imperialism wants, for its own interests, to start a war in the Middle-East, which will cause great misfortune to befall upon the Turkish, Kurdish, Arabic, Persian and all Middle-Eastern nations. It will bring this about by drawing other international imperialist forces alongside it as its representatives. Turkey can be neither a button in the Pentagon patented war scenario nor a US gendarm in the Middle-East."* (Türkischer Staatsterror...pg. 44)

⁴⁶ Yet the report by *Reporters Sans Frontiers* tells of an alledged case of torture, which is purportedly documented in TIHV's office in Diyarbakır at the end of 1998. (<http://www.ifex.org>, <http://www.rsf.fr/carte/europe/rapport/tortureturquie/turquie.html>) International human rights organisations and media are more eager to tell bad news concerning Turkey, rather than good news.

6. FUTURE SCENARIOS

The economic and political situation in Kurdistan includes some promising possibilities, but still mostly very uncertain future scenarios.

6.1. Economic development

The embargo on Iraq has on one hand paralysed not only the economy of Northern Iraq, but also that of Eastern Turkey, but on the other hand, it has created new opportunities for smuggling and for other enterprises that have been partly revived by western humanitarian aid. The lifting of the trade embargo in Iraq robs the autonomous Kurdistan in Northern Iraq of a definite advantage which it enjoys at present due to the international support and (from the Iraqi point of view) a relatively open border with Turkey. Oil exports via the area may open up new economic opportunities, but generally speaking, the recovery of Iraq without a change of power in Baghdad sooner or later threatens the very continuity of the autonomy. Uncertainty is a greater barrier to development than the present situation in itself.

When the Iraqi government got a limited permission to start the oil export, it agreed to use 2,8 milliard FIM per year from the income to the benefit of three Kurdish provinces. This would hardly compensate for the present income generating activities, or for the loss of the economic freedom to that matter. The Iraqi government would have liked to take care of the distribution of the UN food aid for the Kurds by itself, but especially the KDP is striving towards actual economic independence. According to PUK calculations KDP presently earns over one hundred million FIM per month in customs duties, but it is at the cost of being dependent on Turkey; according to INC the road taxes brings in about 40 million FIM per month at the most, on top of which the selling of oil by circumventing the UN sanctions generates an additional monthly income of 120 million FIM, with the tobacco trade adding a bit to it.⁴⁷ (MEI 555)

The speciality of Iraqi Kurdistan is their "own currency": so called Swiss Dinars (five and ten Dinar notes that are printed abroad), which have been taken out of circulation elsewhere in Iraq, but have retained a high exchange rate in the Kurdish area.

The position of the Kurds in Turkey is greatly influenced by the development of relationship between Turkey and the European Union. The large-scale dam projects planned for the northwestern Turkey (GAP project) only get completed in the year 2005, after which the economy of the region is hoped to improve. Until then, the urban migration and emigration, caused by the increasing rate of

⁴⁷ It is estimated that the Kurds smuggle via Turkey 600 000 tons of oil daily, of which KDP apparently cashes in around 15 Finnish pennies per litre. On the other hand twice as much oil found its way to Jordan over the Iraqi border. (Reuters 21.6.1998, NZZ 22.6.98; Der Spiegel 30/20.7.1998) According to one observer the income from the road toll may be as high as 300 million FIM per month. (Phebe Marr, A discussion on the Kurds of Northern Iraq 6.10.1998, Woodrow Wilson Center Division of International Studies)

population growth, will both continue quite independently of the political situation. Unemployment is widespread everywhere in Kurdistan, and there are no social services available.

The poorest provinces of Turkey (GNP per person under 1000 US\$ per year) are in the eastern part of the country, but they are only partially inhabited by Kurds. Neither are they part of southeastern Turkey, or the core area of Kurdistan. They consist of Ağrı, Ardahan, Bayburt, Bingöl, Bitlis, Hakkari, Kars, Muş, Şırnak and Van.

The economic future of the Caucasian countries is affected by the export of the oil from the Caspian Sea to the world market via Azerbaidzhan and Georgia. According to some predictions, Armenia is about to be left into an ever-deepening chasm, which again would tip the scales of political power in favor of Azerbaidzhan. This in its turn might improve the chances of returning back home for those Kurds who have been expelled from the Armenian occupied areas.

6.2. International political situation

The west-east polarisation typical to the cold war era is not totally over yet. The conflicts inherited from that era continue to be fuelled by the political instability in Russia, which nurtures special relationships with Iran, Iraq and Syria out of old memory.⁴⁴ For this reason the Kurds residing in these countries have been forced to rely on the support of the western nations, who in their turn have for a long time already accused Iraq and also Iran and Syria of human rights violations and of fomenting international terrorism, but the interests of great power politics have prevented any use of force against Syria or Iran. At the wake of the Gulf War the Shiite and Kurdish areas of Iraq enjoyed the protection of UN, but the de-facto independence of Kurdistan has not gained international recognition for fear of disintegration of Iraq. For this reason, the future of the Iraqi Kurds and that of the Iranian Kurds who are under the protection of the first mentioned group is uncertain and the preconditions for the stability of the society are lacking.

The centuries-old polarisation between Turkey and Russia still has ramifications on the position of the Turkish Kurds and that of PKK. Unlike the other Kurdish organisations (the fifty year old KDP for example), PKK enjoys a wide international attention and from a generous funding, with the help of which it has built an information network reaching all the way to Finland. This has caused both the internal situation of Turkey and its relationships with the neighbouring countries (especially with Syria) to be tense. Turkey has attacked PKK bases on the Iraqi side with the consent of KDP and PUK, but on a long-

⁴⁴ These special relations were emphasized by Yevgeni Primakov's rise to Prime Minister for half a year in 1998-1999. This caused acute nervousness both in Israel and in Turkey, as Primakov's task in KGB had especially been the relations with the Arab countries.

term basis, a more dangerous tension was thus created between Turkey and Syria. When Turkey and Israel recently made an agreement on military co-operation, the aggravation of any kind of crisis either in the Middle East or within the domestic sphere in Syria could lead to a Turkish strike to the PKK bases in Syria or to the Syrian controlled Bekaa valley in Lebanon. In the autumn of 1998 there already were signs of Iraqi and Syria forming closer ties with each other - albeit Turkey also tried to pacify Iraq by stepping up its anti-Syrian campaign, which culminated in PKK being expelled from Syrian-controlled territories.

Considering the feud between Armenia and Azerbaidzhan over the regions of Mountainous Karabakh, and the traditional Kurdish area in between, none of the states among which Kurdistan is divided seems to be particularly stable. The present state of affairs may actually turn out to have been a comparatively peaceful period in comparison with the future scenarios.

The Kurds are often seen as involuntary tools of the international politics, being made to suffer on the account of political games:

"The tragedy of Barzani and the whole Kurdish nation is that it is in the interests of both East and West, and to a certain extent also in the interests of the Arabic states and Iran, to maintain the Kurdish population of the region as a kind of a threat, as human pawns in the territorial fighting between Turkey, Iraq and Iran."
(SUDOPLOTOV pg. 377)

KDP, which represents the Kurds of Iraq, supports NATO's politics in Kosovo, because it sees that only NATO (in practice the United States, Britain and Turkey) protects the Kurds at least somewhat credibly. (<http://www.kdp.pp.se/press/index.html>) Opposite view in the name of Turkish Kurds was taken by Süleyman Kilic, who contended for the post of Mayor in the town of Adana in April 1999. He demanded that NATO should rather bomb Turkey.

One should not think of this as a totally one sided issue, with only the foreign powers taking advantage of the Kurdish groups, for in a similar vein the Kurds themselves make use of the foreign powers in their internal power struggles. As far as the 1996 fighting between KDP and PUK is concerned, Iraq and Iran could take part in it without their own initiative.

6.3. Domestic tensions

Apart from the international conflicts, the situation of the Kurds is also affected by domestic politics. The Islamic regime in Iran may either gradually become more liberal or crumble as a result of a fierce counter-revolution. Both Iraq and Syria have been waiting for a change in the leadership for a long time already. Even though the possible changes in all of these countries would be positive, as far as general democratic principles and human rights are concerned, they still might not necessarily be of any use to the Kurds in the long run.

The defeat of dictatorial regimes might bring short-term relief for the Kurds, but might also be connected with international clashes, or lead to attempts to turn the attention of the people against the minorities. After the Gulf War, the Iraqi opposition (the US-backed INC) was being sheltered by the Kurds, but it had to flee the country after KDP gave the Iraqi army an opportunity to drive the opposition out of Arbil. NCR, which is the most important opposition group in Iran, has for its part enjoyed the protection of the Iraqi government, and has not been able to establish long term co-operation with KDPI. In both instances, the opposition's rise to power would mainly enforce the position of the extreme left-wing faction among the Kurds, rather than the more moderate Kurdish parties. Both the change of power in Iraq in the 1960's and the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979 only brought temporary benefits for the Kurds.

In the interests of maintaining a kind of balance of terror, the Alawite minority, which holds the reins of power in Syria, has tried to restrain the general Arabic national ethos in the country. Syria's bad relations with its neighbours (including Iraq and Jordan) have left the Kurds with room to manoeuvre, but any changes might restrict it. On the other hand, those Syrian Kurds who have been left without citizenship, and at least a part of the Christian population in Lebanon, might look with favour to possible chaos in Damascus.

In Turkey, the clashes between the extreme left and the extreme right (the Islamists) have again intensified in the manner of the 1970's, which has aroused fears (but also hopes) for a military coup. The political support among the Kurds has increasingly been divided between the two extremes of the political field: PKK with its perseverance has created admiration mixed with terror, but at the same time the village guard system and the vague Islamic groupings have given birth to new military power factors.

According to the opinion poll carried out by the Turkish newspaper *Sabah*, an overwhelming majority of the Kurds rejects independence, although it does long for more rights. (HS 6.7.1992) In addition, according to the studies of the Turkish chamber of commerce and stock exchange (three years later) only 11% of the Kurds demand independence, with another 11% settling for political autonomy, whereas 10% of the Kurds are willing to assimilate into the Turkish society. As many as 36% support the federal model, according to which Turkey would be an officially bilingual country.¹⁹ (IPS 7.8.1995; NZZ 31.8.95)

The Turkish newspaper *Milliyet* carried out a corresponding opinion poll in Istanbul and stated in this city of over a million people, at least 8% are Kurds. An equal number from among them felt themselves to be either Kurdish or Turkish, and 22% considered the independence of Kurdistan to be a good solution (MEI 507)

The applicability of the before mentioned studies can of course be doubted, but their conclusion was - in contrast to the government-held view - that the main population fears the separatist intentions of the ethnic minorities more than necessary. The ethnic Turks may not necessarily know anything more about the

¹⁹ Kurdistan Report 22/1995, which is a PKK publication, announced that 42% of the people who had answered the poll supported the federal model. According to another calculation 15% had demanded for full independence with 43% preferring the federation. (GUNTER PG: 127-130)

Kurds than what is told in the news about PKK, when instead among the Kurds the whole range of opinions is known better. Both the history and the culture of the Kurds are often not very well known among the Turks and unknown factors easily arouse suspicion. It is feared that the Kurds specifically strive towards destroying the Turkish state. Fear arouses anger. One prerequisite to breaking the cycle of violence would be the crushing of PKK, but on the other hand, what is also needed is genuine dialogue and the offering of moderate political options.

A peaceful development of the society calls for the Kurds to be integrated into the state and into the more moderate political parties much more closely than at present. This is possible only through economic investment and cultural autonomy. Plans to this effect came to a halt at the death of president Özal, but should someone continue them, positive development may take place at a surprisingly fast pace.

The human rights situation in Turkey has improved since 1995 and the number of provinces where the emergency rule is in force has been reduced. The continuation of the positive development depends largely on the relationship of the European Union with Turkey (for example a peaceful solution to the Cyprus crisis after 35 years of ineffective UN diplomacy) and on adequate support in order to solve the Kurdish problem in accordance with the principles of the European human rights charter. At the same time this calls for a police co-operation in order to root out terrorism. It is hardly likely that Turkey will ever get into the kind of crisis going on in Algeria, but it is better to intervene in the situation well in advance. According to a report by the national Security Council of Turkey, with the present rate of population growth the Kurds would form a majority of the population in Turkey already by the year 2025. (BARKEY & FULLER pg. 129) According to another estimate, the Kurds will reach the majority status in Turkey only one generation later, around the year 2060, at which time their population growth will stop. At that time there would be 90 million Kurds in the world altogether, with divisions similar to the ones at the present time. However, the birth rate of the Turks on the average is lower than that of the Iranians and Arabs, for which reason the balance of the different population groups would be particularly affected in Turkey. Thus it is assumed that the average living standard of the Kurds is permanently lower than that of the Turks and that the neighbouring countries do not follow Turkey in striving for a higher standard of living, with the accompanying trend to curb the birth rate to some extent (IZADY PG. 119)

6.4. Various scenarios

In order to perceive the future options, one can suggest at least four possible scenarios, which could happen within two years, either as such, in part or in various combinations. For the sake of simplicity it is necessary to caricature the scenarios by presenting the different options in a pointed way.

6.4.1. A Counter revolution in Iran

There will be an anti-Islamistic revolution in Iran and the new government grants autonomy to the Kurds according to the wishes of KDPI. If the situation in Iran remains stable and the Kurds are able to trust the new democracy, also the Iraqi Kurdistan tries to integrate with Iran. This worries both Turkey and the Iraqi government, both of which see united Kurdistan as a threat. The Iraqi Kurds try to balance between the competing states, until Saddam Hussein is provoked to suggest the deportation of all Kurds to the Iranian side, *"from where they have come from in the first place."*

If the conditions in Iran do not remain stable, the new government may in fact turn against the Kurds (as happened after 1979) and accuse them of sectarianism that threatens the interests of the whole state. Apart from the Kurds, Azerbaidzhan and Turkey as its supporter also have an interest in destroying Iran. At the same time Iraq is rekindling the memories of the war in the 1980's and hankers after the region of Arabistan at the bottom of the Persian Gulf. Iraq offers autonomy or even a formal independence (without the oil fields and harbours) to both the Kurds and the Shiites within the new, ambitious form of government, which imitates the Caliphate of the Abbasids from 1200 years ago.

6.4.2. A Revolt in Iraq

There will be a change of power in Iraq and the new military government grants the Kurds an autonomy on conditions accepted by them in order to prevent the state from splitting into two. The situation remains the same as it is now, but there is still no guarantees concerning the future of Iraq.

If Iraq disintegrates, Turkey occupies Northern Iraq and integrates Kurdistan to itself as a formally independent state in like manner with Northern Cyprus. Turkey advertises its coalition state as a counter balance to the European Union and tries to woo Azerbaidzhan into joining it. Masud Barzani is elected as the president of Kurdistan. If the Kurds in Turkey cause any trouble, they can be exiled to Kurdistan, *"their own country."*

6.4.3. A Crisis of democracy in Turkey

Turkey is repeatedly driven into governmental crises. The government tries to unite the nation by drawing attention to the external problems, which the neighbouring countries willingly aggravate. In Cyprus, there is shooting across the "green line" and Syria reminds Turkey concerning its claims on the Hatay region.

While Turkey is on the verge of war at the bottom of the Mediterranean Sea, PKK will declare a general uprising. Turkey pulls out its troops from Cyprus, but deflects the attacks by Syria and revenges the loss of authority it has suffered by stamping the Kurdish uprising with much bloodshed. Herds of refugees spill over the borders of Iraq, Syria and Greece.

Turkey announces that it will inhabit the border areas with Turkish Cypriots and with refugees from Caucasia and the Balkans. If the conflict escalates into a full-scale war between Turkey and Greece, Armenia joins in. Russia prevents Azerbaidzhan from attacking Armenia and offers to be the mediator between the two parties.

Israel conducts air raids on Syria and plans to occupy the whole of Lebanon, but Iran threatens to send its troops to defend Damascus. Iraq announces, that it is unable to prevent the Iranian air forces from flying over its air space and the possible transiting of the Iranian troops across the region of Kurdistan - unless the sanctions are immediately lifted. Thus also the Kurds of Iran, Iraq and Syria become entangled in the war. This scenario lost some of its credibility after autumn 1998.

6.4.4. The European solution

The European Union starts membership negotiations also with Turkey. PKK is began to be thought of as a thing of the past. The emergency rule is declared ended even in the remaining few provinces where it still has been enforced.

The EU membership of Turkey is guaranteed, as long as it is accepted in the referendums carried out in all the provinces. Those areas, where the majority of the voters reject the Union membership, are promised an autonomous region in like manner with Greenland. The Turkish government tries to secure the success of the referendum by promising the Kurds wide cultural autonomy and only the strictest Kurdish activists recommend the autonomy outside of the European Union instead of the full membership.

The concessions of the Turkish government and the excitement caused by the European Union membership strengthens the position of the moderate Kurds in Turkish politics. Human rights violations decrease dramatically in number and the reputation of Turkey is improved in the eyes of the world, which flatters the Turkish national ethos and weakens the attraction of the extremists of both wings. The government of Turkey appeals to the statements made by Atatürk before the year of 1923, where he states that the Turkish republic is the joint state of both the Turks and Kurds. For this reason, Turkey strives to present

itself also as the protector of the Kurds of Iraq, Iran, Syria and the Caucasus region within the European community affairs and in the international connections.

The optimism of this scenario is based on the rapid positive development concerning both the rights of the Kurds in particular and the human rights in Turkey in general in 1991 and again since 1995. This has taken place despite the fact that at the same time the government in Turkey has been unstable and the influence of the European Union has partly failed. Twenty years ago Turkey was as free and as democratic a country as Spain, which despite its problem with the Basques, matured quite rapidly into the EU membership. There is no reason to doubt that a similar development would not be successful also in Turkey, provided it receives credible support. The ability of the European Union for a constructive policy towards Turkey has been sabotaged, however, by the pathological attitude of one member state towards everything connected with Turkey and by its virtual support to PKK.

The European refugee policy for its part also partly foments this conflict; applying for a political asylum has developed into a fairly large business, which promotes its marketing by skirmishes meant first and foremost for the attention of the international media, and by bomb attacks and riots. With ordinary migration being strictly regulated, it is expedient for the Turkish citizens to claim that they are persecuted on political grounds and forge the evidence if needed. Professional forgery of documents, smuggling of human beings and other types supporting activities can be highlighted as some of the by-products of this phenomenon. When human suffering is transferred into productive business and a growing brand of industry, its removal calls for tackling not only the issue of "supply", but also that of "demand".

7. CONCLUSIONS

The Kurdish identity is often a political choice and voluntary manifestation. It can not be defined in an unambiguous manner for example on linguistic grounds or based on religion, but it is a question of situation centred solution typical of the peoples outside of Europe. Of course one can test the language ability, but the lack of competence in it does not in itself prevent one from being a Kurd at least in ones own estimation. In this case one must remember to differentiate the European concept of nationality from multicultural eastern tradition, where religion or political opinion generally are considered to be more important criteria than mother tongue.

Defining the area of Kurdistan is likewise a political solution and a matter of expediency. From the point of view of immigration policy, it is viable to define as Kurdistan those government-delineated areas, where the position of the Kurds has differed from what it is elsewhere in the country, i.e. southwestern Turkey and the protection zone of northern Iraq. Certain provinces in Turkey and some non-delineated Kurdish majority areas in Iran and Iraq are a kind of grey area in this respect.

The history of the Kurds is fairly little known, for which reason it is easy to present certain interpretations of it that are couched in politically motivated ideological formulas. The Kurds have never had a home country that has been more independent than what the contemporary protection zone in Northern Iraq is. Yet the Kurds have been used as pawns in the power struggles between Turkey, Iran, Arabic countries and Russia. Thus the Kurds have also been played against each other, but they themselves have also eagerly offered themselves as instruments for the great power politics.

Specific Kurdish parties are leftist, but even among them there are considerable differences. The social democratic "family" includes the following parties: KDP, KDPI, KDPS, KDPPS and the recently abolished DKP in Turkey. The socialist "family" consists of the following members: PUK, KDP-RL, most of the Syrian Kurdish parties and the successors of the HEP in Turkey. Komala, the WCP of both Iran and Iraq, the communist party of Syria and the PKK form the communist "family". The right-wing Kurds of Turkey support especially in Iran and in Turkey the non-ethnic parties, which stress the general Islamic identity. Only PKK has resorted to systematic terrorism and broken the traditional tribal boundaries; other Kurdish parties work in their own respective home areas in co-operation with the local population.

The Kurds are not persecuted anywhere directly on ethnic grounds. Instead, they experience their share of the general totalitarian structure (in Iran, in the government-controlled areas in Iraq, and in Syria) and specific discrimination (for example in Turkey and Armenia) if they voice political opinions that stress Kurdishness. The Kurds are able to live safely in their own home countries in internal exile in the protection zone of Iraq, in Turkey and in Azerbaidzhan, but the core area of Kurdistan (Southwestern Turkey and Northern Iraq) can not be considered in all cases to be safe to anybody.

The position of the Kurds is not hopeless, but it is very unstable and dependent on the great power politics and on the societal development in the Middle East as a whole. For this reason, there is every reason to follow the situation closely and be prepared for various scenarios. The course of events has pointed out time and time again that Europe can not indefinitely escape these problems, for the lack of joint foreign policy with lasting influence will revenge itself in one way or another. The challenges of immigration policy can not be separated from human rights, neither can human rights issues be separated from politics. The Kurds are among us and the issues concerning Kurdistan touch Europe as much as Bosnia and Kosovo do.

8. THE SOURCES AND SOURCE CRITICISM

The researcher is faced with two problems: 1) the lack of specific information, 2) the abundance of prejudiced sources. Thus it is important both to acquire as much material as possible and to evaluate it critically. Often a useful method is to assume that if there clearly is a generally accepted viewpoint concerning a certain matter, the opposing view should also be found somewhere. Comparing the suitability of the general theories with the specifics of the practical situation and vice versa are ways of testing the objectivity of the final conclusions.

8.1. Source criticism

There is good reason to be critical of the literature concerning this topic, as many of the sources available (BRUINSEN, CLASON & BAKSI, IBRAHIM, CHALIAND) are based on Qasimlu's book (which was written in English and published in Prague in 1965). Particularly biased sources on the subject are books written in the 1970's, as they are openly Marxist studies according to the spirit of the time. The pamphlets based on them and the newer editions of these books have hardly been cleared at all of the ideological motivations and conclusions of the originals. They also refer to the books by Beşikci in 1969 and 1972, and by Vanly in 1970 in Zurich under the auspices of the **Organisation of the Revolutionary Kurds of Turkey in Europe (Hevra)**. The research and publishing activities concerning the Kurdish issues in German language were only started in earnest in 1974.

So far, the best general presentation of the subject matter in the Finnish language is the book by Faik Nerweyi, a KDP activist who has been granted Finnish citizenship. Anyhow, even that relies heavily on the writings of Chaliand and others before him.

David McDowall, who has written the most comprehensive book about the Kurds in the English language, forms the second tier of sources. His is also behind many of the articles published in the *Middle East International* and the *Minority Rights Group* publications. Although McDowall is a competent and an objective researcher, the superior excellence may narrow the perspective of others relying solely on his writings. Mehrdad Izady has published a very detailed book, which unfortunately is full of minor mistakes as far the dates and spelling are concerned.

A third tier is formed by the information produced by the cover organisations of PKK, which has reached almost the status of hegemony. The material kindly offered for the researchers by the Kurdistan committee included copies of the *Kurdistan Report* magazine in English, German and Swedish, and some other printed material by PKK, some of which unfortunately lacked the year of publication. Often the identity of the writer is disguised under a pseudonym. However, the Kurdistan Committee in Finland does not seem to bother to advertise the book by Nerweyi.

There are as many Kurds living in Iran as there are in Southwestern Turkey, but when was the last time we have heard the views of Komala or KDPI concerning the situation in Iran? In Northern Iraq there has existed a de facto independent Kurdistan for seven years already, but its closest representative (from Finland's position) is only found in London. For some reason, the lesser Kurdish parties have not had the resources comparable with those of PKK for opening their own offices and for active publicity abroad.

The viewpoints of the Turkish, Iraqi and Iranian governments are generally not quoted in public except in a pointed way and through examples that are detached from their context. Even though the politics of the countries that divide Kurdistan among themselves are open to a lot of criticism, one should not totally ignore their points of view either.

People handling the cases of the Kurds and the members of the appeal boards do not live in an information vacuum, but form their impressions about the safety of the countries of origin based on the general atmosphere created partly by the media, partly by fashionable phenomena, such as in the case Tibet. Therefore, one must stress the independent gathering of information that is both adequate in its amount and varied in its content.

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- Who is a Refugee? - A Comparative Case Law Study (The Hague 1997)
- WIGRAM, W. A.: The Assyrians and their neighbours (London 1929)
- World Directory of Minorities (London 1997)
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Publications followed consistently:

Kurdistan news 1993-1998 (7-40)

Kurdistan Rundbrief 11/1998-11/1999

Middle East International 1993-1999 (MEI 443-600)

Pogrom 107/1984-198/1998

Abbreviations of the newspapers, international news agencies and Internet publications:

AL = Aamulehti; AP = Associated Press; BBC = British Broadcasting Corporation; RFE/RL = Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty; DN = Dagens Nyheter; HBL = Hufvudstadsbladet; HS = -Helsingin Sanomat; IHT = International Herald Tribune; IL = Iltalehti; IS = Ilta-Sanomat; IPS = International Press Service; KU = Kansan Uutiset; NYT = New York Times; NZZ = Neue Zürcher Zeitung; SD = Suomen Sosiaalidemokraatti; TDN = Turkish Daily News; TS = Turun Sanomat;

Internet pages are useful, but their addresses change frequently and their selection is surprisingly narrow despite the seeming variety - many topics lack information that is specific enough and several organisations still do not have their own homepages. General newspapers and periodicals have been researched mainly via the collection of newspaper clippings in the Finnish Directorate of Immigration's Library and through advice of some experts on the topic. Thus, some source material may have been left without the attention it would have deserved.

Various reports compiled by *Amnesty International*, *Human Rights Watch* and by other organisations monitoring the human rights situation, as well as the official reports by different authorities from various EU countries have also been of great value. Likewise the material obtained from the archives of the Directorate of Immigration in Finland have been quite useful (some of it is considered classified information, in which case no direct mention has been made to it). The above mentioned type of material utilised in this study include, among other things, the following: the appeals of the Kurdish Friendship Society - Kurdistan of Finland Association to the government of Finland (27th September 1998), the country report titled 'Kurds' compiled by the Central Criminal Police for their investigative report concerning illegal entry into the country (2nd of November 1998); newspaper clippings and reports from the country files of the Finnish Directorate of Immigration's Library; decisions on the asylum applications between the years 1990-1997, decisions of the Supreme Administrative Court between the years 1993-1997, and the documents concerning the quota refugees between the years 1993-1997.

9. INDEX

This index for pages 7-117, excluding the references, only includes:

- 1) Persons who have been active - on account of being Kurds themselves, or alternately, being otherwise involved in matters closely related with the Kurdish issues - over the past 20 years, and who are not internationally renown statesmen (the title or profession mentioned in parenthesis after the name may have been changed in the meantime).
- 2) Place names (excluding the present and previous capital cities), areas (districts and provinces) and mountains. The same spelling rules that were applied to the personal names are also utilised here as far as those countries using Turkish or Cyrillic alphabet is concerned. The spelling of the place names of the Arabic countries and those of Iran have been modelled after the atlas edited by *The Times*.
- 3) Publications, (newspapers), organisations, (parties, research institutes, Human Rights organisations etc.), religions and other concepts as far as they are still prevalent in the 1980's. After the mother tongue names and the English names of the parties there is an arrow referring to the respective anagrams. Nationalities are only referred to as minority groups (for example: Armenians living in Turkey, not Armenian citizens).

Clearly exceptional spelling forms of place names and personal names are referenced with an arrow to a more preferable form. **Page numbers are written in bold type.**

In the English literature the names of persons, places and other concepts written in the Turkish alphabet (including those written in Kurmandzhi) are usually modified or simplified (ç = ch or c, ğ = gh or g, ş = sh or s, ı = y or i, ü = u, ö = o). In this study all of the Turkic (extra-) symbols have been used, except, in some cases, for the dotless i-letter (ı), which may be replaced by i, despite of its slightly different pronunciation, since it does not change the meaning of the word nor make it unrecognisable.

The Cyrillic and Arabic letters have been changed to correspond with the Finnish pronunciation. It was deemed acceptable to do so, as in any case there is quite a bit of fluctuation in the transliteration of personal names like these.
(Compare Appendix 4: Spelling)

The spelling dzh should be preferred compared to English j (Azerbaidzhan = Azerbaijan), but was not always consequently employed in this study.

For the names of the parties in the Arabic countries which use the Arabic alphabet as well as for the names of the Iranian parties the English anagrams are employed. Often French anagrams are used for the Syrian parties while Iraq utilises the Kurdish ones. In Turkey, the literature and media use primarily Turkish, rather than English, anagrams for the Turkish parties and either Kurdish or Turkish anagrams for the Kurdish groups. This often causes a lot of

confusion. In addition to that, in Turkey the abbreviations for the party names often are either all in bold, or all in lower case regardless of what words they are shortened from. For example, the Turkish HaDeP party (Halk Demokrasi Partisi) may appear either as HADEP, or HadeP.

The Kurdish language forms have been taken from the dictionaries edited by Amindarov (Kurmandzhi), Abbas, Wahby & Edmonds (Sorani), after which there has been an attempt to adapt them into the Finnish alphabet. Some spelling forms for the place names have been taken, with discretion, from the Internet page <http://www.geocities.com/Athens>.

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 Hizbi Kommunisti Kawa > (Kurdistan) Communist Party Kawa
 Hizbi Kommunisti Krekari 'Iraq > Workers' Communist Party (Iraqi organisation)
 Hizbi Zehnâtêkeshani (Kurdistan) > (Kurdistan) Toilers Party
 Hizbullah (Turkish organisation) 47
 Hizbullahi Kurd > Kurdish Hizbullah
 Hizbullahi Kurdî Shorishger > Revolutionary Kurdish Hizbullah
 HRA > Human Rights Association
 HRFT > Human Rights Foundation of Turkey
 Human Rights Association (Turkish organisation), Turkish IHD 58, 86, 88, 104-105

- Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (Turkish organisation), Turkish TIHV 85, 105
 IHD [Turkish] > İnsan Hak Demegi
 IKF > Iraqi Kurdistan Front
 IKL > Islamic Kurdish League
 IKPSC [English] > International Kurdistan Peace and Solidarity Committee
 Ilim (organisation) 47
 IM(I)K > Islamic Movement of (Iraqi) Kurdistan
 Informationsbulletin Kurdistan (German publication) 58
 Informationsbüro Türkei und Kurdistan (German organisation) 66
 İnsan Hak Demegi > Human Rights Association
 Institut Kurde, L' (French organisation) 65
 International Federation of Iraqi Refugees & Immigrant Council (organisation) 77
 International Kurdistan Peace and Solidarity Committee (Finnish organisation) 77
 Internationaler Verein für Menschenrechte in Kurdistan (German organisation) 65
 Iraqi Kurdistan Front (organisation) 53
 Iraqi Kurdistan Islamic Movement (Iraqi organisation), Kurdish BIKF 51
 IRM > Islamic Rebirth/Renaissance/Revival Movement
 Islamic Action Organisation (organisation) 47
 Islamic Awakening (Iraqi organisation) 44
 Islamic Rebirth/Renaissance/Revival Movement (organisation) 47
 Islamic Kurdish League (Iraqi organisation) 44
 Islamic Movement of (Iraqi) Kurdistan (organisation) 44, 103
 Islamic Union in Kurdistan (Iraqi organisation), YIK 44
 Isänmaallinen ohjelma (organisation), Hevğirtin Welatperez 45
 IUK > Islamic Union in Kurdistan
 IWCP [English] > WCPI
 Jacobites (sect) 14
 Jalali > Jelali
 jîrîsh 42
 Jelali (tribe), Jalali 8
 Jina Nu (publication), "New Life" 56
 Jirki (tribe) 44
 Judaism (people & religion) 11, 14
 Jyvässeudun Kurdi-Suomi-yhdistys [Finnish] > Kurdish-Finland Association of Jyväskylä-Region
 KAK > Komelgay Ashayri Kurdistan
 KAK (Turkish organisation) 57
 Kakai (tribe) 12
 KAV [Turkish] = Kültür ve Arisştırma Vakfı
 Kawa > (Kurdistan) Communist Party Kawa
 KCP > Kurdistan Conservative Party
 KDP > Kurdistan Democratic Party (Iraqi organisation)
 KDP - Revolutionary Command/Leadership (Iranian organisation) 49-50, 76, 114
 KDPI > Kurdistan Democratic Party (Iranian organisation)
 KDPP > Kurdistan Democratic People's Party
 KDPPS > Kurdish Democratic Progress Party of Syria
 KDP-RC > KDP - Revolutionary Command
 KDP-RL > KDP - Revolutionary Leadership
 KDPS > Kurdish Democratic Party of Syria
 KDU > Kurdistan Democratic Union
 Keski-Suomen kurdien kulttuuriyhdistys > Kurdish Cultural Association of Central Finland
 Khabat (publication) 51
 Khemshils (tribe) 21-22
 KHRP > Kurdish Human Rights Project
 KIN > Kurdish Information Network
 Kirmanji > Kurmandzhi
 Kızıl Yol [Turkish], "Red Way" (Turkish organisation) 13
 Kızılbash [Turkish] (religion), Qyzyl Bash 13
 KLP > Kurdistan Liberation Party
 KNDU > Kurdistan National Democratic Union
 Komala Yekسانی (Iranian organisation), Communist Party of Iran 44, 49-50, 54, 76, 114, 117
 Komelgay Ashayri Kurdistan > Association of Kurdistan Clans
 KomKar (German organisation) 57-58
 Kon-Kurd (organisation) 65
 korîcu > village guards

KPDP [English] > KDPP

KRP > Kurdistan Revolutionary Party (Iraqi organisation), PSK 43

KSDP > Kurdistan Social Democratic Party (Iraqi organisation), PSDK 53-54

KSP > Kurdish Socialist Party (Iraqi organisation)

KSP(I) > Kurdistan Socialist Party (Iraqi organisation)

KSP(T) > Kurdistan Socialist Party (Turkish organisation)

KTP > (Kurdistan) Toilers Party

KTV > Kurdistan Television Network

KUK > Kurdistan National Liberators

KUP [English:] > Kurdien yhtenäisyyspuolue

Kurdien kulttuuriyhdistys [Finnish] > Kurdish Cultural Association

Kurdien punainen puolue [Finnish] > Kurdish Red Crescent

Kurdien ystävyysseura Suomen Kurdistan-yhdistys > Kurdish Friendship Society Kurdistan Assoc. of Finland

Kurdien ääni [Finnish], "Voice of Kurds" (Finnish publication) 76

Kurdish Alevi Union (Turkish organisation), Kürt Alevi Birliği 13, 67

Kurdish Association in Finland (organisation) 76

Kurdish Association in Turku (Finnish organisation) 76

Kurdish Cultural and Research Foundation (Turkish organisation), Kürt-KAV 92, 94

Kurdish Cultural Association (Finnish organisation) 76

Kurdish Cultural Association of Central Finland (Finnish organisation) 76

Kurdish Cultural Association of Turku Region (Finnish organisation) 76

Kurdish Cultural Association of Vaasa District (Finnish organisation) 76

Kurdish Cultural Centre (British organisation) 65

Kurdish Culture Network (Swedish organisation) 68

Kurdish Democratic Party of Syria (organisation) 55, 114

Kurdish Democratic Progress Party of Syria (organisation) 55, 114

Kurdish Democratic Union of Syria (organisation) 55

Kurdish Facts (publication) 64

Kurdish-Finland Association of Jyväskylä-Region (Finnish organisation) 76

Kurdish Friendship Society Kurdistan Association of Finland (organisation) 76

Kurdish Hizbullah (Iraqi organisation), Hizbullahi Kurd 43

Kurdish House (Russian organisation) 66

Kurdish Human Rights Project (organisation) 65, 100

Kurdish Human Rights Watch (American organisation) 65

Kurdish Information Network (Canadian organisation) 67

Kurdish Journal (publication) 65

Kurdish Labour Party of Syria (organisation) 55

Kurdish League (organisation) 64

Kurdish Leftist Party of Syria (organisation) 55

"Kurdish National Congress" (American organisation) 65

Kurdish National Democratic Union (Iraqi organisation) 54

Kurdish National Union (Syrian organisation) 55

"Kurdish Parliament (in exile)" (organisation) 50, 64, 67, 76

Kurdish Red Crescent (Finnish organisation) 63, 77

Kurdish Refugees in Sweden (organisation) 68

Kurdish Socialist Party (Iraqi organisation), PaSoK 53

Kurdish Socialist Party of Syria (organisation) 55

Kurdish Student Organization in the United States (amcr. organisation) 51

Kurdish Unity Party (organisation), PYK 52

Kurdish Workers' Party of Syria (organisation) 55

Kurdistan Assyrian Association (organisation) 67

"Kurdistan Committees" (organisations) 66, 76, 96

(Kurdistan) Communist Party Kawa (organisation) 53, 57

Kurdistan Conservative Party (Iraqi organisation), PPK 43, 53

Kurdistan Democratic Party (Iranian organisation), KDPI 31-34, 42, 48-50, 55, 57, 76, 81, 109, 111, 114, 117

Kurdistan Democratic Party (Iraqi organisation), KDP 32...37, 43-44, 48...68, 72...77, 81-82, 103...116

Kurdistan Democratic Party of Turkey, PDKT (organisation) 56, 58

Kurdistan Democratic People's Party (Iraqi organisation), PGDK 52

Kurdistan Democratic Union (Iraqi organisation), YDK 51

Kurdistan Fighters' Association (Swedish organisation) 68

Kurdistan Free Womens Union (organisation), TAJK, YAJK 62, 67

Kurdistan Human Rights Organisation (Iraqi organisation), RMMK 104

Kurdistan Independent Democratic Party (Iraqi organisation) 54

Kurdistan Independent Labour Party (Iraqi organisation), PKSK 53

- Kurdistan Information Centre (Finnish organisation) 76
 Kurdistan Islamic Movement (Iraqi organisation) 47, 67
 Kurdistan Islamic National Movement (organisation) 47
 Kurdistan Islamic Party (Turkish organisation), PIK 47
 Kurdistan Islamic Union (organisation), YIK 43
 Kurdistan Liberation National Front (Georgian organisation) 101
 Kurdistan Liberation Party (organisation), PRK 53, 57
 Kurdistan Liberty Party (Iraqi organisation), KLP, PAK 54
 "Kurdistan National Congress" (organisation) 67
 Kurdistan National Democratic Union
 Kurdistan National Liberation Union (Turkish organisation), ERNK 46, 64-67, 90-95
 Kurdistan National Liberators (Turkish organisation), Rikzgari, RNK, Turkish KUK 57
 Kurdistan News (English: publication) 51
 Kurdistan Observer (English: publication) 51
 Kurdistan Patriotic Association (Finnish organisation) 76
 Kurdistan Patriotic Intellectuals Union (organisation) 63
 Kurdistan (Patriotic Revolutionary) Youth Union (organisation), YÇ(\$W)K 63
 Kurdistan Patriotic Womens Union (organisation), YJWK 62
 Kurdistan People's Liberation Army (Turkish organisation), ARGK 62, 66
 Kurdistan People's Party (Turkish organisation), MGK 58
 Kurdistan People's Unity Party (Turkish organisation), Yekbum 57
 Kurdistan Progressive Workers' Party (Turkish organisation), PRKK 56
 Kurdistan rapport (ruots. publication) 53, 88
 (Kurdistan) Red Crescent (organisation), Heyva Sor (a Kurdistan) 63
 Kurdistan Report (English: & saks. publication) 15, 53, 79, 83, 88
 Kurdistan Revolutionary Party (Iraqi organisation), PShK 43
 Kurdistan Rundbrief (saks. publication) 52
 Kurdistan Social Democratic Party (Iraqi organisation), PSDK 53-54
 Kurdistan Socialist Party (Iraqi organisation), United Socialist Party of (Iraqi) Kurdistan 53
 Kurdistan Socialist Party (Turkish organisation), PSK(T) 57-58, 67, 92
 Kurdistan Socialist Unity Party (Turkish organisation), PYSK 57
 Kurdistan Solidarity Committee (organisation) 66
 Kurdistan Television Network (broadcasting company) 51-52
 Kurdistan Times (English: publication) 51
 Kurdistan Toilers Party (Iraqi organisation), Hizbi Zāhmātkehshani Kurdistan 53-54
 Kurdistan Workers' Party (Turkish organisation), PKK 17, 23, 27, 31-40, 43-48, 52-68, 75-117
 Kurdistan Workers' Struggle Organisation (Iraqi organisation), RTRK, Tekoshin 53-54
 Kurdistan Yezidi Union (organisation) 67
 Kurdistan Niwe (publication) 40
 Kurdistanin isänmaallinen yhdistys [Finnish] > Kurdistan Patriotic Association
 Kurdistanin rauhan ja solidaarisuuden kansainvälinen toimikunta [Finnish] > IKPSC
 Kurdistanin tiedotuskeskus [Finnish] > Kurdistan Information Centre
 Kurmandzhi [körmandzhi] (language), Kirmanji, Bêdini 8-11, 17
 Kürt Alevi Birliği [Turkish] > Kurdish Alevi Union
 Kürt-KAV [Turkish] > Kurdish Cultural and Research Foundation
 Luri (language) 10
 maktaumeen [Arabic] 84
 Mala Geli Kurd > Kurdistan People's Party
 Mala Kurd > Kurdish House
 Manguani (tribe), Mamiquran 44
 Manicheism (religion) 11-12
 Mazlum-Der (Turkish organisation) 105
 Med-TV (broadcasting company) 63, 67, 93
 Medya Güneşi (Turkish publication) 92
 "Mem u Zin" (publication) 8
 Menzil (Turkish organisation) 47
 Mesopotamian Cultural Centre (Turkish organisation), MKM 94
 MGK > Mala Geli Kurd
 MIFK > Movement of Islamic Feyli Kurds
 Milans (tribe) 8
 Millîetçi Kürt İntikam Timleri [Turkish] > Revenge Teams of Nationalistic Kurds
 MKM [Turkish] > Mesopotamian Cultural Centre
 Monophysicism > Jacobites, Armenians
 Mukri (dialect) 4

- Movement of Islamic Feyli Kurds (Iraqi organisation), BIKF 51
 Movement of the Progress-loving Kurds (Iraqi organisation), BPXX 43
 Muslim Brotherhood (organisation) 42
 National Democratic Front (Iraqi organisation) 54
 Nestorians (religion) > Assyrians
 Nevruz [nurozh] (holiday), "New Day" 13, 15, 78, 88, 91
 Newroz (publication) 41, 53
 Nishtiman (publication) 57
 Nusayrianism > Alawism
 "Operation Provide Comfort" (military operation) 34
 Organisation of the Revolutionary Kurds of Turkey in Europe (organisation), Hevra 65, 116
 PAK > Parti Azadi Kurdistan
 Parasten [pärästın] (intelligence service) 51
 Parti Azadi Kurdistan > Kurdistan Liberty Party
 Parti Geli Dimokrati Kurdistan > Kurdistan Democratic People's Party
 Parti Kari Serbekhoy Kurdistan > Kurdistan Independent Labour Party
 Parti Parezgarani Kurdistan > Kurdistan Progressive Workers' Party
 Parti Rizgari Kurdistan > Kurdistan Liberation Party
 Parti Shorishgeri Kurdistan > Kurdistan Revolutionary Party
 Parti Sosyalisti Dimokrati Kurdistan > Kurdistan Social Democratic Party
 Parti Sosyalisti Kurd > Kurdish Socialist Party
 Parti Sosyalisti Kurdistan (- Iraq) > Kurdistan Socialist Party (of Iraq)
 Parti Yekgirtini Kurdistan > Kurdistan Unity Party
 Partiya Demokrata Kurdistan > KDP [English]
 Partiya Kari Serxwebuna Kurdistan > Kurdistan Independent Labour Party
 Partiya Karkaren Kurdistan > Kurdistan Workers' Party
 Partiya Resenga Karkaren Kurdistan > Kurdistan Progressive Workers' Party
 Partiya Sosyalista Kurdistan (a Türkiye) > Kurdistan Socialist Party (of Turkey)
 PaSoK > Parti Sosyalisti Kurd
 Patriotic Agenda (Turkish organisation), Hevgirtin Welatparez 57
 Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (Iraqi organisation), PUK, YNK 32...55, 62...66, 72...76, 81...84, 103...108, 114
 PDK > Partiya Demokrata Kurdistan
 PDK-Yedgirtu > United KDP
 PDKT > Kurdistan Democratic Party of Turkey
 Peace for the Kurds - the Finnish Forum (organisation) 78
 People's Democratic Party (Turkish organisation), HaDeP 40, 45, 47, 59-60, 88, 94, 105
 People's Labour Party (Turkish organisation), HEP 58-59, 114
peshmarga 32
 Pesh Merga (publication) 68
 Pesheng (Turkish organisation) 57
 PGDK > Parti Geli Dimokrati Kurdistan
 PIK > Kurdistan Islamic Party
 PKK > Partiya Karkaren Kurdistan
 PKSK > Parti Kari Serbekhoy Kurdistan
 PKSK > Partiya Kari Serxwebuna Kurdistan
 Pogrom (German publication) 65
 PPK > Parti Parezgarani Kurdistan
 PRK > Parti Rizgari Kurdistan
 PRKK > Partiya Resenga Karkaren Kurdistan
 PSDK > Parti Sosyalisti Dimokrati Kurdistan
 PSK(I) > KSP(I) [English]
 PSK(T) > KSP(T) [English]
 PShK > Parti Shorishgeri Kurdistan
 PUK > Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
 PLJK-TV (broadcasting company) 52
 PYK > Parti Yekgirtini Kurdistan
 PYSK > Kurdistan Socialist Unity Party
 Qyryl Bash > Kızılbaz
 Regay (publication) 53
 Rekhistini Taybeti > Parasten
 Rekhrawi Tekoshani Renjerani Kurdistan > Kurdistan Workers' Struggle Organisation
 Revenge Teams of Nationalistic Kurds (Turkish organisation) 57
 Revolutionary Banner (Iraqi organisation), Alay Shorish 53
 Revolutionary Command > RC, see: KDP-RC

- Revolutionary Kurdish Hizbullah (Iraqi organisation) 43
- Revolutionary Leadership > RL, see: KDP-RL
- Rewti Komunist (Iraqi organisation) 54
- Riya Azadi [reje azadi] (publication), Turkish: Özgürlük Yolu 57
- Riya Têzê [reje tîzê] (publication), "New Way" 22
- Rîzgari > Kurdistan National Liberators
- Rîzgariya Kurdistan (publication), "Kurdistan Liberation" 57
- RMMK > Kurdistan Human Rights Organisation
- RNK > Kurdistan National Liberators
- Roj (broadcasting company) 63
- Roja Welat [rozhe wêlat] (publication), "Fatherland's Day" 57
- Rojname [rozhname] (publication), "Diary" 92
- Route Communiste > Rewti Komunist
- RTRK > Rekhrawi Tekoshani Renjerani Kurdistan
- Sarî (tribe) 12
- Serxwebun [särkhvêbun] (publication), "Independence" 63
- Shabak > Shebek
- Shafi (religion) 10, 17
- Shebek (tribe) 8
- Shekak (tribe) 4
- Shia (religion) 10-12, 30, 101, 111
- Sorani (language) 8-9, 12, 28-29, 49, 52, 78
- Socialist Struggle (organisation), Tekoshina Socialist 57
- Southern Kurmandzhi > Sorani
- Sufi (religion)
- Sunni (religion) 10, 12-13, 17, 20, 30-31, 39
- Suomen kurdihdistys [Finnish] > Kurdish Association in Finland
- Suomen Rauha kurdille -foorumi [Finnish] > Peace for the Kurds - the Finnish Forum
- Söz-TV (broadcasting company) 93
- TAJK > Tevgera Azadî Jînen Kurdistan
- Tekoshin > Kurdistan Workers' Struggle Organisation
- Tekoshina Socialist > Socialist Struggle
- Tevgera Azadî Jînen Kurdistan > Kurdistan Free Womens Union
- TIHV [Turkish] > HRFT [English]
- Tirej (publication) 56
- TKDP [Turkish] > Kurdistan Democratic Party of Turkey
- (T)KSP [English] > PSK(T)
- Turcomans (people), Iraqi Turks 82, 84, 103
- Turun kurdihdistys [Finnish] > Kurdish Association in Turku
- Turun seudun kurdien kulttuuriyhdistys [Finnish] > Kurdish Cultural Association of Turku Region
- UKC > United Kurdistan Christians
- UKDPS > United Kurdish Democratic Party of Syria
- Uniate churches > Chaldeans
- Union of Armenian Ethnic Minorities (religion) 22
- United Islamic Movement of Kurdistan (Iraqi organisation) 44
- United Kurdish Democratic Party of Syria (organisation), Yeketi 55
- United Kurdistan Christians (Iraqi organisation) 51
- United Kurdistan Democratic Party > Kurdistan Democratic Party (Iraqi organisation)
- United Socialist Party of (Iraqi) Kurdistan > Kurdistan Socialist Party (Iraqi organisation)
- USPK > United Socialist Party of (Iraqi) Kurdistan
- Ülkede Gündem (Turkish publication) 63
- Vaasan Isänin kurdien kulttuuriyhdistys [Finnish] > Kurdish Cultural Association of Vaasa District
- Vapaademokraattinen puolue (organisation), Turkish ÖzDcP 46
- Verband der StudentInnen aus Kurdistan (German organisation), YXK 63
- Verband der Vereine aus Kurdistan (German organisation) > KomKar
- Vereinigung der Studenten Kurdistans im Ausland (German organisation) > AKSA
- village guards 29-33, 45, 83
- Voice of Dicle (Turkish broadcasting company) 93
- Voice of Independence (KSDP and KCP broadcasting company) 53
- Voice of Independent Kurdistan (PKK broadcasting company) 63
- Voice of Iranian Kurdistan (KDPI broadcasting company) 49
- Voice of Iraqi Kurdistan (KDP broadcasting company) 51
- Voice of Islam (IMiK broadcasting company) 44
- Voice of the Communist Party of Iran (Komala broadcasting company) 50

- Voice of the Communist Party of Iraqi Kurdistan (broadcasting company) 53
 Voice of the Iraqi Communist Workers' Party (WCP broadcasting company) 54
 Voice of the People of Kurdistan (PUK broadcasting company) 52
 Voice of the Worker (WCPI broadcasting company) 51
 Wahhabism (religion) 42
 Washington Kurdish Institute (American organisation) 67
 WCP > Workers' Communist Party (Iraqi organisation)
 WCPI > Workers' Communist Party (Iranian organisation)
 Welat [wälat] (publication), "Fatherland" 50
 Welat Me [wälat me] (publication), "Äidinmaa" 50
 Widerstand (saks. organisation) 52
 WKI > Washington Kurdish Institute
 Workers' Communist Party (Iranian organisation), WCPI 50-51, 76, 114
 Workers' Communist Party (Iraqi organisation), WCP 54, 83-84, 114
 YAJK > Yekitiya Azadia Jinen Kurdistan
 Yarsanism (religion) 12
 Yazdanism (religion) 9, 11
 YÇ(Ş)WK > Yekitiya Çiwen (Şoreşgeren Welatparezen) Kurdistan
 YDK > Yekieti Dimukrati Kurdistan
 Yek-Kom (German organisation) 65
 Yekbun > Kurdistanin kansan yhtenäisyyspuolue
 Yedgirtu
 Yekieti
 Yekieti Dimukrati Kurdistan > Kurdistan Democratic Union
 Yekieti Nishlimani Kurdistan
 Yekiti (publication) 57
 Yekitiya Azadia Jinen Kurdistan > Kurdistan Free Womens Union
 Yekitiya Çiwen (Şoreşgeren) Welatparezen Kurdistan > Kurdistan (Patriotic Revolutionary) Youth Union
 Yekitiya Jinen Welatparezen Kurdistan > Kurdistan Patriotic Womens Union
 Yeni Gündem (Turkish publication), "New Agenda" 63
 Yeni Politika (Turkish publication), "New Politika" 63
 Yeni Ülke (Turkish publication), "New Homeland" 63
 Yezidism (religion) 11-12, 15, 20, 22, 51, 100-101
 yhteistoimintamiehet 31-32, 40, 42
 YIK > Kurdistan Islamic Union
 YJWK > Yekitiya Jinen Welatparezen Kurdistan
 YKWK (organisation) 63
 YNK > Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
 YRWK > Kurdistan Patriotic Intellectuals Union
 YXK > Verband der StudentInnen aus Kurdistan
 Zagros (publication) 67
 Zāhmākeshan > Hizbi Zāhmākeshani
 Zangana > Zengana
 Zaza (language), Dimili 8-10, 12-13, 17, 28, 85
 Zengana (tribe), Zangana 12
 Zevai (publication) 57
 Zoroastrianism (religion) 11-12
 Zulfikar (publication) 13
 ÖzDeP > Özgürlük ve Demokrasi Partisi
 Özgürlük ve Demokrasi Partisi > Free Democratic Party
 Özgür Gündem (Turkish publication) 59, 63
 Özgür Halk (Turkish publication) 63
 Özgür Politika (Turkish publication) 63
 Özgür Ülke (Turkish publication) 59, 63, 77
 Özgürlük Yolu (Turkish) > Riya Azadi

APPENDIX 1: POPULATION STATISTICS

There are no reliable statistics about the number of Kurds in any of the countries they reside in, due to the fact that in the population statistics the citizens are not classified into subgroups clearly enough. An added difficulty is presented by the complexity of both the linguistic and religious situation of the Kurds. Consequently, the estimates are usually based either on random statements or politically motivated claims. Researchers aiming for reliable and scientific methods settle for the point average of the above mentioned type figures. Another alternative is to try to estimate the present number of Kurds on the basis of what was predicted concerning the development of the Kurdish population decades ago - which figures were also just as suspect, with the only difference that it is more difficult to fathom the grounds on which those numbers were based. As a result, research in this area actually means the accumulation of possible mistakes and concepts that are decades old.

When the various figures compiled within the time span of thirty years are brought together for the sake of making them mutually compatible (to the level of year 1998) by assuming a high 3,6% growth rate for the Kurds in all the countries they reside in, a total figure is arrived at which fluctuates between 18-40 million.* The point average of these figures is 29 million, and it corresponds with the estimates of the made by the moderate Kurdish groups and those made by David McDowall and Mehrdad Izady, who are the most thorough researchers of Kurdish affairs. These figures also include the Zaza and Gurani speaking Kurds, who can be considered to be marginal cases, often also differing from the mainstream of the Kurdish population based on the religious affiliation.

The number of Kurds in the different countries varies in the different calculations in the following manner:

country	fluctuation (millions)	median (millions)	percentage of the country's total population	the Kurdish population: fluctuation in fractions	
Iran	5-9	7	10-16%	21-33%	1/4
Iraq	3-7	4 1/2	21-36%	14-29%	1/6
Syria	1-2	1 1/2	8-13%	2-7%	1/20
Turkey	9-22	14	17-36%	45-63%	1/2
CIS-countries	0-1	1/2		0-3%	1/100
Rest of the world	0-1	1			

Total: 18-40 million (McDowall's estimate 24,5 - 29 million)

* The only exception is formed by Martin van Bruinessen's estimate, according to which there should be around 50 million Kurds in the world at the present time. However, this figure is over 10 million higher than the boldest statements of the Kurds themselves. In contrast to this, the three calculations presented by Barbro Karabuda in her book from 1959 all fall within the general fluctuation concerning the estimates of the Kurdish population figures.

A minimum level is represented by the estimate given by the Ford Foundation in 1990. (<http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/8572.i.htm>). Fluctuations are the greatest, when the proportional number of Kurds is estimated separately in the different countries, while the fluctuations in the total number of Kurds are considerably less. In any case, about half of the Kurds live in Turkey and one-fourth in Iran - although most of the Iranian Kurds are Gurani speakers and one third of the Kurds in Turkey speak Zaza as their mother tongue. In the countries concerned, the average population growth among the Kurds is generally speaking at least as great as that of the rest of the population. The only exception is Iraq, where the number of Kurds seems to be continually decreasing, at present possibly being only 20% of the total population of the country, or only 16% according to the grimmest estimates. (*Genocide in Iraq*, pg. 24)

From the 2,1 million Turkish citizens living in Germany, less than a quarter are classified as Kurds. Among the immigrants the number of Kurds is probably higher than the average, for most of the immigrants originate from the poor areas in the countryside.

APPENDIX 2: THE FLAGS

At the beginning of 1920's, the Kurds in Iraq used a green flag, at the centre of which was pictured a red circle with a white sickle at its centre. It was founded on the Turkish flag, and was common in Arabic countries. However, this flag has not been seen since (<http://www.allstatesflag.com/flags/krdhot.html>)

The flag of the Kurdistan republic (the "Mahabad Republic") was taken into use by December 1945 the latest. It was modelled after the flag of Iran, with the horizontal stripes being changed upside down: red as the topmost colour and green as the bottom most one. In the middle there was a white stripe of colour with a yellow sun at its centre. (ARFA pg. 84) Thus the flag resembles the Hungarian flag and the flag of Tadzhikistan, a country which gained its independence in 1991.

The same flag has since been published in the cover of a book that tells about the uprising of Ararat in the end of the 1920's. (Annual Reports... pg. 39). The flag - perhaps green stripes at the top and the red one on the bottom - is alleged to have been invented already in 1919 or by 1927 at the latest, when Khoybun Party was formed. (<http://www.kurdish.com/kurdistan/flag>). If this is true, the flag could indeed have been used in the 1930's uprisings, the leaders of which withdrew either to Soviet Union or to the Iranian side of the border.

Unfortunately facts often are mixed with anachronisms, i.e. with stories invented later and made to suit the circumstances of the later times. Sertach Bucak has claimed in his article that Turkey had denied the use of the Kurdish flag with the red-yellow-green colour scheme (!) already in 1923. (POGROM 189/1996) He may have been mistaken about the colours of the flag, but at the same time the claim is a typical example of the creation of these types of modern folklore and myths, which are not necessarily based in any real facts. Apart from the Iranian Kurds, the red white and green flag of the "Mahabad Republic" has been used by the Kurds in Iraq. Yet in Turkey, where the flag is said to originate from, it is the least well known. Moreover, the connection of the sun symbolism with the Yezidic religion points to Iraq, rather than Turkey.

In Iraq, the Kurdish organisations KDP and PUK have been marking their border-control posts with green and yellow flags respectively. The parties used these colours also as their election symbols, although blue is the prominent colour in the KDP banner. Zazakistan - possibly Alevistan as well - have a red flag with a white arrow design resembling the letter 'Z', and it is alleged to have been used already since 1921. (<http://www.allstates-flag.com/flags/krd-hist.html>)

However, the best-known "Kurdish flag" is the red PKK flag, for which two versions have been used simultaneously:

1) The party flag proper pictured a sickle and hammer inside a five pronged star with a yellow outline. For understandable reasons, PKK gave up these emblems in January 1995 and placed a torch inside the star instead; (Kurdistan Report 21/1995)

2) In all public connections, in the PKK training camps, in Öcalan's press conferences and in the demonstrations a version of the red flag is used, where

the centre picture is a red star inside a yellow circle that is outlined with narrow green band. This has sometimes been called the ERNK flag, but even in one of their own publications it has been presented as the PKK flag. (Kurdistan Report 13/1993) This does not have any great significance as such, for ERNK openly presents itself as the political wing of the PKK, and generally speaking has not tried to show itself to be an independent organisation. It is well known, however, that in January 1992, ERNK received its own flag. (Kurdistan Report 13/1993; CÜRÜKKAYA pg. 156) The tracing of this flag proved to be a strangely difficult task though, and it is not even displayed in the ERNK office in Finland. Instead, the American Kurdish Network (AKIN) has on its homepages displayed a Kurdish flag, which has three lateral bands of colour; yellow at the top, red in the middle and green at the bottom. (<http://www.kurdistan.org>). Green-yellow-red and red-yellow-green versions of this flag have also been used, the first mentioned of them in 1994, and the last mentioned has been used by KomKar. (<http://Fotw.digibel.be/flags/kurdi.html>)

In addition to that, the guerrilla army of ARGK has its own banner with a red star on a green and yellow stripe, which it inherited from HRK.

The question of the flag and the symbolism of the colours connected with it obtained also legal significance in the course of the 1990's.

The colour scheme red-yellow-green has been known already since the beginning of 1970's. This colour scheme also appeared in the covers of the first two books of a publication series called 'Kurdistan und die Kurden', which came out in 1984-1986. (A third part was also promised for this series, but it never actually materialised.) Via these books, the path leads to the Marxist group of Qasemlu, Vanly and Kendal. As this colour scheme was generally quite popular in the socialist countries and reminded people of the ARGK banner, in which the top most stripe was yellow, it was easy to develop a new ERNK symbol, which could formally be distinguished from the old PKK flag and at the same time be somewhat reminiscent of the old Mahabad flag. This is probably how the yellow red and green striped flag got its design.

"The traditional Kurdish colours" were for the first time brought to the consciousness of news agencies in the spring of 1990 by Jane Howard and Christopher Walker, who were the correspondents of *Guardian* and *The Times* respectively. Walker is known, among other things, from his book on Armenian history, which is very anti-Turkish in its attitude, while at the same time praising the achievements of the Soviet regime. On the 9th of April 1990, Howard told that the Kurds of Turkey are defying the authorities on the Syrian border with red, gold and green colour scheme. Ten days later, Walker reported from the same area, how the roof of a cafe had been painted with "red, yellow and green, the colours of the banned Kurdish flag." Next, *Reuters* referred to the "Kurdish flag" on the 22nd of March 1991, when giving an account of some riots in the self same border towns of Cizre and Nusaybin, which are situated right against the Syrian border.

The uprising of the Iraqi Kurds in the spring of 1991 spread nationalistic fervour also among the Turkish Kurds. Claire Pointon has written in an article in *The Independent* (4th of April 1991) how the Kurdish flag, which had been seen

hoisted in the flagpole across the border was discussed even as far away as in Diyarbakır:

"Parents draped the flag's red, green, yellow and white colours around the necks of children..." (Kurdish Women pg. 6)

Leyla Zana and a few other newly elected HEP members of parliament appeared at the opening session of the Turkish parliament dressed in red, green and yellow - complete with headbands. Other MP's considered this to be a provocative act performed for the benefit of PKK's publicity. Consequently the parliament stripped them off their parliamentary immunity for having protested in this manner and they were tried in court. In her defence, Zana claimed that red, green and yellow were the "traditional Kurdish colours", which were based on the very flag of the "Mahabad Republic". According to Zana, the use of these colours spread to Turkey especially since the year of 1988, after the Kurdish refugees from Iraq were seen also in Diyarbakır. (Free Leyla Zana! pg. 122, 125 and 186-187)

Seemingly "ancient" traditions among the Kurds are born fairly quickly. At the same time, no one thought to ask, what happened to the white colour of the "Mahabad Republic" and why was it replaced with the yellow colour of the emblem?

Over the recent years, the colour combination red-green-yellow has been classified as the forbidden national colours of the Kurds (Annual Reports...pg. 49; SD 2.12.1991; HS 27.5.92). Even *Amnesty International* interpreted in its report "Turkey - The Colours of their clothes" (1997) the colour combination used by Zana as referring to the flag of the "Mahabad Republic", because the PKK flag purportedly did not include green as one its colours!

Despite of this, Öcalan assured in his press conference on the 17th of March 1993 that he had no part in the appearance of these new colours as the Kurdish "national colours":

"I would also like to stress, that we have not taken into use these national colours. The national colour combination of red-yellow-green has a centuries long history. To attack a person on the account of the colours of his neck scarf goes against the rules of civilisation... I have stated that we are not the ones who have taken into use the red-yellow-green colour scheme. We should also say that I do not tell others that they should shout: 'Biji Serok Apo' (Long live Apo the leader, i.e. Abdullah Öcalan)." (Waffenstillstand... pg. 56)

This incident, quite insignificant by itself, yet with huge symbolic value, goes to show how easily a nation whose identity is only just being formed, mixes the historical truth with politically expedient myths. Neither the Turkish court system nor the international human rights organisations seem to have succeeded in the setting up of objective criteria for the purpose of differentiating between nationalistic cultural activity and party politics.

APPENDIX 3: TURKISH ELECTIONS IN APRIL 1999

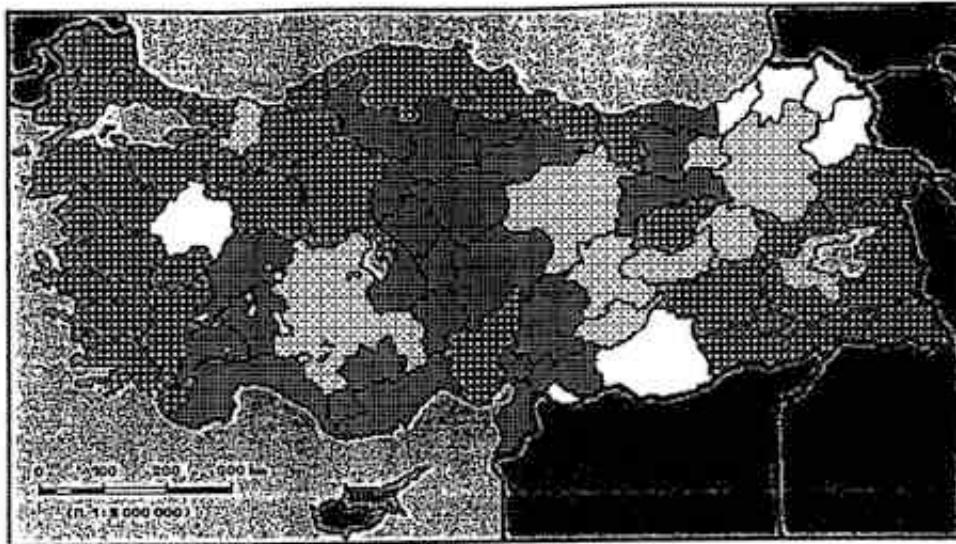
The parliamentary elections in Turkey brought an expected election victory to DSP, which is Prime Minister Ecevit's party, but especially the foreign observers were surprised at the rise of MHP almost the level of DSP in its support. Before the elections the main question was, whether this party would reach the national threshold for votes required to secure a place in the parliament. The traditionalist CHP, however, did not manage to garner the number of votes required by the national threshold, as was expected. The Centre-rightist parties of AnaP and DYP, and the Islamicist FP lost some of their support.

Party	Proportion	Places	Party	Proportion	Places
MHP	18,0%	129	FP	15,4%	111
AnaP	13,2%	86	DYP	12,0%	85
DSP	22,1%	136	CHP	8,8%	0
others		3	HaDeP	4,7%	0

In the Turkish parliament, there are altogether 550 representatives, three of which were elected as independent candidates.

In comparison with the previous parliament, AnaP lost 46 seats, while FP (and its successor RP) lost 33 seats, but DYP only lost 4 seats, even though the number of votes lost by each of these parties was about the same. CHP lost all of its 53 seats, while DTP lost 19 seats. BBP lost 8 seats, and DP and De Par both lost the one and only seat they had held. DSP gained 77 seats, while MHP gained 125 additional seats. There were 29 independent candidates in the previous Turkish parliament. It is typical of Turkish politics for the politicians forced into co-operation with candidates from other parties in order to attain the required national threshold of votes to resign from their parties and form their own parliamentary groupings while the parliament is in session.
(<http://www.byege.gov.tr/frontnews/general-elections.htm>)

HaDeP lost some of its votes in two provinces, Hakkari (46%) and Diyarbakır (45%), where its support had been the highest already in 1999. On the other hand, the party's support went up in five provinces at the expense of the Islamists; in Batman (43%) Van (36%), Ağrı (34%), Muş (32%) and Mardin (25%). In between these two extremes is the province of Iğdır (30%), where HaDeP's success is difficult to explain in light of statistics. In Şırnak (24%), Siirt (22%) and Tunceli (14%) HaDeP suffered slight losses, but in Kars (18%) its support almost tripled at the expense of the Islamists. In Şanlıurfa (17%) and Bitlis (14%), HaDeP benefited somewhat from the losses of the Islamists. Particularly in the northernmost provinces of eastern Turkey the support of the Islamist party dropped to a less than half of what it was in the previous elections.



-  Areas where DSP, CHP or HaDeP is the largest party
-  Areas with FP as the largest party
-  Areas with MHP as the largest party



-  Kurdistan according to the newspaper Özgür Politika (Kurdistan Kurdbrief 9/99)

Outside the area of Kurdistan proper (Ardahan, Adiyaman, Erzurum, Elazığ, Gaziantep, Adana, İçel) HaDeP garnered more votes than it does on the average, but still only less than 10% of the total votes cast in the area. If Kurdistan is defined as consisting of the 14 provinces where, according to David McDowall, Kurds constitute 60% of the population, in Turkish Kurdistan the political support for HaDeP is calculated 22% among the total population, and 37% at the most among the Kurdish population. Amongst the Kurds living in western Turkey the support for this party is insignificant. However, in the six provinces where Martial Law is still being enforced, 37,5% of the population voted for HaDeP. Over half of them are living in the province of Diyarbakır, and HaDeP's support is clearly centred around the slum areas of the city.

Number of Mayors according to party divisions in the 1999 elections:

Party	Number of Mayors	Party	Number of Mayors
MHP	499	FP	492
AnaP	761	DYP	726
DSP	187	CHP	365
others	104	HaDeP	39

In the small localities mayorship is secured with lesser number of votes, which explains the fact that AnaP, DYP and even CHP have more Mayors than DSP, which is successful in the larger population centres. Also, the placing of candidates, personality factors and the level of co-operation between persons representing the rival camps all have an effect on the voting. HaDeP candidates won the office of Mayor in seven Kurdish provincial capitals. In Ağrı (Hüseyin Yılmaz), Batman (Abdullah Akin), Bingöl (Feyzullah Karaaslan), Diyarbakır (Feridun Çalik), Hakkari (Hüseyin Ümit), Siirt (Selim Özalp) and Van (Shahabettin Özasaner).^{*} In Siirt the election result was decided by a margin of 129 votes and in Ağrı the victory was achieved with only 20% support, because the votes were scattered thinly among the rival candidates. On the other hand, in Diyarbakır, Batman and Hakkari HaDeP candidates achieved majority of the total votes; yet they lost narrowly in Iğdır, Mardin and Tunceli (by 86 votes). (<http://www.mhp.org.tr/secim99/belediye/belediye.htm>; <http://www.berlinet.de/kurdistan/1999a/kr990904.htm>; <http://www.burn.ucsd.edu/7archives/kurd-1>; <http://www.anadolujansi.gov.tr/sec99.htm>; Kurdistan Rundbrief 9/5.5.1999

^{*}After the elections, Özasaner thanked his MHP rival, who had confessed his defeat and was the first one to congratulate the winner. Özasaner pledged allegiance to the constitution and proclaimed his faith in the future: "The process of tolerance and compromise have begun in Turkey. We were placed in these positions of office with the support of the people. The state has a Constitution and laws, although we may not necessarily like all of them. We can criticize the laws and the State Constitution, just as the other political parties can. We can call for changes, if we consider them to be undemocratic. Still, I shall be faithful to the existing Constitution and laws and I shall do my duty." (TDN 28.4.99)

Generally HaDeP's fiercest rivals are FP in the northern part of the country (in Bingöl, Bitlis, Van, Diyarbakır, Ağrı), and DYP in the southern region (in Şanlıurfa, Siirt, Mardin, Hakkari, Batman, Muş). DSP and MHP, which are both popular in western Turkey, are only able to garner support in the fringe areas of Kurdistan proper (i.e. in Kars, Iğdır, Erzurum, Erzincan, Sivas, Elazığ, Malatya, Kahramanmaraş, Gaziantep and Şanlıurfa). The extent of the area of Kurdistan, as well as the proportion of Kurdish population in the provinces, can be reliably deducted from the geographical support base of the political parties active in the area.

The new government of Turkey was formed by the winners of the election, together with AnaP. DSP was given eight ministerial posts, with seven ministers coming from the MHP ranks, and five from AnaP. Devlet Bahçeli (MHP) and Husamettin Özkan (DSP) were appointed as Deputy Prime Ministers in Ecevit's government, with İsmail Cem (DSP) been given the post of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Saadettin Tantan (AnaP) that of the Minister of Interior. Hikmet Sami Türk, whose responsibility already in the previous Turkish government were human rights issues, carries on as Minister of Justice. The leader of AnaP, Mesut Yılmaz, opted to stay out of the government line up.

APPENDIX 4: SPELLING

The differences between the Kurdish dialects are highlighted further by disagreements concerning the script that should be used. Kurdish was first written in the Arabic script, but it cannot be applied to the Persian languages without some alterations. For that reason the Kurdish script was expanded further by adding four letters into it. This Persian type alphabet was also adopted by the Turks. In addition to that, some Kurds also began to mark the vowels in the written text. In 1920's, when Turkey, and temporarily also some of the Soviet Republics, switched over to the Latin Alphabet, some Kurds followed the example. In the Soviet Union, the Kurdish groups continued experimenting with different alphabets to the extent of even employing the Cyrillic alphabet for their language. In the end, the Kurds had a larger variety of alphabets than what they had dialects, or home countries to that matter.

Quite understandably the Kurds have tried to standardise their language, or at least its written representation, in the modern media such as Internet or e-mail. Yet the guidelines have varied considerably. From the point of view of phonetic accuracy, it would be natural to replace the special characters in connection with the letters r, l, k, and h with double consonants (rr, ll, kk, hh); some quarters recommend the use of capital letters (R, L, K, H, C, S, E, I, U) instead of special diacritics in the middle of a word, while others recommend using an arrow or a slash (/) before the letters needing a more accurate phonetic representation than what the alphabet employed so far can give. The lack of established standard means that the reader has to either know the language, or guess how the letters should be pronounced. (<http://www.kurdish.com/kurdistan/lang/alpha.htm>; <http://www.cogsci.ed.ac.uk/~siamakr/Kurdish/kurdiur.html>)

GeoNative (<http://www.geocities.com/Athens>), which can be found on Internet, uses the GOST system and ISO standards accepted by the *Fifth United Nations Conference on the Standardisation of Geographical Names*. These deviate somewhat from the widely used US Library of Congress transliteration method, as well as from the transliteration standard commonly used in England.

LC	GOST	"Common English Standard"	
ا alif*	a	-	a
ژ dzhim*	j	j	dzh
ی ja*	y	j	y
ه ha*	h	h	kh
خ kha*	kh	x	kh

Up till the 1920's, the Turkic peoples used the Arabic-Persian script consisting of 35 letters with 16 variations, which were used for describing the vowels that were not represented in the Arabic script. In conjunction with the Latinisation of the alphabet, four characters were combined to be represented by the letter 'z', three characters were combined into the letter 'h', (and 'x') and two

characters into the letter 't'. (August Müller: *Türkische Grammatik*, *Porta Linguarum Orientalium* 11, Berlin 1889; A. Seidel: *Türkisch*, Berlin 1917; Martti Räsänen: *Versuch eines etymologischen Wörterbuches der Türksprachen*, *Lexica Societatis Fennougricae* 17.1, Helsinki 1969; Arvid Genetz: *Lyhyt Kasanin tatarien kielen kielioppi*, Hämeenlinna 1884; J. Ahtinen-Karsikko: *Die neue Rechtschreibung der Tataren*, *Suomalais-ugrilaisen Seuran aikakauskirja* 39.2, Helsinki 1923; Nicholas Poppe: *Tatar Manual* Indiana University Publications, Uralic and Altaic series 25, Bloomington 1968).

The Latin alphabet used in the former Soviet Union in the 1920's and 1930's consisted of 26 letters with 16 variations. The alphabet used in Turkey included 29 letters, in addition to which the lengthening of the vowel 'a' is sometimes represented by â. In 1992 Azerbaidzhan adopted the Turkish alphabet with two additions: the letters 'q' and 'x' were employed for the 'kh' sound. The Crimean Tatars and Turcomans, for their part, decided to add three new letters to the alphabet, namely 'ä', 'w' and ñ (for the velar nasal sound). These 34 letters would amply represent the phonetic systems of other Turkic languages also, including even the letters that are used in loan words only.

The Iranian languages still commonly employ the Arabic script, even though they do not necessarily need all of the characters from it. For the Latinisation of the Tadjik alphabet, it sufficed to use 32 characters, two of which represent the lengthening of the vowels 'i' and 'u' respectively, with the third one (the letter 'ü') being removed from the alphabet already after a couple of years, in 1930. The Latin alphabet of the Kurmandzhi dialect of the Kurdish language consists of 31 characters, which correspond with the sounds represented by the letters common to all the alphabets of the Turkic languages, excluding the letters 'ä', 'ö', and 'ñ'. (Olaf Berggren & Marit Myking: *KITAB - om kulturer, folkegrupper, språk og land*, Oslo 1993; Hans Jensen: *Neupersische grammatik*, *Indogermanische Bibliothek* 1.22, Heidelberg 1931; Carl Salemann & Valentin Shukovski: *Persische Grammatik*, *Porta Linguarum Orientalium* 12, Leipzig 1947; Ann K. S. Lambton: *Persian Grammar*, Cambridge 1961; Taufiq Wahby & C.J. Edmonds: *A Kurdish English Dictionary*, Oxford 1966; Aziz Amindarov: *Kurdish*, New York 1994).

Sorani uses 29 consonants, five vowels of which three are always short (a, i, u) with two (e, o) also appearing in lengthened forms sometimes, and a glide 'oe'. Of the consonants, the letter 'v' mainly appears in loan words, and the velar sound represented by the letter combination 'ng' is exclusive to the dialect of Sulaymaniah. (Ernest Nasseph McCarus: *A Kurdish-English dictionary - Dialect of Sulaymaniah*, Iraq, Ann Arbor 1967; D.N. Mackenzie: *Kurdish dialect studies*, *London Oriental Studies* 9-10, London 1961-1962).

Comparative transliteration of Turkic-Iranian languages

English ¹	Arabic (Persian) ²	Turkish (etc.) ³
A	alif* ا	A ⁴
B	ba* ب	B
J (DZH)	jim* ج	C
CH	(chim*) ل	Ç
D	dal* د	D
E		E (Ê) ⁵
F	fa* ف	F
G	(gef*) و	G
GH	ghayn* غ	Ğ (X ⁶)
H (KH)	ha* ه	H ⁷
KH (Ĥ)	kha* ك	H (Ĥ)
I		I ⁸
Y (İ)		I
Y (J)	ya* ي	Y
ZH	(zhim*) و	J
K	kaf* ك	K

¹ US Library of Congress (deviations from this standard, either representing the GOST system, or being the equivalents recommended by Allworth, are marked in parenthesis)

² The Iranian and Turkic peoples have used modifications of the Arabic script suited to their own languages. The Persians have added five of their own characters to the Arabic script to represent the sounds 'g', 'p', and 'v' (in distinction from 'w'), 'sh' and 'zh'. However, the left over Arabic characters, which in Turkic languages are used to differentiate between the front and back vowels, and in Persian also in loan words, are missing from the Table. Sorani has its own diacritics also for the additional variations of the sounds 't' and 'r', which do not necessarily need a separate transliteration. Indeed, in Kurmandzhi they have been joined together. In addition to the extra 'r', Pashtu language also has five other sounds pronounced with the tip of the tongue (n, d, t, sh, and variations of zh) and the Pashtu alphabet has its own characters for the affricates 'ts' and 'dz'. In all the Iranian languages, there are only four vowels (a, e, i, and either o, or u), all of which also have a lengthened form. Originally the Turkic languages have had nine vowels: a, o, u, y, e, i, ö, ä, ö. The vowel harmony prevalent in the Turkic languages has allowed the combining of the front and back vowels in loan words only.

³ In Turkish, C (dzh), F and J (zh) only appear in loan words. The long established letters of Latin alphabet in the other Turkic languages (Azeri and Turkmen, that is Azerbaijani and Iraqi Turkic dialects) and the divergent letters of the Kurmandzhi alphabet are written in brackets.

⁴ In certain loan words in Turkish, the lengthened 'a' is written as Ā.

⁵ In many of the Turkish dialects, as well as in Kurmandzhi, the letter 'e' is often pronounced as 'ä'. For this reason Kurmandzhi utilizes a special character 'Ê' for the genuine phonetic 'e' sound.

⁶ In Kurmandzhi.

⁷ Only in loan words in Turkic languages; the Turkish, Turkmen and Kirghiz use a single, joint letter for the two 'h' sounds present in the languages.

⁸ Kurmandzhi alphabet employs a special letter, 'İ', for the lengthened 'i' sound.

Q	qaf* ق	K (Q ^u)
L	lam* ل	L [*]
M	mim* م	M
N	nun* ن	N
NG	(sagyr nun*) ^u	N (Ñ ^u)
O		O
P	(pa*) D	P
R	ra* ر	R
S	sin* س	S
SH	shin* ش	Ş
Z	zay* ذ	Z
T	ta* ت	T
U		U (Û) ^u
W	waw* و	V ^u (W ^u)
U, UE (Û)		Û
A, AE (Ä)		E (Ä ^u)
O, OE (Ö)		Ö (U ^u)

^u In the Turkic languages, 'K' and 'Q' are phonetic variations of the same phoneme according to whether the surrounding sounds are front or back vowels (comp. 'g' and 'gh' and 't'); in the Iranian languages, the letter 'q' is often phonetically pronounced as 'gh'.

^{*} There are two separate 't' sounds both in the Kurdish and Turkic languages, but in the latter mentioned ones they are never written with separate letters, because their exact pronunciation depends on their immediate phonetic environment, i.e. whether the vowels surrounding them are front or back vowels.

^u Not an original Arabic or Persian letter.

^u In some Turkic languages.

^u In Kurmandzhi, the letter 'U' is pronounced as 'ö'. This is why there is a separate letter 'Û' for the genuine phonetic 'u' sound. In certain Turkish loan words the same character is used for the lengthened form of the vowel 'u'.

^u Ancient Turkish lacked the 'v' sound altogether, but in the Ottoman Turkish 'b' was changed into 'v' in some instances, in addition to which it also appears in Russian loan words. The letter 'w' that appears in the Arabic words is pronounced like 'v', except at the end of a word, when it becomes either 'u' or 'ü'. There is no need for a separate letter 'w', yet it is found in the new Latin alphabet of the Turkoman language, as well as in the Kurmandzhi alphabet.

^u In some Turkic languages and in Kurmandzhi, in order to separate it from the letter 'V', which is used parallel with it.

^u in some Turkic languages.

^u In Kurmandzhi, the letter 'U' is pronounced as 'ö'.

