A NATION OF REFUGEES:
AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE KURDISH PROBLEM OF PROTECTION

by

Steven Ben Rempel

A thesis
presented to the University of Manitoba in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts, Interdisciplinary Degree Program

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

*****

COPYRIGHT PERMISSION PAGE

A NATION OF REFUGEES:

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE KURDISH PROBLEM OF PROTECTION

BY

STEVEN BEN REMPEL

A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

ABSTRACT

The problem of protection refers to those who have lost or been denied the protection of a nation-state. Since the end of the First World War, a refugee regime has been developed within the international order to provide protection to victims of forced migration and to seek durable solutions to refugee problems. The problem of protection has been defined in various ways by this regime. It began by approaching the problem in terms of liminal collectivities rendered stateless by the wars in Europe. After World War II, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees increasingly emphasized a mandate of extending palliative protection to individual victims of persecution on a global basis. Since the end of the Cold War, most states have restricted access to asylum determination procedures and members of the international order have encouraged the UNHCR to pursue repatriation and source country interventions that occasionally contravene the principle of national sovereignty.

The creation of the safe haven for Kurdish refugees in Northern Iraq in 1991 set the precedent for subsequent interventions on behalf of large refugee populations denied secure asylum in neighboring countries. The fact that Kurdish refugees from Iraq, as well as from Turkey, Iran, and Syria, continue to seek asylum in large numbers throughout the world indicates that this intervention did not provide a durable solution to the Kurdish problem of protection. An analysis of the asylum hearings and resettlement experiences of the small proportion of Kurdish refugees who have come to Canada, demonstrates the politicized nature of the Kurdish problem of protection. Kurdish refugees, both in terms of their personal narratives of displacement as well as in their organization activities in the growing Kurdish diaspora, express an understanding of their experience of forced migration in terms of a shared predicament as a people or as a nation.

This study explores the Kurdish problem of protection in three dimensions: in the context of an evolving refugee regime within the international order, in terms of a cultural and categorical order in which protection is understood collectively, and in terms of the political dynamics of a structural denial of protection to the Kurds within Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and Syria, as well as a Kurdish struggle to regain protection as a legitimate

nation. In Part I, this study explores the refugee regime's approach to protection and solution and the contemporary Kurdish experience of forced migration. In Part II, this study analyzes the relationship between protection and identity in terms of a categorical order – the 'national order of things' – as well as the contested nature of Kurdish identity and its cultural and historical politicization. Part III explores the political, cultural, and economic denial of protection to Kurds, the development of an indigenous ethos of nationalist solidarity, and its violent suppression which together provide the root cause of Kurdish vulnerability to forced migration.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to members of the Kurdish community in Winnipeg for their hospitality in inviting me into their homes on so many occasions, their willingness to assist me in learning about Kurdish history and culture, and their patience in waiting for the final result of my research. In particular I would like to acknowledge the invaluable assistance of Khosrow K., Mam Abbas, Shamal M., Ali S., Lee C., Chowan A., Said K., and Hadi E. I would also like to thank my Kurdish consultants in Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal for their assistance and encouragement. Finally I would like to extend my appreciation to the many Kurdish cultural and political organizations in North America and Europe which provided a wealth of information concerning their efforts on behalf of the Kurdish people.

I am grateful as well, for the assistance of Iraqis, Iranians, and Turks both here in Canada and overseas. In particular I would like to express my gratitude to Mohamad 'Khosh' Yahya, without whose friendship, facilitation, and knowledge, this project could never have been begun.

I owe a debt of gratitude to the thesis committee that ensured the completion of this project, particularly my advisor, Dr. Matiur Rahman. In addition, I would like to thank my committee members Dr. Raymond Wiest and Dr. George MacLean for their insights and constructive suggestions. I would also like to acknowledge those who helped in the early stages of this project: Dr. John Rogge, Dr. Mario Carvalho, and Dr. John Matthiasson.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the support and patience of my family during the time it took to complete this work and in assisting me with the preparation of its final form. A special thank you is due to Grace, Kajia, Savanne, and Irene.

CONTENTS

Abstract.....iii
Acknowledgements.....v
List of Tables.....ix
List of Panels.....x
List of Figures.....xi

Chapter
1. INTRODUCTION.....1
1.1. Problem Statement.....1
1.2. Methods.....3
1.4. Structure of the Thesis.....10

PART I. THE KURDS AS REFUGEES..... 12

2. THE REFUGEE REGIME THE PROBLEM OF PROTECTION IN THE INTERNATIONAL ORDER.....15
2.1. Historical Development.....17
2.2. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees.....19
2.3. The Creation of A Global Refugee Problem.....26

3. THE CONTEMPORARY KURDISH REFUGEE PROBLEM: THE SEARCH FOR ASYLUM AND RESETTLEMENT IN CANADA.....35
3.1 Crossing the Border: Uncertain Asylum on the Kurdish Periphery.....36
3.2 Halfway To Nowhere: Kurdish Refugees On The Margins of Europe.....42
3.3 Coming to Canada: Status Determination and Resettlement 49
3.4 From History to Ethnicity: Kurdish Communities in Canada.....60

PART II. THE KURDS.....71

4. THE NATIONAL ORDER OF THINGS: PROTECTION AND THE POLITICS OF IDENTITY.....73
   4.1 Ethnic Identification.....73
   4.2 The Nation.....76
   4.3 The National Order of Things.....81

5. *KURDEWARI* : CONTESTED IDENTITIES AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN KURDISTAN.....86
   5.1 Who Are The Kurds? 86
   5.2 Religion and Language.....96
   5.3 Myth and History.....103
   5.4 Kurdish Social Organization.....112
   5.5 Tribe and State: The Political Integration of Kurdistan.....121

PART III. *KURDAYETI*: THE STRUGGLE OF THE KURDS.....130

6. KURDISH NATIONALISM: THE DENIAL OF PROTECTION AND THE STRUGGLE FOR LEGITIMACY.....132
   6.1. A Nation Denied and Divided.....132
   6.2. Nations in Denial: The Structural Loss of Protection.....136
   6.3. The Social Organization of Kurdish Nationalism.....149
   6.4. *Kurdayeti*: Populist Nationalism in Kurdistan.....159

7. TRANSIENTS IN HISTORY: KURDISH VULNERABILITY TO MASS DISPLACEMENT.....173
   7.1. *Ash Batal*: The Roots of Mass Displacement.....173
   7.2. Iran: Revolution and Forced Migration.....180
   7.3. The *Anfal* and The Exodus.....184
   7.4. The Safe Haven.....201

7.5. Turkey's Invisible War.....211

8. CONCLUSION.....221

REFERENCES.....237

APPENDIX 1: TREATIES, PROTOCOLS, AND RESOLUTIONS.....228
APPENDIX 2: KURDISH POPULATION TABLES.....244

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1.	Refugees and Forced Migrants	27
2.	Applicants for Asylum In Selected Countries 1988 To 1997	29
3.	Total Refugees Resettled By Country	31
4.	Total Refugees by Source Country	37
5.	Immigrant Population By Place of Birth	60
6.	Kurdish Language for Selected Provinces, 1991	62
7.	Kurdish Ethnic Origin for Canada and Selected Provinces	63
8.	Kurdish Ethnic Origin for Census Metropolitan Areas	64
9.	Total Number of Kurds in Turkey	245
10.	Total Number of Kurds in Iran	246
11.	Total Number of Kurds in Iraq	247
12.	Total Number of Kurds in Syria	248
13.	Kurdish Diaspora: The Former Soviet Union	249
14.	Kurdish Diaspora: The Middle East	250
15.	Kurdish Diaspora: Europe, North America, & Australia	251

LIST OF PANELS

Panel		Page
1.	Hussain's Search For Asylum	43
2.	The End of The Line? Refugees in Limbo	48
3.	Kurdish Refugees In Winnipeg	50
4.	IRB Cases Involving a Kurdish Identity	54
5.	Myths of Origin and Liberation	104
6.	*Our Trouble* (Pt.1) by Ehmedê Xanî	110
7.	*Our Trouble* (Pt. 2) by Ehmedê Xanî	111
8.	Musa Anter's Village	114
9.	A Profile On The Kurds And Kurdistan	133
10.	*Atakurd* by Ahmet Altan	137
11.	Banning Kurdish	142
12.	*Kurdayetî* – The Barzani Years	165
13.	The *Anfal*	192
14.	Uprisings	197
15.	Exodus	200
16.	Safe Haven?	209
17.	Asylum Application Submitted To The Italian Courts by PKK President Abdullah Ocalan (excerpts)	216
18.	"On Trial for Being a Kurd" by Leyla Zana	218

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure Page

1. The International Order....16
2 Map of Kurdish Speech Area 88
3. Map of the Middle East in 1914....91
4. The Middle East in the 1920s 91
5. Kurdistan according to the Treaty of Sèvres 92
6. Kurdistan....92
7. Social Stratification of Kurdish Society....120
8. Formal Organization of the Baban Pashalik....123
9. The *Anfal* Campaigns: February – September, 1988....189
10. Kurdistan in Iraq....205

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to explore the Kurdish problem of protection in terms of Kurdish vulnerability to forced migration and of the struggle by Kurds for legitimacy in the international order. The thesis that will be developed is that a durable solution to this problem requires that protection be understood not only in terms of a legal regime offering individualized, palliative protection, but also in terms of the root causes of the denial of protection to the Kurds as a people, which has encouraged a militant struggle to resolve their shared predicament of collective vulnerability.

The introductory section will introduce the specific concerns of this study and formulate a problem statement. The methodology used to explore the problem will then be explained. Finally, an overview of the structure of this thesis will be provided.

1.1 Problem Statement

This study begins with a brief overview of the Kurdish situation as it relates to forced migration in general and the problem of protection in particular. The Kurds are a people numbering between 20 and 35 million inhabiting a region referred to as Kurdistan and now divided between the modern states of Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and Syria. There are also large Kurdish populations in urban centres and enclaves within those states but outside of the traditional Kurdish homeland. In addition, there are large numbers of Kurds in several republics of the former Soviet Union, such as Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan, and throughout the Middle East in Lebanon, Israel, and Jordan. Since the 1970s, a growing Kurdish diaspora has been taking shape in the cities of Europe, North America and Australia. The Kurdish diaspora expanded dramatically in the during the Iran – Iraq War of the 1980s and following the 1991 Gulf War. It continues to grow primarily as a result of the ongoing forced migration of Kurdish refugees from Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and Syria.

The mass exodus from Iraqi Kurdistan in 1991 was the fastest and one of the largest forced migration events in recorded history. The creation of the safe haven in

Northern Iraq to allow for the repatriation of refugees from the borders of Iran and Turkey was the culmination of a series of benchmark historical events involving the Kurds. The Kurds had made history in 1988 by being the first civilian population to suffer chemical gas attacks from their own government. In 1990-1991, in the wake of the international coalition's efforts to force the Iraqi army out of Kuwait, Kurds participated in a largely spontaneous, mass uprising against the Iraqi dictatorship. The mass flight from Iraq, which followed the suppression of the uprisings, threatened the political stability of coalition members such as Turkey and Saudi Arabia. This crisis provoked an unprecedented intervention on behalf of a refugee population in the sovereign territory of a member state of the United Nations. The creation of the safe haven in Iraq, while mitigating the mass displacement emergency for Turkey and Iran, did not remove the vulnerability of Kurds to forced migration, and Kurdish refugees continue to seek asylum in all parts of the world.

The refugee problem in this century has been distinguished from earlier forced migration events by the development of an international network of agencies to intervene and seek solutions to displacement emergencies. The relatively new interdisciplinary field of Refugee Studies has developed in recent years largely as a response to this problem and the ongoing efforts to intervene and resolve refugee crises. The efforts of researchers in Refugee Studies intersect with those of international intervention agencies and the representatives of the international order in attempts to define approaches to definition and effective response to the refugee problem. These efforts have coalesced around the need to provide palliative *protection* and to secure *durable solutions*. Refugees are defined as those who have lost the *protection* of a nation-state, and a *durable solution* requires the restitution of sustainable protection by some nation-state, preferably the state of origin.

On the basis of qualitative consultations with members of the Kurdish community, it was observed that most Kurdish refugees understood their experience of forced migration in terms of a century-long struggle for protection and legitimacy as a *nation*. In other words, the lack of protection that made them refugees derived from their lack of protection as a *people*. Their *refugeeness*, therefore, could only be understood within the context of two inseparable facts: a) their Kurdish national identity and b) the

politicization of that identity as a result of both its denial and suppression within the international order, and as a result of a nationalist struggle against that suppression. While this was the dominant understanding of the refugee experience, there were multiple approaches to its expression arising from regional, social, and ideological differences among Kurdish refugees. There were, in addition, a minority who expressed contrasting narratives of both the Kurdish struggle and resulting displacement. These perspectives placed less emphasis on Kurdish identity politics and more emphasis on the position of Kurdistan in the geopolitics of the international order.

On the basis of the foregoing considerations, the following problem statement was formulated:

> How is the loss of protection underlying Kurdish forced migration related to the ongoing Kurdish struggle for legitimacy in the international order, and what are the implications of this relationship for an understanding of the problem of refugee protection and for prospects for a durable solution to Kurdish vulnerability to mass displacement?

1.2 Methods

The motivation for this exploratory study of the Kurdish problem of protection came from my background in Refugee Studies. I knew little about the Kurds at the time and became interested in learning more after making contact with Kurdish refugees through my association with the local Iraqi community. An Iraqi friend, who was well respected among both Arabs and Kurds, facilitated much of my interaction with the Kurdish community in the early stages of this research. Much of my initial knowledge of the Kurdish situation was based on conversations with refugees. This inductive approach facilitated the observation of a common subjective narrative among community members wherein the individual experience of displacement was often presented as a reflection of a larger historical displacement of the Kurdish nation. When questioned about aspects of their refugee experience – from flight to resettlement – inevitably the discussion would return to the event history of the Kurdish nation.

Many Kurds can recite a relatively consistent narrative of the Kurdish political history characterized by a series of benchmark events that define the contours of their collective experience as a nation. This narrative generally begins with the Treaties of Sèvres (1920) and Lausanne (1923), when the Kurds won and lost a nation-state, moving

on to the Republic of Mahabad and more than a decade of rebellion by legendary leader Mulla Mustafa Barzani ending in calamitous defeat in 1975. These events provide the essential historical context for the narrative of the tragic history of the last two decades, characterized by the experience of total war, genocide, and mass forced migration. This event history includes the Revolution in Iran, the Iran-Iraq War, the indelible memory of Halabja, the exodus from Iraq and the creation of the safe haven. Many Kurds will also emphasize the ongoing 'invisible war' in Turkey where the army has persecuted Kurds with relative impunity using weapons supplied by Europe and the USA. The particular shape given to this event-narrative might vary according to the regional, social, or ideological background of the narrator, but in most cases it became the matrix for representing the individual refugee experience. The refugee's search for asylum became a reflection of the larger narrative in which the Kurds struggled for protection and legitimacy as a nation.

Kurds are not limited to oral history, of course, and most consultants within the community could suggest a variety of sources of published information including magazines and reports from political organizations, as well books by journalists and academics. One result of the growth of a Kurdish diaspora has been the expansion of Kurdish publishing and electronic media, which has not been possible in Kurdistan. Working first from addresses supplied by community members, I contacted a number of exile organizations in North America and Europe for information by telephone, fax, and mail. In the last five years, the internet has become a large source of information about the Kurds, often as a result of the efforts of Kurdish political and cultural organizations. The information obtained from these sources also contributed towards an understanding of Kurdish perspectives of their common predicament. Although these perspectives ranged from ideological or partisan commitment to detached criticism, the historical narrative of the Kurdish national struggle provided their common denominator.

Academic studies of the Kurdish situation have also increased rapidly during the 1990s with Kurdish Studies Institutes being established at universities in the U.S., Europe, and Australia. Kurdish students and academics are among the growing number of contributors to this literature. Given access to the instruments of imagining a national community denied to them for decades, these activists and scholars have been intent on

both challenging and reversing the marginalization of the Kurds in official histories, as well as disseminating this rediscovered heritage among Kurds in the diaspora and in Kurdistan. These efforts have been facilitated by the growing interest of non-Kurdish researchers in the cultural and political history of the Kurds whose work has amply demonstrated an empirical basis for a more prominent positioning of the Kurds in Middle Eastern Studies.

In attempting to integrate the information obtained from these sources, I found that the issue of forced migration (defined in terms of the problem of protection) provided both a unique and a useful analytical linkage between the individual perspectives of Kurdish refugees, the efforts of Kurdish activists and scholars to redefine a national historical narrative, and the cultural and political research of contributors to the expanding field of Kurdish Studies. While each of these subjects – Kurdish forced migration, Kurdish culture and social organization, and the Kurdish nationalist struggle – has received an increasing amount of isolated study, there have been fewer efforts to explore the linkages between them, particularly with the problem of protection as the unifying analytical approach.

I will begin by describing how the sources listed below were approached, and then indicate how they were organized in order to explore the Kurdish problem of protection.

The Sources:

- Qualitative Interaction With Kurdish Refugees
- Information from Kurdish Political and Cultural Organizations
- Unpublished Biography of a Kurdish Refugee
- Legal Cases in Refugee Status Determination
- Quantitative Sources of Information
- Academic Literature

Qualitative Interaction With Kurdish Refugees

> One of the opportunities – and challenges – posed by qualitative approaches is to regard our fellow humans as people instead of subjects, and to regard ourselves as humans who conduct research *among* rather than *on* them. (Wolcott, 1990:19)

Qualitative interactions with Kurdish refugees took the form of a series of informal group and individual meetings, which were most frequent during the period 1993 – 1996. Initially these discussions were facilitated by the assistance of an Iraqi translator, himself a refugee respected within the Kurdish community, and later with the assistance of Kurdish translators. The purpose of the discussions was initially explained in terms of my interest in learning about the Kurds as part of a study for a university degree program. As the scope of the study became more focussed, more specific topics for discussion were identified.

Early in these discussions, a general consensus emerged that anonymity for community consultants was the preferred approach for attribution of comments. In many Middle Eastern cultures, trust is measured in terms of personal honor rather than in signed consent forms. The commentaries of my consultants are presented anonymously to avoid the imposition of demands for written consent, which would have been perceived as culturally inappropriate, and to respect the trust these consultants placed in me in offering their candid perspectives on Kurdish political history.

In addition to these informal discussions, I regularly attended events sponsored or organized by the Kurdish community. These included community meetings, political demonstrations, and cultural festivities. The latter included weddings as well as the annual Newroz events to celebrate the Kurdish New Year. These events provided an opportunity to observe and participate in the interaction of Kurds from diverse regional, social, and ideological backgrounds, as well as the interaction between Kurds and other cultural groups.

On the basis of initial meetings and consultative interactions with individuals and groups in the Kurdish community, I decided to focus the study on the cultural politics of forced migration, rather than on refugee integration, for the following reasons. First, there was a lack of receptivity in the community to an invasive study based on questionnaires

and surveys investigating their progress in integrating locally. This reticence can be attributed to the relative newness of Kurdish communities in Canada and a general suspicion of the intentions of outsiders from official institutions, based on their own historical experiences and the nature of social relations within the societies they were forced to flee. As a result, I concluded that a study of community settlement could be more effectively undertaken at a later date, after a basis of trust had been established between refugees and researchers.

Second, while I attempted on several occasions to direct discussion towards the local dynamics of settlement and integration, consultants generally made it clear that these matters were, for them, a relatively simple matter of finding jobs and establishing themselves economically. From their perspective, the important and more complex issues had to do with the political and historical experiences that had made them refugees in the first place. There is a tendency in refugee community studies to approach issues of cultural and political history as contingent or secondary, and to place importance on those issues that a particular group of refugees shares with other refugees, such as economic and cultural integration. For refugees, the situation is often the reverse, and on the basis of these consultations, I decided to accept that perspective as an objective expression of refugee priorities equally deserving of analytical attention.

Members of the Kurdish community are, therefore, not the *subjects* of this study and are deliberately referred to as 'consultants'. Their views were sought to help shape the direction of an exploratory study drawing on a variety of sources of information. When the opinions and viewpoints of Kurdish consultants are quoted in the study, the intention is to provide a Kurdish voice or perspective on the experience of forced migration and Kurdish nationalist struggle to supplement or contrast with that of the author. An effort has been made to reflect the diversity of viewpoints present within the Kurdish community.

Information from Kurdish Political and Cultural Organizations

Representatives of Kurdish exile organizations in major cities across Canada, in the United States, in Europe, and Australia, were contacted by telephone, mail, and fax in an effort to learn more about the development and activities of the growing Kurdish

diaspora. Many of these organizations responded with packages of published information detailing their perspectives on Kurdish history, often reflecting a specific regional or ideological viewpoint. Other organizations were expressly dedicated to working outside of the established Kurdish political movements, and were devoted to the cause of cultural and political advancement for the Kurds in general. Any information used from these sources is explicitly attributed in the study.

The contours of organizational activity in the Kurdish diaspora have become more apparent with the rapid growth in access to, and usage of, the Internet. Many Kurdish organizations have established web-sites containing descriptions of their aims and activities as well as news reports and articles dealing with Kurdish issues. Academic, governmental, and international organizations have also established a significant Internet presence and their web-sites provide a source of valuable archival material as well as recently released studies and documents. Where such sources have been used, and there is no non-internet publication information, the web-source has been explicitly attributed.

Unpublished Biography of a Kurdish Refugee

This study also incorporates material contained in the, as yet, unpublished story of Muhammad Rashied Hussain. This life history was narrated in Moscow in 1994, to a Kurdish refugee, Shamal Mustapha, who began its translation into English, and allowed me to quote from it. After Mr. Mustapha resettled in Winnipeg, I assisted him in refining the translation, editing the manuscript, and preparing it for publication. Mr. Hussain, a Kurd from Iraq, experienced many of the dramatic events of recent Kurdish history, including the collapse of the Kurdish rebellions in 1976, the Iran-Iraq War, the Anfal Campaign, the Invasion of Kuwait, the failed uprisings, the mass exodus of the Kurds from Iraq, the safe haven, and a treacherous flight through Turkey, Moscow, and Eastern Europe. Mr. Hussain's narrative parallels that of the Kurdish nation since the end of the Mulla Barzani era, a connection he makes explicitly in his dedication.

> For a better understanding of the Tragedy of the Kurdish Nation by International Society, I am writing my family's tragedy as an example. (Muhammad Rashied Hussain, March 20, 1994, Moscow, Russian Federal Republic)

Legal Cases in Refugee Status Determination

Canada's Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) is responsible for evaluating refugee claims made at the Canadian border. The IRB publishes some of its decisions, made since 1991, from the Refugee Division, the Appeals Division and the Federal Court, in a legal reference publication of case digests called *RefLex*. Published cases involving claimants from Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey, not all specifically involving Kurdish claimants, were selected and categorized by ethnic and regional origin. These cases were then analyzed in order to provide an overview of regional, evidential patterns, and to investigate the conceptual basis of decision-making in cases involving Kurdish claimants. The general intent was to show how the Kurdish problem of protection and politics of identity are evaluated by Canada's refugee regime in determining the credible basis for a refugee claim.

Quantitative Sources of Information

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United States Committee for Refugee (USCR) both provide annual regional totals for refugee flows, returns, and resettlement. Figures from USCR Reports are used more extensively because of their more expansive coverage of refugee figures and their detailed regional descriptions of forced migration events and asylum procedures. These figures are used to explore the problem of protection in the contemporary context of chronic forced migration and increasingly restrictive policies on granting asylum.

Demographic data on the Kurds has been selected from a variety of secondary sources as well as from census data published by Statistics Canada. Demographic data on the Kurds is used to demonstrate how efforts at ascertaining precise numbers for the Kurds, by region or in total, reveal the contested and politicized nature of Kurdish identity. Canadian census data are used to indicate the scale of Kurdish resettlement in Canada as well as difficulties demographers have had in classifying a Kurdish identity.

Academic Literature

A broad range of social science literature has been analyzed to provide the theoretical basis for the argument linking the problem of protection, the politics of

identity, and the Kurdish predicament. This literature can be divided into three interdisciplinary categories. The first is 'Refugee Studies' comprising historical and theoretical work dealing with forced migration and the development of an international refugee regime and its ability to extend protection to refugees. The second is "Kurdish Studies" comprising a diverse body of work from anthropologists, historians, and political scientists dealing with the social organization, culture, and political history of the Kurdish struggle toward national integration. The third category refers to the contributions of a diverse group of social scientists dealing with the study of ethnicity and nationalism. This literature is not reviewed in a separate chapter, but is reviewed throughout the body of the study in order to relate theoretical concerns directly to the core argument. This strategy is employed both to economize on space and to preserve the conceptual continuity of the study.

1.3 Structure of The Thesis

The Kurdish Problem of protection is explored in three dimensions. In Part I, this study explores the problem of protection in the context of an international refugee regime and the current experience of Kurdish forced migration relying on qualitative consultations with Kurdish refugees, on data from government and NGO sources, and on the academic literature of Refugee Studies. Chapter 2 explores the development of a refugee regime and institutions within the international order to provide protection and seek solutions to problems of forced migration. In chapter 3, this study explores the search of Kurdish refugees for protection in Europe and North America since the Gulf War in 1991. The objective in Part I is demonstrate the transformation of approaches to refugee protection, the increasing restrictiveness of access to asylum, and the Kurdish experience of forced migration within a global refugee dilemma.

In Part II, this study explores the problem of protection from a cultural perspective in the context of a categorical order in which protection and legitimacy are defined in collective terms. Chapter 4, examines the historical and anthropological literature on ethnicity and nationalism, to demonstrate the relevance of a 'national order of things' to the problem of forced migration and the nationalist struggle for legitimacy. In Chapter 5, this study explores the contested boundaries of Kurdish identity, the mythic

histories which reinforce a sense of shared Kurdish predicament, and the social transformation of the problem of protection in Kurdistan. The objective of Part II will be to demonstrate a linkage between the politicization of a cultural identity and the social relations that guarantee protection and legitimacy.

In Part III, this study explores the problem of protection in the context of the political, cultural, and economic denial of protection to the Kurds in each of the states which incorporated them after World War I, and of the Kurdish struggle to achieve legitimacy and protection within the international order. Chapter 6 explores the structural denial of protection to the Kurds, the development of an indigenous nationalist ethos known as *Kurdayeti*, and the social organization of the Kurdish nationalist struggle. In chapter 7, this study analyzes the geopolitical context of the Kurdish struggle and the underlying causes of the persistent vulnerability of the Kurds to forced migration. Finally, Chapter 8 will summarize the main findings of the study and explore their implications for the problem of protection in general, and for durable solutions to Kurdish vulnerability to forced migration in particular.

PART I

THE KURDS AS REFUGEES

> The term "refugee" conjures up a melange of bleak images: a teeming boat adrift on the South China Sea, a bloated child in Bangladesh, a shantytown reduced to rubble in Beirut. Determining conceptually (if not politically) who is, or is not, a refugee would appear to be a relatively simple matter. A refugee, we might say, is a person fleeing life-threatening conditions. In daily parlance and for journalistic purposes this is roughly the meaning of refugeehood. (Shacknove, 1985:274)

The term *refugee* was originally used in reference to the French Huguenots who fled to England after the repeal of the Edict of Nantes in 1665 (Dillon, 1998). Despite divergent approaches to definition since that time, the *refugee* has become a global phenomena. The common or vernacular understanding of *refugee*, as described by Shacknove above, suggests a universalized identity applicable to any involuntary migrant, without spatial or temporal limitations. Kurdish refugees can share an identity with Bosnian, Vietnamese, Ethiopian, or Guatemalan refugees just as they can with Jewish, Moslem, or Christian refugees from preceding millennia, no matter what the particular causes of flight may be.

The modern refugee phenomena is distinguished from those which preceded it by its definition as a specific problem area within an evolving international, legal *regime.* A regime can be generally understood as an "institutionalized system of cooperation with respect to a given issue area." (Kegley and Wittkopf, 1989:27). Krasner gives the standard definition of a regime.

> Regimes can be defined as sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given area of international relations. Principles are beliefs or fact, causation, and rectitude. Norms are standards of behaviour defined in terms of rights and obligations. Rules are specific prescriptions or proscriptions for action. Decision-making procedures are prevailing practices for making and implementing collective choice. (Krasner, 1982:186)

An international refugee regime was developed after the creation of the League of Nations and is currently represented by United Nations Protocols and Conventions

governing both the determination of refugee status and the rights and obligations relevant to the protection of status-holders. In legal terms, *refugee* applies only to a subset of involuntary migrants who have satisfied specific status determination criteria (Goodwin-Gill, 1983). According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees:

> ... the term "refugee" shall apply to any person who: ... owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. (UNHCR, 1988:58)

Any human being can, in principle, qualify for refugee status so long as his or her particular experience corresponds with these universalized criteria.. Once a positive status determination is made, a refugee identity does provide some measure of entitlement which makes it a privileged identity relative to other displacees whose determination is negative or who lack access to determination procedures (Zetter, 1985). It is, therefore, not simply an identity contingent upon a particular history, but an autonomous identity linking status holders with each other across historical, geographical, and cultural distances, with a unique place in international jurisprudence and policymaking.

The approach of social scientists is less arbitrary than the vernacular conception, but less restrictive than legalistic definitions. The body of work generated in Refugee Studies has provided long-needed empirical and historical data related to the dynamics of refugee movements as well as critical analyses of the international system of response (Robinson, 1990). The basic assumption of Refugee Studies is that the *refugee*, as a subject of study, should be distinguished from other migrants according to phenomenological or analytical criteria, which may vary according to the disciplinary focus. Analytical criteria include such factors as objective 'push factors' (war, disasters, government policies) (Kunz, 1973, 1981), legal definitions, or spatial requirements such as the crossing of an international frontier. Those searching for objective criteria conceive of the refugee as a discrete type of migrant on a continuum (Hansen and Oliver-Smith, 1982) between *reactive* migrants and *proactive* migrants (Richmond, 1988), between status refugees and illegal immigrants, or between refugees and internal displacees.

Phenomenological criteria, on the other hand, distinguish the refugee as a qualitatively unique class of migratory experience. This approach (Keller, 1975; Baker, 1983, Stein, 1986) focuses on the effects and impacts of the refugee experience. These include an element of fear or trauma that provides a psychological and inherently subjective component.

> Laws and treaties limit the refugee category to reduce the obligations and duties of governments. For researchers who are concerned with the refugee experience or behaviour, these legal distinctions are relatively unimportant. For social scientists the refugee category is defined by the trauma and stresses, persecution and danger, losses and isolation, uprooting and change of the refugee experience. (Stein, 1986:6)

The development of the *refugee* as a universalized problem area has been shaped by all these conceptions: the vernacular emphasis on deserving victimhood, the legalistic emphasis on objective, defining-criteria, and the often politicized evaluation of subjective qualities such as fear and persecution. Chapter 2 will explore the development of a refugee regime within the international order to respond to the problem of forced migration and analyze how that regime has come to define the problem of protection. In Chapter 3, this study explores the contemporary search for asylum by Kurdish refugees as well as their resettlement and community organization in Canada. It will be demonstrated that the protective regime established within the international order is increasingly unable to respond effective to a global problem of forced migration for refugees generally, and for Kurdish refugees in particular. In addition, it will be shown how many Kurdish refugees are determined to pursue a broader conception of the problem of protection than that which currently characterizes the refugee regime.

CHAPTER 2

THE REFUGEE REGIME: THE PROBLEM OF PROTECTION IN THE INTERNATIONAL ORDER

In this study, the *international order* refers to the regimes and institutions created to be the instruments of cooperation and collaboration among states at the international level. For an understanding of the problem of protection as it applies to forced migration, the regimes of particular relevance are the human rights regime and the refugee regime. The international institution of paramount importance is the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The core of the human rights regime is the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which defines the rights of the individual and, by extension, the correlative duties of states to protect those rights. The relationship is not simply dyadic but can be envisaged as "a triangulated relationship between two parties with a reciprocal relationship of rights and duties and an over-arching third party with a duty to enforce that relationship (Blum, 1995).

The contemporary refugee regime is a direct outgrowth of Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights according to which "Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution." (United Nations, 1948) The reciprocal duty of nation-states is specified as that of *non-refoulement* – the duty not to forcibly return refugees to the states they have fled. Human rights, Warner (1998) argues, are normative codifications that apply to individuals in a functioning society. The refugee is, by definition, external to such a society.

> The refuge represents a temporal rift, a radical discontinuity with the past. All people are of concern to the human rights regime, refugees are in a legal limbo. Refugees are neither members of a stable, original community nor are they stable members of a new community. ... Refugees are a specific category of people because the very situation they find themselves in is the result and continuation of dysfunctional politics. (Warner, 1998:13)

The refugee regime can be seen, therefore, as a special case of protection – the right to seek asylum – which applies to individuals who become refugees when the State

fails in some way to protect their other human rights (Blum, 1995). This triangulated relationship is graphically represented in figure 1. According to this idealized set of

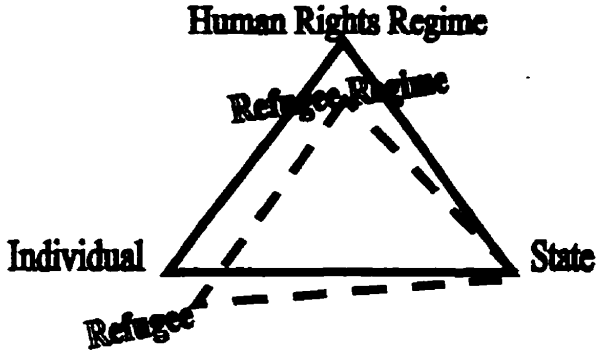

Figure 1: The International Order

reciprocal relationships, the human rights regime supplies the overarching rights that the State has a duty to protect. When this protection is lost in the case of the refugee, the international order, as represented by the UNHCR, has a duty to provide protection until the normative relationship between individual and state can be reestablished.

The historical development of the refugee regime, however, took place over most of this century and has only taken on a universalist character since the Second World War. In fact, a closer examination of the original 1951 UN Protocol (Appendix 1) reveals its historically contingent character. Article A (1) explicitly links the new status determination instrument to earlier protocols such as the 'Nansen Passport' under the League of Nations and the 'Certificate of Eligibility' issued by the International Refugee Organization. The intention was "to ensure the continuity of international protection of refugees who became the concern of the international community at various earlier periods" (UNHCR, 1988:10) by recognizing them as 'statute' refugees.

Article A (2), on the other hand, introduced a temporal limitation to "events occurring before 1 January 1951" demonstrating the reactive nature of the new protocol to particular displacement emergencies. Article B (1) allowed contracting States to make a declaration at the time of accession of their understanding of this limitation as referring to either "events occurring in Europe before 1 January 1951" or "events occurring in Europe or elsewhere before 1 January 1951." Turkey was one of seven states that limited

their accession to the 1951 Protocol to refugees displaced from Europe only. While the UNHCR was to take on an increasingly universal mandate for refugee protection, it was initially, like the regime that preceded it, a reactive response to an historically and geographically defined problem of forced migration.

2.1 Historical Development of the Problem of Protection

The unprecedented scale of displacement and statelessness resulting from imperial collapse during and after the First World War immediately threatened the emerging order of nation-states in Europe. The most important sources of this displacement were from the European periphery and beyond. The Russian Revolution left about 1.5 million Russian refugees stranded throughout Europe and the Far East between 1918 and 1922. As a result of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, by 1923 there were about 320,000 Armenians as well as about 30,000 Assyrians (Holborn, 1975) and other displaced groups scattered throughout the European periphery. Until that time, refugee relief had been largely the responsibility of small private organizations and voluntary agencies with limited funding supplied by the country of refuge. The foremost international relief agency at that time was the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) whose mandate was largely humanitarian and dedicated to civilian victims or prisoners of war. None of these agencies were capable of dealing with the massive levels of displacement then occurring.

The League of Nations was established without any provisions to deal with problems of displacement. In 1921 it gave Nansen the title of "High Commissioner on behalf of the League in connection with the problems of Russian refugees in Europe", making him the "first international civil servant to deal with the refugee problem" (Holborn, 1975:7). His office was successively expanded over the next decade to address the problems of Armenian, Turkish, Assyrian, and, later, German refugees.

The issue of protection was of primary importance, although none of the legal instruments of the time defined the nature of protection. Nevertheless, "refugees were themselves defined by groups and categories outside their countries of origin and not enjoying the protection of their government" (Goodwin-Gill, 1988:153). Dr. Nansen's directives were to try to achieve a permanent solution through repatriation to Russia,

employment in the host country, or immigration to another country (Holborn, 1975). Because of the principle of national sovereignty, the regime, despite Nansen's extraordinary efforts, was unable to deal with the root causes of displacement. When new national entities such as the Soviet Union, and the Republics of Turkey and Greece refused to accept the return of displaced populations, the Nansen office had no recourse but to find other means of protection and solution.

The Nansen Office did achieve substantial results in its efforts to resettle large numbers of displaced peoples. In doing so, however, it reinforced the legitimacy of ethnically based nation-states. Thus, 1,300,000 ethnic Greeks were moved from Asia Minor – where they had deep ancestral roots – to Greece, 400,000 Turks were transferred from the Balkans to Turkey, 125,000 Bulgar refugees were resettled in Bulgaria, and Armenian refugees were resettled in the new Soviet Republic of Armenia (Holborn, 1975a). The situation was, of course, far more problematic for displaced peoples such as the Assyrians, Kurds, and later, the Jews, who did not fit into the new national mosaic.

To facilitate the travel necessary for such resettlement and to protect those yet to be resettled, Nansen devised a groundbreaking form of international documentation that became widely known as the *Nansen Passport.* This document was less a 'passport' than a 'certificate of identity' (Holborn, 1975). It was awarded not on the basis of individual need, but "to specific national groups who had lost the protection of their state of origin: to Russian refugees (in 1922), Armenians (in 1924), Assyrians, Assyro-Chaldeans, Syrians, Kurds and Turks (all in 1928)" (Joly, 1992:7).

This approach continued with each successive organization until the creation of the UNHCR. The Nansen Passport was superseded by the London Travel Document, initially developed in response to the specific plight of Jewish refugees in Europe, but later awarded to refugees from the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War. The League of Nations' 'High Commission for Refugees (Jewish and Other) coming from Germany' (1933), the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees (1938), the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (1945), and the International Refugee Organization (1947) were all primarily oriented towards the resettlement of displaced groups on an ethnic, religious, or national basis (Joly, 1992).

By evaluating the need for protection and awarding international identity certificates on the basis of categorical rather than individual need, the Nansen Passport implicitly recognized displaced peoples as anomalies in an international order that was still in a transitional phase. The source of their displacement was not misfortune or persecution at a personal level, but the fact that their communal identities had yet to be successfully incorporated into that order. Implicitly, therefore, the problem was not seen to be one of the *refugee*, but one of *statelessness* and, by extension, of an international order that created the anomalous condition of the stateless person.

The refugee regime that began with the Nansen Office and culminated with the UNHCR was fundamentally reactive to spatially and temporally defined emergencies. Each of the refugee agencies in the inter-war years were successful in according transitional protection to a large number of displaced persons in Europe and its periphery. These agencies were less successful in the search for durable solutions and each new organization had to respond not only to new displacement emergencies but also had to continue extending protection to stateless persons from previous conflicts. The UNHCR began in similar fashion as a basically reactive agency, but has gradually taken on a universal and open-ended mandate to offer protection to refugees on a global basis.

2.2 The United Nations High Commission for Refugees

During the first session of the UN General Assembly, representatives of the UK, the USA, France and other countries called for an international organization "in the interest of humanity and social stability" to respond to a refugee dilemma which was "a source of disturbance in the relationships of the nations" (Holborn, 1975:27). The goal was not to create a permanent refugee agency, but rather to restructure the existing institution, the IRO, in a scaled-down form to deal with the persistent problem of displaced persons throughout Europe. The result was the 1951 Convention, which "in original purpose and intent, was essentially an instrument to establish, confirm or clarify the legal status of a known population of displaced persons." (Goodwin-Gill, 1988:166)

The negotiations over the protocol were fractious and polarized, a situation that contributed to the ambiguous character of the resulting agreement. From the beginning, there was strong disagreement concerning the intended lifespan of the agency with France

arguing for an open-ended mandate and the USA taking the position that the agency should be limited to finding solutions for residual IRO refugees. A compromise was arranged whereby the General Assembly would review the work of the agency after three years and would determine the need for a renewed mandate. This debate over duration, however, was a reflection of the more generally divergent attitudes concerning the role of the new agency – in particular, as it related to the provision of protection and the search for solutions. Nowhere was this more evident than in the debate over defining refugee status, as Holborn describes in her study of the UNHCR.

> The one solution ... was to draft a "universal definition" that would specify the characteristics of refugees to be included within the Statute or the Convention; the alternative was to draft a "definition by categories" that would enumerate the specific groups to be covered. Of the "definition by categories" it was said that this was the approach that had been used in all prior international instruments pertaining to refugees. (Holborn, 1975:77)

Those in favor of the categorical approach, led principally by the USA, argued that it was necessary to secure the support of member nations who would be reluctant to commit themselves to an open-ended agency of unknown scope or duration. If and when new refugee dilemmas arose, these could be dealt with on a case by case basis. France, on the other hand, argued for a linkage between refugee status and human rights law, particularly with regard to a general human right to seek asylum (Hathaway, 1988). Others argued that the categorical approach, where status was decided by the specific characteristics of specific groups of refugees, had made the IRO very inefficient. Given that the UNHCR was intended to be a smaller organization, it should have a simpler universal definition which would not necessitate complicated legal machinery, would be consistent with the broad humanitarian aims of the UN, and could be flexibly applied to new refugee situations as they emerged (Holborn, 1975). The definition that finally emerged from these deliberations was a contradictory amalgamation of these approaches.

The most problematic aspect of the refugee definition contained in the 1951 UN Convention was the phrase, "well-founded fear of being persecuted." In the immediate post-war years, the IRO had begun relying on the standard of persecution in order to extend its protection to dissidents from the newly formed 'Eastern Bloc' (Hathaway, 1988). This standard satisfied the prevailing interests of the USA in the new agency – the

condemnation of the Soviet Union and its satellite states and the resettlement of its dissidents in the west. In deliberations over the definition, the Soviets had argued strenuously against inclusion of those that fled their countries for ideological reasons and advocated only for the inclusion of stateless persons. The new definition excluded the wider category of statelessness and, instead, specified a fear of persecution as the basis of status determination.

Proponents of the UNHCR had hoped for a small agency that would not, like the IRO, be given the responsibility for meeting the needs of large numbers of individual refugees. Paragraph 2 of the Statute states that the responsibility of the UNHCR "shall relate, as a rule, to groups and categories of refugees" (Holborn, 1975:90). Determining eligibility on a group basis would allow a simpler administrative framework that would decide whether or not the individual was a member of an eligible group. However, the provision for a "well-founded fear of being persecuted" amplified the individualistic orientation and complicated the evaluative dimension of the refugee regime, as is apparent from the UNHCR's handbook on status determination.

> Since fear is subjective, the definition involves a subjective element in the person applying for recognition as a refugee. Determination of refugee status will therefore primarily require an evaluation of the applicant's statements rather than a judgement on the situation prevailing in his country of origin.
> To the element of fear ... is added the qualification "well-founded". This implies that it is not only the frame of mind of the person concerned that determines his refugee status, but that this frame of mind must be supported by an objective situation. (UNHCR, 1988:11-12)

While this emphasis on a subjective fear of persecution supported by a prevailing objective situation was adequate for the demands of cold war political expediency, it was far less suitable for the forced migration crises resulting from independence struggles and civil wars in post-colonial states during the 1950s and 1960s. The problem was partly reconciled by the introduction of the 'good offices' function in the late 1950s that allowed the UNHCR to deal with groups and categories without making an individual eligibility determination. Nevertheless, the nature of refugee crises increasingly shifted from an east-west axis to a north-south axis, forcing the revision of the UN Protocol in 1967 (Appendix 1) to remove the temporal limitation and to acknowledge the global nature of

the refugee dilemma. Turkey, along with four other states (Brazil, Italy, Malta, and Paraguay) acceded to the new Convention with an expressed declaration maintaining a geographical limitation to refugee-producing events in Europe. In general, the 1967 Convention has set the international standard for refugee definitions, although the Organization for African Unity has endorsed a more expansive protocol.

The ambiguity arising from the clause stipulating a "well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality or political opinion" has persisted in the revised protocol. On the one hand, the convention recognizes that protection is guaranteed on the basis of nationality defined by individual citizenship within a nation-state. This is indicated by the provision that a refugee must be unable or, owing to a fear of persecution, unwilling to avail himself of the protection of his country of origin, as described in the UNHCR handbook.

> Being *unable* to avail himself of such protection implies circumstances that are beyond the will of the person concerned. There may, for example, be a state of war, civil war or other grave disturbance, which prevents the country of nationality from extending protection or makes such protection ineffective. Protection by the country of nationality may also have been denied to the applicant. Such denial of protection may confirm or strengthen the applicant's fear of persecution, and may indeed be an element of persecution. (UNHCR, 1988:23)

On the other hand, the Convention recognizes that protection can be lost as a result of membership in a "nationality" defined by ethnicity or language. The UNHCR guidelines are quite specific in terms of how the concept of 'nationality' is to be interpreted under the Refugee Convention:

> The term "nationality" in this context is not to be understood only as "citizenship". It refers also to membership of an ethnic or linguistic group and may occasionally overlap with the term "race". Persecution for reasons of nationality may consist of adverse attitudes and measures directed against a national (ethnic, linguistic) minority and in certain circumstances the fact of belonging to such a minority may in itself give rise to well-founded fear of persecution. (UNHCR, 1988:18)

As a result, the Refugee Convention has become a malleable instrument accentuating either the individualistic aspect of persecution under objective circumstances where a state has denied protection to its citizens, or a subjective aspect whereby persecution may be a question of perception among cultural groups denied

protection within a nation-state. According to Holborn, the standard of persecution has given the High Commissioner the difficult task of reconciling its protection mandate with a recognition of the political factors underlying displacement.

> The inclusion of this clause within the Statute definition has had the effect of requiring the HC to take cognizance of the political situations which produce refugees, while at the same time his mandate requires that his actions must be non-political. In other words he must minister to the human needs of refugees without taking sides in the political controversies that made them refugees. (Holborn, 1975:89)

This delicate balancing act has been a significant factor in giving the UNHCR a longevity not enjoyed by its predecessors. However, the UNHCR has also had to cope with another, inherently political, ambiguity. Despite American opposition to defining the UNHCR's responsibilities as anything other than protection, the 1950 Statute gave the agency two functions: 1) to provide international protection and 2) to seek permanent solutions for the refugees through repatriation or assimilation within new national communities (Holborn, 1975). The principle elements of UNHCR's protective function are to promote the ratification of international conventions by states and to insure that contracting states fulfill the obligations they have undertaken. This humanitarian function of the UNHCR is generally described in terms of a mandate "to facilitate palliative protection for desperate people until and unless they are able to go home in dignity." (Hathaway, 1995:292). While Hathaway argues that this remains the core function of the UNHCR, Holborn emphasizes the role the High Commission plays in seeking solutions.

> Protection is not considered a permanent solution since it simply seeks to provide an international substitute for the diplomatic and consular protection of a state which refugees by definition lack. The purpose of international protection is to give refugees a recognized legal status analogous to that of other nationals living abroad. "Permanent solutions," ... refers to the economic and social integration of refugees in countries that have offered them asylum. ... It is only when a refugee becomes a national of a state that he no longer needs international protection, and ceases to come within the mandate of the HC. (Holborn, 1975:87)

The role of the UNHCR in seeking solution is framed in the 1951 Convention in terms of facilitating cooperation among nation states. Its mandate in this regard was essentially non-operational and oriented towards non-intervention. To a large extent, this

was a reflection of Cold War politics, as is indicated by the nature of solutions the UNHCR facilitated. Relatively little repatriation took place during the Cold War era (Guest, 1998) and resettlement of refugees in North America was the dominant durable solution employed. Coles (1988) argues that this 'exilic bias.' institutionalized a transitional rather than a structural approach to protection and solution.

> Firstly, the consequential or contingent aspects of the refugee problem were made the basic aspects. The basic refugee problem, therefore, was not about exile but about admission and stay abroad. It followed that the basic solution was principally external settlement, eventual return being a possible solution of equal order but not of equal practical significance. ... Secondly, the adversarial approach to definition (i.e., the problem must concern persecution and not something more complex or different, as in the case of war) ensured that the element of the cooperation of the country of nationality was effectively excluded from thinking *a priori*. ... The difficulty raised by the debate over causes or the possibility of preventive or remedial measures was dodged by the expedient of calling the question of causes or such measures a 'political' matter. ... The term 'humanitarian', of course, was no more than a rhetorical device for avoiding controversy over questions that were political by their nature. In addition, the refugee problem came to be seen as only the problem of the refugee, the wider aspects of the problem disappearing entirely from view, relegated to the area of other (and more general) concerns. (Coles, 1988:213-214)

According to Coles, the detachment of the idea of protection from solution has transformed the UNHCR's protection mandate into a "static and disconnected statement of individual rights ungoverned by solution" (Coles, 1988:215). Other refugee specialists (Hathaway, 1995; Blum, 1995; Warner, 1998) argue that in order for the UNHCR to adequately perform its role in providing palliative protection, it must remain apolitical. Blum argues that the "refugee legal regime is not concerned with the causes of refugee displacement ... but solely to determine if the refugee is deserving of international protection (Blum, 1995:296). The only 'coercive power' granted to the refugee regime, she argues, is the ability to grant refugee status. Both Warner (1998) and Blum situate the *duty to intervene* to enforce state-based protection with the United Nations generally and the High Commissioner for Human Rights in particular.

When the dyadic relationship between the individual and the state breaks down and protection of basic human rights is lost, the international order, through the regimes

established to regulate the actions of states, incurs a duty to ensure that this normative protective relationship is reestablished (Blum, 1995). The capacity of the United Nations to enforce observance of human rights is limited, however, as indicated by the fact the human rights machinery responsible for addressing human rights abuses only receives one percent of the UN budget (Hathaway, 1995). The result, according to a former UNHCR official, is a gap between the rights guaranteed to individuals or refugees and their enforcement within the international order.

> A society of sovereign but interdependent States might well be expected to confer responsibilities on its agencies, but not necessarily to create a parallel system of obligation. The result is a gap between institutional roles and legal obligations, between refugee and refuge, between *non-refoulement* and asylum, between protection and solutions, and often, finally, between the individual and the ideal of fundamental human rights regardless of nationality or status. (Goodwin-Gill, 1988:170)

Hathaway agrees that "strict respect for sovereignty, coupled with a willingness to disregard that norm only when some form of self-interest stirs powerful states into motion, has meant that there is a huge dichotomy between the rhetoric and reality of human rights law." (Hathaway, 1995:290) Nevertheless, international interventions within a sovereign state as a direct result of forced migration have become more common since the end of the Cold War. In all cases – the Safe Haven in Iraqi Kurdistan (1991 and after), repatriation to Cambodia (1992-1993), the Safe Havens in Bosnia (1992-1994), and in repatriation of refugees to Rwanda both before and after the 1994 genocide – the lead agency was the UNHCR. In each case, refugees were repatriated to the countries they had fled *before* either the conflict they had fled had been resolved, or the political situations under which they had been persecuted had substantially changed (Guest, 1998).

The pursuit of a repatriation solution under the justification of 'a right to remain' is the subject of an ongoing and often acrimonious debate between specialists in refugee law, NGOs, and the UNHCR. Critics (Hathaway, 1995, Blum, 1995) argue that citing a 'right to remain' to justify 'in country protection' is a strategic inversion of the right to seek asylum guaranteed under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This new operational capacity of the UNHCR, encouraged by the UN General Assembly, both absolves nation-states of their duty to offer asylum to refugees and undermines the UNHCR's responsibility to provide palliative protection to refugees by exposing them to

the dangers they originally fled. Those who defend the new operational role of the UNHCR (Jaeger, 1995; Guest, 1998 – both former UNHCR officials) argue that this is the best option left to the organization in situations where numbers of refugees are overwhelming, asylum opportunities are restricted, or conditions in the border zones where refugee camps are concentrated are dangerous. While a complete analysis of this debate is beyond the scope of this study, an exploration of the development of a global forced migration dilemma will indicate the conditions under which the role of the UNHCR is being transformed and the context in which contemporary Kurdish displacement is taking place.

2.3 The Creation of a Global Refugee Problem

The refugee problem began to take on a chronic and global character during the 1970s, signaling a transition from events producing localized displacement to a global migration dilemma. In part, this was a result of the numbers involved. In 1951, the UNHCR estimated that there were 1 million refugees under its mandate (more than 80 percent of whom were in Europe) and a little more than 2,000,000 by 1953 (Holborn, 1975). Over the next two decades, although refugee numbers increased dramatically during specific mass displacement events, a chronic refugee problem on a global scale had yet to develop. For 1976, the UNHCR provided an estimated total of 2.8 million refugees under its mandate, a figure not substantially higher than those in the 1950s. Global totals would never be so low again and, by 1983, they had increased to 11 million, largely as a result of war in Afghanistan and Southeast Asia (UNHCR, 1993).

The United States Committee for Refugees (USCR) provides global data for the period of 1987 to 1997 during which figures range from 13 to 18 million (Table 1). Also included are figures for those in 'refugee-like circumstances' – individuals who are stateless or for others reasons do not meet determination criteria – and for internal displacees whose numbers can only be estimated. Within this data are refugee populations whose need for protection has persisted throughout the period, such as Palestinians, Afghanis and Iraqis, while others have been reduced in number through

Table 1. Refugees and Forced Migrants

Year	Total Refugees	Refugee-Like Circumstances*	Internally Displaced*
1987	13,300,000	>2,112,000	>17,000,000
1988	14,400,000	>2,734,000	>14,820,000
1989	15,100,000	>2,400,000	>32,799,000
1990	16,700,000	> 3,136,000	>21,003,000
1991	16,600,000	>4,145,800	>23,013,000
1992	17,600,000	>3.991,000	>39,204,000
1993	16,300,000	>4,342,160	>33,610,000
1994	16,300,000	>3,150,000	>26,353,000
1995	15,300,000		
1996	14,500,000	>2,909,292	>35,474,000
1997	13,600,000	>3,910,000	>32,848,000

* USCR emphasizes the uncertainty of many of these figures and offers a range of figures for several locations. The numbers given above are an approximate indication of the lowest range.

Source: Compiled from USCR data, 1988 – 1998

repatriation or resettlement. The persistence of the former and the replacement of resolved crises by mass displacement events elsewhere, have ensured that the low end of the refugee population has remained in the range of 13 to 15 million world-wide since the mid-1980s, reaching much higher levels during acute crisis periods. Clearly, the refugee problem has become a constant feature of the modern international order.

The globalization of the refugee problem is also due to the fact that during the same period the wealthier nations of Western Europe, North America, and Australia have been transformed from funders and power brokers behind refugee protection, to countries of first or second asylum. Countries such as France and Germany have long been on the front lines of refugee movements, but others, such as in Scandinavia, the U.K., or North America, were relatively sheltered from mass population movements until the 1980s. All participated in resettlement programs through the UNHCR for targeted vulnerable populations such as Hungarians and Czechs in the 1960s, Ugandan Asians and Chileans in the 1970s, and most extensively, with refugees from Southeast Asia after 1975. It was with the latter that resettlement countries began to institutionalize policies and processes aimed at regulating the absorption and integration of refugees. Refugee status

determination procedures and institutions, generally modelled on the UNHCR, were established at national and even municipal levels to provide the administrative capacity to respond to the refugee problem as an ongoing global issue, rather than as an ad hoc response to particular displacement events.

Asylum seekers can now be found in almost every state in the world. The creation of a global forced migration phenomenon is a result of a combination of complex processes of social change, which merit a separate study. In general, a chronic refugee problem has been produced by the globalization of conflict during the Cold War, the development of a global weapons market, the collapse of local economies as a result of war and/or ongoing underdevelopment, and the lack of resolution of many conflicts whose origins date back to the creation of the UNHCR or before. Refugees are able and willing to travel greater distances as a result not only of improved transportation facilities, but also as a result of the transnational extension of social networks and the expanding economies of 'migrant-smuggling' thriving along the increasingly restrictive boundaries of Europe and North America.

Table 2 shows the number of applicants for asylum in selected European countries over a ten-year period. The table distinguishes first between countries labelled as 'transit' destinations – those with no or limited opportunities for local resettlement – and then between various geographical regions. Of the transit nations, the appearance of a decline in applicants during the 1990s is somewhat misleading in that all three countries have taken measures to limit the access of asylum seekers to status determination systems. Austria, often labelled 'the waiting room of Europe,' began introducing restrictive measures in 1991, such as disallowing asylum applications at the border, refusing applications to those who travelled through 'safe-third countries,' and instituting visa requirements for nations such as Turkey, which are consistent sources of asylum seekers. Italy took similar steps beginning in 1992 and turned 30,000 asylum seekers away at the border. The Greek government insists on third country resettlement for all those it does allow into the determination process, has frequently expelled asylum seekers from Turkey, and generally issues only temporary residence permits to asylum seekers rather

Table 2. Applicants for Asylum in Selected Countries: 1988 To 1997

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
TRANSIT										
Austria (1)	15,800	21,882	22,789	27,308	16,238	4,744	5,082	5,920	6,991	6,719
Greece	3,992	2,100	6,188	2,672	1,900	800	1,277		1,635	4,376
Italy	13,000	13,900	3,376	26,472	2,493	1,646	1,766	1,732	675	1,858
W. EUROPE										
Germany (2)	103,100	121,300	193,063	256,112	438,191	322,599	127,210	127,937	149,200	151,700
Switzerland	16,726	24,425	35,836	41,629	18,138	24,739	16,134	17,021	18,001	23,982
France (3)	34,352	61,422	54,800	47,400	28,873	27,564	26,044	20,170	17,200	21,000
Netherlands	7,500	13,898	21,208	21,615	20,300	35,400	52,576	29,300	22,900	34,443
Belgium	5,100	8,181	12,871	15,291	17,754	26,882	14,353	11,400	12,232	11,787
UK (4)	5,700	16,800	38,200	73,400	32,300	28,000	42,200	55,000	27,900	32,500
NORDIC										
Sweden	19,600	30,335	29,418	27,323	84,000	37,600	18,640	9,047	5,753	9,662
Norway		4,400	727	4,569	5,238	12,876	3,379	1,400	1,778	2,271
Finland	64	175	2,725	2,137	3,455	2,023	836	854	711	973
Denmark	4,700	4,600	5,292	4,600	13,900	14,347	6,651	5,100	5,896	5,100
NON-EUROPE										
Canada	45,000	19,900	36,700	32,300	37,700	21,100	22,006	25,800	25,600	24,289
USA (5)	60,726	101,679	73,637	56,300	104,000	144,200	146,500	154,000	128,200	84,800
Australia	521	920		1,320	2,957				7,358	

This table shows the number of asylum applicants filing claims in selected countries during the period 1988 through 1997. Source: Compiled from USCR data, 1988 – 1998

1. Data do not include dependents.
2. Since July 1993, data include dependents only if a separate application is filed. Data for 1996-97 include reopened applications.
3. Data do not include accompanied minor dependents
4. Data for 1996-97 do not include dependents.
5. Data include reopened applications, do not include dependents, and are based on USA Fiscal year.

than awarding full refugee status (USCR, 1994).

Table 2 also shows that the principle destinations for asylum seekers in Europe have long been Germany, France and Switzerland, and, more recently, the Netherlands, the UK, Belgium, and Sweden. West Germany, during the 1970s and 1980s, had perhaps the most liberal asylum laws of any European country and was the only nation in the world that provided constitutional protection for asylum seekers. Although Germany's recognition rate of refugee claims was not high, until the late 1980s those whose claims were denied were not expelled. However, with the social pressures caused by unification, the ongoing influx of migrants from Turkey, refugees from the Balkans, and attacks against both asylum seekers and foreigners generally, Germany has also begun to restrict access to its asylum system. Numbers of applicants have remained high because the level of social services available to applicants is still relatively good, the likelihood of deportation comparatively low, and because the increasing restrictiveness of transit countries has channeled more refugees to Germany.

Switzerland had, during the 1980s, the highest ratio of asylum seekers to local population in all of Europe (USCR, 1986). As Table 2 shows, a succession of restrictive measures since 1987 (including deportation of rejected claimants, safe third country provisions, reduced access to appeals, visa impositions, and refusal of entry at the border without proper documentation) have not succeeded in significantly reducing the number of applicants. However, by 1989 acceptance rates for applicants reached an all-time low (USCR, 1990). France, like Germany, had relatively liberal asylum procedures until 1984 when the anti-immigration lobby began to promote more restrictive measures. While the number of applicants has remained high, the success rate has been gradually lowering and by 1993 was at 28 percent (USCR, 1994). In 1992, France was the first country to sign the Schengen Agreement that standardized visa requirements and provided criteria to determine which countries would determine asylum cases. France also levies fines against airlines that carry asylum seekers without proper documentation. Even countries that did not sign the Schengen agreement introduced similar restrictive measures during the 1990s, particularly after the large influxes of refugees from the former Yugoslavia beginning in 1991.

Table 3. Total Refugees Resettled by Country

	1975-85	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	RATIO
Austria	14,171	71	1,432	1,113	1,785	2.070	3,678	2,469	2,289	1,193	1:265
Germany	54,224	11,124	8,893	8,231	7,621	5,991	6.518	11.597	9,189	16,396	1:631
Switzerland	18,336	936	820	830	680	821	808	1,158	8,839	4,364	1:191
France	145,959	13,259	10,645	12,848	8,794	8,711	13,073	16,112	10,943	9,914	1:245
Netherlands	10,707	9,800	2,027	2,381	2,301	2,755	1,709	3,337	4,553	10,338	1:379
UK	NA	NA	NA	NA	1,000	1,587	1,100	3,700	16,435	10,880	1:1,272
Sweden	36,789	6,241	13,419	16,545	17,601	23,961	12,839	18,663	12,791	36,482	1:47
Norway	7,263	763	835	1,043	1,350	7,450	3,767	2,872	2,830	1,489	1:149
Denmark	14,512	8,962	9,229	2.726	2,196	NA	747	509	4,100	3,237	1:139
Canada	178,781	16,456	22,290	23,348	28,588	35,000	37,820	45,925	36,409	18,470	1:68
USA.	1,030,429	70,583	70,831	69,921	83,420	106.250	122,326	115,511	137,395	128,811	1:140
Australia	127,767	9,680	11,840	11,092	10,301	11,663	10,281	13,000	8,758	8,842	1:83

*Ratio of Resettled Refugees and Asylees to Total Population, 1995

Source: Compiled from USCR data, 1988 – 1998

31

In general, levels of resettlement have also declined since the early 1980s, except for the USA. Table 3 shows the levels of resettlement as well as the ratio to the general population. Of the countries on the list, several have become traditional resettlement countries and have regularly set annual quotas for overseas refugees recognized by UNHCR. Sweden had a quota of 2000 refugees for several years until it was increased to 6,000 in 1994, while Norway has generally had a quota of 1000 and Finland, 500. Australia has generally resettled more overseas refugees, mostly from Southeast Asia, than it has resettled claimants from within the country. In 1997 for example, Australia allocated up to 10,000 "offshore places" for overseas refugees and up to 2,000 "onshore places" (USCR, 1998).

Throughout the 1980s, refugees from Southeast Asia comprised the majority of refugees resettled in the United States, as well. By 1989, the Reagan administration was shifting its allocated places to émigrés from the Soviet Union who constituted 90 percent of the admissions for that year (USCR, 1990). While the USA has historically been a common destination for asylum seekers from Latin American, acceptance rates for such claimants have been just as consistently low (under 3 percent in 1989, for example). Refugee resettlement in the USA has consistently been driven by ideological concerns as demonstrated by the fact that by 1993, at least 90 percent of refugee resettlement was from the former Soviet Union and Vietnam (USCR, 1995).

Canada's role as a resettlement country, like many others, was sporadic until the exodus from Southeast Asia in the late 1970s. Since the late 1980s, quotas for government-sponsored refugees have rarely been met and have generally been regarded as an upper rather than a lower limit. From 1990 to 1994, the ceiling was set at 13,000 although the government has generally sponsored around 50 percent of that total. In 1997, Canada resettled 10,370 refugees plus dependents from overseas, of which 7,712 were government-assisted and the remainder were privately sponsored (USCR, 1998). The role of private sponsorship has been steadily declining over the last decade from more than 19,000 in 1990, to 5,000 in 1993, to less than 3,000 in 1997.

Since the 1980s, Canada has become a common destination for asylum seekers. The result has been a growing backlog of claimants waiting for their claims to be decided. The backlog was more than a 100,000 in 1989 but, as a result of a special

Backlog Clearance Program, was substantially reduced by 1992. Nevertheless, at the end of both 1996 and 1997, around 30,000 refugees were still waiting for claims to be decided. For those claims which have been decided over the last ten years, acceptance rates have been steadily declining from 75.7 percent acceptance rate for 1989 to 40 percent in 1997 (Wong, 1997). While Canada has not introduced restrictions as severe as many European countries, the government is still intent on reducing the number of asylum seekers arriving in Canada by threatening sanctions against carriers and negotiating safe-third country agreements with the United States.

In summation, the development of a global refugee dilemma has provoked a crisis in the capacity of the international order to respond to the problem of protection under the contemporary refugee regime. To some extent, this crisis had developed as a result of significant geopolitical changes since the end of the Cold War. During the first stage of the evolution of an international refugee regime – from the end of the First to the end of the Second World War – the problem of protection was defined in terms of national groups left stateless as a result of historically contingent and spatially confined conflicts. While repatriation was already considered to be the solution of choice, in practice, groups of refuges were often resettled according to their cultural identities.

In the second stage, extending from the creation of the UNHCR to the collapse of the Soviet Union, the problem of protection became defined according to the dictates of Cold War politics as indicated by the reliance on standard of persecution to define refugees. As long as refugee movements followed an east-west axis, resettlement was encouraged as the most practical solution, reinforcing the exilic bias of the refugee regime and an individualist approach to status determination. As forced migration became chronic in the emerging states of the developing world, the problem of protection became defined in global terms and the universalist orientation of the UNHCR was amplified. Repatriation was increasingly emphasized as the preferred solution, although Cold War rivalries generally prevented its successful application by intensifying the conflicts that created displacement.

In the current phase, which began with the end of the Cold War, forced migration has become both global and chronic with the developed nations of Europe and North America increasingly accessible to asylum seekers from every region of the world. The

application of the refugee regime is currently characterized by a situation in which states are significantly reducing access to asylum determination procedures and opportunities for permanent resettlement. Repatriation and 'in-country protection' are being increasingly emphasized as the preferred solution to the problem of protection and, as a result, the UNHCR has taken on an increasingly operational role. Many refugee specialists have criticized this new capacity for intervention as a threat to the UNHCR's traditional palliative approach to protection and to the right of refugees to seek asylum.

This transformation does, however, provide an opportunity to focus attention on the root causes of the problem of protection: the relationship between the state and its constituents and the responsibility of the international order to enforce the protection of universal human rights. The contemporary phenomenon of Kurdish forced migration provides a suitable case for an analysis of these issues. While Kurds have been displaced by conflict and persecution throughout this century, a coordinated international response to the Kurdish problem of protection did not take place until 1991 after the mass exodus of Kurds from northern Iraq. Despite a precedent-setting international intervention that resulted in the creation of a safe haven for returning refugees, Kurds have continued to be displaced from all regions of Kurdistan.

CHAPTER 3

THE CONTEMPORARY KURDISH REFUGEE PROBLEM: THE SEARCH FOR ASYLUM AND RESETTLEMENT IN CANADA

Kurdish refugees first achieved global attention in 1991 when, after the collapse of a mass uprising against Saddam Hussein following the Gulf War, they fled Iraq en masse creating "the fastest refugee movement in the 40-year history of the UNHCR." (De Almeida e Silva, 1991:13) In fact, refugees had been pouring out of Iraq since before the war, with 700,000 Iraqis having left by mid-January, 1991. Nevertheless, in the first two weeks of April, the refugee population in Iran rose from 50,000 to 560,000, while the UNHCR estimated that a quarter of a million refugees were trapped on the Turkish border. By the middle of May at least 1.4 million Iraqis had fled to Iran while another 500,000 were clustered on the border with Turkey for a total of close to 2 million refugees having joined the exodus in a month's time (De Almeida e Silva, 1991:13).

The response of the international order was the creation of a safe haven in northern Iraq, an unprecedented intervention on behalf of refugees within the territory of a sovereign member of the United Nations. This intervention, with the UNHCR overseeing the repatriation of Kurdish and other refugees, was necessitated by the overwhelming numbers of forced migrants which threatened to destabilize Turkey (a NATO ally essential to the success of the coalition which had forced Iraq out of Kuwait), by the refusal of Turkey to offer them asylum, and by the dangers to the refugees themselves stranded in the mountains along the Iraqi frontier. The political dynamics of the safe haven in Iraq will be examined in a later chapter. The creation of the safe haven did not resolve the Kurdish problem of protection, however, as refugees continue to flee from all areas of Kurdistan at the present time. This chapter will examine the contemporary situation of Kurdish forced migration in terms of the search for asylum and the resettlement of Kurdish refugees in Canada.

Kurdish forced migration, in the context of a modern refugee phenomenon, dates to the same post-World War 1 period of imperial dissolution, social chaos, and population transfers which initiated the creation of an international refugee regime. At that time they would have been classed as former-Ottoman subjects. Since that time, to

the extent that Kurdish refugees came within the jurisdiction of international agencies, they have been considered as Iraqi, Iranian, Turkish, or Syrian nationals. The contours of a distinctly Kurdish refugee phenomenon begins to emerge only in the 1980s when more reliable refugee data became available and larger numbers of Kurds began seeking asylum in Europe, particularly in the last years of the Iran-Iraq war.

This chapter begins with an overview of the options for first asylum in neighbouring regions for Kurdish refugees and follows with an examination of the increasingly restricted access to asylum determination procedures and resettlement programs in Europe and North America. An analysis of refugee status determination procedures will indicate the importance of Kurdish identity politics in the assessment of individual vulnerability to forced migration. Finally, this chapter will show how the regional and ideological dimensions of this politicized identity have emerged in the context of Kurdish resettlement in Canada.

3.1 Crossing the Border: Uncertain Asylum on the Kurdish Periphery

The tendency of Kurdish asylum-seekers to be submerged within larger categories as Iranians, Iraqis, Turkish, or Syrian refugees makes it difficult, if not impossible, to obtain accurate figures about their actual numbers. Kurdish refugees continue to flee from all parts of Kurdistan, their traditional homeland now divided between Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Syria. According the United States Committee for Refugees (USCR, 1997), Iraq continues to host about 34,200 refugees from Iran and about 10,800 from Turkey, mostly Kurds. During 1997, ongoing conflict between rival Kurdish factions, repeated invasions by the Turkish army, and forcible expulsion of Kurds from cities like Kirkuk added 30 – 100,000 more internal displacees to the 500,000 people already displaced within northern Ira. (USCR, 1997). Iraq is also a source of refugees, with thousands of Kurds and others crossing the borders into Turkey, Iran, and Syria during 1997. For example 75,000 Iraqi Kurds fled to Iran in 1997, adding to the existing population of 580,000 Iraqis in that country (USCR, 1997).

Iran is a steady source of refugees as well, particularly Kurds, with hundreds of thousands estimated to be living in refugee-like conditions in Turkey alone (USCR, 1997). In Turkey, the single biggest cause of displacement continues to be the ongoing

conflict in the southeast between the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) and the Turkish security forces with estimates of internal displacement in the hundreds of thousands or even millions. Tens of thousands of Turkish Kurds continue to seek asylum in Iraq and in Europe. Syria, with the smallest Kurdish population, has produced fewer Kurdish refugees in comparison to other parts of Kurdistan, Nevertheless, many politically active Kurds, like other Syrian dissidents, must seek international asylum to avoid persecution and imprisonment. In addition, about 142,000 Syrian Kurds are stateless, having had their citizenship revoked in 1962 after being labelled "alien infiltrators" (USCR, 1997).

Most displacement of Kurds has occurred within existing state boundaries or within the contiguous region of Kurdistan. There is, however, a rapidly expanding Kurdish diaspora in the Near East, Europe, Australia, and North America generated for the most part by forced migration. Table 4 provides a general overview of forced migration from the region and also indicates some of the problems involved in estimating refugee figures. The numbers in this table refer to status refugees, not asylum-seekers or those refugees who have been permanently resettled.

Table 4. Total Refugees by Source Country

Year	IRAQ	IRAN	TURKEY
1984	60,000	27,000	
1985	60,000	121,200	
1986	430,000	78,000	
1987	400,000	80,100	
1988	508,200	348,000	
1989	508,000	270,100	
1990	529,700	211,100	
1991	217,500	50,000	
1992	125,900	65,400	
1993	134,000	39,000	
1994	635,900	54,250	
1996	608,000	46,100	15,000
1997	526,000	35,000	11,000

Source: Compiled from USCR data, 1988 – 1998

There are few accurate numbers available for the hundreds of thousands of asylum-seekers from Turkey who sought asylum in Europe during the period covered in Table 4. Few countries track claims (or makes such information available) by country of origin. In addition, because some countries, such as Turkey, do not recognize asylum-seekers from outside of Europe as refugees, figures for Iraq and Iran are much lower than actual totals. For example, thousands of Iranian asylum-seekers – including Kurds – have entered Turkey over the last two decades, often on renewable tourist visas, but they have not been recognized as refugees. The half-million Iraqis who fled to Turkey and the more than one million who fled to Iran in April and May of 1991 are also not represented in the table. Though many of them repatriated the same year, a large number have persisted in 'refugee-like-conditions' in Iran.

For Kurds from Iraq, the principle countries of first asylum have been Iran, Syria, Turkey, and the bordering countries of the Middle East, the Caucasus, and Asia. While some Iraqi refugees have been able to secure tenuous asylum in nearby Arab countries, refugees from Iran have generally had to go to Turkey and then to Europe. Similarly, refugees from Turkey have also principally sought refuge in Europe.

Few of the countries of first asylum have offered secure protection to refugees. Syria, for example, has been a host country to Kurdish and other Iraqi refugees since its creation as a state, but received little or no support from international agencies until the 1990s when a camp was established for more than 6,000 displacees at El Hol (USCR, 1994). More than 5,000 refugees from Iraq continue to reside in Syria with minimal services or opportunities for resettlement or repatriation. Jordan hosted over 100,000 Iraqis after the Gulf War, but few were accorded official refugee status (USCR, 1997). While USCR (1995) estimated that about 30,000 still remained in Jordan in 1994, UNHCR had only recognized 100 as refugees (USCR, 1995). Large numbers of Iraqis and Iranians live in the United Arab Emirates, but since the country has no mechanism for granting asylum, most are considered as foreign workers. Saudi Arabia refuses to accept refugees for permanent resettlement and, after the Gulf War, confined thousands of Iraqis in camps in the desert. Many have since been resettled in Iran, Europe, and North America.

Pakistan, though not a signatory to the UN Convention, has tolerated the presence of Iraqi and Iranian refugees who are referred to as 'illegal entrants.' Draft-age Iranians sought

asylum in Pakistan throughout the 1980s but were not granted asylum and were denied government assistance. Their status has always been uncertain and they have been frequently threatened with deportation. Kurdish asylum-seekers have been effectively in limbo since 1989 when Pakistan and the UNHCR agreed to stop resettling them to third countries (except for family reunification) in an effort to stop the influx. Kurds in Pakistan have staged hunger strikes and protests against their treatment.

Given that prospects for meaningful protection in first countries of asylum have been minimal, many Kurdish and other refugees understandably prefer to try their luck in Europe. The most common access route has been through Turkey, although, as the following account from a Kurdish refugee makes clear, the border crossing from Iraq or Iran can be hazardous.

> In 1987, July 28, and exactly at 12:00 p.m., my cousin Lamyah came to me and told me some sad news. She was crying, she told me that two of her brothers, Atellah and Jengez, had been captured in Zakho district on the border with Turkey while they were trying to cross the border into Turkey.
>
> They were in Al-Kasir Al-Abbase Hotel with five other persons in the same situation, with a guide whose name I can't remember. The seven gave their money to the guide to smuggle them to Turkey. They didn't know that he was in direct communication with the security circle of Zakho. They were captured and sent to Abu-Khrieb Jail, about 50 kms to the west of Baghdad, the capital of Iraq, on the way to Al-Rumady governorate from Baghdad.
>
> Abu-Khrieb was the biggest jail in Iraq. It was the Hell of God on earth for Iraqis. I asked my cousin: "What do you want me to do?" I have deserted from the army since a long time. After 15 days, a person came from the Arab Baath Socialist Party and gave my cousin a paper. They wrote on it:
>
> "To the family of the criminals: You must come to Abu-Khrieb Jail to receive your bodies." (Hussain, A Kurdish refugee from Iraq)

The situation inside Turkey for asylum-seekers can be hazardous as well, particularly for those who do not speak Turkish. Because Turkey does not recognize forced migrants from non-European countries as refugees, UNHCR has been limited in its ability to extend protection to asylum-seekers from Iran and Iraq. By 1985, during the Iran-Iraq War, USCR estimates that close to a million Iranians had fled to Turkey. By 1984, UNHCR had registered only 2,600 Iranian refugees, and Turkey has frequently been accused of forcibly repatriating others. In 1988, for example, an Iranian doctor

selected for resettlement in Canada was reported to have been forcibly sent back to Iran (USCR, 1989). A Kurdish refugee from Iran explained how most Iranians did not even try to register with the UNHCR in Turkey. Instead, they would try to secure a tourist visa (often by bribing Turkish officials) which had to be renewed every three months. To renew the visa they would have to cross over to Bulgaria and then back into Turkey. Another Kurdish refugee from Iran explained how they had managed to be interviewed by UNHCR.

> I spent 11 months in Turkey after crossing through the mountains in 1991. My wife flew to Ankara. We had to bribe the police in Turkey because we had no papers. First, we went to the United Nations, then we were sent to the Police for an interview. Fortunately some friends helped us, they knew the Police. If you don't know anyone you can have trouble. First you talk to the U.N. then you take the test, the interview for refugee status. Too many people said they had left the army, so after 2 or 3 days they were not accepted. (A Kurdish refugee from Iran now living in Winnipeg)

In the late 1980s, European countries began introducing restrictive measures to curb the flow of asylum-seekers from Turkey. For example, in 1987 Bulgaria began to refuse admission to Iranians wishing to transit to West Germany. At that time there were still more than a million Iranians in Turkey who were finding it increasingly difficult to gain access to Europe. They were refused asylum in Turkey, but still feared to return to Iran, which gave them few options but to remain in legal limbo. By 1988, only about 1,000 Iranian refugees per year were being resettled in third countries.

In 1988, after the chemical gas attacks against Iraqi Kurds, more than 100,000 refugees attempted to cross into Turkey. Turkey initially closed the border to them but reversed this policy in response to international pressure, although UNHCR was not allowed to assist the refugees. With thousands of refugees still refusing to return to Iraq in 1989, Turkey appealed for international assistance but continued to dispute with UNHCR about access to the camp and distribution of the assistance. The US Congress appropriated $10 million to assist Turkish refugees fleeing Bulgaria, but chose not to provide the $5 million the Senate had allotted for Iraqi Kurds in Turkey (USCR, 1989). According to refugees who were confined in the camps, conditions were poor and relations with camp authorities hostile. In all three camps, Kurdish refugees accused the Turkish authorities of being responsible for incidences of mass food poisoning in 1989

and 1990. Children were denied education and, until 1990, access to employment was prohibited. Those Kurds who could, fled the camps to Iran.

The initial decision of the Turkish government to close the border to the hundreds of thousands of fleeing Iraqis after the second Gulf War was based, to a large extent, on the unresolved situation of Kurdish refugees in Iraq from the earlier exodus in 1988. Once the emergency relief effort was underway for the 1990-91 exodus, Turkey opened up the existing camps with the objective of resettling or repatriating the earlier refugee population. By the end of 1992, 7,519 Iraqi and Iranian refugees had been accepted for resettlement. Many of the first Kurds to arrive in Canada came from this resettlement effort. Following are excerpts from consultations with two Kurds from Iraq on the subject of being selected by Canadian immigration authorities.

> About coming to Canada? We had no choice. Canada, Norway, Finland, Great Britain: – they made the choices. There were still 3000 people in the camps at that time. A Canadian counsellor came to the camp. My son was outside the camp. He called my son to write down his name to come to Canada. He didn't believe him, but he put his name down. 300 people wrote their names.
> We did not know where we were going. They called us for an examination; they took our pictures, checked our health. We had to wait about a month. After one month, a man called a list of names to go on a bus to Istanbul. We were told nothing else.
> I had a daughter in the U.S. I would have preferred to go there. Two of my family were in Ottawa, others in Edmonton. We all came at the same time. We were all supposed to go to one city – to Toronto. But no, we were separated by the Visa officers. Some went to Edmonton, some went to Winnipeg. (A Kurdish refugee from Iraq)

> I was in a Turkish refugee camp where I was beaten three times and interrogated. After three months, I was interviewed by UNHCR. They sponsored my daily expenses. I was given a choice between Sweden and Canada but I refused to go to Sweden because of the language difficulty. Canada has more opportunities. It is close to the US. It has political power. It promotes integration more, and English is an international language. I am very happy after Turkey. (A Kurdish refugee from Iraq)

After the creation of the safe haven in Northern Iraq in 1991, most of the Iraqis who had fled during that same year voluntarily repatriated. Turkey began to pressure both Iranian and Iraqi refugees from earlier influxes to repatriate as well. However, despite the massive repatriation to Northern Iraq in 1991, refugees continued to flee to Turkey from Iran.

Throughout the 1990s, Iranians in Turkey have been estimated to number around 1 million, with at least 10,000 thought to be eligible for refugee status. However, few make themselves known to the authorities. Between 1993 and 1997, conflict between Kurdish factions in the safe haven and the blockade by the Iraqi army have forced thousands of Kurds and other refugees to seek asylum once more.

In 1994, Turkey began to implement its own asylum hearings which had previously been done by the UNHCR. Acceptance rates have generally been low, and those who are given official status are sent to camps to await resettlement by UNHCR. Turkey's "Law on Settlement" prohibits those who do not belong to the "Turkish culture" to settle in Turkey (USCR, 1995). Those whose claims are rejected are given short notice to leave the country and deportations and forced repatriations continue to be issues of concern with international agencies. UNHCR resettled 881 Iranians in 1994, 886 in 1995, 922 in 1996, and 905 in 1997 – most to Canada and Australia. Resettlement of Iraqi refugees from Turkey has declined steadily since 1992, with 1,262 resettled in 1994, 667 in 1995, 564 in 1996, and 600 in 1997, again, most to Canada and Australia. Clearly the impact of such resettlement is minimal given the levels of ongoing forced migration from Kurdistan. Nevertheless, the prospect of resettlement must still be an encouragement to refugees seeking to gain entry to Turkey or to Europe. In Panel 1 – Hussain's Search For Asylum – a Kurdish refugee describes his unsuccessful search for Asylum in Turkey.

3.2 Halfway To Nowhere: Kurdish Refugees On The Margins of Europe

Those refugees in Turkey who do not receive legal status, or are not selected for resettlement, continue to try to gain access to European status determination systems. The most common transit states through which access is attempted are Greece, Italy, Austria, and Russia. Russia signed the UN Refugee Convention in 1992 and UNHCR opened its first office in Moscow in 1993 registering 46,512 asylum-seekers, of whom 6,000 were from Iraq. However, because of the ongoing economic crisis in the country and the constant influx of displacees from throughout the former Soviet Union and beyond, few asylum-seekers are offered an opportunity to regularize their status.

By 1997, estimates of undocumented asylum-seekers in Moscow ranged from 100,000 to 1.5 million persons. The numbers are often manipulated by local politicians

Panel 1. Hussain's Search For Asylum

The problem was the Turkish police, because they were sending the Iraqis back to the point that they came from. So I went to the base of the Iraqi Turkish Party who provided me with an official document allowing me to stay in Turkey.

After twenty days, we were deeply shocked when we received a letter of rejection or refusal from the UNHCR in Turkey. I stayed in bed for a week, then I went with my family to the base of the UNHCR in Ankara to know the reason. I started yelling bad words about the Turkish Police, UNHCR, and everything. Suddenly we met Khailam and his wife Zahra who wrote a letter to UNHCR of Turkey to know the reason. The letter was for Mr John Michael, the chief of UNHCR of Turkey.

The next day and without our knowledge, my wife Layla went to the office of the UNHCR of Turkey and waited for the car of the Chief John Michael, to throw herself in front of the car. The chief stopped immediately and asked about the reason for this suicide attempt. Layla told him everything very angrily, so we gained another appointment for a second chance.

The Turkish lawyer of UNHCR, Aishah Gul, broke our hearts completely when she told us in the second meeting: "That's it, you've been refused!". On January first, 1993, we received our official rejection from the UNHCR of Turkey. So we decided to leave Turkey.

Until now, I am still thinking about the reason of our rejection and I can't find any reasonable reason. The only thing that I am sure of is that I told them the truth and nothing else than the truth.

After thirty-two very cold days on the border between Turkey and the Republic of Georgia, we were able to cross the border and enter the Commonwealth of Independent States on March, 19, 1993, to reach Ratomi. After one day we traveled by boat to Sochi to reach Moscow after 36 hours by train, on March 23, 1993.

- Hussein, a Kurdish refugee from Iraq

to exploit anti-migrant feelings, and abuse of asylum-seekers by police is reported to be frequent. USCR, (1997) citing a Human Rights Watch report, states that undocumented asylum-seekers "have no institution to turn to for protection; for them, living in Moscow is running a daily gauntlet of police demanding money, and the real prospect of police beatings, detention and deportation." Most asylum-seekers in Moscow are reported to be from Afghanistan, but few from anywhere outside the former Soviet Union receive refugee status. UNHCR has registered thousands of refugees, but even those registered are still denied basic rights, access to social services, and schools for their children.

Poland is another common destination for Kurdish and other refugees seeking access to Western Europe. Poland has had more success in implementing its own status determination process than Russia, but still sees itself primarily as a transit point rather than a country of extended asylum. Polish authorities cite the high rate of abandoned asylum claims by refugees as evidence that most claimants are simply buying time until they can cross into Germany. Germany's reform of its asylum laws in 1993 has reduced the likelihood of a successful claim there, and many applicants are returned to the Polish border every year to resubmit their claims. Low approval rates, minimal services for refugees, and the lack of an effective integration program encourage asylum-seekers to continue their search in other countries.

Latvia, because it has not signed the Refugee Convention, has actually become more attractive to asylum-seekers than a country like Poland which has signed. Refugees know that if they can successfully cross into Scandinavia, they will not be sent back because of Latvia's non-adherence to the Convention. Latvia makes no distinction between illegal migrants and asylum-seekers and has repeatedly jailed both. In 1995, 130 Iraqi refugees were put on a train – referred to in the media as the "train of despair" – and transported back and forth between Latvia, Lithuania, and Russia at least thirteen times before Latvia put them in a detention centre. It was another two years before UNHCR gained access to the refugees, after which several Nordic countries agreed to resettle them.

Countries like Latvia and Russia, because of their non-compliance with the Refugee Convention, provide profitable opportunities for the growing underground economy of smuggling immigrants into Scandinavia and Western Europe. 'People-

smuggling' is an industry that extends up and down the boundaries separating eastern from western Europe. The ongoing wars in the Balkans, in Turkey, and the Middle East, in combination with more restrictive borders in Europe, have ensured growing demand and profits for the smuggling industry. Once inside the network of states that have signed the Schengen agreement, migrants feel they have a better chance to secure asylum in a Western European country. According to one Kurdish refugee, the process generally begins when a refugee is given a telephone number to call in Moscow, Prague, Ankara, or other large urban centre. A fee is negotiated and a meeting is arranged. Refugees turn over their papers to the smugglers so that, if caught, they cannot be sent back. They are then taken across international borders using the same routes by which drugs and weapons are smuggled. As Hussain describes below, for refugees in limbo in places like Russia with no prospect for protection, paying a smuggler is often the only or last desperate choice in the search for asylum.

> Even the people who had money became victims of the blood-sucking smugglers. A lot of asylum-seekers had thousands of dollars stolen from them. I think the smugglers didn't realize that this money came from the refugees having to sell everything that they had brought from their countries or from having to borrow it from their relatives and good (and sometimes bad) friends.
> Lately, we have been completely depressed. A large number of asylum-seekers have been coming back from the border because they were unable to cross. I can't explain the recent situation because it changes every hour and each minute. The news makes us fly from happiness and the news makes us die from depression and anxiety. Nobody knows exactly when we will be able to leave.
> We were able to make an agreement with a smuggler to send the four children and their mother to Germany. Amanj and I will stay in Russia because there is not enough money for us to leave together. We need 1800 American dollars more or less, I am not sure because the prices of the blood-sucking smugglers are always changing. But it is clear that I will have to collect as much as possible. (Hussain, A Kurdish refugee from Iraq, writing from Moscow in March, 1994)

In a phenomenon reminiscent of the 'Boat People' exodus from Southeast Asia, Kurdish refugees have been attracting increasing media attention in Europe by showing up in large numbers in boats along the coastlines of Scandinavia, Italy, and Greece. In 1992, several boat loads carrying hundreds of Kurdish refugees, who had been charged as

much as $2500 per person, arrived on the Swedish island of Götland from Latvia. Swedish authorities were informed that another 5,000 Iraqi Kurds were waiting in Moscow to make the trip to Sweden (USCR, 1993). In 1993, over a hundred Iraqi refugees, including children, spent 5 days in a small boat before landing in Finland. The refugees reported that they had travelled from Moscow to Estonia to meet the smugglers (USCR, 1994).

Most Kurdish refugees in Turkey still attempt the more hazardous crossing to Greece and Italy. The treatment of refugees apprehended in the process of being smuggled from Turkey to Greece is much harsher than that received by those arriving in Finland or Sweden. Many who are not forcibly returned are imprisoned upon arrival. Between 1992 and 1995, Greek authorities intercepted about 22,900 refugees attempting to cross illegally from Turkey and expelled them immediately. Greece, which considers itself to be a transit point, provides those asylum-seekers who are allowed to stay, with temporary residence permits only, and insists that they be resettled in third countries, although prospects for resettlement are steadily diminishing.

Italy also considers itself primarily as a transit point but is still a popular destination because asylum-seekers are less likely to be forcibly returned than they are from Greece. Italy is host to thousands of undocumented aliens, many waiting for an opportunity to cross over into Germany or France. As a result, both of these countries have exerted strong pressure on Italy to restrict access to asylum-seekers as a condition for closer integration with the European Union. Shortly after signing the Schengen Agreement in 1997, a series of boats carrying hundreds of Kurdish refugees began arriving on the Adriatic coastline. By the end of the year more than 5,000 Kurds from Iraq and Turkey had arrived in Italy where they were allowed to apply for asylum. This gesture strained relations with Germany and France who immediately reinforced border patrols, fearing that the Kurdish refugees intended to join families already in those countries (USCR, 1998).

Many Kurds have had family connections in Germany since that country began to actively recruit foreign workers from Turkey in 1961. Hundreds of thousands of migrants from Turkey arrived over the next decade or so. After the oil-crisis in 1973, Germany stopped recruiting foreign workers and many returned to Turkey. However, as a result of

declining return migration, a steady influx of family members from Turkey and a high birth rate, Turkish migrants continued to be the largest group of foreign workers, numbering over 1.8 million. (White, 1995). Estimates of the numbers of Kurds in Germany range from 400,000 to 450,000 (Gunter, 1997). In the latter part of the 1970s, gaining entry to Germany as a foreign worker became increasingly difficult, and during the 1980s, as the war between the PKK and the Turkish government intensified, most Kurds arrived as refugees. Germany is attractive to refugees on the basis of its comparatively liberal asylum policies and social services, but just as important are the established social networks which have provided migration linkages.

From the early 1980s, thousands of asylum-seekers from Turkey and Iran began arriving in Germany, with over 20,000 a year applying from Turkey between 1991 and 1997. Large numbers of Kurds from Iran and Iraq, mostly draft evaders, began arriving in the 1980s and arrivals continue to number several thousand per year. Of these, Iraqis are generally the most successful at receiving approval for asylum claims, or at least protection against forcible return. Kurds from Turkey, on the other hand, have been specifically targeted by legislation threatening expulsion for 'serious offences' because of the political agitation of Kurdish nationalist organizations. Germany, however, does not enforce an 'internal flight alternative' mechanism to deny asylum to Iraqi Kurds, who could theoretically seek asylum in the 'safe haven,' nor to Turkish Kurds who could do so in Western Turkey (USCR, 1998). Nevertheless, the German interior ministry has issued repeated calls to transit countries in Europe to curb the influxes of Kurdish asylum-seekers.

Switzerland has also been a popular destination for Kurdish refugees – mostly from Turkey – who comprised close to two thirds of asylum claimants by 1988. As Switzerland, Germany, and France have restricted access to their determination systems, asylum-seekers have moved further west to the Netherlands, Belgium, and the U.K. In 1997, the largest number of claimants in the Netherlands were from Iraq. Kurds from Turkey have long been one of the largest groups of asylum-seekers arriving in the U.K. The U.K. has vigorously attempted to curb such arrivals through carrier sanctions against airlines bringing passengers from six "troublesome nationalities," including Iranians,

Panel 2. The End of the Line – Refugees in Limbo

I feel that I am completely exhausted and I have no more energy to finish this journey. I am dying minute by minute and second by second, when I see my children don't know how to read or write. They know how to speak Kurdish, a little Turkish, a little Persian, and recently they learned a little bit of Russian. I think they will have to learn German. I don't know what else they will have to learn in the future.

Even my relationship with Layla is tense because both of us are tired. If we didn't have children, we would have killed ourselves a long time ago but they are the only reason for us to keep fighting to survive. Still we don't know what will be our future. Where will we settle down? We hope for death all the time but we don't want die without seeing our children in school and enjoying the protection and care of a merciful government. Other times we are afraid we will die and leave those flowers in this desert.

I am dreaming of having a house, a home. Even a snake has a hole, a lion has a home, animals all have a home. But we do not have a home.

Sometimes I am completely confused. I don't know from whom I should take revenge. Who is to blame? Who did this? Who is responsible? What is the guilt of a patient old lady, to survive in Moscow in the hope that the day will come when she will join her 14 year old daughter in Sweden who failed her studies because of the absence of her mother, her three brothers there cannot replace the mother. And the father is in Holland waiting for his official acceptance for residence. And only God knows when this family will be gathered with the rest who are still in the north of Iran – in Kurdistan! Mama Sonya only wishes to stay four days in Sweden to see Tonie, her fourteen year-old daughter, her three sons – Najdat, twenty-four years old, Guran, eighteen years old, and Yusuf, forty-three years old, who have been in Sweden about nine years. Mama Sonya's only wish is to see them and die.

- Hussain, A Kurdish refugee from Iraq, writing from Moscow in March, 1994

Syrians, and Turks (USCR, 1993). Many of those who do gain access to the U.K.'s asylum system do not receive permanent status but are granted an 'exceptional leave to remain.'

The search for durable solutions in Europe by Kurdish and other refugees, therefore, is an ongoing, hazardous process offering progressively diminishing returns. It is ongoing because the numbers of those attempting to seek asylum are not declining. The hazards include gambling a lifetime's savings on smugglers as well as treacherous border-crossings – particularly boat crossings which are frequently intercepted and have recently involved large numbers of deaths by sinking or attacks by criminals or border police. Even if entry is gained to a potential asylum country, a lack of access to status determination procedures, the risks of return to a 'safe third country', or detention in a holding centre are generally more likely than is meaningful protection or permanent resettlement. Refugee status, which had traditionally offered the promise of a transition from protection lost to protection renewed, has been replaced for many asylum-seekers by a limbo state characterized by uncertainty and despair (Panel 2: The End of the Line).

3.3 Coming to Canada: Status Determination and Resettlement

From consultations with Kurdish refugees in Canada between 1994 and 1996, it became evident that many had become refugees as a result of political factors pre-dating the Second Gulf War (Panel 3: Kurdish Refugees in Winnipeg). Until the late 1980s, there were very few Kurdish refugees in North America, and most began arriving after 1990. Most Canadians understandably tended to identify Kurdish refugees with the failed uprisings following the international intervention to remove the Iraqi army from Kuwait. In fact the first significant resettlement of Kurdish refugees to Canada was of those who fled Iraq in 1988.

After the Iraqi army used chemical weapons against Kurdish civilians, tens of thousands of Kurds fled across the Turkish border and were concentrated in camps in Diyarbakir, Mardin-Kiziltepe, and Mus. These camps were closed to outsiders until December 1990 when the UNHCR was finally allowed in. At this time, the combined camp population was estimated at about 30,000 (USCR, 1991). After UNHCR officials were admitted, the first visa officers of the Canadian Embassy arrived to survey the

Panel 3. Kurdish Refugees In Winnipeg

From Iraq:

"In 1988, I escaped to Turkey. My son was in the camps for six years, I was there four years. It was a very hard time. The Turkish army surrounded the camps. No one could leave the camps. Some had no carpets, just tents. There was little food, not even a can of tomatoes. The Turks treated us like animals."

"I left with my family after the 1988 Anfal campaign, to Turkey. We stayed in the Diyarbakir Camp until we bribed our way out. We were smuggled into Greece."

"Until 1975 there were only a few Kurds in Canada. In 1986 the United Nations first recognized Kurds as political refugees. In 1987, the first ones came to Canada. Many more came at the end of 1988 after the chemical attack. In June of 1988, five Kurds came to Winnipeg, all of us from Iraq. Most Kurds went to Toronto, Ottawa, or Vancouver."

From Turkey:

"After the 1976 war, about 5,000 refugees came to the United States and Canada. For the first time the Canadian Government recognized the Kurds as refugees. I was one of the first from Northern Kurdistan to receive refugee status. The Canadian Government is not aware of the problem in Turkey."

"After the coup in 1980, there was a lot of military oppression. Most refugees went to Europe. In the summer 1984, the PKK started the war against the Turkish army. After 1985, refugees from Kurdistan in Turkey started to arrive in Canada. The Turkish government forced 3 million people to move to Western Turkey."

From Iran

"I spent eleven months in Turkey after crossing through the mountains in 1991. My wife flew to Ankara. We had to bribe the police in Turkey because we had no papers."

"Most people know about the Kurds, two or three years ago, no. Now, people know more because of the newspapers, radio. A woman, who I picked up in my cab, said to me: "I know what happened to the Kurdish children". People know we came here because of politics. But people in Vancouver and Toronto know more."

residents of the camps for potential resettlement. During a week-long mission in August 1991, three hundred and thirty persons were interviewed and accepted for resettlement from Mardin-Kiziltepe, and in October, another three hundred were selected from Diyarbakir. According to an unclassified memorandum from Canadian Embassy officials in Ankara, these were the only refugees Canada resettled from the 1988 influx.

As the Canadian Embassy in Ankara points out below, the media portrayal of the dramatic exodus of Kurds from Iraq in 1991 has tended to define the Kurdish refugee problem and was certainly the most significant factor encouraging a Kurdish resettlement program in Canada.

> A point of clarification at the outset is essential to an understanding of the refugee program managed by the Embassy in Ankara. Photographs broadcast on CNN, and in various other media, in April/May, 1991, of Kurds camped in appalling conditions on Turkish mountain sides, and children dying at a rate as high as 1000 each day evoked many sympathetic gestures on the part of individuals and government. This is the root of our current program. (Unclassified Memorandum from the Canadian Embassy in Ankara, Turkey, May 24, 1993)

Embassy officials were concerned to correct misconceptions about the resettlement program. They pointed out that those Kurds being resettled had actually fled Iraq much earlier and that most of those refugees being resettled were not Kurds at all, but mainly Iraqi Christians and Turkomen. Of those refugees selected for resettlement in Canada by 1993, embassy officials estimated that only 40 percent were Kurds. In addition, the attention given to Kurdish refugees in Turkey tended to obscure Canadian resettlement efforts elsewhere in the region. Until the massive influx of Iraqis in 1991, the major priority for Canada was resettlement from Iran, which included other minorities such as Bahai, Azeris, and Persians, as well as Kurds. Resettlement of refugees from Iran had been going on since the 1980s, but it was only with the crisis in Iraq that the Kurds began to be increasingly distinguished from other refugee groups.

While most Kurds have come to Canada as government-sponsored or privately-sponsored refugees, others have managed to claim refugee status from within the country. Their numbers have increased since Canada has reduced the scope of its resettlement program in the Middle East. Canada's status determination procedure begins with an officer of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) who determines

if the claimant is ineligible for a hearing with the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) on the basis of being a threat to national security, having a record of criminal activity, or having prior refugee status. Cases heard by the IRB are generally decided by a two-member panel of the Convention Refugee Determination Division (CRDD), only one of whom needs to issue a positive ruling for a claimant to receive refugee status. Exceptions to the above process occur when the claimant is given access to an expedited process because his or her case will not involve complicated issues of refugee law or factual evidence, or in cases where panel members conclude that the claimant has destroyed his or her identity documents without a valid reason. The latter situation requires a unanimous positive ruling by the panel. Where a claimant receives a negative decision, a leave to appeal can be requested which allows a federal judge to either uphold the CRDD decision or send it back in cases of a misapplication of refugee law. Claimants who receive a positive decision are usually automatically transferred to a process to land them as immigrants.

The IRB publishes some of the decisions made by the Refugee Division, the Appeals Division and the Federal Court, in a legal reference publication of case digests called *RefLex*. The analysis below is based on a survey of published cases between 1991 and 1998 involving claimants from Iran, Iraq, and Turkey, as well those cases specifically involving Kurdish claimants. The numbers given for particular classes of cases should not be treated as absolute figures and are intended to provide an overview of the regional or evidential patterns rather than precise variances. The principle concern in the analysis that follows is not the numbers of various types of claims, but the conceptual basis of the decision-making, particularly in cases involving Kurdish claimants. The intention will not be to evaluate the accuracy of the decisions in individual cases, but to investigate how the dynamics of Kurdish forced migration and the politics of Kurdish identity have been approached in deciding refugee claims.

Most surveyed cases involved claimants from Iran (107) of which 6 dealt specifically with Kurds. Sixteen (16) cases involved claimants from Iraq, with 3 overtly Kurdish, and 15 from Turkey, with 7 involving Kurds. Only two cases from the region involved Kurds from Syria. While Canada takes a relatively small proportion of refugees and immigrants from the Middle East (compared to those from Europe, Asia, and Latin

America), the majority of those who are landed are from Iran, a fact that is reflected in the volume of published cases involving Iranian claimants. The numbers of claimants from Iraq and Turkey are more likely a reflection of selection criteria for publication based on case law than a reflection of actual proportions. The same is true for claims from Syria, though the fact that fewer Kurdish claimants from Syria make it to Canada is an indication of the greater difficulty Kurds experience in leaving Syria relative to the difficulty of leaving other parts of Kurdistan.

An analysis of the claims that involve Kurds will provide an indication of how the problem of Kurdish forced migration has been approached in relation to refugee status determination as well as regional differences in the interpretation of this problem. A Kurdish refugee claimant, like other claimants, is required to establish a credible basis for a well-founded fear of persecution and the absence of state protection. Many cases explicitly involving Kurdish claimants demonstrate the consideration by IRB panelists of an individualized fear of persecution on the basis of both political opinion and a Kurdish group identity.

The excerpts from decisions given in Panel 4 – IRB Cases – provide an indication of how a Kurdish identity has been considered as part of a credible base for a refugee claim. In the first case, an argument is made for a well-founded fear of persecution based on membership in the group, 'politically-active Kurds' ("the profile of a Kurd who would be persecuted"). In the second and third cases, from Iran and Iraq respectively, an argument is made for a well-founded fear of persecution based on a Kurdish nationality as well as on political activity. The fourth case is made on the basis of a refusal to serve in the military, Kurdish ethnicity, and political activity.

In all cases the political character of articulating a Kurdish identity is evident, but it is most explicit in the fifth case. The claimant established a well-founded fear of persecution on the basis of a public acknowledgement of his Kurdish identity, which by itself constituted a political act. This political dimension of a Kurdish identity is also reflected in a Federal Court review of a CRDD decision, which criticized the evaluation of documentary evidence by an IRB panel. According to the Federal Court, the documentary evidence "combined with the evidence that the claimant was a Kurd was

Panel 4. IRB Cases Involving a Kurdish Identity

The claimant was of Kurdish ethnicity or nationality and had a family history of promoting the cause of Kurdish rights, both under the Shah's regime and under the Islamic Republic. The documentary evidence indicated that Kurds who are viewed as promoters of Kurdish separation or Kurdish rights are the targets of persecution in Iran. The claimant fit the profile of a Kurd who would be persecuted. CRDD V96-02049, Clague, Quong, March 31, 1998, April 15, 1998 (written).

The claimant was a member of a prominent Kurdish landowner family which had supported the Shah. Her brother had been a regional head of Savak, the Shah's security service. Her husband was accused of supplying arms to the Kurdish Democratic Party, was tried before a Revolutionary Court; almost all of their land and property was confiscated, and the family was banished to another region for two years. ... The Refugee Division found there was more than a mere possibility that the claimant would face persecution in Iran based on her Kurdish nationality, her imputed political opinion as a Kurd, and her attendance at the pro-Kurdish demonstration. CRDD A97-00081, Harker, Noseworthy, July 29, 1997.

While at medical school, the claimant had been known by Iraqi security officials as being politically active against the government. Also, he had worked as a doctor in a Kurdish refugee camp in Iran. He was detained without trial for a year, during which he was tortured. He was not released by Iraqi authorities, but rather was liberated by Kurds. The Refugee Division found that the claimant had a well-founded fear of persecution on the basis of his nationality and political opinion. CRDD T94-05761, Sims, Koulouras, November 1, 1995.

The claimant, a young Kurdish male of military age, had a well-founded fear of persecution on the grounds of political opinion as a result of his political activism and his refusal to become an informer for the Turkish authorities. ... His past experiences in detention, which included torture, and the experience of others as documented in human rights reports, indicated that there was a reasonable chance that he would be seriously harmed in detention not only due to his refusal to serve, but also because of his Kurdish ethnicity and past involvement with Kurdish political parties. CRDD T97-02924, Kelley, Ramirez, May 6, 1998 (reasons signed June 10, 1998).

The claimant was a Kurd from Turkey. His family suffered constant harassment and physical abuse over many years because they were Kurds. When the claimant was performing his military service, he made a comment publicly acknowledging the existence of Kurds in Turkey. As a result he was charged and faced prosecution before a tribunal for anti-Turkish propaganda. .. the documentary evidence was overwhelming that Kurds were subjected to torture, unfair trials, and extra-judicial killings. People had been sent to prison for acknowledging in public that there were Kurds in Turkey. ... U92-06016, Gaudet, Sandhu, September 16, 1993.

Source: *Reflex* – 1991-1998

enough to provide a credible basis" (Toytemur, Mehmet v. M.E.I. ; F.C.T.D, no. T-2491-92).

Particular aspects of a Kurdish identity have also been relevant in establishing a group basis for a well-founded fear of persecution. The following case of a female claimant from Turkey, who established a credible basis as a result of membership in a particular social group, demonstrates that claimants are often fleeing more than state persecution.

> [If she returned to Turkey,] she would be considered a Muslim woman, a Kurdish Muslim woman in a small village, who has violated the social mores of her culture and her country by refusing both to return voluntarily to her country with her husband, and by refusing to live with him. She would also be considered a Kurdish Muslim woman who would be living alone, in an Islamic tradition where this is considered unacceptable. If she were to be without the protection of a male relative because of having asked for a divorce from her husband, she would be considered a "bad woman".... also... it would not be reasonable to ask the claimant to consider the internal flight alternative within her country.... as a Kurdish woman, she would not receive a job, and would have no support within the community. Life would be intolerable for her and her children, and according to the panel, such treatment would be equivalent to persecution due to her particular social group, which ground is related to the definition of a refugee according to the Convention. (CRDD M91-12191, M91-12192, M91-12193, M91-12194, Hebert, Kafai, March 19, 1992)

In two cases, a decision was made for a lack of credible basis because the claimants failed to convince the panel that they were Kurdish. The IRB has generally acknowledged that Alevi Kurds have been specifically targetted for persecution in Turkey on the basis of both a religious and a national/ethnic identity. Many members of the Alevi sect in Turkey – Kurdish or otherwise – hide their religious beliefs to avoid such treatment. In one case involving an Alevi Kurd, an IRB panel ruled that "there is nothing in refugee law which indicates that a person must deny his religious and/or cultural identity in order to obtain state protection." (CRDD A93-81258, Gilad, Henders, May 18, 1994)

As negative decisions indicate, a Kurdish identity by itself is not enough to establish a credible basis. Even where a claimant's Kurdishness is not in dispute, he or she must demonstrate the absence of state protection. This is the case even if the country

of first asylum has a history of persecuting Kurds, as is demonstrated by the example of a Kurdish claimant expelled from Iraq to Iran. The panel found the claimant to be stateless, given that neither country would recognize him as a 'national.' Nevertheless, the fact that Iran was allowing him to stay, seek employment, and even leave the country, was evidence of the existence of state protection. The claimant was denied Convention Refugee Status.

Similarly, if a claimant shows that he or she passes through a country which is a signatory to the Refugee Convention, the panel may rule that the claimant had an obligation to call upon that state for protection. Such was the case with a Kurdish claimant who came to Canada via Turkey, Greece and Italy. The trip, which took about nine days, was arranged by a smuggler who advised the claimant that Canada had a fairer refugee determination system than the transit countries. Although the Refugee Division gave a negative decision, the case was sent back upon review after a Federal Court determined the transit time was not sufficient for the claimant to request asylum prior to arriving in Canada.

A similar argument applies in cases where it is argued that an 'internal flight alternative' (IFA) exists. In cases involving Kurdish claimants, this occurs most frequently with those from Iraq due to the establishment of the safe haven in the north. On the basis of published cases, the argument does not seem to be applied consistently, but is evaluated independently in each case. In 1993 for example, a Kurdish claimant with a well-founded fear of persecution was denied refugee status on the basis of an IFA in Northern Iraq. The panel in this case concluded that the autonomous Kurdish government was stable, despite the intensifying conflict between political factions within the safe haven. Upon review of the case, the Federal Court Division acknowledged that an IFA had been previously ruled out in a similar case but supported the panel's decision with the following argument.

> In a contemporaneous case with similar facts, another CRDD panel found that there was no IFA; however, that decision was not binding. In each case, the CRDD must decide on the basis of the evidence before it. The application was dismissed. (Tawfik, Taha Mohammed v. M.E.I.; F.C.T.D., no. 93-A-311, MacKay, August 23, 1993.)

By 1995, conditions in the safe haven had deteriorated to the point where, in the following case of another Kurdish claimant, an IRB panel ruled out the possibility of an IFA in Northern Iraq.

> It rejected the possibility of an internal flight alternative in the "no-fly zone" in the northern area of Iraq, noting: that the Iraqi government had imposed on the Kurdish area a rigid embargo, encompassing necessities such as food, medicine and electric power; that the government had shelled the area on many occasions; that it had sent agents into the area to execute individuals and plant bombs; and that there was a continuing danger of Iraqi invasion. Kurdish opposition groups and Kurdish authorities in control of parts of this area were also responsible for human rights abuses. (CRDD T94-05761, Sims, Koulouras, November 1, 1995.)

Kurdish claimants have also had negative decisions based on the fact they have fled 'laws of general application' or 'non-selective phenomena.' The first objection has most often been applied to those fleeing military conscription. For example, a Federal Court Division review supported the CRDD's ruling that "detentions and any associated mistreatment were related to the claimant's failure to complete his military service, rather than to his Kurdish origin or related political views (Ahani, Roozbeh v. M.C.I.; F.C.T.D., no. IMM-4985-93, MacKay, January 4, 1995). In another case, however, the Federal Division sent back a CRDD negative ruling which had been based on a similar argument because, in this case, the claimant had refused military service in the Iranian army on the basis of a conscientious objection to the use of chemical weapons against the Kurds. This objection gave the claimant a basis for arguing that persecution was based on his political opinion. War has been an ongoing fact of life for all parts of Kurdistan since the early 1980s. Nevertheless, as the case below demonstrates, chronic warfare alone, either between local states, between those States and the Kurds, or between Kurds themselves, has not been enough to establish a credible basis for Kurdish claimants.

> The Refugee Division found that the claimant had never been targeted for any sort of abuse and that what he feared was war, not persecution for any Convention reason. The Division cited Hathaway's comment that "persons who fear harm as the result of a non-selective phenomenon" are not encompassed by refugee law. the Division also considered the guidelines on Civilian Non-Combatants Fearing Persecution in Civil War Situations, and held that the claimant fell into the guidelines' category (C) [i.e., "Harm that is not distinguishable from the general dangers of

> civil war" -- Ed.]. (CRDD T96-03131, Davis, Bubrin, Davis, April 8, 1997) .

Finally, Kurds have also been denied status on the basis of suspected membership in political organizations that have been accused of 'acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.' Principally, these rejections have involved claimants thought to be affiliated with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which is condemned by Turkey and many of its allies as a terrorist organization. Kurdish claimants suspected of being PKK members, or even of having PKK 'sympathies,' can have their claims rejected or held up indefinitely on a 'national security' basis, as occurred in the following case.

> At the Canadian port of entry, authorities had seized from the claimant photographs of the leader of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), and journals which referred to the PKK; on this basis, the Minister had alleged that the claimant was a terrorist. The Division accepted expert evidence that a young Kurdish nationalist might well be interested in the PKK without being a member. Moreover, it was implausible that a sophisticated organization like the PKK would have sent the claimant to Canada with a passport which did not contain her photograph, and with PKK materials. ... (CRDD T94-06646, MacPherson, October 6, 1995)

A notable, ongoing case in Toronto involves a Kurdish claimant from Turkey named Sami Durgan. Mr. Durgan arrived in Canada in 1988, was recognized as a refugee, but spent the next ten years in legal limbo, having been denied his landing papers. On March 9, 1998 he began a vigil outside of the immigration office in Toronto, vowing to remain there until he receive his papers. Without them he has found it impossible to hold a job or complete his education. Although the local immigration authorities had recommended that he received his landing papers, the process had been delayed by CSIS (Canadian Security and Intelligence Service). A group of refugee advocates known as the Sanctuary Group assisted Mr. Durgan in filing a complaint with the SIRC (Security and Intelligence Review Committee). In the course of preparing this action, it was found that his case had been delayed as a result of testimony from the deportation hearing of another Kurd who, although he never mentioned Mr. Durgan, made reference to a flag of a Kurdish political party, the ERNK (affiliated with the PKK), displayed in a local Kurdish centre with which Mr. Durgan was also connected. The Sanctuary Group also presented a list of 14 Kurdish refugees who had made a formal

complaint alleging that CSIS had promised them landing papers if they informed on other Kurds. Because they did not do so, the group alleged, all of them were still waiting, like Mr. Durgan, in legal limbo.

The case points to a basic difference between the approach to claimants from Turkey in comparison to those from Iraq or Iran. Although claimants from every region of Kurdistan are granted refugee status within Canada, those from Turkey stand the greatest chance of being accused of representing a risk to national security. In each region of Kurdistan, Kurdish nationalist organizations have engaged in a violent struggle for political freedoms, local autonomy, or Kurdish independence. Several of these organizations, such as the PKK in Turkey and the PUK and KDP in Iraq, have been accused by independent agencies of human rights abuses, although nothing on the scale of that which local states have perpetrated against the Kurds. Only one of these states – Turkey – has allies in the West. The political opposition of Kurdish refugees from Turkey to a prominent western ally has been a constant source of friction between them and the governments of Canada, the United States and in Europe. A Kurdish refugee in Canada, familiar with Mr. Durgan and his case, explained his view of its larger political dimensions.

> The Canadian government is not just making Sami's life bitter by leaving him in a legal limbo, but more than that, is helping barbaric regimes such as Turkey to commit genocide on the Kurdish people. While Turkey has been consistently denounced by Amnesty International as a serious abuser of human rights, the Canadian government has been continuously providing the Turks with advanced military technology. ... The navigation system for the Black Hawk helicopters is made by a Canadian company, Marconi of Montreal, and the fire control computer of the M60 tank is made by a company in Ottawa. (A Kurdish refugee from Turkey, June1998)

Canada, though not on a scale comparable to countries like the USA, Germany, or Israel, has had extensive trade relations with Turkey over the last few decades, a substantial proportion of which is related to military technology and hardware. A Canadian group, Project Ploughshares, using government data, provided a grand total of $64,907,118 in military exports to Turkey between 1978 and 1996 (Project Ploughshares, 1998). Military exports peaked in 1988 and in 1992 following the Second Gulf War.

3.4 From History to Ethnicity: Kurdish Communities in Canada

Until 1991, any Kurd in Canada who wished to be counted as such in the national census, would have had to enter *Kurdish* as a 'self-coded response' for ethnic identity. The 1981 Census counted self-coded Kurds under the classification ' Asian Arab, n.e.s.' ('not elsewhere specified'). The 1986 Census classified those who specified *Kurdish* as an ethnic identity as 'Arab, n.i.e.' ('not included elsewhere'). Kurds, when presented with this information, are generally quick to object that they are not 'Arabs' of any kind. Linguistically, Kurdish is closer to Persian and is classified as a 'West Iranic' language. Until 1991, for the purpose of census taking, any Kurds in Canada would have had their identity submerged in larger ethnic categories, growth rates for which are given in Table 5.

Table 5. Immigrant Population in Canada by Place Of Birth

	Before 1961	1961-1970	1971-1980	1981-1990	1991-1996
IRAN	100	660	3,175	22,065	21,410
IRAQ	250	660	1,460	4,550	9,780
TURKEY	740	2,720	2,755	3,635	4,580
SYRIA	160	1,455	2,490	4,885	4,110

Source: 1996 Census, Statistics Canada

The Canadian Census recognized 'Kurdish' as a distinct category under 'Mother Tongue,' 'Home Language,' and Ethnic Origin' for the first time in 1991. *Kurdish* was explicitly listed under the 'West Asian origins' category along with 'Afghan,' 'Armenian,' 'Iranian,' 'Israeli,' and 'Turk.' While linguistic data from the 1996 Census are not yet available, Table 6, based on 1991 data, gives an indication of the scale of Kurdish resettlement to Canada in the first few years. Data are provided for both single and multiple responses and also for the gender of respondents.

'Ethnic Origin' in the 1991 Census refers to the ethnic or cultural group(s) to which the respondent's ancestors belong and is explicitly distinguished from 'citizenship' and 'nationality'. Until 1981, only the paternal ancestry of respondents was listed indicating each respondent as having only one ethnic ancestry. This was changed first in 1981 to allow for one self-coded (write-in) entry and again in 1986 to allow for three separate write-in ancestries. In 1991 the number of ethnic groups listed for mark-in

circles was increased (including Kurdish) and two write-in spaces were provided. Table 7 provides a comparison of 1991 and 1996 census data for those specifying a Kurdish ethnic origin. A breakdown of 1996 data by gender is not yet available.

The impact of Canada's resettlement program is represented in this table by the tripling of the national total from 1,430 to 4,225. As with immigration trends generally in Canada, most Kurds have resettled in Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia. The dramatic increase in the numbers of Kurds in Alberta in the 1996 census is noteworthy and is likely due to secondary migration as a result of greater economic opportunities in Alberta. Under such circumstances, smaller provinces such as Manitoba and Saskatchewan tend to lose immigrant population to Alberta, B.C., and Ontario, and this would seem to be the case with the Kurds as well.

Table 8 gives a comparison of 1991 and 1996 data by Ethnic Origin with a breakdown by Census Metropolitan Area, ranked according to the size of the Kurdish community. As would be expected, the Canadian cities which traditionally attract larger numbers of immigrants (as they do Canadian migrants as well) – Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal, Calgary – all show increases in the sizes of their Kurdish communities. The establishment of substantial Kurdish communities in Kitchener, London, Hamilton, and Windsor, likely indicates the development of specifically Kurdish migration and social networks within Canada. In the course of consultations with Kurdish refugees in Winnipeg between 1993 and 1996, it was observed that a large number of families and individuals had relocated – some more than once – to Windsor, Calgary, Vancouver, Toronto, Hamilton, and Halifax (roughly in that order). The reasons cited for such moves generally involved economic opportunities, the presence of other family members, and the existence of more developed and active Kurdish community organizations.

There have been very few studies of Kurdish communities in Canada. In 1996, The Calgary Mennonite Centre for Newcomers (CMCN), in cooperation with local Kurds, published a situational analysis of the Calgary Kurdish Community. The study estimated the total Kurdish population in Calgary to be about 300 individuals, with a total of 223 individuals (41 families) participating. Of the participants, 109 were female and 114 male, with most (56 percent) under the age of 19. The families in the study tended to be large, sometimes with up to 12 members. Generally, the data on resettlement to

Table 6. Kurdish Language For Selected Provinces, 1991

	Mother Tongue*			**Home Language***		
	Single	Multiple	Total	Single	Multiple	Total
Canada						
Total	**1,095**	**165**	**1,260**	**1,045**	**65**	**1,110**
Male	750	125		590	50	
Female	345	40		450	10	
Quebec						
T	**80**	**25**	**105**	**95**	**15**	**110**
M	65	25		50	10	
F	15	-		40	-	
Ontario						
T	**730**	**115**	**845**	**530**	**55**	**585**
M	500	85		315	40	
F	235	30		220	10	
Manitoba						
T	**45**	**10**	**55**	**165**	**-**	**165**
M	30	5		80	-	
F	15	-		85	-	
Sask.						
T	**10**	**5**	**15**	**30**	**-**	**30**
M	5	-		10	-	
F	5	-		20	-	
Alberta						
T	**85**	**10**	**95**	**115**	**-**	**115**
M	55	-		65	-	
F	30	5		55	-	
B.C.						
T	**115**	**5**	**120**	**95**		**95**
M	80	5		65		
F	35	-		35		

*'Mother tongue' refers to the first language learned at home in childhood and still understood by the individual at the time of the census.
'Home Language' refers to the language spoken most often at home by the individual at the time of the census.

Source: 1991 Census, Statistics Canada

Table 7. Kurdish Ethnic Origin For Canada And Selected Provinces

	1991			1996		
	Single	Multiple	Total	Single	Multiple	Total
Canada						
Total	**1,175**	**255**	**1,430**	**3,015**	**1,210**	**4,225**
Male	740	195				
Female	435	65				
N.S.						
T	**—**	**10**	**10**	**65**	**0**	**70**
M.	-	10				
F		-				
Quebec						
T	**175**	**15**	**190**	**265**	**290**	**550**
M	110	10				
F	70	-				
Ontario						
T	**600**	**175**	**775**	**1,705**	**645**	**2,355**
M	385	130				
F	215	40				
Manitoba						
T	**130**	**-**	**130**	**15**	**75**	**95**
M	70	10				
F	60	-				
Sask.						
T	**—**	**15**	**15**	**0**	**0**	**0**
M		10				
F		10				
Alberta						
T	**160**	**20**	**180**	**455**	**100**	**555**
M	95	15				
F	70	-				
B.C.						
T	**105**	**15**	**120**	**444**	**155**	**595**
M	85	10				
F	20	-				

Source: 1991 & 1996 Census, Statistics Canada

Table 8. Kurdish Ethnic Origin for Census Metropolitan Areas

	1991	1996		
CITY		**Total**	**Single**	**Multiple**
Toronto	**220**	**835**	480	355
Kitchener	**85**	**585**	400	80
Vancouver	**90**	**580**	430	150
Montreal	**175**	**475**	185	285
London	**160**	**380**	340	40
Calgary	**20**	**325**	310	15
Ottawa	**45**	**280**	210	70
Edmonton	**145**	**215**	140	75
Hamilton	**45**	**200**	150	55
Winnipeg	**130**	**90**	75	15
Windsor	**25**	**85**	80	10
Quebec		**75**	75	0
Halifax		**70**	65	0
Thunder Bay	**15**	**15**	15	0
Regina		**10**	0	10

Source: 1991 & 1996 Census, Statistics Canada

Canada follows the pattern described earlier with most being resettled after 1988.

> The majority of Kurdish families in Calgary (73 percent) arrived in Canada between 1992-1995, with the peak being in 1992. For 15 of the 41 families interviewed (36 percent) Calgary was the first place they arrived in Canada. The rest came to Calgary after periods of time in other Canadian cities, notably: Toronto, London, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, and Vancouver. For the most part, this latter group chose to come to Calgary because of other family members or friends. (CMCN, 1996,5-6)

About 90 percent of the Kurdish families in Calgary came to Canada as government sponsored refugees. A large proportion (76 percent) indicated that they had spent from 2 months to 12 years in refugee camps in Turkey before coming to Canada. Most families (27 percent) had spent four years in the camps followed by those that had stayed for two years (25 percent). While the study does not indicate nation of origin for participants, judging from the excerpts of responses to the open-ended question "Why did you leave Kurdistan?" most Kurds in Calgary were originally from Iraq (CMCN, 1996). The overwhelming majority of responses to this question related directly to the

experience of war, persecution, or the generalized tyranny of Saddam Hussein's Iraq. On the basis of both consultations with Kurdish refugees in Winnipeg, as well as from participation in a variety of cultural events organized by a local community association, I was able to discern how the experience of forced migration was framed within a larger narrative of national struggle.

Immigrants and refugees are motivated to establish community organizations for various reasons including the desire to support political struggles in the homelands they left behind, to facilitate service delivery to community members, to encourage cultural integration, to discourage assimilation, or for the personal advancement of community leaders. Within the context of an official policy of multiculturalism, the formation of community associations may even be encouraged by government or immigrant service provision agencies. Given the fact that refugees have come to Canada as a result of political conflict, it would not be surprising if they tended to favour organizations with political objectives to a greater extent than do immigrants. Since most Kurds have come to Canada as refugees, political concerns have been a consistent feature of Kurdish community organization, even in the organization of specifically cultural activities.

As part of this study, a large number of Kurdish associations in Europe and North America were contacted to ascertain their objectives as a community organization. Of those that responded, most emphasized political objectives related to human rights, equality, or independence for the Kurdish people. Even organizations not affiliated with a specific party or regional movement emphasized the goals of raising international awareness of the Kurdish predicament in addition to the preservation of Kurdish traditional practices in the diaspora. Cultural pursuits were generally framed within the larger narrative of a political struggle for Kurdistan.

In cities where there are sufficient numbers, community associations often reflect the principle political divisions and party affiliations existing in Kurdistan. In Iraq, these are represented by the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP). In Iran, the principle Kurdish party is the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI), but Kurds are also active supporters of a number of leftist parties (Komala, Feda'iyan-e Khalq, Tudeh) or even monarchist organizations. In Turkey, the most prominent party is the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), although there are also a number

of smaller leftist organizations, not all of which are nationalist. In addition, Islamic parties have become increasingly popular in recent years. While each of these parties has a specific regional base within Kurdistan, they draw support in the Kurdish diaspora from Kurds with a variety of regional backgrounds. As a result, in the diaspora, ideology may be a better predictor of party affiliation than regional origin.

Where communities are small but political divisions are still persistent, it has often been difficult to create or maintain representative organizations. The Manitoba Kurdish Union seems to be unique among smaller Kurdish communities in that, despite having to cope with fractious differences, it has persisted as a unified organization. One of the first activities undertaken by the small community in Winnipeg was the establishment of a Kurdish community association. Because of the political friction which followed a period of extensive activism during and following the Second Gulf War, Kurdish community organizers decided to shift to less divisive cultural concerns. An Iranian Kurd, who served as President of the Kurdish Union, described some of their projects:

> The Manitoba Kurdish Union now has a Kurdish class for kids. Since November, at the International Center, there are three guys teaching kids every Saturday from 5 to 7 in the evening. We also have made a questionnaire to find out the level of Kurdish spoken by children, how many children in each family. We are also trying to start a Kurdish Women's Workshop, to try and get women out of the house, let them talk to each other more.

Another member of the Kurdish community, originally from Iraq, outlined some other goals of the local community:

> The main priority for the Kurdish association is cultural events, not political, because there are too many factions. Right now we are practising songs and dances for next year's Newroz. Last year it was too disorganized. We invited an organizer from Saskatoon but he couldn't make it. We are also trying to bring in an Iranian Kurdish musician. He is a member of the Iranian Communist Party but he is a nationalist. These are the main things that we are doing right now.

As the organization of Newroz (Kurdish New Year) events frequently demonstrated, the separation of cultural and political issues was not easily achieved. These annual celebrations have often been sources of controversy when some community

members felt they had become too generic and devoid of political context – particularly if they failed to foreground the issue of Kurdish nationalist aspirations. Many of the Kurds from Iran are not affiliated with the most prominent Kurdish nationalist party – the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) – but rather with a variety of Marxist and Communist organizations. They tend to dismiss traditional Kurdish nationalism as being too parochial, chauvinistic, or even tribal. Kurdish nationalist feeling among Iraqi Kurds in Canada appears to be much stronger. Some attribute this to the success of the nationalist movement in Iraq in achieving greater levels of autonomy, while others argue that Kurdish refugees from Iraq originate from predominately rural areas where traditional nationalist allegiances are more important. The differences between the two points of view have been serious enough at times for some Iranian Kurds to call for the creation of a separate association. Kurds of all origins have strenuously resisted this separation because of its symbolic reinforcement of the actual geographical division of Kurdistan between various states.

While a common approach is to divide Kurds according to their state of origin, such an approach can be misleading to the extent that it obscures more substantial sources of social division among Kurds. First, each state of origin has developed separate political movements so that observed regional divisions are generally an indirect result of specific party affiliations. Iran's political parties tend to be less traditionally nationalist than those of Iraq – a distinction which will be explored in more detail below. For less ideologically inclined Kurds, an important source of social division is class-based. Many of the Kurds resettled from Iraq have a rural background, while those from Turkey and Iran tend to be more urban. An educated Kurd from Sulaimaniya, a city in Iraqi Kurdistan, might find more in common with an educated Kurd from Mahabad, in Iranian Kurdistan, than with a rural Kurd from elsewhere in Iraq.

An example of another source of division is provided by a project to translate an orientation video for a local settlement agency in which Kurds from diverse regions participated. The project faced a substantial challenge because the Kurdish language is characterized by two prominent dialects that are not mutually comprehensible. This linguistic distinction – between Badinani and Sorani speaking Kurds (discussed below) – crosses existing state boundaries so that Sorani-speaking Kurds in Iraq may associate

more easily with Sorani Kurds in Iran than with Badinani Kurds in Iraq. The greater access to education that Sorani-speaking Kurds have had in Iran and Iraq complicates this difference. None of these distinctions – regional, ideological, class, or linguistic – should be understood as absolute differences, and examples of strong associations across each of them can be found wherever mixed Kurdish communities have been established. However, these divisions do tend to be the principle lines of fracture when political or social conflict arises among Kurds.

In summation, the continuation of forced migration of Kurds since the creation of the safe haven in 1991 indicates that the Kurdish problem of protection has persisted despite the precedent-setting intervention by the international order. This forced migration is ongoing in the context of a global refugee dilemma and diminishing access to asylum and opportunities for resettlement. Asylum determination procedures in Canada have tended to recognize that a Kurdish identity is itself enough to indicate the likelihood of a well-grounded fear of persecution among refugees from Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and Syria. Nevertheless, Kurdish applicants for asylum must still demonstrate objective reasons indicating how such identity became a cause for persecution on an individual basis. The evaluation of these reasons varied according to the regional background of asylum applicants indicating not only the different political histories of each state the refugees have fled, but the diverse relationships those states have with Canada and other western countries. Kurds from Iraq, for example, are more likely to be recognized as refugees than Kurds from Turkey.

The difficulties, traumas and dangers involved in the flight from persecution and the search for asylum are experiences the Kurds share with many other refugees. Similarly, the politicized character of refugee status determination – particularly in the evaluation of categorical identities in relation to the individual experience of persecution – is also common to many refugee groups. Finally, Kurds, like other refugees, have formed community associations in the diaspora which reflect the dynamics of the social and political conflicts in the homelands they have fled. On this basis alone it would seem logical to argue that, rather than the issue being a specific *Kurdish* problem of protection, the Kurds share a wider dilemma with all refugees regardless of cultural origin.

A comparison of the experience of Kurds in their ongoing search for asylum with the global dynamics of the problem of protection in the international order (explored in Chapter 2), would seem to justify an analytical approach subordinating the Kurdish situation to the larger refugee dilemma, or concentrating on the phenomenology of the individual experience of displacement common to all refugees. This approach would be compatible with both the emphasis in the field of refugee studies on the universality of the refugee experience and the emphasis of the contemporary refugee regime on the individual basis of persecution and protection. The intent of this study is not to disprove the validity of these wider associations, but to argue that a deeper understanding of the problem of protection, particularly as it applies to the relationship between root causes and durable solutions, can be achieved by examining the cultural dynamics underlying the specifically Kurdish experience of forced migration.

On the basis of consultations with Kurdish refugees, a common sense of shared predicament could be discerned among Kurds from a diversity of regional, ideological, and social backgrounds. The statement of one Kurd best sums this up: "The Kurdish situation is different."

> The Kurdish situation is different. There are twenty-four million Kurds divided between four countries. We have to be united. The Kurdish people now realize the truth. They are asking the PKK to help them. (A Kurdish refugee from Turkey living in Vancouver.)

The implications of this shared sense of Kurdish predicament for social practice were manifested in a normative ethic of duty towards one's fellow Kurds. At its most nationalistic, this ethic was understood in terms of *Kurdayeti* (discussed in detail below), or unity and self-sacrifice for the good of the Kurdish nation. Even those who did not feel themselves to be nationalists, were observed to be motivated by a sense of communal duty and expressed their internationalist politics *as* Kurds:

> What the Kurds want is freedom of culture for all. All people can come to Kurdistan and live there. Kurds don't want to say: "no, you can't live there because you are not Kurdish". We all have the same problem – capitalism. (A Kurdish refugee from Iran living in Winnipeg.)

While it may be acknowledged that Kurds share problems with other refugees, Kurds insist that the Kurdish situation is different because of the specific history of the oppression of the Kurds as a people.

> My family ... just as all refugees generally, and Kurdish refugees especially - I say especially because all the other refugees escaped because they have problems in their countries, but the Kurds don't even have a country, a government, an embassy, support, or a future ... (Hussain, A Kurdish refugee from Iraq)

Langer (1990), in a study of refugees from El Salvador in Australia, characterized the trajectory from refugeeness to resettlement in a multicultural society as a passage from 'history to ethnicity.' The refugee is removed from the historical drama of political conflict and "cast as a member of an 'ethnic group', in which the divisions of class, religion, politics and region on which the drama is premised are glossed by the presumed unity of language, food, music, dancing, religion and soccer." (Langer, 1990:5) For Kurds the desire to remain within history is expressed by the tendency of many refugees to frame their individual experience of forced migration within the larger narrative of a shared Kurdish predicament. Similarly, this affirmation of a shared sense of predicament is reflected in the normative ethic of self-sacrifice and duty toward the Kurdish people, even if the individual expression of that ethic varies according to ideological, regional, and social background. In the next section, this study will explore the cultural and historical basis for the politicization of Kurdish identity and its relevance for the Kurdish problem of protection.

PART II
THE KURDS

In Part I, the problem of protection was first analyzed in the context of an international order in which the interaction of nation-states was characterized by a combination of narrow political interest – *realpolitik* – and idealist legal regimes such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Refugee Convention. Protection was demonstrated to be a reciprocal duty of the state towards its individual constituents based on universal human rights. The refugee regime was shown to be a special case of protection involving a triangulated relationship with the international order responsible for protecting the refugee when the state failed to do so. Finally, the difficulties involved in finding durable solutions within the international order revealed the centrality of the state in addressing the root causes of displacement.

The system of nation-states has increasingly been analyzed, not only in terms of the tension between realist and idealist perspectives, but also in anthropological terms (Anderson, 1991; Appadurai, 1990; Bhabha, 1990; Wallerstein, 1987) as a "powerful regime of order and knowledge that is at once politico-economic, historical, cultural, aesthetic, and cosmological ... [and as a] transnational cultural form" (Malkki, 1995:5). Anderson argues that "nation-ness is the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time" (Anderson, 1991:3) and proposes that "nationalism has to be understood by aligning it, not with self-consciously held political ideologies, but with the large cultural systems that preceded it, out of which – as well as against which – it came into being." (Anderson, 1991:12) Malkki takes Bhabha's (1990) reference to the nation as "a system of cultural signification" and argues that this system needs to be located at the level of "the whole relational constellation of imagined national communities" (Malkki, 1995:5). She suggests that "we think not just of national*ism*, but of a *national order of things.*" (Malkki, 1995:5)

The advantage of such an anthropological approach is that it reveals the system of nation-states as more than a political expression of international order, but also as a cultural order in which the problem of protection can be directly related to the desire for

categorical legitimacy. In introducing her ethnography of national cosmology among Hutu refugees in Tanzania, Malkki describes her intent in "politicizing the anthropological study of classification."

> One of the generalized, global aspects of the nation is its social life as a powerful regime of classification, an apparently commonsensical system of ordering and sorting people into national kinds and types. ... This project seeks to make a specifically anthropological contribution to the study of nationness, then, through exploring the status of nations as a categorical order, and the effects of that kind of classification on the essentialization, aestheticization, policing, and historical transformation of our social and political identities. (Mallki, 1995:6).

In Chapter 4, this study will explore the politics of identity in terms of both essentialist and instrumentalist approaches to ethnicity and nationalism. An analysis of the social and political transformations involved in the creation of a 'national order of things' will demonstrate that the problem of protection is not only a legal question relevant to the international order, but is also intrinsically related to cultural order, particularly to the normative value of the state as the instrument of political change and the guarantor of protection and legitimacy. In Chapter 5, this study will explore the contested boundaries of Kurdish identity and analyze the cultural and historical transformation of the problem of protection in Kurdistan. It will be demonstrated how the combined political incorporation and fragmentation of Kurdish society provided the context for a politicizing of Kurdish identity based on a growing sense of shared predicament.

CHAPTER 4.
THE NATIONAL ORDER OF THINGS:
PROTECTION AND THE POLITICS OF IDENTITY

4.1 Ethnic Identification

> Is ethnicity an object of analysis, something to be explained? Or is it an explanatory principle capable of accounting for significant aspects of human existence? (Comaroff, 1987:301)

Ethnicity, the cultural basis of group identification, has proven as resistant to rigorous definition as *culture* itself. Attempts to give the concept an analytical solidity, run the risk of being too reductive to predict or explain observable social relations that are understood by social agents to be motivated by 'ethnicity.' The alternative – allowing the concept an elasticity that can encompass observable phenomena – correspondingly decreases its analytical utility. Moreover, the importance of ethnic identification in any given social context can be understood only in relation to other locally and historically contingent social forces such as political integration and alienation, class and gender relations, as well as religious or other forms of categorical legitimacy. However, efforts to reduce ethnicity to a purely contingent aspect of any one of these forces have usually resulted in the reification of other notions such as 'false consciousness' or 'elite manipulation' which are themselves demanding of explanation. Ethnicity, therefore, may have limited utility as an explanatory principle, but it has persisted nevertheless, as a social process that needs to be explained.

The study of ethnicity can be broadly divided according to approaches treating it as an object of analysis or as an independent explanatory principle (Comaroff 1987). *Instrumentalists* generally adopt the former approach, but treat ethnicity as a contingent process dependent on external causes such as 'elite manipulation,' or structural features of group incorporation into the modern state or world system. Ethnic identification, in other words, is seen as a byproduct of asymmetric modernization whereby certain groups have been politically, socially, and economically marginalized within a new or changing polity. Because ethnic mobilization is a function of inter-group competition, it is not

'cultural content' which is important, but the definition of group boundaries (for ex. Antonius, 1994; Olzak, 1985).

Primordialists, on the other hand, tend to approach ethnicity as an objective basis of group identification and are fundamentally concerned with cultural content. Ethnic identification arises from a 'fixed ethnic tradition' based on the conviction of primordial, ancestral relatedness. It is rooted in an *ethnopsychology* (Connor, 1993), which draws its strength from this sense of primordial kinship, as well as from normative traditions encouraging strong affective relationships and altruism. Much of the inspiration for such approaches is taken from the work of Geertz , who was less concerned with establishing the case for an 'objective' ethnicity than with articulating an 'emic' perspective, or view of ethnicity from the inside.

> By a primordial attachment is meant one that stems from the 'givens'– or, more precisely, as culture is inevitably involved in such matters, the assumed 'givens'– of social existence: immediate contiguity and kin connection mainly, but beyond them the givenness that stems from being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language, or even a dialect of a language, and following particular social practices.... The general strength of such primordial bonds, and the types of them that are important, differ from person to person, from society to society, and from time to time. But for virtually every person, in every society, at almost all times, some attachments seem to flow more from a sense of natural– some would say spiritual– affinity than from social interaction. (Geertz, 1963: 108)

In trying to account for the social dynamics of ethnic identification in specific cases, the two approaches are often merged. This is particularly the case when it becomes necessary to explain the emergence of an *ethnic charter* or political mobilization based on ethnicity. The problem is that while most ethnic movements are demonstrably of recent historical origin and obviously manipulated by various social agencies, ethnic identification retains a potency for popular mobilization that has proven more durable and effective than less culturally-charged categorical identities. In dismissing the mythic and affective elements of ethnicity as being contingent, a narrow instrumentalist approach ignores what is considered to be essential and motivating by participants in ethnic identification. In Douglass' words (1988), instrumentalists "examine their bodies rather

than their souls, while addressing what are oftentimes heated issues as if they were devoid of calories" (Douglass, 1988:196).

If it were, as instrumentalists insist, fundamentally a product of elite manipulation, ethnicity would be unable to motivate corporate action among an imagined community based on a sense of primordial kinship in a social field fragmented by differences of class, ideology, and religion. The recourse to 'elite manipulation' as an explanatory principle is inevitably question-begging. Why do some elites become successful manipulators of the collective imagination and others do not? Why are non-elites such willing participants in their own manipulation?

Primordialist approaches, however, are no less problematic. Ethnic boundaries are dynamic and rarely covariant with any given set of cultural traits which overlap with other competing forms of group identification. A narrow primordialist approach begs the question of how and why a particular *ethnopsychology* becomes socially relevant in any given context. Ethnicity is too plural, fluid and constructed according to the dynamic demands of boundary definition in social fields with multiple possibilities for collective fragmentation and conflict, to sustain the static weight of cultural universality that primordialists assign to it.

Like *culture*, ethnicity serves as a conceptual nexus encompassing the interpenetration of a variety of social features such as political economy, language, social organization, and religious belief. As a *conceptual attractor*, or composite of those contingencies, it is not reducible to any one of them. Ethnic identification as a categorical imperative is an instrument of individual and group legitimation that appeals to elites anxious to preserve, accrue, or regain social position. For the same reason, it also appeals to non-elites, often as a result of their exclusion from such positions.

Ethnicity is able to achieve an apparent autonomy as a motivator of corporate action because of its ability to articulate across diverse social fields, a compelling poetics and politics of collective identity. The poetics of identity provides for a connecting historical narrative of myths, symbols and traditions, while also defining social boundaries. In addition, it provides a compelling explanation for contemporary social dilemmas. The politics of ethnic identification is sustained not only by the role of such

narratives as motivators of corporate action, but by a political system in which protection and legitimacy are perceived to derive from the legitimation of ethnic categories.

In trying to explain the emergence and politicization of an ethnic charter, it is necessary to account for the role of cultural traditions, particularly the role of renewal and descent myths (Smith, 1984) in providing the set of normative ethics which encourage group solidarity and altruistic behaviour. On the other hand, it is also necessary to account for the *constructed* nature of such myths and their contingent employment by those who have or desire political power. Finally, it is necessary to account for the fact that ethnic identification is not politically relevant in every situation, that it is only one among many possibilities for group identification, and that it is not always successfully manipulated by elites or external interests.

As Eric Wolf has pointed out, "to call a social entity an "ethnic" group is merely the beginning of the inquiry rather than the implementation of it" (Wolf, 1994:7) and "that cultural ordering requires leadership, control, influence, and power" (Wolf, 1994:6). This argument directs us to the issues of the nation as the site of identity construction and instrumental power. The key to an understanding of the instrumental use of an essentialized cultural identity for political change is the emergence of the nation as "the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time" (Anderson, 1991:3) and the role of a new categorical order in securing its cultural hegemony.

4.2 The Nation

> A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. Only two things, actually, constitute this soul, this spiritual principle. One is the past, the other is in the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of remembrances; the other is the actual consent, the desire to live together, the will to continue to value the heritage which all hold in common. Man, sirs, does not improvise. The nation, even as the individual, is the end product of a long period of work, sacrifice and devotion. (Renan, 1882:26)

Renan's definition of the nation reflects much of the tone of nineteenth century European nationalism as well as its often contradictory qualities. On the one hand the nation has an 'essence' which presents itself as a primordial legacy, not as a question of choice, but one of 'birthright.' On the other hand, the nation is a product of consent and

mutual desire – an exercise of the will. More recently, Connor has argued that the nation – unlike the ethnic group – must be 'self-defined,' but by an emotional rather than a rational conviction – "'primordial' thinking with the heart (or with the blood)." (Connor, 1978:380) To state the apparent contradiction in simple terms: the nation is defined by those who *choose* to recognize their *unchosen*, shared legacy as the basis of a communal bond. The nation is not an improvisation, but a conscious recognition of a 'natural' community derived from a pre-political, religious, linguistic, or cultural unity. Kedourie sees in nationalism, a 'theory of the nation' which "admits of no great precision" and warns that "it is misplaced ingenuity to try and classify nationalisms according to the particular aspect which they choose to emphasize." Nevertheless, Kedourie does find some common themes.

> What is beyond doubt is that the doctrine divides humanity into separate and distinct nations, claims that such nations must constitute sovereign states, and asserts that the members of a nation reach freedom and fulfillment by cultivating the peculiar identity of their own nation and by sinking their own persons in the greater whole of the nation. (Kedourie, 1994: 49)

This conceptual leap from primordial essence to consensual community was bridged by the conception that the nation must be 'awakened from sleep'. Anderson (1991) argues that this idea was introduced by the second-wave, 'popular' nationalisms, which flourished in the political space opened up in Europe by the collapsing empires of Habsburgs, Romanovs, and Ottomans, rather than by the earlier revolutionary nationalisms of the Americas. This 'awakening' not only "opened up an immense antiquity behind the epochal sleep" (196) but, in addition –

> ... the trope provided a crucial metaphorical link between the new European nationalisms and language... [It] permitted those intelligentsias and bourgeoisies who were becoming conscious of themselves as Czechs, Hungarians, or Finns to figure their study of Czech, Magyar, or Finnish languages, folklores and musics as 'rediscovering' something deep-down always known. (Anderson, 1992:196)

The linguistic aspect, more so than 'blood,' was crucial to these popular nationalisms and opened them up to consensual participation. It underlies the fact that, in most contemporary nations, an outsider can be voluntarily 'naturalized' by accepting the various obligations of membership, one of the most important of which is learning the

national language. Under the influence of nationalism, language, like blood, takes on an essentialist quality. In the rediscovery of the Turkish language after the Ottoman collapse, for example, the language had to be purged not only of its foreign elements, but of its imperial influences, as well, so that, as a national language, it would resemble the idealized dialect of the authentic *Turk*.

It is this aspect of reinvention, crucial to nation-building, that demonstrates the instrumental character of nationalism. In the absence of the state, the nation is inchoate, and it is the activists and political leaders – the elites– who give it an apparent shape. For these educator-intellectuals, "the people had to be purified of the dross of centuries – their lethargy, divisions, alien elements, ignorance and so on – and emancipate themselves" (Smith, 1994:153). But where Renan and others talked about *will*, Weber emphasized the role of *power*.

> Time and again we find that the concept "nation" directs us to political power. Hence, the concept seems to refer – if it refers at all to a universal phenomenon – to a specific kind of pathos which is linked to the idea of a powerful political community of people who share a common language, or religion, or common customs, or political memories; such a state may already exist or it may be desired. The more power is emphasized, the closer appears the link between nation and state. (Weber, 1978:398)

Where primordial conceptions of the nation draw on a genealogy from Renan to Rousseau and Herder, instrumentalist and constructivist approaches have generally taken their inspiration from Weber and Marx. As with ethnicity, it is the contingent quality of the nation which is emphasized. Kedourie argues that "France is a state not because the French constitute a nation, but rather that the French state is the outcome of dynastic ambitions, of circumstances, of lucky wars, of administrative and of diplomatic skills (Kedourie, 1994:52). The nation may represent itself as a "deep, horizontal comradeship" (Anderson, 1991:7), but this populist affinity, in Gellner's view, is a manipulation by nationalist elites.

> The basic deception and self-deception practiced by nationalism is this: nationalism is, essentially, the general imposition of a high culture on society, where previously low cultures had taken up the lives of the majority, and in some cases of the totality, of the population. It means the generalized diffusion of a school-mediated, academy-supervised idiom, codified for the requirements of reasonably precise bureaucratic and

> technological communication. It is the establishment of an anonymous, impersonal society, with mutually substitutable atomized individuals, held together above all by a shared culture of this kind, in place of a previous complex structure of local groups, sustained by folk cultures reproduced locally and idiosyncratically by the micro-groups themselves. This is what *really* happens. (Gellner, 1983:53)

World-systems theorists argue for an even more contingent role for the nation. Wallerstein analyzes the idea of the nation, along with two other concepts roughly equivalent to 'people'– race and ethnic group, in relation to various dimensions of the capitalist world economy: "race to the core-periphery axis, nation to the political superstructure, and ethnic group to the formation of household structures through which non-market economies subsidize the market and capital" (Wallerstein, 1987:373). Wallerstein describes the characteristics of a capitalist world economy in terms of a singular historical system or geoculture.

> Among its basic structures have been an axial division of labor reflected in a core-periphery polarization and a political system of sovereign states bound together within an interstate system. This singular historical system has a geoculture ... which means that there are norms and values which serve to legitimate the world-system as a whole. ... One key geocultural value has been that every state should be a nation. This is what we mean by "citizenship," and it forms in turn the basis of the widely accepted myth of popular sovereignty (within each state). A second key geocultural value has been the belief that over time it is possible to ameliorate material conditions and move in the direction of greater material equality. (Wallerstein, 1994:9)

Wallerstein refers to these geopolitical values as 'liberal reformism' and, as an ideology, he feels that they are eroding. For much of this century, however, these values had "the effect of pressing people to find solutions to their problems, look for salvation, place their faith in states, in their states." (Wallerstein, 1994:10) The importance of the nation-state as a corporate agent of social change is generally overlooked or underestimated by the romantic and primordial approaches to nationalism. It is this element, pointing toward the future rather than to a rediscovered past or reawakened present, which provides for a motivating, normative matrix that can encourage affective relations and self-sacrifice among non-elites. Similarly, as with instrumental approaches to ethnicity, the focus on 'elite manipulation' – while it reveals many of the critical

elements of political and economic power which motivate a nationalist agenda –fails to explain why the masses, so essential to nationalism, become enthusiastic participants in the struggle to realize that agenda. Geertz identifies two powerful appeals of nationalism: the 'search for identity' and the 'desire for progress.'

> ... the peoples of the new states are simultaneously animated by two powerful, thoroughly interdependent, yet distinct and often actually opposing motives – the desire to be recognized as responsible agents whose wishes, acts, hopes, and opinions 'matter', and the desire to build an efficient, dynamic modern state. The one aim is to be noticed: it is a search for identity, and a demand that that identity be publicly acknowledged as having import, a social assertion of the self as 'being somebody in the world'. The other aim is practical: it is a demand for progress, for rising standard of living, more effective political order, greater social justice, and beyond that of 'playing in the larger arena of world politics,' of 'exercising influence among the nations'. (Geertz, 1963:107)

In this study, the search for identity described by Geertz is characterized in terms of 'legitimacy,' and the practical motivation is conceived in terms of the need for 'protection.' A primordial legacy – even one reconstructed by elites – is an important part of the 'search for identity,' particularly in the context of a collapsing world order based on imperial hierarchy and religious community. But in the face of such a collapse, an activist or revolutionary program provides a far more convincing motivation for nationalist identification by offering not only a rediscovered communal kinship, but legitimate membership in a new order which can replace the lost or diminished web of protective relations. The urgency of such a program is rendered even more convincing if other social groups, who shared membership in the former spiritual or imperial community, are being separately reinvented as nations based on their 'peoplehood' or 'race.'

This was essentially the context in which the possibility for a widely distributed sense of Kurdish national identification emerged. Though the Ottoman Empire was scorned as 'the sick man' in European capitals, it remained a compelling object of communal identification – for Moslems especially – until its final collapse after World War I. The social chaos, which resulted both from the war and the conflicts that followed the imperial defeat, energized a struggle among both Christian and Moslem groups – many of the former with European support – to receive a legitimate place in the emerging order.

4.3 The National Order of Things

> I have suggested that we think not just of nationalism, but of a national order of things. The phrase is intended to describe a class of phenomena that is deeply cultural and yet global in its significance ... to underscore that the nation is always associated with particular places and times, yet simultaneously constitutes a supralocal, transnational cultural form... (Malkki, 1995:6)

The nation-state and nationalism significantly pre-date the emergence of the post-World War I international order. According to Anderson, the possibility for the global extension of a system of nation-states began with the success of the American and French Revolutions which provided the modular examples for the nationalisms which followed them. The 'second-wave' nationalisms of Germany, Hungary, Greece, the new Balkan states, and Turkey were modeled on those of America and France, but drew to a greater extent upon populist conceptions of race, ethnicity, and linguistic affinity. Towards the end of the last century, a new model Anderson calls 'official nationalism,' was created by imperial monarchies who sought to achieve both legitimacy and a sense of nationhood among former subjects by promoting print-vernaculars and romantic ideals of a primordial folk culture. The linguistic basis of these European nationalisms was instrumental in promoting the ideal of the nation as the predestined and legitimate expression of peoplehood.

As Anderson (1991) has shown, this extension proceeded not only on the basis of modular examples provided by the American and French Revolutions, but also because of two technical innovations essential to the development of the modern state – precision mapping and the census.

> Ever since John Harrison's 1761 invention of the chronometer, which made possible the precise calculation of longitudes, the entire planet's curved surface had been subjected to a geometrical grid which squared off empty seas and unexplored regions in measured boxes. The task of, as it were, 'filling in' the boxes was to be accomplished by explorers, surveyors, and military forces. ... They were on the march to put space under the same surveillance which the census-makers were trying to impose on persons. Triangulation by triangulation, war by war, treaty by treaty, the alignment of map and power proceeded. (Anderson, 1991:173)

The complete "alignment of map and power," the final "filling in" of all the boxes, though begun in the era of colonial imperialism, was not fully realized until this

century. The aftermath of World War I and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire were followed by an unprecedented period of state-creation and 'nation-building' that compressed peoples and homelands into an interlocking grid of non-violable territories. The completion of this 'hegemonic topography' (Malkki, 1995) was enabled and legitimated by the development of international institutions, beginning with the League of Nations, which promoted the idea of the sovereign nation-state as a universal political value.

> The First World War brought the age of high dynasticism to an end. By 1922, Habsburgs, Hohenzollerns, Romanovs and Ottomans were gone. In place of the Congress of Berlin came the League of *Nations*, from which non-Europeans were not excluded. From this time on, the legitimate international norm was the nation-state, so that in the League even the surviving imperial powers came dressed in national costume rather than imperial uniform. (Anderson, 1991:113)

As demonstrated in the analysis of the development of a refugee regime, one of the principle threats to the stability of emerging international order was posed by the large numbers of refugees fleeing imperial collapse, revolution and social conflict during and after the First World War. The revolutionary Russian government initially refused all claims to the territorial appendages which were formerly attached to the Russian empire (Northedge, 1986), and stable national entities had yet to emerge from the collapsing Ottoman Empire. The hundreds of thousands of stateless and uprooted persons displaced across Europe and the Middle East can be seen as members of 'liminal collectivities' caught between the collapse of the old categorical order and the still unstable post-war international order. Some, like the Kurds, were never incorporated as a nation, but were absorbed into other nation-states resulting in the structural incorporation of their collective liminality.

The anthropological concept of liminality was developed by Turner (1967) and based on van Gennep's theories of rites of passage "which accompany every change of place, state, social position and age." (van Gennep, 1960 in Turner, 1967:94) Turner used the term to refer to the structural invisibility of those caught between the rites of separation and the rites of incorporation.

> The structural "invisibility" of liminal *personae* has a twofold character. They are at once no longer classified and not yet classified. (Turner, 1967:95-96)

Turner characterized liminal personae as transitional beings who are "particularly polluting, since they are neither one thing nor another, or may be both, or neither here nor there, or may even be nowhere (in terms of any recognized cultural topography), and are at the very least 'betwixt and between' all the recognized fixed points in the space-time of cultural classification." (Turner, 1967:97) Malkki (1995) has taken Turner's concepts and applied them to the refugee condition to emphasize the refugee's "systematic invisibility" in the literature of nations and nationalism as result of being both no longer classified and not yet classified. Drawing on the work of another anthropologist, Mary Douglas, Mallki contends that refugee represents not only a political danger but a symbolic threat to the categorical order of peoples and nations as well.

> One of the most illuminating ways of getting at the categorical quality of the national order of things is to examine what happens when this order is challenged or subverted. Refugees can represent precisely such a subversion. They are an "abomination" (Douglas, 1966) produced and made meaningful by the categorical order itself, even as they are excluded from it. (Mallki, 1995:6)

The response to this threat has been to constitute refugeeness as an emergency problem area (Nyers, 1988), "as an anomaly requiring specialized correctives and therapeutic interventions" (Malkki, 1995:8). At the level of institutional responsibilities, this is represented by the common assertion that UNHCR is responsible for the palliative care of refugees (Hathaway, 1995). At the level of Refugee Studies, this is represented by the conception of the refugee as a *distinct social-psychological type* (Stein, 1981) where the physical displacement from normality is relocated "within the bodies and minds of people classified as refugees" (Malkki, 1995:8). The result at either level is the externalization of the refugee from the national order of things, "this functionalist dream of a Family of Nations" (Malkki, 1995:9), to either a liminal zone awaiting a transformative return to the categorical order, or to a limbo zone beyond categorization.

In the case of the refugee, therefore, *the rite of separation*, to use van Gennep's conception, is constituted by the "discursive constitution of the refugees as bare humanity." (Mallki, 1995:11) In the context of the international order, this is indicated by

the fact that the refugee, having lost his state-specific regime of protection, is entirely dependent upon the protection provided by the universality of the refugee regime. In the context of the national order of things, the refugee, by becoming *deterritorialized*, also becomes culturally uprooted.

The first step in a 'rite of reincorporation' is the universalization of the refugee, which takes place when he or she becomes the ward of a humanitarian regime, followed by the refugee's reintegration and resettlement as an ethnic minority in a multicultural country such as Canada. Even in situations where the idealized solution of repatriation is realized, the objective is to realize the same categorical trajectory. The refugee is separated from his or her 'natural' place in the categorical order, passes through a liminal threshold state defined by invisibility and danger, and is culturally transformed by being readmitted to the state of origin under a renewed set of protective relations, or *naturalized* into a completely new state. The role of the refugee regime, therefore, is not only to extend protection to refugees on behalf of the international order, but to oversee their palliative transformation in order to protect the national order of things.

In summation, ethnic identification is able to effectively motivate corporate action because of its ability to articulate a compelling poetics and politics of collective identity across diverse social fields. The poetics of identity provides for a connecting historical narrative of myths, symbols and traditions, while also defining social boundaries. In addition, it provides a compelling explanation for contemporary social dilemmas. The politics of ethnic identification is sustained not only by the role of such narratives as motivators of corporate action, but by a political system in which protection and legitimacy are perceived to derive from the legitimation of ethnic categories.

The establishment of the nation-state as a universal political value and as the sole guarantor of protection provided such a system. In the international order that emerged after the First World War, the state became the principle corporate agent of social change. Following the collapse of the imperial and religious categorical orders, revolutionary and nationalist movements offered not only a rediscovered communal kinship, but legitimate membership in a new order which could replace the lost or diminished web of protective relations.

This new system was not only constituted of political norms and regimes, but was also a powerful cultural regime of categorical order – a national order of things. Refugees pose not only a political danger to the stability of this order, but also a symbolic threat to the integrity of its categories. The purpose of the refugee regime is not only to extend protection to refugees, but to oversee the liminal transformation of the refugee and restore equilibrium to the categorical order.

By bringing together the discourse of refugeeness with that of nationalism, it is possible to see the liminality of the individual refugee reflected in the liminality of imagined communities which have also been excluded and externalized from the national order of things. The next chapter will explore the contested boundaries of both the Kurds as a people and of Kurdistan as their homeland, indicating the extent to which both have become a subversive and liminal category within the current order of nation-states. In addition, an analysis of the transformation of Kurdish social organization will demonstrate how a Kurdish society, characterized by a dynamic and situational politics of identity, became detached from a categorical order where protection was guaranteed in non-ethnic terms, as a result of its incorporation into more complex political systems.

CHAPTER 5.

KURDEWARI:
CONTESTED IDENTITIES AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN KURDISTAN

A Kurdish dictionary defines *Kurdewari* as: "... *n.* the Kurdish world, sg. typically Kurdish" (Wahby and Edmonds, 1966:80). Similarly, Hassanpour defines the nominal suffix *'ewari'* as meaning 'in the manner of' and traces its first written use to Ahmadi Khani's work *Mem u Zin*, composed in 1693-94 (Hassanpour, 1992). The term is still in common usage, and Kurdish consultants explain its meaning in relation to common Kurdish cultural practices such as a certain style of cuisine, dress, social interaction, or traditional lifestyle.

Kurdewari represents a subjective and primordial sense of cultural distinctiveness indicating that ethnic boundaries are more persuasively drawn by participants than by observers. Although Kurds share many similarities with neighbouring cultures, they are able to discern a distinctly Kurdish inflection to oral traditions shared across a variety of distinct dialects, a distinctly Kurdish approach to religious practice, and a distinctly Kurdish character to their material culture. While individual Kurds disagree on the precise placement of cultural boundaries, and though the importance of particular boundaries varies according to the extent to which they have been politicized, the sense that there is a collective identity that can be distinguished from its neighbours is as deeply rooted among Kurds as it is among Arabs, Turks, and Persians.

5.1 Who Are The Kurds?

> The Kurds are people of Indo-European origin who live mainly in the mountains and uplands where Turkey, Iraq, and Iran meet, in an area known as "Kurdistan" for hundreds of years. (K. Kakel, a Kurdish refugee now living in Europe)

This is likely the most succinct and least controversial answer one will find to the question "who are the Kurds." It states the only basic elements of identity, location, and origin that might elicit general agreement. Kurdistan is located along an arc extending

from the Taurus mountains in the northwest down to the Zagros mountains in the southeast (Figure 2) . Historical references to *Kurdistan*, 'the home of the Kurds,' date at least as far back as the seventh century. Written usage of the name *Kurd* dates from the same period but "is perhaps an echo of similar names used with more restricted application by the classical writers, such as the Gorduaia mountains and the brigand Kurtioi of Atropatian Media, ... and the Kardouchoi who attacked Xenophon and the Ten Thousand in such characteristic fashion as they retreated through the Zakho region (400 B.C.)." (Edmonds, 1957:6) The origins of these peoples as primarily Indo-European is not contested, but from this point forward, the debate has been intense.

The heterogeneity of the region is part of the problem. While Kurds predominate in the mountainous heartland of Kurdistan, the region is also populated by other groups – Turks, Persians, Arabs, Bakhtiari, Lurs, Azeris, Armenians, etc. – and its putative boundaries shade into regions where those other groups are the majority. As a result of migration and conquest, the regions where Kurds have been predominant have changed as well, extending outwards from the mountainous core to the eastern Anatolian plateau during the 13th and 14th centuries (McDowall, 1992). In the process, Kurds assimilated, and were assimilated by, neighbouring cultures.

The name *Kurd* itself seems to have undergone significant changes over time. During the period of Arab conquests and the spread of Islam, it was a label applied to (but not necessarily by) the Western Iranicized populations encountered by the conquerors in the area of the Zagros mountains (Edmonds, 1957). The Russian linguist, Minorsky, was one of the first to seriously study the Kurdish language.

> The "Persians used to call Dailamites "the Kurds of Tabaristan", as they used to call Arabs "the Kurds of Suristan", i.e., of Iraq. Other Arab and Persian authors in the tenth century AD mean by Kurds any Iranian nomads of Western Persia, such as the tent-dwellers of Fars (Minorsky, 1982/1943:75).

The name does not seem to have taken on a more linguistic quality until the 15th and 16th century – the period when a written Kurdish literature first appeared. *Kurd* continued to vary as a regional, social, or linguistic referent until late in the nineteenth century. It was primarily in this century, for reasons to be considered below, that the identity took on a more widely distributed *ethnic* and political significance. The tension

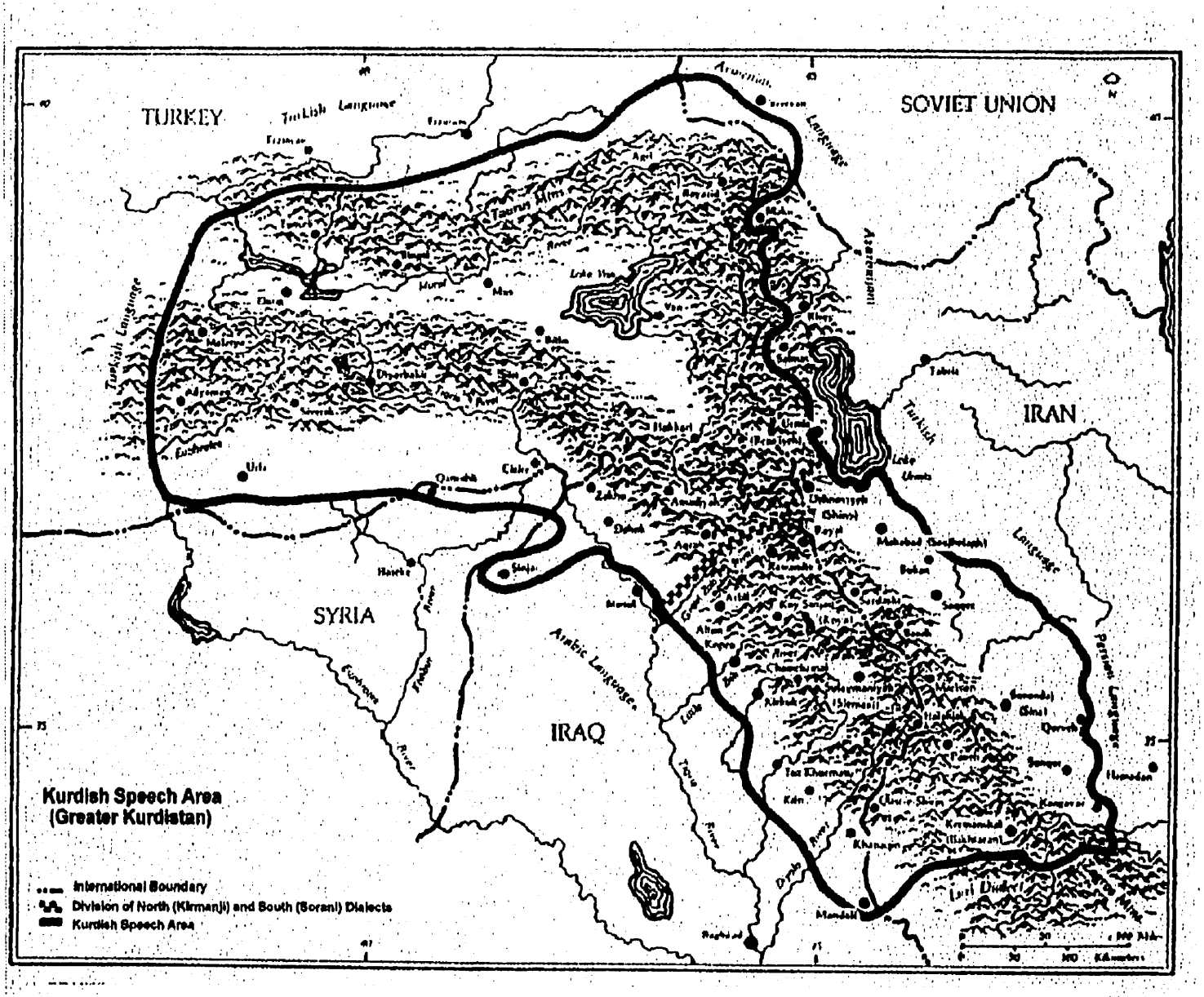

Figure 2. Kurdish Speech Area (Greater Kurdistan). Reprinted from Hassanpour, 1992:2

between the territorial and cultural referents of ethnic identification continues to the present time. *Kurdistan*, as a territorial entity, has no meaning without the Kurds as a dominant cultural group, and *Kurdishness* has always been fundamentally connected to Kurdistan. It is primarily this territorial identification that has sustained and nurtured the nationalist ambitions of many Kurds.

Kurdistan has long been the fracture zone where competing empires have collided. These included "the Achaemenid (550-331 B.C.), Seleucid (331-129 B.C.), Parthian (247 B.C.-226 AD), Sasanian (226-636) Empires, the Arab Caliphate (636-1258), the Mongol and Turkmen (1258-1501) and finally the Ottoman and Persian Empires" (Hassanpour, 1992:49). The Kurds were frequently able to exploit the impenetrability and autonomy of their frontier location to establish independent principalities, which occasionally paid nominal tribute to the regional suzerain depending on the ebb and flow of imperial power. In 1639, the map of the region attained a greater degree of solidity as the Ottoman and Persian rulers formally recognized their respective imperial high-water marks with a treaty demarcating the boundary between them. Contemporary Kurds view this treaty as 'the First Division of Kurdistan', and the region has been separated ever since into Persian and non-Persian (Turk and Arab) spheres of influence or control. From the perspective of the high imperial centres, *Kurdistan* began to refer solely to their own frontier provinces.

The importance of this boundary should not be ignored. It has persisted with small modifications to the present time. However, while the existence of an abstract line separating the lands paying tributes to the Ottoman Sultan from those doing so to the Persian Shahs may have offered some assurance to the imperial elites, in Kurdistan, nomadic economies and tribal politics continued to transgress the nominal frontier. Kurdish leaders brokered their often token allegiance for a comfortable level of autonomy and established a series of semi-autonomous emirates which lasted until the nineteenth century. Depending on the relative strength of the Ottoman and Persian empires, Kurdish leaders would occasionally switch sides or refuse to pay tribute to either. In times of imperial strength, the Sultan or Shah could depose one Kurdish chief and impose a more compliant Kurdish ruler. In the nineteenth century the last of these principalities was

forcibly incorporated into the imperial fold and the abstract imperial division became a political reality.

It is this forcible incorporation of the Kurds (begun in the imperial era and completed with the establishment of a new international order after the First World War) that is the essential element underlying most of the controversy over questions dealing with the Kurds. For example, the mapping of Kurdistan became a political imperative only with the impending break-up of the Ottoman empire (Figure 3) and its division into separate nation-states. Kurdish aristocrats, inspired like the Armenians by the promises of autonomy contained in American President Woodrow Wilson's conditions for peace following World War I – known as *The 14 Points* – presented a rough territorial demarcation for a future Kurdish state to the powers negotiating the reconfiguration of Europe. The 1920 Treaty of Sèvres laid the foundations for a Kurdish nation-state to be created out of the territory of Ottoman Kurdistan (Figure 5) and was the first and last international recognition of a Kurdish national entity. By 1923, Turkish Republican forces had been successful in repelling efforts by the Greeks and Allied forces to carve up the remaining pieces of the Ottoman Empire and forced the signing of a new peace treaty. With the signing of Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 – which made no mention of the Kurds – Kurdistan has disappeared from official cartography (Figure 4).

This disappearance has not discouraged both Kurdish and non-Kurdish observers from attempting to demarcate Kurdistan – at least in terms of the distribution of the Kurdish population (Figure 2) – with some precision. Kurdish nationalists have often been concerned with the specific demarcation of the political boundaries of a territorial Kurdistan. For example, the Centres d'Etudes Kurdes, Paris in 1949 published a map

whose boundaries indicated an expansive claim to a Kurdistan exceeding 500,000 square kilometres and including an area from Mount Ararat to the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean Sea (Ghassemlou, 1965). A similar inclination is represented in the maps presented by contemporary Kurdish institutes in Europe and North America (Figure 6). The general contours of a bounded Kurdistan, similar to these maps, has achieved an iconic status for many political organizations and is graphically represented in their informational literature and logos. In general, these types of representations seem to be

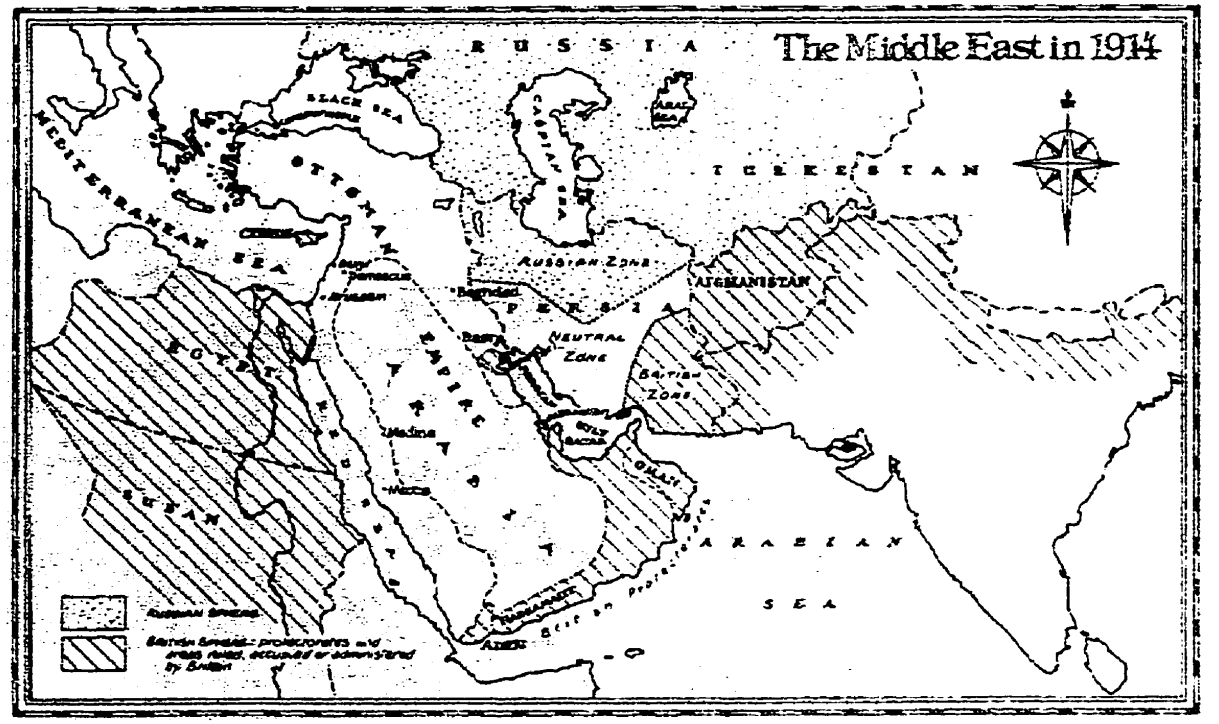

Figure 3. The Middle East in 1914. Reprinted from Fromkin, 1990:21

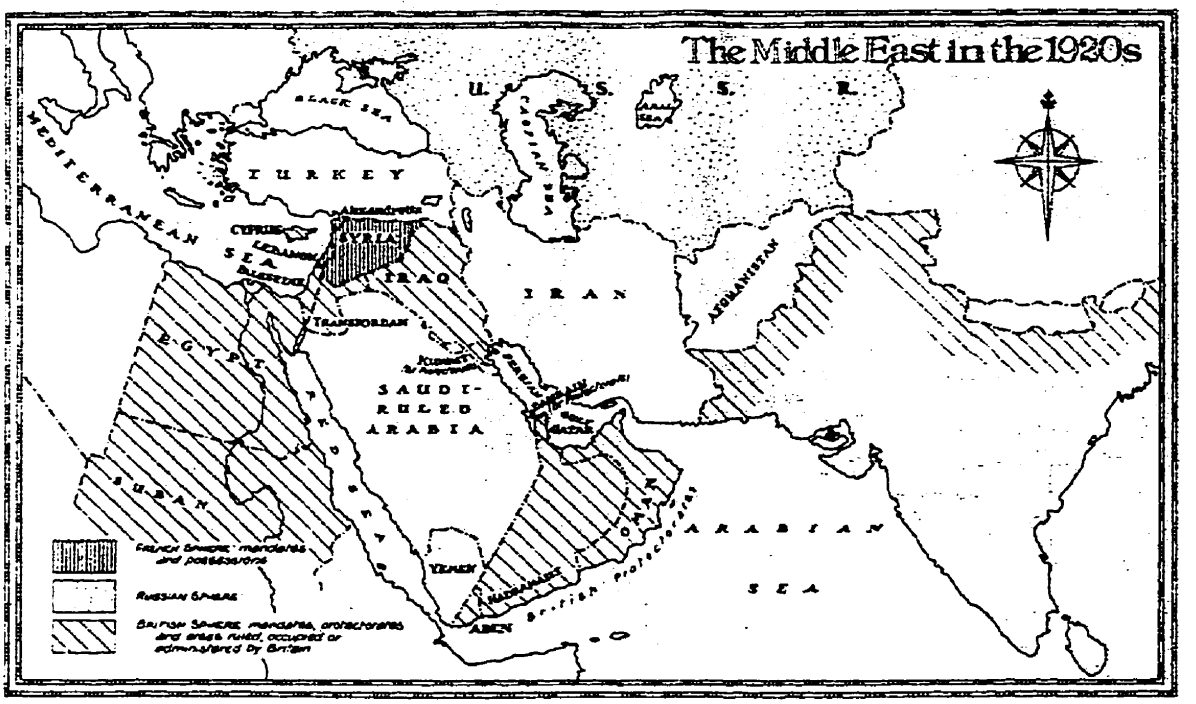

Figure 4. The Middle East in the 1920s. Reprinted from Fromkin, 1990:24

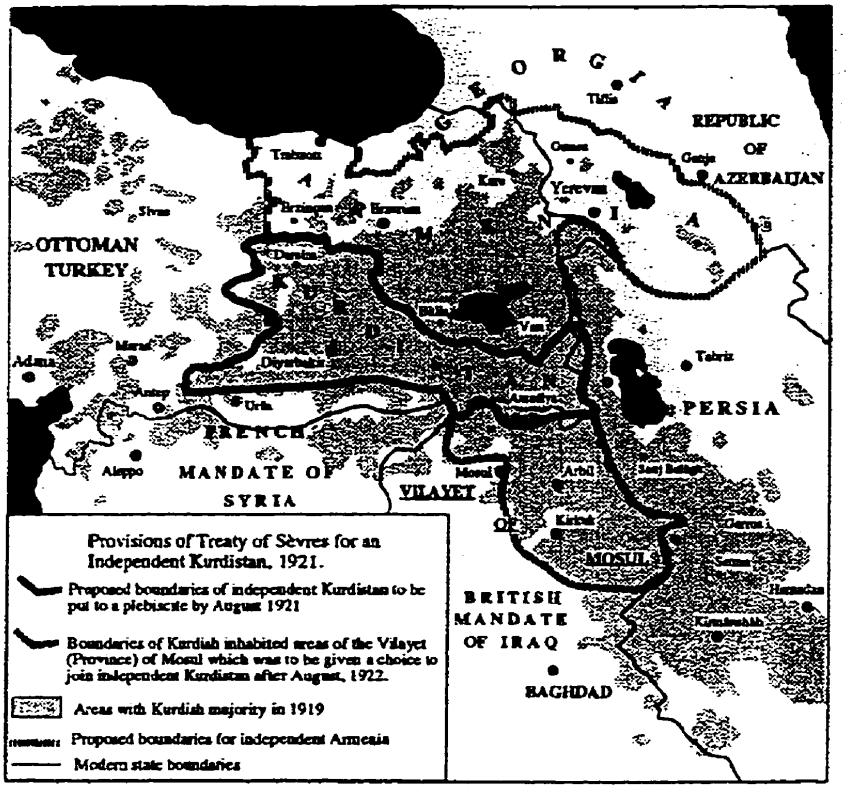

Figure 5. Kurdistan according to the Treaty of Sèvres. Reprinted from Izady, 1992:58

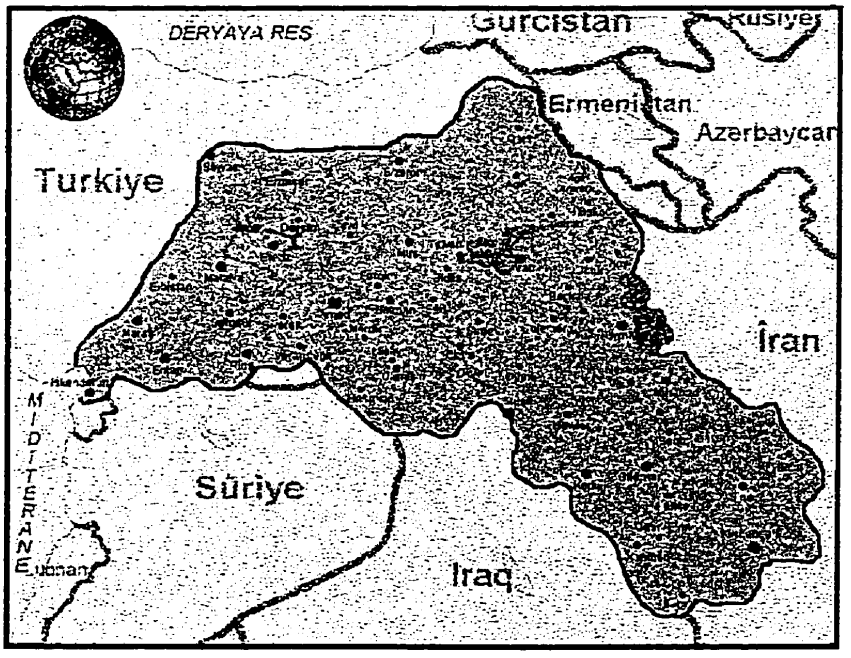

Figure 6. Kurdistan. Reprinted from the American Kurdish Information Network (1999, http://www.kurdistan.org)

more prevalent among Kurdish organizations in the diaspora than among the political movements active within the various regions of Kurdistan. As will be shown in Chapter 8, these movements have increasingly focussed their territorial ambitions on Kurdish regions within existing state boundaries.

For Kurds, issues about boundary determination - though they may be vigorously debated - take second place to the importance of recognising the essential existence of *Kurdistan* as a territorial entity. As will be argued below, this recognition is one of the single-most enduring and widely acknowledged values of Kurdish nationalism cutting across regional, social, and ideological divisions. Nevertheless, it is recognition granted by none of the region's nation-states nor by any member of the international order. In fact, its existence has been so aggressively combated by Turkey, Syria, Iran and Iraq, that even such representations of the Kurdish speech area offered by Hassanpour (1992) are in a sense idealized. So much of the population of Kurdistan (Kurds and non-Kurds) has been displaced that a Kurdistan defined by its speech area would have to include Tehran, Baghdad, and Istanbul. Given the contested nature of questions concerning the ethnic and geographical boundaries of the Kurds, it is not surprising that even the basis demographic facts about the Kurds are a source of bitter controversy. This situation has changed little since Naamani argued several decades ago that Kurdish population figures are little more than 'guesstimates.'

> A favorite game of Kurdologists is to "guesstimate" the number of Kurds inhabiting the large, ill-defined but contiguous territory, split because of politics, economics and war ... (Naamani, 1966:279)

As can be seen in the Kurdish population tables (Appendix 2) the game of "guesstimating" Kurdish population figures is at least as old as the nation-states among which Kurdistan is divided. All of the numbers given, both from Kurdish and non-Kurdish sources, are rough estimates or, in a few instances, are based on early census data obtained under political and economic circumstances hardly conducive to accurate reporting. On the basis of this general survey, a pattern can be discerned whereby a few researchers will calculate rough projections based on such data as exists, projections that are then used selectively by subsequent writers with varying motivations. Eventually, certain numbers (15, 20, 25 million) become accepted, more as a result of frequent

repetition than on any empirical basis. Because census data have been gathered only infrequently in the countries concerned, because they have only rarely been gathered on an ethnic basis (and then only indirectly by language), and because the gathering of such data has always been thoroughly politicized (often in a climate of insurrection or war), there are simply no truly reliable population data on the Kurds.

Yet numbers have always been a crucial component of the Kurdish argument for the right to self-determination and nationhood. The Kurds claim to be the largest nation without a state, and most observers agree that they constitute the fourth largest ethnic group in the Middle East after the Arabs, Persians, and Turks. The unreliability of the data are also commonly acknowledged as is the tendency of governments to minimize population figures and of Kurdish nationalists to exaggerate them. As is shown in Tables 9 to 15 (Appendix 2), Kurdish sources do account for the high end of the range of estimates, while official figures, or those derived from official sources, tend to be lower than the median range. In response, independent studies (from both Kurds and non-Kurds) have tended to take a cautious route between the two extremes, which lending an aura of reasonableness to such figures as 20 million Kurds in total, as opposed to 15 or 30 million. Given the quality of the available data, the perceived reasonableness of the middle range may be no less illusory than the possibly inflated numbers.

Mehrdad Izady, a Kurdish scholar in New York, has been one of the few who has attempted to approach population data for the region systematically and who has disclosed his sources and methods. Others include van Bruinessen, 1992; Hassanpour, 1992; Edmonds, 1957; and Ghassemlou, 1965. By combining "standard demographic modelling techniques and ... national and international data for neighbouring ethnic groups as a control mechanism" (Izady, 1992:112), Izady has estimated the decade by decade change in Kurdish population figures since 1900 (in Tables 9 –12), and has even projected them into the next millennium. Izady, like many Kurdish writers, includes diaspora numbers in his totals for the Kurdish population, which explains some of the discrepancy with the totals of non-Kurdish writers who generally restrict themselves to the contiguous territory of Kurdistan.

The national census has been an infrequent occurrence in each state, and has been inevitably politicized – often with disastrous results for the Kurds (as shown in Chapter

7). The census is not only a technology of data collection but a representation of how the *state* would configure the *nation* and its constituent categories. Are *Kurds* to be counted as an ethnic or cultural minority, or are *speakers of Kurdish* to be counted? Or, as Iran and Turkey have generally decided, is either category too potentially subversive to be counted at all? When Kurds *are* being counted, or even estimated on the basis of official data, who is to be included? Izady is able to provide his population projections of present and future demographic trends (he even offers a graph depicting Kurdish demographic changes between 600 BC and 1900 AD) because of his inclusive conception of Kurdish identity. The acceptability of his figures may depend less on the quality of the data than on the extent to which one accepts his expansive criteria for whom to count as Kurds.

> As to who *is* a Kurd and who is not, this work respects the claim of anyone who calls himself a Kurd, regardless of the dialect he speaks, religion he practices, or state where he lives. As to who *was* a Kurd, I treat as Kurdish every community that has ever inhabited the territory of Kurdistan and has not acquired a separate identity to this day, or been unequivocally connected with another identifiable nation the bulk of which is or was living outside the territories of Kurdistan. This is consistent with what is accepted by consensus for the identification of ancient Egyptians or Greeks and the relationship they have to modern Egyptians and Greeks. (Izady, 1992:xiii-xiv)

Local states have been much more exclusive in their data gathering. Turkey has spent the better part of its history attempting to explain away the existence of the Kurds entirely, characterizing them as 'mountain Turks who have forgotten their language'. Turkey gathered statistics on the Kurdish-speakers within its borders until 1965, but only counted those tribes who claimed the Kurmânji dialect (Badinani in Iraq) as their mother tongue (Izady, 1992) or as their only language (van Bruinessen, 1992). In Iran, estimates of Kurdish population levels have generally been based on inferences from the data reported for Sunni Muslims, most of whom are Kurdish, since Kurds have not been counted separately (van Bruinessen, 1992).

There is also significant disagreement among Kurds and Kurdologists about how to determine the ethnic boundaries of *Kurdishness*. Izady's conception, quoted above, is very much connected to the idea of Kurdistan, absorbing most of its historical inhabitants who cannot be conclusively assigned another identity. This approach is important for the development of the argument made by Izady and others, that the Kurds constitute a

distinct and historically documented *nation*, not an ethnic minority. According to this conception, discussed in greater detail below, the heterogeneous character of the Kurds does not undermine their ethnic identity so much as it points toward their unity as a Kurdish *nation* despite this diversity.

Nevertheless, the issue about which groups to include in this nation remains controversial. In Turkey for example, it has long been customary for both Kurds and Kurdologists (with some exceptions) to characterize the Kurdish-speaking Alevis (a heterodox Moslem sect) as Kurds, though many speak a dialect (*Zaza*) whose structural relationship to other Kurdish dialects is contentious. While many Alevis continue to affirm a strong Kurdish identity, others insist on a separate identity. While some Kurdish nationalists reject arguments for the separate identity of Zaza-speaking or Alevi-Kurds as a government plot, many orthodox Sunni Kurds have never considered members of heterodox sects, such as the Alevis or Yazidis, to be Kurdish (van Bruinessen, 1989).

The boundaries of Kurdish ethnicity seem to have been relatively less controversial in Iraq. The principle questions have generally concerned the inclusion of religious minorities such as Kurdish-speaking Christians, Jews, and Yazidis. The gradual shading off of Kurdistan into other regions along its southeastern frontier in Iran has been more problematic. The similarity of Lurs and Laks, for example, is often indicated in the literature by their characterisation as 'cousins to the Kurds.' Kurdish writers have often counted both groups as Kurds (on the basis of linguistic or cultural affinity), yet many Laks prefer to be considered separately, or even as Lurs (Izady, 1992). Most Lurs seem to consider themselves as a separate group except for one group known as Fayli (a subdialect of Luri) Kurds, a Shi'ite minority which Iraq expelled to Iran. In general, non-Kurdish writers do not count Laks or Lurs (except the Faylis) as Kurds, but often include heterodox and non-Moslem Kurds. There is little agreement, therefore, on the boundaries of both Kurds and Kurdistan among Kurds, among their adversaries, among nationalists, or among academics.

5.2 Religion and Language

For much of their history, the most salient non-local identity for many Kurds was that of membership in the Community of Islam. The Islamic Ummah linked its members

together by a common faith, ritual practice, and sacred language. The latter was an innovation for most of those who became Moslems. Islam introduced both literacy and an educated religious elite into Kurdish as well as Arab, Persian, and Turkic cultures. The successful spread of Islam was based not only on military power, but on the training of mullahs (in Kurdish: *mela*) from the newly absorbed linguistic communities in the law and the language of the Koran. These new local elites were often instrumental in facilitating not only the spread of the Islamic faith, but the 'Arabization' of convert cultures as well. The Kurds were successful in resisting assimilation to such a dominant cultural force both as a result of the isolation and autonomy that the mountainous environment of Kurdistan afforded them and the development of indigenous forms of religious observance.

By the sixteenth century, the existence of a Kurdish linguistic identity can be discerned largely from the appearance of written documents such as the *Sharafnâma by* Bitlisi. The linguistic basis is indicated by the author's inclusion of heterodox Moslems such as the Alevis and Yezidis as Kurds in his history, because they spoke a Kurdish dialect (van Bruinessen, 1989). This linguistic identity of the Kurds was in some ways preserved by Islamic institutions such as the *madrasa*, the religious schools which until this century were the principle source of education for Kurdish elites. Although the principle objects of study were the Koran (written only in Arabic) and other religious texts (in Arabic and Persian), many *madrasa* in Kurdistan also encouraged study of the works of Kurdish authors such as Ahmadi Khanî and the mystic poet Melê CizirÎ (Mulla Jaziri) (van Bruinessen, 1992). In addition, Hassanpour (1992) has found that *madrasa*-trained Kurds, such as Ahmadi Khanî, often translated contemporary scientific and theological works into Kurdish for the benefit of their students.

Currently, it is estimated that about 80 percent of contemporary Kurds are Sunni Muslims (van Bruinessen, 1992), an identity they share with the majority of Turks and Arabs. Religious practice in Kurdistan has still been distinct from that of neighbouring peoples and, for much of Kurdish history, an Islamic identity has had instrumental dimension. During the period of Ottoman-Safavid (Persian) rivalries, Kurdish chieftains would switch their devotions and those of their subjects from Sunni to Shi'a Islam depending on whose interests they were serving. Today, most Sunni Kurds follow the Shafi'i school or *madhhab*, which distinguished them from Turkish and Arab Sunnis who

followed the Hanefi *madhhab.* In the politically charged society of modern Turkey, people will distinguish Kurds from non-Kurds by asking about someone's *madhhab*, rather than their ethnicity (van Bruinessen, 1992).

Many modern Kurdish nationalists continue to see Islam as a force that has been complicit in the prevention of Kurdish unity and point to the pre-Islamic Zoroastrian religious movements as being the 'true Kurdish religion.' Izady (1992) has argued that contemporary sects such as the Alevis, the Ahl-e Haqq, and the Yazidis originated from a proto-Kurdish religion he refers to as the "Cult of Angels.' The Alevis and the Ahl-e Haqq are more closely related to Shi'a Islam, while the Yazidis have been repeatedly denigrated as 'devil-worshipers.' They have been so thoroughly persecuted that most Yazidis have now left the Anatolian plateau and northern Iraq and have resettled in the Caucasus and in Germany. Shi'a Kurds are largely concentrated in southeastern Kurdistan in Iran, constituting about 5 to 7 percent of the overall Kurdish population (van Bruinessen, 1992). There are also Kurdish-speaking Christians and a Kurdish Jewish minority in Iraq who, as Izady describes, lived peaceably enough with their fellow Kurds until pressure from the central government forced them to emigrate to Israel.

> Jews remained a populous group in Kurdistan until the middle of the present century and the creation of the state of Israel. The relative freedom of Kurdish women among the Kurdish Jews led in the 17th century to the ordination of the first woman rabbi ... Many Kurdish Jews have recently emigrated to Israel. However, they live in their own neighborhoods in Israel and still celebrate Kurdish life and culture, including Kurdish festivals, costumes, and music in some of its most original forms. (Izady. 1992:162)

While to some extent membership in these groups helped to highlight Kurdish distinctiveness, it also increased differences among Kurds, most of whom remained Sunni and often participated in the persecution of the minority sects. Even today, intermarriage across ethnic boundaries is more common than intermarriage across religious boundaries (van Bruinessen, 1989). One of the most persistent forms of religious adherence among Muslims in Kurdistan has been the Sufi brotherhoods (*tariqa*), particularly the *Naqshbandiyya* and *Qadiriyya* orders. Popular veneration of Sufi Shaykhs has been intense and fanatical during various periods of Kurdish history, particularly among the peasant and urban lower classes (van Bruinessen, 1992). During

the nineteenth century, after the removal of the Kurds' aristocratic leaders, popular shaykhs became the most powerful leaders of Kurdish rebellions against the Ottoman state and are generally credited with encouraging the rise of a popular Kurdish nationalism (van Bruinessen, 1992; and Olson, 1991). They posed such a threat to the Kemalist forces in revolutionary Turkey that Kemal Ataturk banned the *madrasa* and *tariqa* in order to remove their power-base. Even today, prominent Kurdish leaders such as the Barzanis and Jalal Talabani can credit at least some of their popularity to their families' renowned heritage as religious leaders.

Language, like religion, has both united and divided the Kurds. The groups of dialects and subdialects commonly referred to as 'Kurdish' constitute a subgroup of the northwest Iranic branch of the Indo-European family of languages. They are, therefore, structurally similar to Persian/Farsi while being substantially different from Turkish and Arabic. The linguistic study of Kurdish has been the subject of vigorous debate both within academia and between academics and Kurdish nationalists. The latter have not been the only, or even the most extreme, protagonists motivated by ideological concerns. While Kurdish nationalists have been quite clearly concerned with achieving linguistic unity among Kurds, academic studies have often been used to justify the suppression of Kurdish language rights. The principle source of the debate concerns the extent to which the various dialects of Kurdish can be considered as part of generalised Kurdish language, and, in the case of one dialect sub-group, whether they can be considered Kurdish at all.

Non-Kurdish scholars have tended to emphasize the structural similarity of Kurdish and Farsi (MacKenzie, 1961) and the lack of mutual intelligibility between Kurdish subdialects. Kurdish dialects are generally divided between a northern group – dominated by *Kurmanji* (spoken in Turkey, Syria, the bordering republics of the former Soviet Union, and the northern parts of Iraq and Iran) – and a southern group, in which *Sorani* has, since the middle of the last century, become increasingly dominant. The dividing line has traditionally been the Greater Zab River (Figure 2).

Kurmanji and Sorani-speaking Kurds, who are not familiar with each other's dialect, may need to resort to the use of a translator or another common language for conversation. Kreyenbroek describes some of the dialectical differences between Sorani and Kurmanji.

> From a linguistic, or at least grammatical point of view ... Sorani and Kurmanji differ as much from each other as English and German ... Sorani has neither gender nor case-endings ... whereas Kurmanji has both, ... in Sorani pronominal enclitics play a crucial role in verbal constructions, while Kurmanji has no such enclitics, etc. Differences in vocabulary and pronunciation are not as great as between German and English, but they are still considerable. Many Kurmanji-speakers therefore cannot understand Sorani, and vice versa. Furthermore, ... there are the substantial differences between local and regional sub-dialects of each of these "dialects"; speakers of different sub-dialects can usually understand each other, but tend to disagree as to the proper way of expressing many things. (Kreyenbroek, 1991;71)

The differences do seem to be surmountable and, with ongoing contact, speakers of both dialects manage to communicate more easily (Hassanpour, 1992). Nevertheless, the drive to forge a common written form of Kurdish has been a persistent goal of Kurdish nationalists and cultural activists. The philologists employed by the governments of Iran and Turkey have been equally determined to maximize the dialectical differences within Kurdish or, in the case Turkey, to deny its autonomous existence entirely.

The most problematic dialect grouping includes one that academics refer to as *Gorani*, but which the Kurds call *Hawrami* and the Persians call *Avramani*. A related dialect is sometimes referred to by its Turkish name *Zaza*, but is also known by its local name, *Dimili* (Hassanpour, 1992). Their status as Kurdish dialects has been the subject of dispute, with western academics such as Minorsky (1943) and Mackenzie (1961) insisting that they are distinct from Kurdish. Speakers of Kurdish are generally "shocked to find out that European scholars class Hawrami and the related Dimili (or Zaza) dialects as non-Kurdish tongues" (Hassanpour, 1992:25), and speakers of these dialects are reported to "feel themselves as Kurds in every way" (Edmonds, 1957:10). In fact, Gorani was considered by many Kurds to be a 'purer' form of Kurdish and was accorded a privileged status in the principalities of Ardelan before the imposition of direct Persian rule (Hassanpour, 1992) and of Baban, before being displaced by Sorani in the nineteenth century (Edmonds, 1957).

The concerns of academic scholars have been largely with structural features of these dialects such as 'historical sound change' (Mackenzie, 1961) and with the problem of classifying a particular dialect or language 'genetically.' As a result, the basis of their

determinations of the relative Kurdishness of a dialect is reduced to purely philological criteria with little or no consideration of socio-cultural factors. Leezenberg's caution in this regard is a welcome addition to the often rancorous debate over Kurdish philology.

> It turns out that there are two distinct senses of the expression 'Kurdish dialect': the one being 'dialect of the Kurdish branch of Northwestern Indo-Iranian languages', and the other a 'dialect spoken by people who consider themselves Kurds'. Failure to distinguish these two senses may easily lead to needless confusion and polemics: ethnic developments should not be confused with linguistic reconstruction. (Leezenberg, 1993)

Nevertheless, attempts to undertake linguistic reconstruction in a political vacuum are likely to be frustrated by the fact that linguistic identity has become intrinsically linked to political identity and legitimacy. Dialect groups, like ethnic groups, seldom have sharp boundary distinctions. The southern Kurdish dialects, for example, are described as 'shading off' into another group of dialects called *Luri*. The Lurs were at one time more closely associated with the Kurdish mainstream but are now culturally and geographically peripheral and more closely associated with Persians (Hassanpour, 1992). Zaza (or Dimili) speakers have always generally considered themselves to be Kurdish. However, the insistence by some western specialists on the non-Kurdish character of their language, has encouraged Zaza-speakers in Europe to begin advocating for an autonomous ethnic identity (Leezenberg, 1993).

The linkage between language and identity politics arose from the parallel historical development of nationalism and print capitalism (Anderson, 1992). At the same time as Kurdish identity was taking on a more overtly linguistic character, Ottoman Turks and Persians were also discovering their 'national' identities. The latter were able to encourage this awareness with much greater facility by virtue of their greater access to the technology of print production that helped to establish standardized 'pure' versions of Turkish and Persian. In addition, they were able to establish the education institutions essential for creating a reading public, thereby transforming dynastic subjects into citizens of the state. Because Kurds have lacked such institutions, and because of the deliberate policies of external administrations to suppress its development, Kurdish has never succeeded in becoming a 'language of power' as have its competitors.

Turkish, Arabic, and Persian benefitted from a privileged access to the 'lexicographic revolution' which had already transformed Europe through the spread of print-capitalism which, Benedict Anderson argues, laid the basis for national consciousness in three ways:

> First and foremost, they created unified fields of exchange and communication below Latin and above the spoken vernaculars. ... Second, print-capitalism gave a new fixity to language, which in the long run helped to build that image of antiquity so central to the subjective idea of the nation. ... Third, print-capitalism created languages-of-power of a kind different from the older administrative vernaculars. Certain dialects inevitably were 'closer' to each print-language and dominated their final forms. Their disadvantaged cousins, still assimilable to the emerging print-language, lost caste, above all because they were unsuccessful ... in insisting on their own print-form. (Anderson, 1991:44-45)

Kurmanji and Sorani were able to establish themselves as 'languages-of-power' in their own regions by predominating as languages of trade and by the patronage of Kurdistan's princely classes and their descendants exiled in urban capitals. In addition, they enjoyed the advantage that their speakers were generally Sunnis, while many – but not all – speakers of other dialects, such as Zaza, Hawrami, and Gorani, tended to belong to heterodox faiths (Leezenberg, 1993). Nevertheless, both Sorani and Kurmanji were characterized by social, functional, and stylistic restrictions typical of pre-capitalist, pre-industrial, and pre-nationalist societies (Hassanpour, 1992).

Kurdish dialects became 'locked in' to these structural limitations after the central administrations in Teheran, Baghdad, and Ankara consolidated themselves as unilingual modern states after the First World War. As a result, Kurds were forced to learn the dominant language of power in each state as a condition for economic or political advancement while the Kurdish language stagnated from a lack of institutional support or active suppression. The new state system also intensified differences between Kurdish speakers as each state enforced its own alphabetical reforms, with Iraq insisting on Arabic script, Iran on Persian, and Turkey introducing a new Latin script. The modernization and unification of the Kurdish language has had to await the growth of an educated Kurdish diaspora, but still remains a daunting task beset by both linguistic and political obstacles. Despite these significant linguistic differences and the ambivalent effects of religion on Kurdish cultural integration, a communal sense of Kurdishness has

been encouraged by a shared mythic narrative which has only increased in importance with the intensification of political repression.

5.3 Myth and History

The Kurds possess a long tradition of renewal and descent myths that have become a vital part of a connecting narrative encouraging political action. According to Anthony Smith (1984), the types of myths common to the politicization of a national identity are those of origins, liberation, nobility, and solidarity. These are typically formed into an historical narrative extending from an idealized past, through a communal decline, to a triumphant rebirth. The resonant themes of flight and liberation from tyranny are apparent in the mythic narratives given in Panel 5 - Myths of Origin and Liberation. The first myth is a variation on a mythic theme popular throughout the region and though its epic form derives from the Persian writer Ferdowsi, Kurds claim the story as part of an oral history predating the written versions. It relates an enduring theme in Kurdish history: the flight from oppression and the security and refuge provided by their mountainous homeland. Although Ghassemlou's version is presented as an origin myth, it is better known to the Kurds as a tale of liberation celebrated on the Kurdish new year – *Newroz* – on March 21.

While *Newroz* is also celebrated by non-Kurdish Iranians, for the Kurds it has taken on a distinctly political tone and has frequently been banned throughout Kurdistan. On *Newroz*, the Kurds celebrate not only the coming of spring, but also their liberation from the tyrant Zohak by the mythic hero, *Kawa* the blacksmith. Interestingly, while *Kawa* also appears in the Persian epic by Ferdowsi, he is a secondary character who assists the Persian hero *Feridoun* to free the people from Zohak and become the new Shah. While Iranians celebrate the occasion as a traditional celebration of the New Year (with its roots in Zoroastrianism), Kurds now frequently mark the event by demonstrations demanding cultural freedom and political liberation from their current oppressors.

Part of the legitimating narrative of any nationalism is the presupposition of a limitless past, represented in the merging of the historical narrative of the nation with the mythic narrative of the people. These mythic histories affirm a lineal connection with the noble peoples and events of the ancient past and confirm a primordial connection with an ancestral homeland. Izady begins his history of the Kurds, for example, with the pre-

Panel 5: Myths of Origin and Liberation

Origins: Refugees from Tyranny

Once upon a time there was a king called Azhdehak. He was merciless to his subjects and the cup of his cruelty was constantly filled by two snakes growing out of his shoulders, and twisted around them. Each of them required the brain of one young human being every day. People suffered greatly under this burden, and there was no house or hut throughout the whole country where someone would not be mourning for a victim of the hated king.

Many people wondered how to do away with this cruelty, and thus it happened that Armaeil and Germaiel, two witty friends, invented a trick which would help to lessen people's suffering. They conspired with the king's cook and instead of two human brains a day they prepared only one which the cook mixed together with one brain of a sheep and presented to the voracious snakes. The saved person was always sent far away into the mountains and plains so that he would never be seen again.

Every month thirty young people left for the mountains, and whenever they reached the number of two hundred, the cook gave them some goats and sheep to take to the mountains with them. The Kurds are the descendants of these people who were saved from the snakes of king Azhdehak. (Ghassemlou, 1965: note p. 33)

Newroz: Liberation and Rebirth

One of the famous legends, which in Kurdish is called "Kawe the Blacksmith and Zohak," tries to explain the origin of Newroz by connecting an historical event to this holy day. This is a good way of preserving the history, the history of a nation which has been under huge pressure since their empire fell about 500 B.C.

According to the legend of Kawe the Blacksmith, there was once an evil king whose name was Zohak who enslaved the Kurds and brought great suffering upon the people. Consequently, Zohak became a legendary figure of cruelty, abuse, and enslavement of the people.

One day during the Newroz celebration, a popular hero by the name Kawe the Blacksmith led the people in revolt against Zohak and succeeded in surrounding his palace. Kawe then dashed through the besieged guards of Zohak and grabbed Zohak's neck with his powerful hands. He struck Zohak's head with his hammer and dragged him down from his evil throne.

With this heroic deed, Kawe set the people free and proclaimed freedom throughout the land. Fire was set on the tops of the mountains to send a message to tell the people throughout the land that Zohak was dead and they were free again. Since this day, Newroz has become the day of liberation and freedom.

(Dîlan Roshanî, A Kurd living in Sweden)

history of Kurdistan.

> PREHISTORY & EARLY TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT:
> 10,000 – 3000 BC
>
> This is by far the most noteworthy period in the history of Kurdistan. The technological advancements and discoveries made in the Kurdish highlands in the 7000 years preceding the rise of Mesopotamia (300 BC) forever changed the course of human history, and altered the very face of the planet. Much that was achieved later by the civilization of lowland Mesopotamia starting 5000 years ago began 7000 years before that, in the bordering mountains and valleys of Kurdistan. The archaeological and zoological-botanical evidence of Kurdistan's crucial importance to the development of civilization is bountiful and well documented. (Izady, 1992:23)

Most Kurdish nationalists argue that the Kurds are descendants of the Medes, an Indo-European people who established an empire in contemporary Western Iran from the years 728 to 550 B.C. When a linguist questioned the Median origin of the Kurds on philological grounds (McKenzie, 1961), a Kurdish language specialist was quick to publish a rebuttal (Wahby, 1965), and his article was widely circulated among Kurdish nationalists (Hassanpour, 1992). According to Amir Hassanpour, the "Median connection not only provides "authenticity" but also distinguishes the Kurds from the linguistically related dominant Persian nation" (Hassanpour, 1992: note p. 66). Establishing connections with ancient peoples of the region such as the Medes, Xenophon's Carduchoi, the Hurrian Qutils, the Akkadian Kurtei, or the Talmudic Qarduim (Izady, 1993), also reinforces the legitimacy of the Kurds' claim to a primordial homeland, as in this introductory statement from a Kurdish diaspora organization.

> Being the native inhabitants of their land there are no "beginnings" for Kurdish history and people. Kurds and their history are the end products of thousands of years of continuous internal evolution and assimilation of new peoples and ideas introduced sporadically into their land. Genetically, Kurds are the descendants of all who ever came to settle in Kurdistan, and not any one of them. A people such as the Guti, Kurti, Mede, Mard, Carduchi, Gordyene, Adianbene, Zila and Khaldi signify not *the* ancestor of the Kurds but only *an* ancestor.
> (Kurdistan Information Network, 1997)

While such claims may seem extravagant, much of the sceptical reaction to them arises from the lack of a Kurdish nation-state with the attendant institutions (for example: National Museums, Departments of Antiquities, Official Chairs of Kurdish Studies at

prestigious universities) which lend legitimacy to the no less extravagant claims made by contemporary Greeks, Egyptians, Englishmen, or Turks to their national heritage. Even in the absence of a legitimating state, Kurds are adamant about claiming their historical benefactors. Thus, while non-Kurds like to point out that the Islamic hero, Salah al Din (Saladin), though of Kurdish origin, ruled as a Moslem at the head of a Moslem dynasty, for Kurds like nationalist leader Ghassemlou, he as an exemplar of historical achievement.

> The victorious struggle of Salahaddin Ayyubi against the European crusaders formed one of the most glorious chapters in Kurdish history; Salahaddin, who had come from the Kurdish tribe of Rawand settled in the Dvina district of the Yerevan region, built up a large empire extending over Egypt, Syria and Mesopotamia. The rule of the Ayyubite Dynasty continued for 81 years (1169-1250), thus constituting the greatest era of this period. (Ghassemlou, 1965:36)

The mythic rendering of history is important not only for the legitimizing connections they provide to a noble past, but also for the moral implications they have for contemporary Kurds. For example, a Kurdish institute finds the roots of modern disunity in the fall of the Median empire.

> After the fall of the Mede empire of which the centre was in Iranian Kurdistan, the Kurds failed to unite themselves. Under the different occupations their tribes lived an independent life in the mountains. (Kurdish Institute of Brussels, 1989)

The myths of an idealized past find more historical basis in the appearance of a succession of independent principalities in the frontier regions of first the Arab caliphate and, later, of the Ottoman and Persian empires. Izady (1992) characterizes the dynasties (the Daylamites, the Ayyubids, the Shaddâdids, the Mamlânids, and the Hasanwâyhids) which flourished until the 13th century when most were destroyed by the Mongol invasions, as the "Kurdish period of Islamic history." While the Kurdish character of this 'golden age' is disputed by historians, the Kurdishness of the principalities which arose in the buffer zone between the Ottoman and Persian empires is less ambiguous. Orientalists have largely ignored the history of the forty or more autonomous Kurdish principalities during the imperial era, generally preferring to excavate the histories of the regions dominant groups. These benchmark achievements of Kurdish political integration have received more diligent attention in recent years. In general, the hierarchical structures of these societies mirrored

that of their Arab, Persian, and Turkish neighbours – particularly in the division between a tribal ruling class and dependent class of serfs.

The *Sharafnâma*, as the first written history of the Kurds, combines an effort to preserve the achievements of the great Kurdish princes while at the same time to lament their disunity. The first takes the form of a chapter by chapter description of each Kurdish principality arranged by degree of independence. It begins with the royal dynasties who have minted their own coin and have had the *khutba* (Friday sermon) recited in their name, followed by those dynasties which have taken similar measures, but which have not claimed royalty, followed by those led by hereditary governors, and concluding with the author's own principality of Bitlis (Hassanpour, 1992). The lament is inspired largely by the defeat of the Kurds by the invading Mongols but also as a result of their subordination to the competing guardians of Islam, the Sunni Ottomans and Shi'a Persians.

> Intermittently, Bitlisi speaks of the idea of a pan-Kurdish king. He laments its absence, and then, believing that Islam and the distracting idea of *umma* may be the problem, metonymically blames it on a curse set on the Kurds by none other than the Prophet Muhammad. "The Prophet Muhammad, disconcerted by the warlike and awesome looks of a Kurdish visitor," Bitlisi writes, "asked the Almighty to place a curse of disunity on the Kurds, since in unity, the Prophet feared, they will overcome the world. (Izady, 1992:52)

The now familiar lament over Kurdish disunity arose from the fact that the autonomy enjoyed by most Kurdish dynasties was due to their ability to be of strategic use to the Ottoman Sultan or Persian Shah, in their ongoing imperial conflicts. The *Sharafnâma* was written in Persian in the period following the Ottoman defeat of the Persians at the Battle of Chaldiran in 1514. In return for their decisive assistance, the Ottoman sultan recognized about sixteen *Kûrd hukumeti* (Kurdish Governments) (van Bruinessen, 1992). The prince's Kurdish history is a record of both the destruction caused to Kurdistan as a result of being the battlefield of warring empires and of the progress achieved by the Kurdish princes after the Persian defeat.

Ahmadî Khanî's *Mam Û Zîn* was written in the period following the 'First Division of Kurdistan,' the formal boundary demarcation agreed upon by the Ottoman and Safavid empires in 1639. This was a contradictory period for the Kurds. On the one hand they were

less subject to the ravages incurred by being the battlefield of imperial armies, but on the other, they were increasingly compelled to accept tributary relations with either sultan or shah to avoid becoming the direct target of those armies. The imperial rulers were quite content to exploit tribal divisions between the Kurds and to avoid having to risk conflict in difficult terrain to ensure that the autonomous princes did not become too powerful.

Khanî was a poet, not a prince, and *Mam Û Zîn* was a poetic recasting of a popular story from Kurdish oral tradition (Mam and Zin) as a political fable that has become the key text in Kurdish literary history. Although it was written in an adapted Persian form, the text itself was in Kurdish, making liberal use of Kurdish popular idioms (Hassanpour, 1992 and Chyet, 1991). Hassanpour provides an outline of its romantic theme:

> Mam and Zin were two lovers whose union was destroyed due to the discord sown by Bakir. Mam died as a result of Bakir's intriguing. While mourning the death of her lover on his grave, Zin fell dead of grief. Zin was buried next to Mam's grave. Bakir's role in the tragedy was soon revealed. Fearing his fate, Bakir ran away taking refuge between the two graves. Bakir was, however, killed there, out of revenge. Out of Bakir's blood, grew a thornbush which sent roots deep into the earth, separating the two lovers even after death...(Hassanpour, 1992:87)

Hassanpour reads the tale as a parable of the division of Kurdistan with 'Bakir' personifying the disunity of the princes responsible for the decline of the Kurds. The poem continues to have a strong political resonance for many Kurds, but the status of *Mam Û Zîn* as the 'national epic' of the Kurds is due as much to a long introductory section which is interpreted by many Kurds as the first clear statement of Kurdish nationalism. Its poetic resonance for contemporary Kurds is reinforced by the persistence of the problems of internal disunity and external subjugation described by Khani. Two contrasting themes of a Kurdish proto-nationalism are apparent even from the fairly modernist translations given in the Panels 6 and 7 – *Our Trouble* .

In Panel 6, Khanî calls for the appearance of a king who, with the power of the sword and the pen, would provide the stamp of legitimacy to show the Kurds as equals to all others. The assertion that "value is added to gold and silver with a stamp' that could only be provided by a king with a divine right to rule, demonstrates clearly the pre-nationalist notions of legitimacy from above, characteristic of the imperial era. The disgrace of being subjects to the 'Rumi and Ajami' (translated here as 'Turks and

Persians') is not a disgrace borne by the 'Kurdish people', but only by "persons of repute", and is "a matter of honor for the Chiefs, the Leaders."

In Panel 7, the lament is no longer for the lack of a Kurdish king, but for the character and condition of the Kurdish people, however narrowly defined at the time. While the use of the words 'state' and 'stateless' are modern additions, it is still the Kurdish people who are "splattered with blood" when the "Turkish ocean and Persian sea" wash over their ramparts. It is the Kurdish people's "spirit of independence and exalted benevolence" which has prevented them from unifying and perfecting "the art of government and religion." These two often opposing laments for a heroic leader who will unify them and for a people seemingly incapable of unification, are resonant themes in the ongoing Kurdish struggle.

Khanî's theme of 'sword and pen' was taken up by the poet Haji Qadir Koyi, 'the second apostle' of Kurdish literary nationalism (Hassanpour, 1992) in the nineteenth century. The incorporation of the autonomous principalities, begun in the seventeenth century, was finally accomplished by both the Ottoman and Persian empires with disastrous results for the Kurdish nobility. Khanî was both poet and mullah and while he blamed the Kurdish aristocracy for disunity, he did not criticize the institutions of Islam. Koyi blamed the clergy directly, calling them 'traitors' for failing to encourage the development of the Kurdish language (Hassanpour, 1992). Koyi dedicated himself to finishing the task started by Khanî, elevating the Kurdish language to a level equal to that of Persian and Arabic, but continued to decry the absence of a Kurdish government to complete that process.

> The state is founded on sword and pen,
> I have the pen, [but] there is no trace of the sword.
> He [Haji] has neither flag, nor kettle-drums
> The helpless [man] wrote as much as he could.
> I fulfilled all my duties,
> The nation's fabric depends [however] on the sword of the state.
> (translated by Hassanpour, 1992:94)

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, as the last of the Kurdish princes struggling for local autonomy were removed from power, the 'sword' passed from the aristocracy to the popular Sufi religious leaders. Kurdish intellectuals, along with Turkish and Arab nationalists at the turn of the century, also began to advocate for a Kurdish state,

Panel 6: *Our Trouble* (Pt.1) by Ehmedê Xanî

Bartender! For the love of God, please
Pour some wine into the crystal glass
Let the glass with the wine show the world
Let there appear whatever it is that we wish
Let the events ahead of us come to light
Let us know if the future holds promise for us
Look! Our misfortune has reached its zenith,
Has it started to come down do you think?
Or will it remain so,
Until come upon us the end of time?
Is it possible, I wonder, that for us, too
A star will emerge out of the firmament?
Let the luck be on our side for once,
Let our lady luck wake up for change.
Let there emerge from within us, too, one to shoulder the earth
Let there be a king of our own, too.
Let his sword attest to our might
Let it be known the power of our pen,
Let there be an answer to our trouble
Let there be an demand for our knowledge.
If we had an exalted leader,
A do-gooder wanting a poem
Our bullion, too, would be stamped
It wouldn't be so unwanted and suspect.
However pure and clean they may be,
Value is added to gold and silver with a stamp
If we had a king,
If God saw him deserving of a crown
If a throne was appointed to him,
Our luck would turn around.
If he, too, was provided with a crown
Of course, for us too there would be respect.
He would feel sorry for us orphans,
He would set us free from bondage to the cravens.
They would not be victorious over us these Turks
Ours would not turn into ghost towns,
We wouldn't become fugitives, dispossessed, wretched,
We wouldn't bow our heads in defeat to the Turks, the Tadjiks
But God made it so from time memorial
He made the Turks and the Persians attack us.
Although it is disgraceful to be their subjects,
This disgrace belongs to the persons of repute
This is a matter of honor for the Chiefs, the leaders
What can the troubadours and the dispossessed do ?
Whoever took the mighty sword in his hand,
Established in a manly manner a state for himself.
Because the world is like a prize bride,
Its fate, too, is determined by the mighty sword
But its dowry[2] , trousseau, jewels and wedding presents
Are goodness, generosity, kindness and forgiveness.

Translated by Chain Baker & Bawermend, (Kurdistan Observer, 1997)

Panel 7: *Our Trouble* (Pt. 2) by Ehmedê Xanî

I asked the world, "What is your dowry ?"
"Benevolence", it said to me.
In short, "with the sword and goodness,
the world submits and bows its head to man".
I am confused by God's wisdom:
In this world of States
Why have the Kurds remained Stateless, dispossessed,
What for have they all become fugitives, condemned ?.
They have conquered the spring of fame with sword
They have subjugated the land of benevolence
Every one of their Chiefs is of Hatem's generosity[3]
And of Rostem's[3] bravery is every one of their men
Look! From Arbia to Georgia
It is all but Kurdish lands like a fortress
Like a great wall the Kurds stand between the Turks and The Persians
Here and there are all the Kurds occupying all four corners
Both sides make the Kurdish clans
Targets of their poison-tipped arrows
As if the Kurds hold the key to crossing the borders
Each clan is as strong as a great wall
However rough and stormy they get
These Turkish ocean and Persian sea
It is the Kurds who are splattered with blood
And like a rampart separates the two.
Generosity, benevolence, bravery,
Chivalry , guardianship and valor
All are credited to the Kurdish clans
The fame of their sword and their benevolence is farflung
To the same extent they cherish freedom and independence,
They hate submission and obligations.
It is the spirit of independence and exalted benevolence
That has become the obstacle to shouldering the burden of obligation
Always without unity it is because of this
Divided and pitched against one another they stand
If we had unity amongst ourselves,
If we all together obeyed one another
The Turks, The Arabs and the Persians
Would all together be in our servitude
Then we would perfect the art of government and religion
Then we would acquire all the wisdom and command nature
Wheat would be separated from the chaff then,
Would come forth the real achievers then.

Translated by Chain Baker & Bawermend
(Kurdistan Observer, 1997)

particularly as the Ottoman Empire disintegrated. Kurdish elites were instrumental in creating the most successful bid for Kurdish statehood represented in the Treaty of Sèvres that was signed by the victorious European allies in 1920. While Sèvres promised the Kurds autonomy, the treaty was never finally ratified. It has now taken its place as a benchmark in the Kurdish historical narrative of betrayal and defeat. From this time forward, the sense of being a 'nation denied' has become that narrative's dominant theme. However, while this mythic narrative has provided a symbolic framework for a sense of shared predicament among Kurds, its effectiveness in motivating political integration has, until recently, been limited to an elite class of poets and aristocrats. The popular attraction of a Kurdish *national* identity awaited radical changes in the social organization of Kurdistan.

5.4 Kurdish Social Organization

In the popular travel literature of the pre-World War era, Kurds were romanticized or demonized (depending upon the writer) as an autonomous, nomadic tribal people stubbornly resistant to external domination. While few Kurds are nomadic today, Kurdish society has long been characterized by a segmentary social organization whose influence, though reduced, is still relevant in Kurdish society. On the basis of fieldwork undertaken in Kurdistan during this century, several anthropologists (Leach, 1940; Barth, 1953; and van Bruinessen, 1992) have put forward a case for unique features of Kurdish social organization. This study will present a brief overview of the general characteristics of Kurdish segmentary organization and its interpenetration by a feudal social structure before examining the influence of these factors on social integration in Kurdistan.

Kurdish segmentary organization is generally described as a hierarchy extending from the *ashiret* (tribe), to the *qebile* (sub-tribe), to the clan (which van Bruinessen, 1992 defines as a tribal segment recognized as a political unit) to the *hoz* (lineage) and sub-lineages. The incidence of fictive or putative kinship becomes more prevalent above the level of the lineage. The 'tribe' in Kurdish society was, and is, associated with a particular territory or region that is known by that tribe's name. The primary territorial unit, particularly among nomadic groups, has generally been the clan whose lands were redistributed when clans split or merged. In more sedentary Kurdish populations, the

village emerged as the principle territorial unit, a process facilitated by the strong preference among Kurds for endogamous marriage.

Most economic activity took place at the level of the household which has generally been based on the nuclear family – except among the wealthy who could afford multiple wives or preferred extended families to avoid dividing their estates (van Bruinessen, 1992). Historically, a distinction has been observed between tribal and non-tribal groups living in Kurdistan. While both tribal and non-tribal villages demonstrate a preference for endogamy, the former is much more strongly associated with a pattern of close cousin marriage (FaBrDa). The result is that the tribal village (the local group) in Kurdistan tends to either approximate the lineage or is composed of distinct endogamous lineage segments. Barth describes the significance of the traditional lineage system.

> In the tribal political system, patrilineal descent is of considerable importance. Membership in the political unit itself depends on patrilineal descent and one gains prestige from belonging to particular segments of the larger lineage. As compared to the non-tribal village, the whole status system is considerably more elaborated, as one would expect in a traditional system. Since marriage, both according to Islamic law and general Kurdish values, should be between equals, and since each lineage segment wishes to preserve its own status position ... neither sex is willing to marry down in the social scale, and near-kin marriage is the reasonable solution. Most clear is the status equivalence of children of brothers, and FaBrDa becomes the preferred spouse. (Barth, 1953:69)

The tribal village has traditionally been the most common corporate unit and has been characterized by communal ownership of land, collective approaches to herding and irrigation, and political unity during conflict. The non-tribal villages, on the other hand, are relatively unstructured above the level of the household, most of which are subordinated to a local landowner. The village chief is referred to as *agha* in much of Kurdistan (*reis* in parts of southern Kurdistan), as is the head of the lineage, clan, or tribe. The term is less an institution or public office than a public recognition of de facto power: "The *agha* is apparently a leader who *rules*" (van Bruinessen, 1992: 80). According to Leach (1940), the primary characteristics of the village *agha* were the right to evict tenant farmers (more in principle than in practice), to receive part of the village's yield, and the responsibility for maintaining the village guesthouse. Domination by a village or

Panel 8: Musa Anter's Village

The village I lived in was called Zivenge which in Kurdish means "winter place". This was no sports and leisure area the like of which people from rich nations frequent. The caves were where the flocks were kept in the winter. ... There are many places in my country named Zivenge, but each takes its tribe's name as well. So ours would be called Zivenge Tamika, while others were called Zivenge Habizbinya, Zivenge Bohtan etc.

...

My grandfather is interesting, as he kidnapped my grandmother to be his wife. She was the daughter of a not very friendly and authoritarian tribal leader. ...

Naturally my grandfather's and grandmother's families wanted nothing to do with them, so they were not allowed to live in the area. However, my grandfather started his own village, building a Chateau in Xaniya Xek. He no longer recognised either family and for security gathered together many Yazidi armed guards. He gathered these people from the jobless or people who, for various reasons, were not respected in Kurdistan. He then intimidated four of the neighbouring villages to sell some of their land, gardens and fields to him. And that is how today's village was set up.

...

There are no strangers in the village. Our farm was the village. When the Ottomans first came, our village was registered in my great grandfather's name, Antere Mihoteze. Since then the family has grown and divided between our relatives.

...

Other people living here who were not families were allowed any land that we had no use for. These people would work for us and take orders from us and would also give us one tenth of whatever they produced. It was all done in an agreeable and happy way. When the tractor arrived everything began to change, with people becoming more selfish and leaving the area. We called the people who worked for us neighbours. Our neighbours went to the towns and cities to work and found suffering there, but because they are still our friends whenever we meet we hug and talk about the good old days.

...

Traditionally a landowner's income is like a family charity and my father and mother, like their ancestors, carried on this tradition. We used to have an area with a room just like an hotel. Whoever came to visit the village stayed in this room free of charge.

...

As well as visitors, troubadours or religious people would call regularly and were provided for. Some of these visitors played traditional Kurdish music on traditional instruments and also told stories, while the religious singers would have their own special instruments to accompany their singing. ... They would also sing the classical songs of Kurdish poets. I now know that these songs were taken from the poetry of Melaye Cizire and Feqiye Teyran. These songs told of the brutal treatment and the genocide that the Ottoman and later on the Republic (Turkey) inflicted on the Kurds.

- Musa Anter, *My Memoirs*, translated by Iskender Ozden in Kurdistan Report

lineage headman strengthened the village's corporate character. In Panel 8 – Musa Anter's Village – a Kurdish writer provides a vivid description of his ancestral village in southeastern Turkey.

The non-tribal villages were generally more feudal in structure. Non-tribal villagers formed a disparate peasant class, or caste, which could comprise Christian minorities or members of a variety of cultural groups. For many years these groups were little more than serfs, exploited and traded as a productive asset by a warrior class of tribesman. The subjected peasantry was treated as a separate social category, referred to variously as *misken*, *guran*, or *kurmanj* , but more generally identified by the class marker *rayat* (van Bruinessen, 1992). These peasants occupied the base of the feudal/segmental system followed by the tenant farmer, the smallholder, and finally the landowner.

The tribal society tended to combine feudal and lineage systems. Power and authority in Kurdish society, were largely determined by status requirements derived from a combination of feudal and lineage elements. Most essential, however, was the individual and pragmatic demonstration of those characteristics rather than any independent normative prescriptive value. A model of social organization whereby the village *agha* is subject to the clan *agha*, who is subject to the tribal *agha*, is an abstract ideal. In practice, it was fundamentally the personal character of these leaders that determined if they would sustain a following. Barth argues that it was this lack of a shared set of normative prescriptions for determining leadership – which amounted to an indigenous conception of public office – that discouraged the broader integration of Kurdish society. Primogeniture, for example, was only applied with any regularity at the household level, where its power could also be dampened by the presence of a resident unmarried or widowed uncle (van Bruinessen, 1992). Van Bruinessen describes the practice of lineage-based leadership in Kurdistan:

> Leadership of the lineage of the tribe is generally inherited within the same family, but there is no fixed rule of succession. In some tribes the eldest son is thought to be the most appropriate successor (but then the rule is still applied quite flexibly), in others it is the elders of lineage or tribe who – in theory at least – choose the brother or son or nephew they consider most fit to succeed to the position. He should be a 'man' in the full meaning of the word: strong, courageous, just and generous, a good

> strategist and a wise judge, and nowadays it is also important that he know how to deal with 'government people' (to avoid excessive taxation, to help his dependants evade military service, etc.) In practice, often sheer power, even brutal violence, and shrewd manipulation are involved. (van Bruinessen, 1992:79)

Leadership, particularly above the village level, was closely associated with conflict, which was the only motivation for corporate action among clans, lineages, and tribes. The three principle sources of that conflict were marriage practices, blood feud, and contests for political power. Both van Bruinessen and Barth find that the prevalence of village or lineage endogamy among Kurds encouraged conflict between villages and lineages by the lack of agnatic ties established between them.

To qualify for leadership, an individual had to rank high on any of a number of status scales available in Kurdish society, but what mattered most was the ability to exploit a given status qualification in an opportune context. Barth provides a summary of village status scales:

> *Family*: (a) prestige derived from descent from a person or persons with high prestige, or (b) membership in a large effective kinship unit.
> *Age*: prestige derived from experience and maturity, increasing up to the onset of senility.
> *Sex*: dichotomy favoring the male and relations in the male line.
> *Wealth*: prestige from capital, real or movable property, and occupations to produce such.
> *Sacred powers*: the extent of "unseen powers from Good Forces" delegated to the person.
> *Sanctity*: the actual embodyment of sacred powers, or sacred position achieved by personal suffering and renunciation of the world.
> *Learning and piety*: prestige from knowledge of, and conformity to, Moslem religious and moral ideals.
> *Honor and bravery*: the degree of approach to the Kurdish "hero" – physical prowess, valor, a certain recklessness, respect for women, kindness to the poor, unending hospitality, etc.
> (Barth, 1953:98)

These scales can basically be divided into status scales deriving from patrilineal kinship ideology, economic power, religious status, and warrior abilities. The first two are obviously closely linked with high family status generally associated with greater relative wealth. A complication arises with the issue of gender. Most observers agree that women in traditional Kurdish society have relatively more freedom than do women in

traditional Turkish, Arab, or Persian society demonstrated not only in styles of dress and degree of social participation, but also in access to family inheritance. The position of women, however, is still a subordinate one – particularly at the village level where family status and wealth are generally not enough to overcome the impediment gender poses to leadership. Higher up the segmental scale, however, women from dynastic families have occasionally played a significant role in tribal leadership. Barth (1953) cites two examples, the most prominent being Adela Khanem, a member of the ruling lineage of Ardalan princes who became leader of the *Jaf* confederacy around the time of the First World War following the death of her husband, a hereditary leader. Because there were no absolute requirements for leadership in Kurdish tribal society, there were also no absolute impediments, and any of the status scales could, in principle, be manipulated for advancement.

Religious status in Kurdish society poses an interesting paradox, particularly from the perspective of western assumptions about spiritual practice. On the one hand, the Kurds have traditionally demonstrated a unique preference for mystical Sufi brotherhoods and their charismatic leaders. On the other, the role of these heterodox movements has been less 'otherworldly' than directly influential in Kurdish power politics. The power of these movements rests in the person of the Shaikh who is often accorded supernatural powers by his followers. In Barth's view, however, the principle role of the Sufi Shaikh is to offer an outlet to power for the marginal members of Kurdish society.

> At present ... recruitment to the brotherhoods seems to be essentially from the most underprivileged class, people with minimal power and prestige in the social system. The derwish brotherhoods would thus seem to be a type of "religion of the disinherited", in which a substitute for social power is offered. Rather than being of direct relevance to the power distribution in the Kurdish village and countryside, the [derwish brotherhoods] ... show the relevance of a concept of power in all fields of Kurdish culture, and constitute a justification for regarding power distribution as an essential and subjectively highly valued aspect of all Kurdish institutions. (Barth, 1953:83)

A more far-reaching role for these religious leaders arising from their ability to mediate between feuding tribal sections is described by van Bruinessen. He attributes this to a distinctive feature of Kurdish political

organization, the tendency of chieftains of large Kurdish tribes to claim origins different from those of the tribe.

> ... many chiefly families claim descent from Arabs who played a glorious role in the history of Islam: companions of the Prophet, heroes of Arab conflicts, or founders of great ruling dynasties. Apart from the religious legitimation provided by such a pedigree, the very fact that a chieftain is not related to the rest of the tribe also places him above feuds between component clans or lineages. Because he does not belong to any of the feuding lineages, he is in the position to mediate in such feuds. (van Bruinessen, 1992:68)

Shaikhs owe their status largely to their spiritual reputations and personal charisma and are, therefore, sufficiently external to Kurdish tribal organization, yet compelling enough as leaders to play an effective role in mediating disputes. Significantly, this role became most prominent towards the end of the nineteenth century, after most of the dynastic leaders and tribal chiefs had been removed as a result of the successful imposition of direct rule in the Persian and Ottoman empires. In the absence of traditional conflict mediation from lineage leaders, the Shaikhs were the only indigenous leaders left who could negotiate solutions. Beneath the Shaikh is the village mullah – often a farmer as well – who could play a local role in civil functions and in mediating village disputes if his individual reputation were sufficiently respected.

The status accrued from being a successful warrior has long been the most dependable strategy for advancement in the tribal system. Contesting leadership largely depended upon the ability of any individual to rally an armed group of supporters to his cause (obviously easier for those with high lineage, economic, or religious status) to challenge the leadership of an existing *agha*. This type of conflict could range from local raiding of neighbouring villages or clans to open warfare. Success as a chieftain or warlord encouraged the allegiance of not only fellow lineage members, but also of unaffiliated individuals and deserters from other lineages.

This is the idealized structure of traditional Kurdish social organization. It is a segmentary tribal system with a strong preference towards close-cousin endogamy that encouraged the formation of lineages which were relatively isolated from each other. Corporate activity was only frequent at the lower levels of the system, particularly at the

household and village level. Higher up, corporate activity takes place at the clan or tribe level only in the context of conflict.

Given the fact of lineage isolation and the lack of a shared normative system for legitimating authority, conflict has often been endemic in Kurdish society. Both Barth and van Bruinessen observe that there was no predictable effort to resolve conflicts between villages, clans, or tribes when they did occur. Individual feuds or lineage conflicts could go on for months, years, or generations with the various protagonists preferring to avoid social contact rather than negotiate a settlement. Like many travellers in the region before him, Barth observed that many villages had their own 'enemy' villages with whom they avoided relations and against whom they manifested considerable hostility. The route to power for Kurdish leaders was not only the resolution of conflicts, but also the manipulation of them for political ends.

A leader's position "depends in the last instance on the number of riflemen he can muster. However, only co-lineage males can be expected to give such political support" (Barth, 1953:137). Close-cousin marriage encouraged solidarity of close collateral relations and ensured, so far as local conditions would allow, the support of a large group of agnatic males. This status could be augmented or challenged on the basis of other scales arising from economic wealth, religious status, or military ability. There were frequent contradictions to the kinship system in that lineages could unite around a 'foreign' leader, or split internally over allegiances to rival chieftains. If a clan *agha* felt sufficiently powerful, he could oppose the tribal *agha* to whom he was theoretically subordinate. As a result, there was room for considerable mobility within Kurdish social organization.

> In summary, one might say that there are no absolute impediments, or, inversely, necessary requirements, relating to leadership in any of the Southern Kurdish political systems; that persons theoretically may qualify for leadership by any combination of part-statuses, so long as they add up to a total status position sufficiently exhalted to correspond to, or justify, the political and other demands involved in leading the group in question. (Barth, 1953:121)

The possibilities for such mobility are represented graphically by van Bruinessen in Figure 7. Vertically there are three principle identity classes; the landless "gypsy-like"

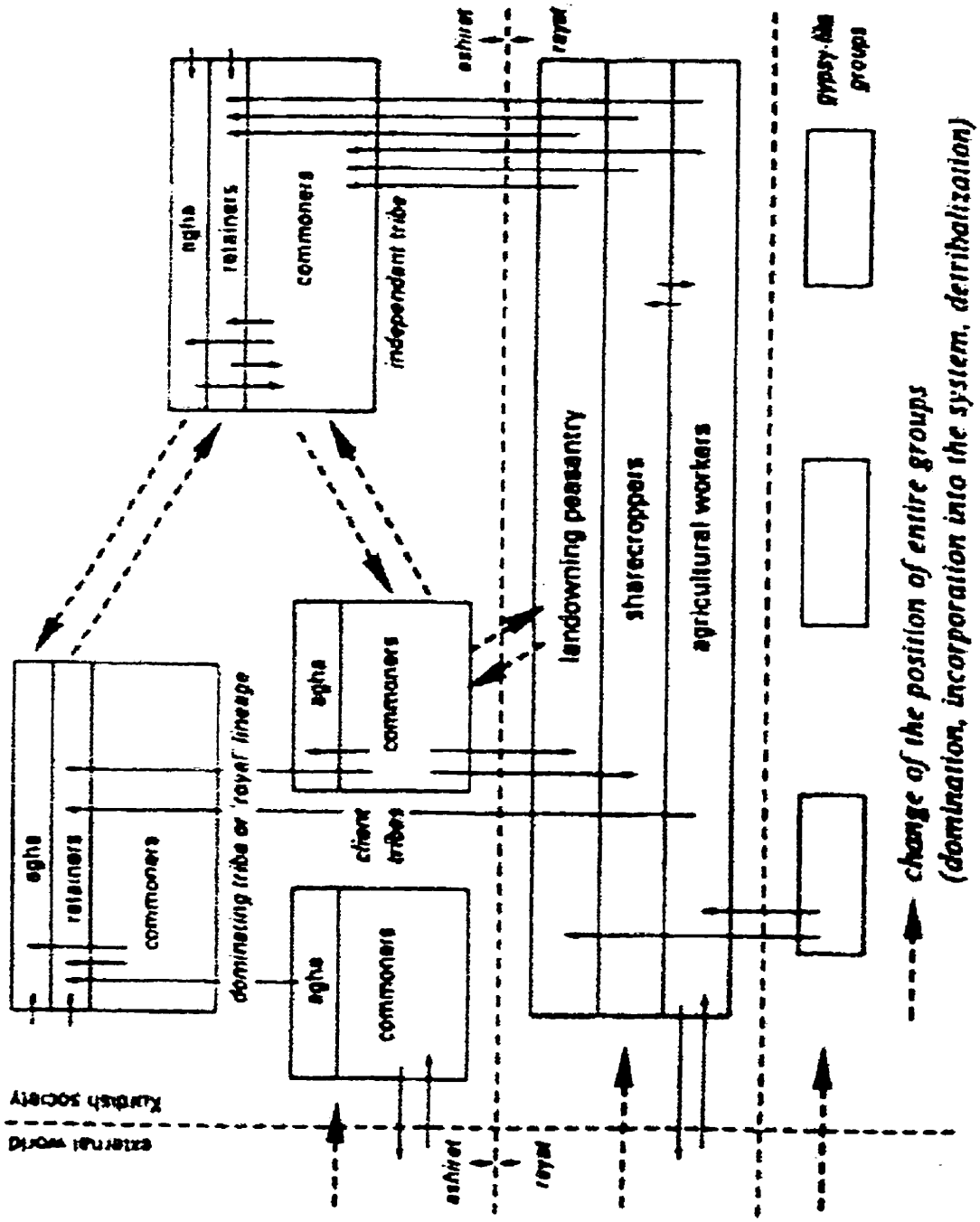

Figure 7. Social Stratification of Kurdish Society. Reprinted from van Bruinessen, 1992:120)

groups are at the bottom, followed by the peasant *rayat* class, and the *ashiret* or tribal class are on top. Within each class there is a further hierarchy of subordination, but in principle, vertical mobility was possible across all of these distinctions. Horizontal mobility was also a possibility as members of one tribe could shift allegiances and move geographically to another tribe.

Within this dynamic system of protection and allegiances, ethnic identity played a very minor role. While lineage endogamy would obviously encourage Kurdish tribes to remain predominantly Kurdish, the flexibility of the boundaries between tribes allowed for frequent movement across cultural boundaries, with Kurds becoming Turks, Turks becoming Kurds, Armenians becoming Kurds and so on. Furthermore, because there was little possibility for supra-tribal leadership in the ideal segmental system (rival *aghas* would always oppose attempts at domination by tribal *aghas*), there was little possibility for supra-tribal integration of Kurdish society. The Kurdishness of various lineages was a recognized and even respected fact, but it was a fact of minimal practical importance. It could not, in isolation, encourage allegiance to a particular tribal leader, nor could it be used to receive protection from one. To see how a politics of identity could emerge in such a society, it is necessary to consider the segmental organization, not only in its ideal or abstract formation, but also in its interaction with external forces – from the imperial empire to the nation-state.

5.5 Tribe and State: The Political Integration of Kurdistan

According to Barth (1953) and van Bruinessen (1992), the higher levels of Kurdish social organization, as indicated in Figure 7, become relevant only during conflict, with the locus for corporate action narrowing to the village or household level in the absence of conflict. In most social situations, therefore, the tribe is largely an abstraction. As a corporate unit, it exists only for the protection of its members in times of conflict or external threat. It is a regional entity based around a core of lineages that may just as easily depart if the fortunes of a particular tribe's leadership change.

Political integration in Kurdistan at levels higher than the tribe has historically been associated with some degree of parallel incorporation into an imperial system. For example, van Bruinessen (1992) points out that only the names of the smallest social

units are of Kurdish origin: *hoz* for a lineage called after a common ancestor, *mal* or 'house,' for a pure lineage descending from a powerful ancestor, and *bavik* for a shallow lineage, usually at the sub-village level, which may contain unrelated adherents. Where separate terms exist for higher segmental levels, they are borrowings from Arab, Persian, or Turkish systems such as *khan* or *beg*, and have feudal connotations referring to paramount tribal chieftains. The highest levels of political integration achieved by Kurdish society – that of the various emirates established in the 16th century – resulted from the successful manipulation of external imperial rivalries to sustain the power of an aristocratic dynasty over a tribal confederation.

The Ottomans and the Persians were generally willing to allow for a greater degree of Kurdish independence as long as Kurdish military energies were directed against their rivals. As a result, the legal and administrative structure of these Kurdish emirates began to resemble microcosms of the imperial states. Both were quasi-feudalist societies with a caste-like division between a tax-paying class of peasants, craftsmen, and merchants comprised of both Kurds and non-Kurds on the one hand, and a tribal class organized into larger confederations generally dominated by a single family dynasty on the other.

The experience of autonomy provided by the emirates has had a seminal impact on the development of Kurdish national feeling, providing the first models of state-like entities, which could inspire calls for a rebirth of the Kurdish nation. This politicization, however, was limited to the aristocracy of a quasi-feudal hierarchy whose sense of community had more in common with their rival Persian and Ottoman elites than with the subject classes they ruled. It did not include non-tribal and subject members of the peasant stratum. Many of this privileged class – as both Bidlisi and Ahmadi Khani lamented – were much more interested in protecting their own autonomy by entering into a nominal-tribute arrangement with the Persian and Ottoman empires, than in risking that autonomy by uniting with other members of the Kurdish aristocracy. While the Kurdish princes were all fiercely independent, most seem to have preferred being ruled indirectly by Turks and Persians than directly by rival Kurds.

The emirates were essentially an unstable union of competing tribal segments, depending upon the power of a dynastic lineage to unite them. In Figure 8, Barth (1953)

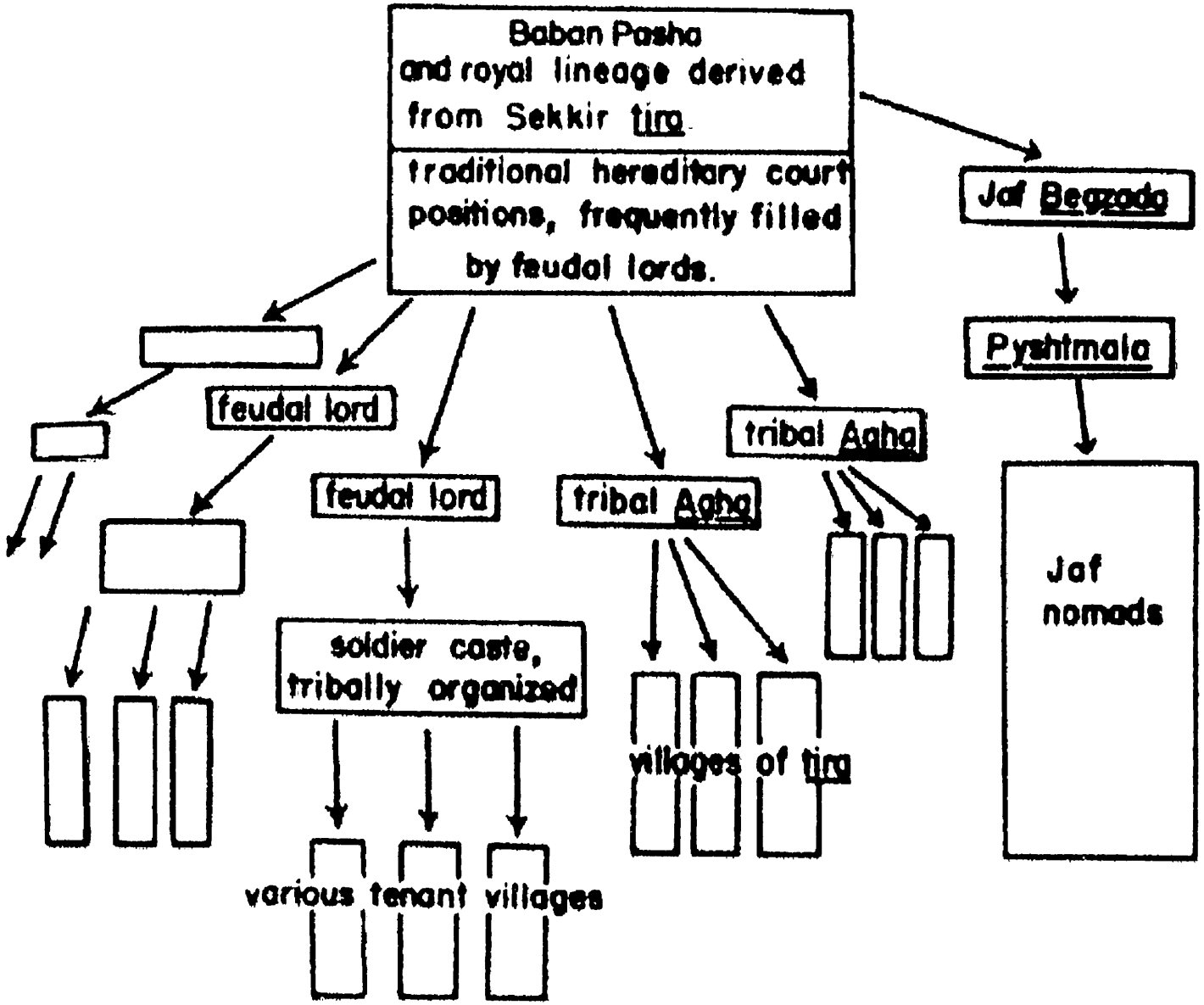

Figure 8. Formal Organization of the Baban Pashalik. Reprinted from Barth, 1953:61)

depicts the organization of the Baban principality – particularly the interpenetration of tribal and feudal elements. Figure 8 shows how a dynastic system could incorporate the segmental tribal system to stabilize a political hierarchy referred to variously as an emirate, principality, or *Pashalik*. The ruling dynasty was usually derived from a *tira*, which Barth (1953:36) defines as the "primary political group and land-owning unit," approximating a maximal lineage group (tracing patrilineal descent from one common ancestor). There was little direct connection between the dynastic lineages at the top and the non-tribal groups controlled by the feudal lords and tribal chiefs at the bottom. To some extent the Kurdish emirs or pashas sustained their authority from the internal power politics associated with the strategic manipulation of part statuses. However, Figure 8 should also be interpreted as an abstraction from Figure 8 in which the role of external powers is more apparent. As the name *Pasha* indicates, many of the dynastic leaders depended on the support or at least good will of the Ottoman or Persian empires to preserve their authority.

Indirect rule served the imperial interest in having a nominally subject government administering the frontier and served the interest of Kurdish aristocracies by affording them the power to dominate tribal chieftains. As a result, the solidarity called for by some Kurdish princes and poets could offer nothing but an exchange of the indirect rule by a distant and often ineffectual administration for direct domination by a rival Kurdish leader. Until the nineteenth Century, the imperial administrations were not strong enough to extend direct rule over their Kurdish dominated frontiers but were both politically and militarily capable of preventing the emergence of an integrated Kurdish political leadership. Without imperial support, the likelihood of the latter occurring was remote given that no Kurdish tribal or dynastic leader could accrue the military power necessary to subjugate his local rivals.

The complete incorporation of Kurdish political organization by imperial powers was difficult, and was not completed until the end of the nineteenth century, but was eventually assured by their superior military strength. While Kurdish disunity is frequently attributed to tribalism, it was this incorporation of Kurdish political organization that amplified a tendency towards segmentary fission. Tribalism, therefore, is as much a symptom of a lack of political integration as it is a cause. Van Bruinessen, using the Botan emirate as an example, finds that the Kurdish case confirms Fried's observation that "most tribes seem to be secondary phenomena in a very specific sense: they may well be the

product of processes stimulated by the appearance of relatively highly organized societies amidst other societies which are organized more simply" (Fried, 1968:15).

> Thus, in a few generations, tribal organization in Botan has shown a rapid devolution from complex, state-like to much simpler forms of social and political organization – as if it has taken a few steps back on the evolutionary ladder. In this case it is clearly a response to central government interventions. The denser the administrative network of the state became, the smaller and simpler the tribes. The state did not give up indirect rule altogether, but this took place at increasingly lower levels. After the mirs, some government authority was delegated to the tribe aghas, and later again *qabile* [sub-tribe] aghas, village aghas or the *mezins* or *bavik* [lineage elders]. It would seem that this process, more than any other factor, determined the effective size and, therefore, the complexity of the tribes. (van Bruinessen, 1992:182)

Kurdish tribalism, therefore, rather than being a vestigial social institution, or even a preliminary step in political evolution, can be seen as an on-going effect of the incorporation of Kurdish society by more complex political systems. Incorporation of the Kurdish segmental system was not accomplished by military means alone, but by the manner in which the imperial administration transformed the system of land control (and later land ownership) that was the basis of regional power relations. Until the last century, land, though nominally the property of the sultan, was controlled by local elites such as autonomous princes (*mirs*), appointed governors (*pashas*), or by loyal members of the Ottoman military who received land grants as rewards for service. All, to varying degrees, essentially became 'tax farmers' for the imperial administration. At the local level, according to Barth, land control came to effectively distinguish tribal from non-tribal Kurds and *freeholding* from *tenant* farmers.

> Characteristically, where such freeholding farmers are found in a village partly controlled by a large landowner, every effort seems to be made on the part of the landowner to secure property rights also to the remaining fraction of land, and thus place all members of the community in the unambiguous hierarchy of control and power. Consequently freeholding farmers with property of any significance are generally found in tribally organized communities, and a dichotomy between only freeholding vs. only tenant communities generally holds true. (Barth, 1953:80)

The situation was relatively dynamic with individuals generally being able to move up and between segmental and feudal hierarchies until the "external administration

'froze' the formerly fluid feudal hierarchies" (Barth, 1953:121) by extending a reformed land regime into Kurdistan. The peasants were subject to whoever was powerful enough to control the land: the tribes, the Kurdish emirates, the imperial military or the provincial bureaucracy. The centralizing of the empire, which took place during the Ottoman reform movement (*tanzimat*) in the 19th century, did little to relieve the tax burden of the peasantry. While the intention of Sultan Mahmud (1808-1839) was to reassert the principle of state ownership of land to replace tax-farmers and local chieftains with direct taxation, the manner in which the reforms were implemented actually concentrated land ownership in the hands of local elites and ended up doubly taxing the peasantry (van Bruinessen, 1992).

The Land Code itself was explicitly designed, through its creation of individually owned and inheritable land-titles (*tapu*), to sedenterize the unruly nomads. The result was that tribal chiefs, *aghas*, and shaikhs, as well as merchants and local officials, were much more effective in having the *tapu* officials register large tracts of pasture and agricultural land in their names than were the illiterate peasants. The actual effects of the land code are summarized by van Bruinessen:

> 1. Reduction of the communal features of the tribal economy; individualization.
> 2. Increased economic stratification within the tribe. Many aghas became landlords, their followers becoming their share-croppers. In the course of time this was to give some aghas inordinate power over the commoners.
> 3. A new class, with a new life-style, emerged: the urban-based landlords.
> 4. New forms of cooperation and patronage developed between the urban based landlords and tribal aghas who remained in the villages. . . .
> 5. In many cases the actual cultivators lost some of their traditional rights and became share-croppers or even hired labourers. The landlords could evict them if they wished. This latter competence remained largely potential, until the mechanization of agriculture made most manpower superfluous (in the 1950s); many former share-croppers were then in fact evicted. (van Bruinessen, 1992:184)

In general, the effects of the reforms were to amplify the feudal aspects of Kurdish society and to reduce the tribal character (at least at the higher levels of segmentation) by fragmenting the land base of the clan and tribal *aghas* between village *aghas* and absentee landlords. Tribal free-holding farmers lost the right to evict the peasant *reyat/miskin* classes and, therefore, effectively lost control of that labour source. The result, Barth argues, was a dramatic shift in local class hierarchies.

> The resulting class hierarchy laborer-tenant-intermediary-absentee landlord, differs radically from that generally associated with tribal organization, which includes relatively few laborers and/or *Meskjin*, and a majority of freeholding farmers. (Barth, 1953:132-133)

With de facto power shifting from the *agha* to the local landlord (who may or not be the same individual), the ideals of tribal and lineage solidarity are emptied of their practical relevance. The need for the state to preserve the power of its recognized local administration requires that the means of coercion must also be transferred to the landlords, leading to the further breakdown of the traditional tribal lineage organization (Barth, 1953). This concentration of the powers of coercion by a landlord class, along with the continued preference for village endogamy, resulted in the increasing atomization of Kurdish society. The fragmenting of regional lineage groups or tribal districts produced "an open web of relations between separate, endogamous, socially quite autonomous small villages" (Barth, 1953:139). Barth concludes his study with an observation by Talcott Parsons.

> There seem to be certain elements of inherent instability in societies where the overwhelming bulk of the population is organized on the basis of peasant village communities. One of the reasons for this is the fact that the village community as a primary focus of solidarity can only within very narrow limits be an effective unit for the organization of the use of force. It is, in the face of any more extensive organization, not a defensible unit. Hence there must always be a 'super-structure' over a peasant society, which, among other things, organizes and stabilizes the use of force. The question is how far such a superstructure is, as it were, 'organically' integrated with the self-contained village communities and often the level of integration is not high. (Parsons, 1952:162-3).

In Barth's view, "the secondary role played by the quite large Kurdish population in the history of the Middle East" (Barth, 1953:163) is attributable in large part to the failure of local, non-tribal political institutions to solve the problem of integration as framed by Parsons. The possibility for higher integration of Kurdish society was effectively nullified by a combination of reduced ability for corporate action at the higher segmental levels, a local entrenchment of feudal land relations, and the marginal integration of that society into the local state system. Kurdish society was, therefore, poorly placed as a result of the devolution of its political and social organization to

compete with its imperial neighbours for a place in the new international order that emerged after the First World War.

In summation, an indigenous sense of Kurdish distinctiveness – *Kurdewari* – has existed for centuries based on a shared connection to a loosely bounded homeland called Kurdistan, a related family of dialects, and unique forms of religious practice. The diversity within that mountainous and isolated geography, the plurality of Kurdish dialects, and the friction between orthodox and heterodox religious schools provided many points of fracture to divide the Kurds. The practice of indirect rule by rival empires allowed for political integration by a Kurdish aristocracy at the supra-tribal level. Despite their many internal differences, Kurds have long shared an oral history of mythic narratives that preserved a distinct cultural identity. The creation of autonomous Kurdish principalities gave that identity a political character for the first time. This character was encouraged by a poetics of identity that gave expression to both a lament over Kurdish disunity and the desire for a King to unify the Kurds and make them the equals of the Persians and Ottomans. The stratified and feudal character of Kurdish society ensured that this politicization did not spread far beyond the Kurdish aristocracy, who generally preferred indirect rule by a distant empire, to direct domination by their fellow Kurds.

Most Kurds, as well as most other cultural groups in the region, were linked together in an 'imagined community' based on Islam. The Islamic *Ummah* enfranchised them within a judicial system that, in principle, afforded them equality of protection with other Moslems in the Ottoman empire. The power of the Caliphate as the guardian of the Ummah persisted until the end of World War I. For most Kurds, protection was also derived from a traditional system of social organization, depending on their relative placement in a segmental and feudal hierarchy where communal identity defined in cultural terms had relatively little social utility. The integrity of this social organization was progressively undermined towards the end of the nineteenth century by its incorporation into more complex political administrations and the introduction of a new land regime.

Power and leadership have always been closely associated with conflict in Kurdish society. The empires that incorporated Kurdish society have historically exploited these possibilities for segmentary fission, reducing the possibilities for

autonomous leadership at the supra-clan level and incorporating leaders at the village or clan level by changes to the land regime. The last of the autonomous Kurdish political units were brought under direct rule at the turn of the century. The effect on Kurdish society was to 'freeze' the formerly fluid system of segmental and feudal hierarchies, to concentrate land ownership in the hands of local elites, to increase the exploitation of the peasantry, and to remove indigenous leadership at the higher levels of social organization thereby intensifying intra-Kurdish conflict.

In Part II, this study has demonstrated that the problem of protection needs to be understood not only in terms of a legal regime offering individual protection within an international order, but also in relation to the question of categorical legitimacy within a cultural order. The system of nation states also constitutes a cultural normative order that reinforces the legitimacy of some categories over others and, as a result, encourages a struggle for legitimacy among those marginalized within that order. The Kurds and their contested homeland – Kurdistan – provide a compelling case of liminal categories that have come to have a threatening and destabilizing effect on the national order of things.

The analysis of the transformation of Kurdish social and political organization also demonstrated, however, that the problem of protection is not only one of symbolic or categorical legitimacy. The quality of protection is directly related to the configuration of material relations and dynamics of leadership, power, and coercion in society. The fragmentation and incorporation of Kurdish social and political organization both intensified conflict and the degree of exploitation and disenfranchisement experienced throughout Kurdish society.

In Part III, this study will explore how this transformation provided the context for a more popular sense of shared predicament among Kurds *as* Kurds following the creation of a new international order based on a society of nation-states – horizontal communities bounded by linguistic and politicized conceptions of racial and national identity. The transformation of *Kurdewari* into a political ethos called *Kurdayeti* will be analyzed to show how a nationalist perspective recasts history with a moral and normative dimension, creating a narrative of a people's destiny for coherence and unity. Finally, this study will show how the suppression of this struggle has created an inherent vulnerability to forced migration among the Kurds as a people.

PART III

KURDAYETI: THE STRUGGLE OF THE KURDS

> **Kurd** *n. and a.* Kurd, Kurdish; ~AYETÎ n. Kurdish patriotic movement (~AYETÎ K., be an active Kurdish nationalist); ~ENAMÛSÎ n. gen. K. E ~ENAMÛSÎ, fulfil patriotic obligation to help other K. in need. (Wahby and Edmonds, 1966:80)

> By the 1960s, the modern nationalist ideas had developed into a coherent system of thought that was named *Kurdayetî*. This term means the idea of and struggle for relieving Kurds from national oppression by uniting all parts of Kurdistan under the rule of an independent state. (Hassanpour, 1992:62)

> ***Kurdayetî*** we use for what we do for Kurdistan. It means you fight and work to save the Kurdish people. If I say this family is empty of *Kurdayetî*, it means that this family has not done anything for the Kurdish nation. *Kurdperist* is a word used for nationalism. If a family keeps their Kurdish culture pure and they do not change their language and tradition, we say "*maleka Kurd perwer.* (A Kurd living in Norway)

Kurdayetî is the indigenous expression of a Kurdish nationalist ethos. It has become the single strongest factor encouraging the political and cultural integration of the Kurdish people and of Kurdistan. It has accomplished this by being flexible enough to incorporate those who emphasized the necessity of an independent state as well as those who prefer to struggle for local autonomy and cultural freedoms. More importantly, despite these differences in emphasis, it has provided a shared normative matrix for encouraging altruistic commitment on behalf of the Kurdish people across the many divisions of Kurdish society. *Kurdayeti* developed over a period of several decades and its coherent expression was largely the result of the interpenetration of the diverse social expressions of Kurdish nationalism after the Treaty of Lausanne. Its integrationist ideals, however, continue to be undermined by a combination of internal conflict and extreme state repression. In addition, Kurds themselves are increasingly critical of many of its traditional assumptions. Nevertheless, it remains the most significant indigenous expression of a coherent social struggle to achieve legitimacy and protection for the Kurds within the national order.

Just as protection is not only a legal question relevant to international order, it also not simply an issue of symbolic legitimacy. In Chapter 6, this study will analyze the denial of protection to the Kurds at every level – political, cultural, and economic. It will be shown that the thorough marginalization of Kurdish society has not been an accidental offshoot of modernization or industrial development, but a result of the deliberate policies of the states that have incorporated Kurdistan. The response of the Kurds to this loss of protection will also be explored. This response has taken the form of a succession of increasingly popular autonomist, nationalist, and revolutionary movements, the most successful of which was the Barzani-led struggle in Iraq which encouraged the diffusion of *Kurdayeti* as a populist nationalist ethos.

The nationalist struggle in Iraq that developed the ideals of Kurdayeti during the 1960s also culminated in the Kurds' most devastating defeat. In Chapter 7, this study will analyze the geopolitical context of the suppression of the Kurdish struggle in order to demonstrate the root causes of Kurdish vulnerability to mass displacement. It will be shown how the defeat of Barzani was followed by varying degrees of demographic war by each state against its Kurdish population. The ongoing determination of these states to seek a military solution to the Kurdish struggle has transformed the Kurds from a liminal cultural category denied inclusion within the national order of things, into a nation of refugees trapped in a limbo zone beyond both meaningful protection and durable solutions.

CHAPTER 6
KURDISH NATIONALISM:
THE DENIAL OF PROTECTION AND THE STRUGGLE FOR LEGITIMACY

It is has become a customary feature of analyses of the Kurdish dilemma to approach its historical, political and social dynamics on a regional basis divided according to the prevailing 'hegemonic topography' (Malkki, 1995). This is the case with both Kurdish and non-Kurdish writers, although the former generally prefer formulations such as: Kurdistan in Turkey, Kurdistan in Iraq, Kurdistan in Iran, and, less frequently, Kurdistan in Syria. Given the degree of political and institutional (but not necessarily social) isolation of the different regions of Kurdistan since the Second World War, such an approach is unavoidable. However, the approach tends to obscure important commonalities of the Kurdish experience of involuntary incorporation into separate states, despite the divergence in regional responses to this incorporation.

The most important of these commonalities has to do with their collective loss of protection as Kurds within the international order. In addition, Kurds from every region of Kurdistan have responded to this loss in a succession of often violent resistance movements for local autonomy or independence, which, although occasionally allied across state boundaries, have more frequently been involved in mutual conflict. These conflicts reveal the presence of persistent divisions within Kurdish society that have been encouraged, sustained, and exploited by the state powers. Finally, the efforts of each state to secure a total defeat of these resistance movements has provided the basis for an inherent vulnerability to mass displacement in each part of Kurdistan.

6.1 A Nation Denied and Divided

When Kurds explain their political situation to outsiders (Panel 9– A Profile On The Kurds And Kurdistan), two related themes generally emerge: their sense of being *a nation denied* and their experience of being *a nation divided.* In fact, statements to the effect that "the Kurds are the largest people or nation without a state" have become, for many Kurds, a fundamental expression of their Kurdish identity. On January 8, 1918, the

Panel 9: A Profile of The Kurds And Kurdistan

Political Outline

The Kurds are the largest nation in the world who have been denied their basic human right for a nation-state. Their nationalist struggle extends back to the first quarter of the nineteenthCentury when the Ottoman control extended over five Kurdish semi-independent principalities: Soran, Baban, Botan, Miran and Hakkari.

After the First World War defeat and collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the Kurds, who fought against the Ottoman for the interests of the allied forces, gained international support. President Woodrow Wilson's "Programme for Peace", declared that the non-Turkish minorities of the Ottoman Empire should be granted the right of self-determination, Apparently the programme was full of confusion. The nations with sea access, notably the Arabs and Greeks, gained their independence, whereas the Kurds and the Armenians were only left alone to be massacred by the Turks, but also, for the sake of oil, the allies and then the League of Nations divided their homeland.

Ever since, the Kurds have been organizing a series of unsuccessful revolts against their respective governments, demanding a nation-state or at least local autonomy that can preserve basic human rights and self-expression.

It is clear that the USA and its allies, have no interests in allowing the Kurds to achieve their aspirations for an independent Kurdistan.

For the USA and European Community members. Kurdish issues like: human rights violations, oppressions, ethnic cleansing and mass exodus are all "air bubbles" once the balance of power over oil in the Middle East is preserved. Furthermore, these powers have been introducing the Kurds to their public as: "war-like people", "illiterate nation", "tribes men", "terrorists", ... etc.

Labels like these, not only degrade the credibility of the Kurdish cause, but also support the criminal acts of the countries hostile to the Kurds.

Finally, it seems that there is no solution for the Kurdish problem in the so-called "New World Order" as long as the balance of power in the world serves the old paradigm of "peace through strength" and not through law.

From a pamphlet distributed by the Manitoba Kurdish Union, 1995.

American president, Woodrow Wilson, set out in definite terms the conditions of peace at the conclusion of World War I that came to be known as 'The Fourteen Points.' Point 12 dealt explicitly with the former Ottoman territories.

> 12. The Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development, and the Dardanelles should be permanently opened as a free passage to the ships and commerce of all nations under international guarantees.
> (United States Serial 7443. Document No. 765, January 8, 1918)

The Treaty of Sèvres (Appendix 1) was one of the first treaties negotiated by the League of Nations– itself an institution inspired by Wilson's 'Fourteen Points'. The treaty has since become a standard feature of the Kurdish case for autonomy. It was negotiated in 1920 while the Ottoman Turks were still weak following their defeat in the First World War, but never implemented. The autonomy or independence it promised to Ottoman minorities was a product of two factors. First, following widespread reporting of atrocities committed against Christian minorities (Armenians, Assyrians, Chaldeans), there was considerable public support for an Armenian state. Kurdish nationalists made common cause with the Armenians and advocated for a state of their own. The second factor was the desire of Britain to retain control of the former Ottoman province of Mosul – a predominately Kurdish region – because of its oil reserves. By promoting a Kurdish client state or mandate territory in the region, Britain could more effectively oppose Ottoman efforts to retain possession of the province. Under the Treaty, Britain was given Mesopotamia (Iraq) – including Mosul – as a mandate within the League system (Northedge, 1986), and the Kurds were promised independence if they demonstrated enough support and readiness within one year.

Turkish nationalists, led by Mustapha Kemal were outraged by the proposed dismemberment of their Turkish homeland and fought what they celebrate today as the Turkish War of Independence from 1919 to 1923. Kemal's defeat of the Greek army in Anatolia gave the Turkish forces the political leverage to negotiate a new Treaty with the allies who were now looking for a buffer state between their Middle Eastern territories and the Soviet Union. The result was the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 that effectively annulled the Treaty of Sèvres. The Treaty of Lausanne recognized the new Turkish State

and left the Kurds divided between Turkey, France's mandated territory in Syria, Britain's mandated territory in Iraq, and Iran (which managed to emerge from the hostilities with its territory intact). Additional Kurdish minorities were also present in the Caucasus republics of the Soviet Union.

The Treaty of Lausanne made no mention of the Kurds, although Article 39, in Section III concerning 'Protection of Minorities', specified that:

> Turkish nationals belonging to non-Moslem minorities will enjoy the same civil and political rights as Moslems.
> All the inhabitants of Turkey, without distinction of religion shall be equal before the law.
> Differences of religion, creed or confession shall not prejudice any Turkish national in matters relating to the enjoyment of civil or political rights, as, for instance, admission to public employments, functions and honours, or the exercise of professions and industries.
> No restrictions shall be imposed on the free use by any Turkish national of any language in private intercourse, in commerce, religion, in the press, or in publications of any kind or at public meetings.
> Notwithstanding the existence of the official language, adequate facilities shall be given to Turkish nationals of non-Turkish speech for the oral use of their own language before the Courts.
> (New York Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1924.)

The Turks made strategic use of the fact that under the Ottoman system, Kurds and Turks had been recognized as equals by virtue of their Muslim faith. Kurds should not now, they argued, be considered as minorities. This interpretative fusion of Turkish and Kurdish identity was only the beginning of an aggressive assimilation policy which would end by denying the existence of the Kurds entirely and renaming them 'mountain Turks.' The Turks also reasserted a territorial claim to the province of Mosul. A League of Nations commission of inquiry toured the province to solicit Kurdish opinion on whether they preferred to be ruled by the new King of Iraq or by Turkey. The response was unequivocal: neither. Most Kurds who voted, wanted independence, but the British mandate was considered the lesser of two evils (Northedge, 1986). In 1925, the League awarded Britain a twenty-five year mandate over the Kingdom of Iraq, with explicit guarantees of Kurdish rights as a minority. The boundaries of Iraq, however, were declared inviolable. The French received the new mandate territory of Syria which they administered until 1946.

The Kurds have been denied protection of basic cultural and political freedoms as Kurds in Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria. This loss has occurred to varying extremes within each state according to the development of rival nationalisms by Arabs, Turks, and Persians and according to the relative ability of successive regimes to dominate state institutions. Domination of the state administrative and military power was achieved first in Turkey where the denial of protection to the Kurds has also been the most extreme. In Iran, this process was delayed until after the Second World War, but the degree of ethnic hegemony achieved by the Farsi- or Persian-speaking population has never been as total as that of the Turks. Central control of the state in Iraq and Syria – both artificial creations of colonialism – was not achieved until the 1970s, when rival Baath Arab Nationalist parties secured power in each state.

6.2 Nations in Denial: The Structural Loss of Protection

Turkey is the most paradoxical of all the states that have incorporated parts of Kurdistan. Turkey has the largest population of Kurds, but they have generally received far less attention than have the Kurds of Iraq, which has fewer Kurds than Turkey or Iran. Turkey is the only one of these states that can claim a democratic tradition, yet the rights of the Kurds, as Kurds, have been more thoroughly and systematically suppressed than in any other part of Kurdistan. Turkey is a democracy so long as the fundamental doctrines of the State, which allow only one identity – *Turk*, are not questioned.

> ... all citizens of the Republic were equal regardless of class, rank, religion, or occupation. So it was that the 1924 Constitution specified that "The People of Turkey, regardless of religion and race are Turks as regards citizenship." (Shaw, 1977:378)

On April 17, 1995 Ahmet Altan, a writer for the Turkish mass circulation daily, *Milliyet*, published an editorial entitled "Atakurd." (Panel 10: *Atakurd*) In it he posed a series of declarative questions which hypothetically reversed the dominant order in Turkey. Turkey became *Kurdey*, and the Kurds were now the oppressors, while the Turks were reduced to "ocean Kurds." Mr. Altan was dismissed from his position, given a conditional 20-month prison sentence, and fined the equivalent of $12,000 U.S. for having "incited people to mutual enmity through discrimination against races and regions." (Norwegian Forum for Freedom of Expression, 1996) Compared to others, such

Panel 10. *Atakurd* by Ahmet Altan

What if Mustafa Kemal Ataturk had been an Ottoman General born, not in the Greek city of Thesaloniki, but in the Iraqi city of Mosul, and following the successful conclusion of a war of liberation with the participation of the Kurds and the Turks, he had named the republic in whose formation he played a leading role, not "Turkey" but "Kurdey", and he then assumed the title "Atakurd" by a resolution of the parliament.

What if the slogan "Blessed is he who says he is a Kurd" was prominently exhibited throughout the suburbs of Istanbul and as citizens of Kurdey we all were called Kurds.

What if it were asserted there were no Turks in Kurdey and those who thought of themselves as Turks were claimed to be in fact "Ocean Kurds".

What if it were asserted that the Kurds had a history dating back "Seven thousand years", that the Kurds were the original and true owners of Anatolia, that the Mongols, the Huns and Etruscans were the ancestors of the Kurds and the heroism of the Kurdish generals in the Ottoman armed forces were taught in schools.

What if we were forbidden from giving our children Turkish names such as Ghengis, Teoman, Attila and Osman and were forced to assume Kurdish names like Berfin, Newroz and Tiruj.

What if broadcasting in Turkish was outlawed and all broadcasts were in Kurdish, and we were compelled to write novels, stories and poems only in Kurdish, compelled to listen to Kurdish music and print all newspapers in Kurdish only.

What if Kurdish was the only language in schools and use of Turkish for teaching any subject was made illegal.

What if we were thrown into prisons without even being questioned whenever we said "We are Turks, we have a distinct history and language."

What if in major cities like Ankara, Istanbul etc we were constantly harassed by the police, the so-called "Special Teams" incessantly mistreated us as if we were criminals on the suspicion that we were "separatists" bent on dividing the Kurdish Republic, and continually subjected insults and abuses simply for being Turks.

What if following the coup of 12 September 1980, those of us living in the west of the country were thrown into jails, were subjected to incredible torture, buried in mud up to our necks, with high pressure water some of our internal organs were destroyed, mad dogs were used to maul our legs.

What if our homes were raided and on the assertion that we were aiding the "Turkish terrorists" our apartments were demolished, without being allowed to take our possessions from our homes we were forced to leave to cities like Hakkari and Diyarbakir and forced to live in tents.

(Excerpt from "Atakurd" by Ahmet Altan, translated in *Freedom of Living in Turkey*, published by the Norwegian Forum for Freedom of Expression, 1996)

as the Turkish sociologist Ismail Besikci, now serving cumulative prison sentences amounting to more than one hundred years for writing about the Kurds, Mr. Altan received a light sentence.

The reasons why such an obviously ironic piece would be perceived as subversive and seditious are related to the ongoing war between the Turkish government and the PKK, but have deeper roots in the historical development of the Turkish State. The shift from a diffuse national home of the Ottomans, which stretched from Tunisia to Iran, and from Egypt to the Caucasus, to an ancestral Anatolian homeland, put Turkish nationalism on a collision course with both Armenian and Kurdish nationalisms situated in the same region. The First World War and the collapse of the imperial order that followed was a period of profound social chaos throughout the empire. It is precisely during such periods of social conflict and devastation from war, when the old system fails to protect those whose allegiance it claims, that large numbers of people are more likely to be drawn to the promise of a new order.

The creation of a Turkish Republic was greatly facilitated not only by the successful revolution of Mustafa Kemal, later Atatürk, but also by the ethnic reconfiguration of the region which followed. This process began with the population exchanges between Greece and Turkey after the war and continued with the assault on the Armenians. The Ottomans had long been targeting the Armenian minority on the Anatolian plateau who were distrusted for their Russian-supported nationalist ambitions. In 1915, after reprisals, massacres, armed conflicts and forced displacement, much of the Armenian population disappeared from the plateau. Kurdish tribal militia assisted the Ottoman army in the 'ethnic cleansing' of the region. According to van Bruinessen, some Kurds saw an advantage in a more culturally homogeneous homeland that would facilitate the creation of a Kurdish state. However, according to an anecdote related by van Bruinessen, at least one Kurdish chieftain, Halid Beg Cibran, who had led campaigns against the Armenians, predicted a more ominous result: "This day we have wetted the sword that will one day cut our own throats." (quoted in van Bruinessen, 1978:371) With the Armenians out of the way, there was no longer an ethnic buffer between Kurds and Turks who alone remained to contest the Anatolian plateau.

After the Treaty of Lausanne the lines between the rival nationalism became clearly drawn. Kemal Atatürk had been incrementally reducing the power of the old Ottoman elite as much as his supporters would allow. He began by separating the Sultanate from the Caliphate, the imperial order from the religious order, and then replacing the sultanate with his own 'populist' government. On March 4, 1924 the institution of the Caliphate was formally abolished. The effect was to abolish the last symbolic linkage with the non-Turkish subjects of the Ottoman Empire. After the opposition Progressive Republican party was banned in 1925, Atatürk moved swiftly to implement three of his key radical reforms: the Code of Civil Law (*Medeni Kanunu Devrimi*), which replaced the Ottoman and Islamic civil code with the adapted Swiss Civil Code, the Dress and Headgear Law (*Kiyafet Kanunu Devrimi)* which banned religious clothing, and the Alphabet Law (*Harf Kanunu*), which replaced the Arabic with the Latin script.

To ensure the implementation of these reforms, the state inserted itself and its doctrines at every level of Turkish society. Police detachments were established in any village of a certain size, offices of the Republican People's Party, called 'People's Houses' (Stirling, 1965) were established throughout Turkey, and the tenets of Kemalism, as described by Shaw below, became part of the standard educational curriculum.

> In February 1937 they were brought together in six ideologies written into article 2 of the Constitution: Republicanism, Nationalism, Populism, Revolutionism, Secularism, and Statism. These became the bases for most of the programs developed by Kemal and his successors from 1923 to the present day. The first four principles reflected the ideological basis of the new political structuring, and the last two expressed the policies that were to provide a philosophical framework for reforms. (Shaw, 1977:375)

The Kemalist revolution has generally, and with some justification, been viewed in the West as a remarkable experiment in modernization and secularization of a profoundly rural and religious culture. The instrument of this transformation was a fundamentally rigid program of Turkish Nationalism, and the price was the structural inability to respond flexibly to the stubborn refusal of the Kurdish population to be absorbed by the Turkish identity. Nevertheless, without a public acceptance of a Turkish

identity, political and economic advancement was impossible. For example, the Turkish Prime Minister stated in 1930 that:

> Only the Turkish nation is entitled to claim ethnic and national rights in this country. No other element has any such right. (Ismet Ononu in the Turkish newspaper *Milliyet*, No. 1636, August 31, 1930; cited in Kendal, 1993b:56)

Later in the year, the Turkish Minister of Justice proclaimed in the same newspaper:

> We live in a country called Turkey, the freest country in the world. As your deputy, I feel I can express my real convictions without reserve. I believe that the Turk must be the only lord, the only master of this country. Those who are not of pure Turkish stock can have only one right in this country, the right to be servants and slaves. (Mahmut Esat Bozhurt in *Milliyet*, No. 1655, September 16, 1930; cited in Kendal, 1993b:56)

The Kurdish language was banned as were all published references to Kurds who were from then on to be referred to as 'Mountain Turks' or 'Eastern Turks' (*Dagli Türkler*). To provide a 'scientific' basis for these restrictions, Atatürk encouraged Turkish academics to extend and articulate two theses which he had formulated: the *Türk Tarih Tezi* (The Turkish Historical Thesis) and the *Günes Dil Teorisi* (The Sun Theory of Languages). The first was articulated by Resit Galip, the official general secretary for the Historical Thesis, as follows:

1. The Turks are not of the yellow or Mongolian race. They are white men and they are brachycephals of the Alpine type, as is to be seen in Dixon.
2. The brachycephalic or Alpine peoples are seen to predominate in central, southern, eastern Europe, western Asia, and these are immigrants from Asia.
3. The brachycephalic peoples of Anatolia and Turkestan, who speak Turkish, conform with and are similar to the peoples of central Europe and western Asia.
4. The original homeland of the brachycephalic types is eastern Turkestan.
5. The Turks are a brachycephalic or Alpine people.
6. It was these brachycephalic or Alpine Turkic types from Turkestan who in moving out of Turkestan founded states wherever they went.
7. These are the Ata Türkler and we the modern Turks are their children. These Turks had the original power of creativity and power to create civilizations.
8. The other racial types could not create civilizations before they came into contact with the brachycephalic Turks, from whom they derived the elements of civilization and creativity.

9. In effect all civilizations are the creation of the Turks spilling out of the Altay.
10. It is sufficient to prove this simply if one finds the presence of brachycephalic or Alpine physical skeletal remains in the various areas of distinct civilizations.
11. There are no original and independent civilizations. They are all derived from the Turks. (quoted in Vryonis, 1991:72)

The Sun Theory of Languages similarly declared Turkish to be the origin of all languages and Kurds to be a tribe of Turkish origin who had forgotten their true language as a result of mountainous isolation and a polluting Persian influence (Hassanpour, 1992). To cleanse them of this influence, Kurds were fined for speaking their language in public places (Panel 11 – Banning Kurdish) and for listening to foreign radio broadcasts in Kurdish. The influence of the cultural politics underlying the Turkish Historical Thesis and Sun Theory of Languages, if not the theories themselves, continues to be felt in Turkish society. For example, the 1984 edition the *Oxford Turkish-English Dictionary* defines *Kürt* as "(ethn) Kurd; (pej.) uncivilized person." (Hassanpour, 1992:134) In 1988, Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Özal (also of mixed Kurdish parentage) authored a book entitled *Turkey in Europe,* which offered a history of Turkish influence on European civilization since the Neolithic era, ostensibly for the political purpose of facilitating Turkish integration into the European Community (Vryonis, 1991).

Iran, like Turkey, has been determined in its efforts to absorb and nullify the Kurdish presence. It has been less ruthless and less successful for a number of reasons. The Kurdish regions of Iran had been technically incorporated into the Persian Empire since 1639, although successive dynasties were able to extend only indirect rule over the region until the last century. Moreover, the transition of Iran and its Kurdish territories from imperial dynasty to nation-state was less abrupt and traumatic than was the case in Turkey. The monarchy persisted in Iran until the Islamic Revolution in 1979. Iran provides an example of what Anderson refers to as 'official nationalism,' whereby the Shah maintained his imperial authority under a veneer of Iranian national identity. When more modern nationalist forces attempted to challenge this authority in the 1950s, they were, with American connivance, ruthlessly suppressed. This lack of a radical juncture in

Panel 11: Banning Kurdish

The Kurdish language was banned inside and outside the city and if anyone was caught speaking Kurdish, they were fined 1 TL (Turkish lira) for each word spoken. This struck Mardin city dumb because being unable to speak Kurdish in public meant people used sign language. ...To help you understand the situation, I will give you another example of the difficulties arising from the prohibition of speaking Kurdish.

The villagers used to take wood to the city to sell. They transported it by donkey. They would sell the firewood for about 5060 kurus (pennies). If the donkey and the saddle was in good condition, they could sell it for 5-6 lira. To make the donkey go while riding it, a Kurd would say 'Co'. Villagers speaking nothing but Kurdish when they arrived at the city would say 'Co' and the soldiers would stop them and fine them on the spot for speaking Kurdish. Unable to speak Turkish, the Kurdish villager would attempt to explain to the soldiers in Kurdish and thus the fine built up and up.

A relative of my mother was set up by the soldiers and in order to pay the fine he sold his firewood and donkey. He received five Turkish lira for them but his fine was 12 lira so he was beaten up and put in a cell for two days. Three and a half months later, when the tax collectors came to our village, they demanded the remaining seven lira outstanding on the fine. If he did not pay up, they would seize his house and belongings. My uncle managed to pay the fine by selling some of his sheep. Such incidents were part of our ordinary, normal daily life.

- Musa Anter, *My Memoirs*,
translated by Iskender Ozden in Kurdistan Report

the ruling order delayed the popular transmission of nationalist feeling, not only among the Kurds, but among other minority groups as well.

The Persian or Farsi-speaking population in Iran has never enjoyed the kind of ethnic dominance that the Turks did in Turkey. The proportion of the population estimated to be Persian varies from 50 to 60 percent (with the higher percentages preferred by Persian sources) while the Kurds are estimated by Persian sources at around 6 or 7 percent and by Kurdish sources at about 12 – 14 percent (Table 10 – Appendix 2). Amirahmadi (1987) estimates that less than 50 percent of the population of Iran speaks Farsi, the official language, as a mother tongue. In addition to the Kurds and Persians, there is a sizable minority of Azeri Turks (22 percent), as well as smaller minorities of Baluchis (2.5 percent) and Arabs (2 percent) (Amirahmadi, 1987) and other cultural groups. This lack of ethnic dominance has forced the central authority in Iran to pursue a more subtle policy of co-option, particularly towards the Azeris in order to preserve its power. Because the vast majority of Iranians (85 percent), including the Azeris, are Shi'a, this strategy has been largely successful. The fact that most Kurds in Iran are Sunni, has been a significant factor in the stronger tendency towards nationalist resistance among Kurds than among other Iranian minorities.

Finally, the Kurds are much closer to the Persians in language and in culture than to either Arabs or Turks. There have been attempts in Iran to recast the Kurds as 'mountain Persians', but the most common approach has been to depict Kurdish language and culture as a form of 'proto-Persian.' The implication was that Kurdish was a primitive form of Persian and its encouragement would be contradictory to efforts to modernized Iranian society. After the Islamic Revolution, this policy of denying Kurdish distinctiveness could be easily asserted in religious form with the insistence that there was no room for ethnic difference in Islam.

Persian was proclaimed the official language of Iran in its first constitution in 1906. It was not until Reza Khan, later known as Reza Shah, took power in 1921 that the government was strong enough to enforce that policy (Hassanpour, 1992). World War I left the Iranian government in Teheran weakened and less able to control its peripheral regions. This situation was exacerbated by the signing of a treaty with the British that rendered Iran little more independent than the Mandate territory of Iraq. Ghassemlou

describes how Reza Khan was able to strengthen and centralize the state apparatus, sedentarize the nomads, and ruthlessly 'pacify' the rebellions Kurds and other tribes who had taken advantage of the lack of direct rule to assert their autonomy.

> Between the two world wars, the Iranian government used the army to sedentarize the Kurds, with disastrous consequences; often whole tribes were completely exterminated. Out of the 10,000 members of the Jalali tribe who lived on the frontiers between Iran, Turkey and the Soviet Union only a few hundred survived deportation to Central Iran and returned to their own territory in 1941. General Ahmed Agha Khan became so notorious for his liquidation of the Lurs that he was nicknamed "the butcher of Luristan." The same treatment was meted out to the members of the Galbaghi tribe: they were deported to Hamadan and Isfahan and their lands occupied by Turkish-speaking peoples. (Ghassemlou, 1993:102)

Reza Shah banned all manifestations of Kurdish culture – Kurdish dress, literature, music and dance. Kurdish sources from the period recount how Kurdish professionals were often arrested, sometimes tortured, and exiled on charges of speaking Kurdish (Hassanpour, 1992). World War II provided another opportunity for external powers such as Britain and the Soviet Union to exert their influence in Iran, and the Shah's centralization project was interrupted. While Kurds took advantage of the decline of central power to assert their autonomy and declare the independent Republic of Mahabad, the withdrawal of the foreign powers allowed Teheran to extend its control over Kurdistan once again.

In the immediate post war years, a new political administration in Teheran attempted to limit the Shah's power. In addition, opposition groups were able to operate with comparatively more freedom in the more liberal context of the Mossadegh administration during the early 1950s. Mossadegh nationalized the oil industry, allowed for more freedom of political organization, and almost succeeded in reducing the power of the Shaw to that of a constitutional monarch. After Mossadegh was deposed in coup d'etat, the Shah was able to accrue dictatorial powers without opposition.

The repressive policies introduced by the Shah during the 1960s and 1970s, including the suppression of free speech, journalism, trade unions, and all forms of political, cultural, and professional organizations, affected all segments of Iranian society (Ghassemlou, 1993). To a greater extent than was the case in Iraq, Turkey, and Syria, the

Iranian regime was perceived by many Iranians to be an imperialist power sustained by foreign interests. This encouraged many Kurdish political activists to participate as strongly in leftist opposition movements, along with Azeris, Persians, and other minority groups, as they did in explicitly Kurdish nationalist movements. Nevertheless, because this oppression was experienced to greater extremes in Iranian Kurdistan, which remained more politically and economically marginal than other areas of Iran, many Kurds have come to see Kurdish autonomy within a democratic Iran as their best hope for protection.

A key difference between the Kurdish situation in Iraq and that which prevailed in all other areas of Kurdistan, was the extent to which the need for protection of Kurdish rights was recognized in International protocols. The nation now known as Iraq was created from the joining of the three former Ottoman *vilayets* of Baghdad, Basra and Mosul. While the British were able to conquer Basra and Baghdad during the first World War , Mosul, which is essentially Iraqi Kurdistan, proved more difficult to subdue. The British needed the Kurds to secure control over Mosul and, as a result, encouraged their aspirations for autonomy. Had the provisions of the Treaty of Sèvres for an autonomous Kurdish entity been implemented, that entity would have been centred in Mosul, and a League of Nations Commission investigating the situation declared:

> If the ethnic argument alone had to be taken into account, the necessary conclusion would be that an independent Kurdish State should be created, since the Kurds form five-eighths of the population. (quoted in McDowall, 1992: 81)

After the Treaty of Lausanne, possession of the Kurdish area in the Mosul vilayet was contested by both the Turks and the British. At the end of 1925, the League of Nations issued a decision attaching Mosul to Iraq but maintaining the latter as a mandate of the British Government for 25 years. The League cited as justification for this decision, the cruel treatment both the Kurds and the Assyrian Christians had received from the Turks (Izady, 1992). With regard to the Kurds, the League decision specified:

> As the mandate power, the British Government is invited to present before the Council the administrative measures it will take to ensure that the Kurdish populations mentioned in the Commission of Inquiry's report enjoy the type of local administration recommended by the Commission in it s conclusions. (quoted in Vanly, 1993; 148)

The decision referred to a 1925 League of Nations International Commission of Inquiry sent to Mosul, which recommended that:

> Regard must be paid to the desire expressed by the Kurds that officials of Kurdish race should be appointed for the administration of their country, the dispensation of justice, and teaching in the schools, and that Kurdish should be the official language of all these services. (quoted in Hassanpour, 1992:105)

Unfortunately for the Kurds, as the British administration progressively detached itself from Iraq, such guarantees became more and more diluted. In fact, once Turkish demands for the return of Mosul were nullified, the primary motivation for British support for Kurdish cultural and political autonomy disappeared. The new Iraqi monarchy made partial concessions to the Kurds by allowing Kurdish language education at the primary school level (but only in restricted areas of Sulaimaniya and Arbil), allowing publication of books in Kurdish, and inviting Kurdish ministers into the government (Vanly, 1993). In 1930, a new agreement nullified the British Mandate and Iraq became nominally independent. The Anglo-Iraqi Treaty signed by the two governments made no mention of the Kurds.

Arabs within the Iraqi government warned of the dangers of not ensuring the voluntary incorporation of the Kurds into the new state. Abd al Muhsin al Sa'dun, when resigning as Prime Minister of Iraq in 1926, advised the monarch as follows:

> This nation cannot live unless it gives all Iraqi elements their rights. ... The fate of Turkey should be a lesson to us and we should not revert to the policy formerly pursued by the Ottoman Government. We should give the Kurds their rights. Their officials should be from among them, their tongue should be their official language and their children should learn their own tongue in the schools. It is incumbent upon us to treat all elements, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, with fairness and justice, and give them their rights. (quoted in McDowall, 1992:84)

The League of Nations' Acting Commissioner Major Young, reacting to continuous petitions from the Kurdish areas, toured Iraqi Kurdistan and warned Kurdish leaders against separatist demands, but also encouraged the Iraqi government to implement provisions for safeguarding the Kurdish language and ensuring Kurdish representation in the administration of the region (Hassanpour, 1992). Nevertheless, the Iraqi government continued to delay the implementation of such provisions, and pursued

new ways to 'Arabize' the Kurdish regions. A language law, considerably reduced in scope, was passed in 1931. It made knowledge of Kurdish alone a requirement for government employment in Kurdish areas, allowing Kurdish-speaking Arabs to be installed in positions of importance. While the League council voted for Iraq's membership in the League in 1932, it did so with the following stipulations:

> [Article One] The stipulations contained in the present chapter are recognized as fundamental laws of Iraq and no law, regulation or official action shall conflict or interfere with these stipulations, nor shall any law, regulation or official action now or in the future prevail over them. ...
> [Article Nine] Iraq undertakes that, in the liwas of Mosul, Arbil, Kirkuk and Sulaimaniya, the official language, side by side with Arabic, shall be Kurdish in the qadhas in which the population is predominantly of Kurdish race.
> In the qadhas of Kifri and Kirkuk, however, in the liwa of Kirkuk, where a considerable part of the population is of Turkman race, the official language, side by side with Arabic, shall be either Kurdish or Turkish. (quoted in Hassanpour, 1992:111)

These stipulations were largely a result of the skepticism of the League's Permanent Mandate Commission as to Iraq's sincerity in protecting its minorities. The League stopped there, however, declaring that "the discussion of the question of the autonomy of certain minorities in Iraq did not fall within its ambit." (quoted in Vanly, 1993:149) British support for the inclusion of Iraq in the League succeeded in ensuring that Iraq's current and future transgressions of the stipulations would be largely ignored. Once again the League acted as little more than a legitimating cover for European imperial ambitions. Having given Kurdish aspirations legitimacy and having offered them a modicum of protection within the international order, the League abruptly abandoned the Kurds to the government in Baghdad. The Iraqi monarchy immediately took steps to limit Kurdish language use to primary schools and to certain regions of Iraqi Kurdistan, to reduce the administrative use of Kurdish, and to encourage the Arabization of most public institutions (Hassanpour, 1992). After Iraq became a sovereign member of the international order, all Britain could – or would – do on behalf of the Kurds was quietly and ineffectively encourage King Faisal to implement the Local Languages Law.

The existence of Kurdish communities in Syria dates at least to the time of Salahaddin. Today, these communities are found in the *Jezireh* (a northeastern region

bordering Iraq and Turkey), with more than 50 percent of Syrian Kurds, the *Kurd-Dhag* (Kurdish Mountain), which borders Turkey near the Mediterranean, and in many Syrian cities. Damascus, in particular, has long had distinctive Kurdish quarters. All of the regions inhabited by Kurds are separated by other areas inhabited primarily by Arabs. Syria's Kurdish population, numbering around a million, is the smallest of any of the states incorporating parts of Kurdistan. The smaller population and the lack of a contiguous Kurdish territory has made the Kurdish question in Syria a largely peripheral one in relation to other areas of Kurdistan.

At the Allied Conference in San Remo in 1920, Palestine and Jordan were separated from the former vilayet of Damascus and given to the British as mandate territories. The French took what remained of the vilayet Damascus as well as Aleppo, Tripoli, and Saida, and subsequently created the new state of Lebanon. In 1938, the Sanjak of Alexandrette and the Plain of Antioch, with a mixed Arab, Turkish, and Kurdish population, was transferred to the Republic of Turkey which renamed it Hatay (Nazdar, 1993).

Under the French Mandate, Kurds enjoyed more cultural freedoms than in any other area of Kurdistan, even if this freedom derived more from the absence of deliberate repression than from explicit legal protection (Khoury, 1987). Nevertheless, Kurds from other parts of Kurdistan took advantage of these freedoms to publish nationalist journals and newspapers and to organize in Syria their struggles against the other states. The perception that these freedoms were at least nominally better protected under the French mandate than would be the case under the Arab nationalists, probably helped encourage many Kurds to assist the French in suppressing the Arab resistance movement. Kurdish auxiliary troops played a prominent role in the suppression of what came to be known as the Great Revolt (1925-1927). Most Kurdish support seems to have come from the landlord classes who had the most to lose from a radical political restructuring.

The French mandate ended in 1946, but a thorough restructuring of the Syrian political system did not occur until 1958 when Arab Nationalists succeeded in joining Syria with Egypt as the United Arab Republic. Kurdish political organizations were suppressed and Kurdish publications, music, and broadcasting were prohibited. After the Union collapsed in 1961, the country was renamed the Syrian Arab Republic and 120,000

Kurds in the Jezireh were classed as foreigners under a deliberate policy of Arabization (Vanly, 1992). The assault on the Kurdish presence in Syria became even more direct when the Baath party took over in 1963. In 1965, a prominent Kurdish activist, Ismet Cheriff Vanly, received a death sentence from the Syrian government for publicizing a secret report from the Syrian secret service planning the transformation of the Jezireh. Among the recommendations listed in the report were the forced displacement of Kurds from their lands, the denial of education and employment possibilities, the resettlement of Arabs to Kurdish lands, and the denial of Syrian citizenship to non-Arabs in the region (Vanly, 1992). The Baath Party created a military cordon along the Turkish border and many Kurds were resettled from the region and lost their citizenship.

The process of disenfranchising the Kurds in Syria was moderated with the coming to power of Hafiz al-Asad in 1972. Asad was a member of the Alawite community, a Shi'ite religious minority of marginal status in Syria and Lebanon, and he needed the Kurds as allies to consolidate his power. Many Kurds continued to lend support by joining Asad's military and helping to suppress rebellions among the Sunni majority. Asad has also frequently exploited the Kurdish nationalist cause in order to gain leverage in his ongoing political disputes Iraq and Turkey. The protection of Kurds in Syria remains precarious and is entirely dependent on their political usefulness to Asad's dictatorship. Many Kurds remain without citizenship and are essentially stateless, while those Kurds who have been active in advocating for Kurdish cultural freedoms or against the regime, have suffered persecution at least as harsh as that of other Syrian dissidents.

6.3 The Social Organization of Kurdish Nationalism

> In an anthropological spirit, then, I propose the following definition of the nation: it is an imagined community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.
> It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. ...
> The nation is imagined as *limited* because even the largest of them ... has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations.
> It is imagined as *sovereign* because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm.

> Finally, it is imagined as a *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. (Anderson, 1991:6-7)

According to Benedict Anderson, nationalism has historically been a modular process with any given 'vintage' of nationalist movements building on the achievements of, and deriving legitimacy from, successful predecessors. His argument deals primarily with the social transformations necessary for the imagining of national community, particularly as facilitated by the development of print capitalism, standardization of languages, and state institutions and bureaucracies with power over education and communication.

By the nineteenth century, Kurdish nationalists could look to the models of populist nationalism emerging in Europe and begin the process of imagining a 'deep, horizontal kinship' among all Kurds. They were acutely aware that they lacked the instruments and institutions to encourage the fusion of this sense of kinship with a nation-building project among their fellow Kurds. Haji Qadiri Koyi (1817 – 1897), a poet whom Hassanpour calls 'the second apostle of Kurdish nationalism,' gave written expression to a Kurdish linguistic nationalism which, unlike the aristocratic nationalism which preceded it, could, in principle, unite all Kurds regardless of class or religion. The lack of a strong Kurdish linguistic identity was blamed by Koyi on Kurdish religious leaders who were responsible for any education most Kurds might receive.

The extent to which "the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm" had been shaken was demonstrated by Koyi's open criticism of the clergy for undermining Kurdish unity. Where the aristocratic nationalism of Ahmadi Khani drew on the dynastic models of the Ottomans and Safavids to legitimate the independence of the Kurdish principalities, Koyi looked to the emerging republics of the Serbians, Bulgarians and Greeks who "were all on their way to independence, although their numbers were even smaller than those of the Kurds of the Baban area of Kurdistan." (Hassanpour, 1992:93) These emerging nations had in common not only a written vernacular to facilitate their collective imagining, but the state apparatus to promote it as well.

As Koyi realized, while a written vernacular ('the pen') is essential for building the nation as an imagined community, the nation-state is fundamentally about power ('the

sword'). Turkish nationalists, for example, successfully allied themselves with elements of the Ottoman military and were able to use their victory over occupation forces in Anatolia, to create a modern state which the international powers had little choice but to recognize. Kurdish power had traditionally resided with its regional dynasties that had been defeated, and its lineage chiefs whose land base had been fragmented and incorporated by direct rule from Istanbul and Teheran. When the 'sword' of Kurdish nationalism did emerge, it was from among the religious leadership Koyi had criticized, because they were the only power-brokers remaining who could resolve disputes and inspire corporate unity across tribal divisions (van Bruinessen, 1992).

> Besides their piety, august morality and, many times, charismatic personalities, sheikhs also had to have all the abilities of a modern politician. They had to be able to effect compromises, settle disputes and provide succour in such a way that none of the aggrieved felt short-changed. Such acts of arbitration and conciliation were often best effected by men of non-local origin, men who had not participated in local feuds which would have been thought to have tainted their judgement. The sheikh's reputation was to be based on his family's saintly genealogy, sagacity, charismatic personality, and non-local blood lines (Olson, 1991:392).

Their newly acquired centrality to Kurdish political life gave the Sheikhs the opportunity to forge a linkage between the Kurd's religious allegiances and a nationalist project. This conjunction of nationalist symbolism and religious allegiance began the process of integrating a more diverse social element into Kurdish nationalism. The mystical orders founded by Kurdish Sufi Sheikhs drew their adherents primarily from the lower strata of Kurdish society who had few other avenues open for access to social power. Charismatic religious leaders led the majority of nationalist rebellions in Iran, Iraq, and Turkey between 1880 and 1940. The most prominent among these were Sheikh Ubaydallah (1870 – 1883), Sheikh Said (1920s), and Sheikh Mahmud (1918 –1931). Each of these leaders explicitly called for the creation of an independent Kurdish state.

Scholars of Turkey (for example: Robinson, 1963; Lewis, 1968; Shaw, 1977), have been generally dismissive of the early Kurdish rebellions against the Turkish state. Shaw (1977) treats the 1925 Shaikh Said rebellion as little more than organized banditry stimulated by Russian communists, while Lewis (1968) dismisses its nationalist veneer as a

cover for an essentially reactionary and religious movement. Before the 1980s, most Turkish officials would have agreed with the following assessment:

> During the 1920s, the principle challenge was simply the maintenance of law and order in the Kurdish areas as the Turks tried to contain the Kurdish nationalist movement. Later through forced resettlement and education, the back of Kurdish resistance was broken, and today it is probably safe to say that most Kurds are by and large loyal to Turkey. (Robinson, 1963:83)

These authors relied primarily on Turkish sources and their perspectives generally reflect the Kemalists view of the insurrections. For the Kurds, these rebellions signify the beginning of a near century of nationalist struggle against their division and colonization by outside powers, and their leaders have become nationalist heroes. The Sheikh Said rebellion (1925), for example, while partially a reactionary movement against the abolition of the caliphate, was, for Kurds, the beginning of their struggle as a nation, and with each subsequent rebellion, nationalist slogans and ideology played a more significant role (Olson, 1989).

Sheikhs played prominent roles in Kurdish rebellions in Iran and Iraq, as well, with the principle difference being the role of the colonial powers. The British selected Sheikh Mahmud of Barazanji to subdue the local tribes and keep order on their behalf. Unfortunately for the British, the Sheikh had ambitions which exceeded being an imperial pawn. Once his power in the Mosul *vilayet* was established, the Sheikh, from his base in Sulaimaniya, declared himself the king of an independent Kurdistan.

These rebellions have become an important part of the Kurdish nationalist narrative and have been an inspiration and model for subsequent rebellions. They opened up the Kurdish nationalist movement to the lower strata of Kurdish society for the first time. However, the ability of the Sheikhs to achieve significant political integration was limited by substantive divisions that were sometimes a direct result of their religious character. The dominance of the Shaikhs, van Bruinessen (1991) argues, gave the nationalist movement a stronger Sunni character, alienating Shi'is, Alevis, and Yazidis, and perhaps encouraging persecution of Christian minorities. In Iran, the Sunni character of the rebellions aggravated tensions between the Kurds and the Shi'i administration. In Turkey, prominent Alevi tribes refused to support the Said rebellion because of its Sunni

leadership. In fact, many Alevis probably felt more protected by the reforms of Atatürk, which reduced the threat of persecution by the Sunni-majority (van Bruinessen, 1992), than by a Sunni-dominated Kurdish nationalism. When the Alevi Kurds did rebel against the Turkish government, many Sunni Kurds refused to support them.

The power of the Sheikhs derived not only from their charismatic talents, but also from their personal wealth and the regional land base they had secured since the 1858 Ottoman Land Code allowed them to gain title to large tracts of land. As a result, while they articulated their demands in terms of legitimacy and protection for the Kurdish nation, they were often just as concerned with securing or preserving the legitimacy and protection of their own regional power base. For example, Sheikh Ubaydallah rebelled after the Shah had begun claiming tax revenues directly from subjects who had traditionally paid their taxes to the Sheikh. The Ottomans and British supported his revolt until they realized that the Sheikh was more than a disgruntled landlord, but had larger territorial and nationalist objectives (Chaliand, 1994).

Traditional Kurdish tribal leaders also supported or opposed the rebellions depending on the security of their own regional power base. For example, *aghas* who wanted to protect their land and their domination of the livestock markets from the Turkish administration, supported the Shaikh Said rebellion. Other landlords, such as those in Diyarbakir, opposed the rebellion, based largely on the strength of their patronage connections with the Kemalist government (Olson, 1989). In addition, Sheikh Said received little support from peasant cultivators or urban tradesmen who could expect little protection from tribal landlords and warriors. In Iraq, according to McDowall, Kurdish opinion – particularly outside of Sulaimaniya – was not entirely behind Shaikh Mahmud, the self-declared King of Kurdistan, whose lofty ambitions were distrusted.

> Nothing, perhaps, expressed Kurdish disarray more than the effort of the British to establish whether their proposal that their protege, the Emir Faisal, should become King of all Iraq was acceptable to the Kurdish population. Mosul and Arbil voted in favour, Kirkuk voted for a delay on its decision (decided in 1923 in favour of Faisal's Iraq), though the interesting fact is that its Kurds asked for a separate Kurdish province *but only on condition* that they were not incorporated with the Kurds of Sulaymaniya. Only the population of the latter voted unconditionally against Faisal or any inclusion in Iraq. (McDowall, 1992:82)

The most significant violent opposition to external rule in Iraq emerged from the tribal area of Barzan, led first by a Sufi Shaykh Ahmad Barzani and later by his brothers Mohammad Sadiq and Mulla Mustafa. Mustafa Barzani was essentially a tribal leader, and his conversion to Kurdish nationalism was gradual and due largely to the violent means by which the Iraq government attempted to suppress his regional autonomy. Barzani's stature among the Kurdish population was enhanced by his stubborn resistance against Iraqi and British forces, and he was only defeated with the assistance of RAF bombing that destroyed much of Barzan (McDowall, 1996).

Barzani, along with other member of his family, was exiled to the south of Iraq and then to Baghdad. Upon his release, he returned to Barzan to try to regain what he had lost. Encouraged by the nationalist arguments of Kurdish officers in the Iraqi army who offered him their support, Barzani began demanding more autonomy, not only for his tribal region alone, but for all of Iraqi Kurdistan. His status began to take on legendary proportions after he defeated the Iraqi army twice in 1945. The Iraqi government was forced to buy off rival tribes, particularly the Zibaris, in order to defeat him. Together they forced Barzani across the Iranian border to Mahabad, where his transition into an ardent Kurdish nationalist was completed (McDowall, 1996).

Each central state administration adopted similar policies aimed at exploiting the divisions within Kurdish society to offset the potential for rebellion. One aim of these policies was to incorporate the military aspect of Kurdish tribal organization into state militias and another was to actively encourage local domination of the land base by loyal *aghas* to keep the peasants under control. For example, the extent of Sheikh Ubaydallah's success encouraged the Ottoman administration to try and redirect Kurdish militancy against other increasingly troublesome minorities, particularly the Armenians. Kurdish tribal leaders were given weapons and allowed to form elite cavalry units, known as the *Hamidiye*, with members recruited on a tribal basis (so long as they were Sunni). The *Hamidiye* allowed loyal tribal chiefs to gain dominance over their rivals and were used by the Ottomans against both foreign enemies, such as the British and the Russians, as well as to quell internal rebellion in the Balkans and from the Armenians.

Olson argues that the exposure of Kurdish military leaders in the *Hamidiye* to modern tactics and ideologies introduced an organized military dimension to the Kurdish

nationalist movement (Olson, 1991). Many of the former *Hamidiye* regiments provided important military support for the series of rebellions against Turkish rule after the Treaty of Lausanne. The *Hamidiye* also became the precedent for the now standard government tactic of arming Kurdish militias (generally formed on a tribal basis) to defend villages against Kurdish militants. The recurring tragedy for the Kurdish nationalist movement has been that when 'the sword' does appear, it is often double-edged, with one side cutting for the cause of a Kurdish nation and the other for a patron state.

In addition to the co-option of the tribal military component of Kurdish society, the central state administrations also endeavored to incorporate the landed elites. In Iran, the collapse of central power after World War I allowed Kurdish *aghas* and shaikhs to reverse Tehran's previous efforts to assert direct rule. Many villages invited them to take control, if only to provide protection from the tax-farmers associated with the ruling dynasty (McDowall, 1996). After the Shah reasserted his control McDowall argues, he stopped short of radical land reform that could undercut the powers of local *aghas*.

> Where his authority was unopposed, Reza Shah left tribal organization at lower levels intact as a bulwark against Bolshevik ideas among settled peasantry concerning their land or water rights. Through the Land Registration Department he encouraged local aghas to register communal property under their own names. Forcible transfer, confiscation of herds, the prohibition on the tribal migration all had a damaging effect on tribal solidarity and life. Furthermore, they had severe economic consequences, not only for the tribes themselves which became impoverished, but also for food supplies locally. Many towns on the edge of Kurdistan depended on the tribes for their meat. (McDowall, 1996:226)

In Iraq, the reassertion of tribal power was the result of an explicit strategy of the British administration to secure tribal loyalty. The British essentially began reviving the indirect rule policies of earlier Ottoman administrations, removing uncooperative *aghas* and replacing them with others who were often, as one officer remarked, "small men of no account until we made them powerful and rich." (quoted in Farouk-Sluglett & Sluglett, 1990:291) Judging by the remarks of British colonial officials, the revival of a dependent class of local landlords was a result of a calculated policy of the British Foreign Office.

> Settled agriculture and extended civilisation have tended to disintegrate the tribe and to weaken the influence of the shaikhs. To restore and

> continue the power of the tribal shaikhs is not the least interesting of the problems in land administration which the Baghdad *wilayet* presents. (Administrative Report, Revenue Board, Baghdad, for the period 22 march to 31 December 1918, F0 371/3406/139231, quoted in Farouk-Sluglett & Sluglett, 1990:290)

> We must recognize that it is primarily our business not to give rights to those who have them not, but to secure their rights to those who have them. (Lt.Col. E.B. Howell, Note on Land Policy, Baghdad, 1919, FO 371/4150/127807, quoted in Farouk-Sluglett & Sluglett, 1990:290)

The process was delayed somewhat in southeastern Turkey because of the exile of many aghas and landlords after the suppression of Kurdish rebellions. The reaction of the Turkish government to the insurrections set a precedent which succeeding governments have emulated to the present day. Laws, sweeping in their scope, were passed to ban any spoken or organized resistance against the Turkish state, and the military and police were given almost unlimited powers to enforce them. For example, during Sheikh Said's rebellion, a law was passed concerning "the re-establishment of order" (*Takrir-i Sukum*) that gave the government "all powers to officially ban any organization, movement, tendency or publication liable to endanger the country's stability and social order or to further reaction and rebellion." (Kendal, 1993b:53) By the 1930s, substantially more draconian legislation was passed. For example, according to Article 1 of Law No. 1,850:

> Killings and other acts committed, either individually or collectively, by representatives of the state or of its provinces, by civil or military personnel, as well as by local authorities, guards or the militia, or any civilian having aided them or having acted in accord with them, from the twentieth of June 1930 to the 10th December 1930, in the pursuit and the extermination of uprisings which took place at Ercis, Zilan, Agri Dagh [Ararat)] and the surrounding areas, also including the region of the first inspectorate and the district of Pulumur, in the province of Erzincan, will not be considered as crimes. (quoted in Chaliand, 1994:38)

On May 5, 1932, the Turkish government announced a new program of forced dispersion of Kurdish populations and the transfer of ethnic Turks into Kurdish areas in four distinct zones:

> No. 1 zones comprise those regions where it is desired to increase the density of the populations having a Turkish culture.

> No. 2 zones comprise those regions where it is desired to establish populations which require assimilation into the Turkish culture.
> No. 3 zones comprise those territories where immigrants of Turkish culture may freely establish themselves, without the aid of the authorities.
> No. 4 zones comprise those territories, which it is desired to evacuate, and which are prohibited areas, for medical, cultural, political, strategic and public order reasons. (quoted in Chaliand, 1994:38)

The Said Rebellion also indicated that the religious threat emanated not only from the institution of the caliphate, but also from the various Dervish brotherhoods. Atatürk reacted by closing all the *tarikats* (Dervish lodges), *zaviyes* (cells), and *turbes* (religious tombs) (Olson, 1989). Olson argues that without the threat posed by Kurdish nationalism, Atatürk could not have justified the total authoritarian control needed to implement such drastic measures. Any opposition to those reforms could and would be characterized as treasonous support for the enemy.

> The Sheikh Said rebellion created and provided a means whereby most serious subsequent opposition to government policies or comprehensive disagreement with its progress laid open the possibility that the disaffected groups would be labeled as traitors. In the aftermath of the rebellion, it was relatively easy to color opposition forces with a hostile ethnic tinge. The vehicles created and the laws passed for the suppression of the rebellion and the symbols of opposition to the Kemalist program that it generated meant that the consolidation of the Turkish state and of Turkish nationalism were greatly expedited by the suppression and perceived threat of Kurdish nationalism. (Olson, 1989)

The one-party state dominated by Atatürk's Republican People's Party gave way in 1946 when an opposition party, the Democratic Party, was allowed to emerge. The Democratic Party exploited the widespread rural discontent with the regime over the abolition of the caliphate and years of economic mismanagement. The RPP, concerned over the growing influence of the DP, invited exiled aghas to return and resume possession of their lands and even allowed for religious instruction in schools. It was too late, however, and following the DP's win in the 1960 election, religious education became compulsory, and the state financed the construction of 5,000 mosques (McDowall, 1996). As a result, and in the absence of significant land reform, Kurdish *aghas* became dominant in southeastern Turkey once again, but this time with a strong investment in the Turkish State.

> Indeed, the aghas ceased to be Kurdish in two vital senses: they quietly disowned their Kurdish origin, and they exploited their relationship with the peasantry not as a means to semi-independence from the centre as in the old days, but in order to become more closely integrated members of the ruling Turkish establishment. (McDowall, 1996:400)

Despite its successes in the radical cultural transformation of society, the Turkish State was a relatively ineffective vehicle for achieving substantive economic change. Such investment as did occur in industry, occurred in the non-Kurdish areas of Turkey, and agricultural investment was generally neglected until the 1960s (Lewis, 1968). Until that time, around 80 percent of the population worked in farming, forestry, or fishing. Agriculture was responsible for half the domestic income (which barely increased during this period), and three-quarters of the population continued to live in villages (Stirling, 1965). As a result, most labour in the southeast remained tied to the land rather than being released for urban industry. The overall underdevelopment of Southeastern Turkey, which still remains peripheral to the Turkish economy, isolated the majority of the Kurdish population from the Turkish mainstream. This marginalization is not only economic but educational with rates of illiteracy far exceeding those in the rest of Turkey. Many Kurds, according to Hassanpour, are still not fluent in Turkish.

> ... the Turkish deputy from Aydin told the daily Cumhuriyet (July 31, 1966) that 91% of the people of Mardin could not speak a word of Turkish; in other major Kurdish provinces the%ages were 87% in Surt, 81% in Hakkari, 67% in Diyarbakir, 68% in Bingol, and 66% in Bitlis. (Hassanpour, 1992:136)

In Iraq, as in Iran and Turkey, the landlord class became essentially parasitic to the rural economy, moving to the towns and villages while keeping the growing numbers of sharecroppers tied to the land. Most villages were owned by single families and any remaining collective or tribal land was quickly converted into large private estates. By 1958 for example, 1 percent of landowners owned 55 percent of all private land in Iraq (Farouk-Sluglett & Sluglett, 1990). The situation was only aggravated by the modernization of agriculture. In Iraq, the state subsidized the widespread introduction of mechanical irrigation pumps, which transferred de facto ownership of land to those who owned the pumps. In production, the emphasis was on quantity not quality, and wasteful cultivation techniques led to rapid soil deterioration and progressive land abandonment

by both peasants, who became share-croppers, and landlords, who moved to the cities (Farouk-Sluglett & Sluglett, 1990).

6.4 *Kurdayeti*: Populist Nationalism in Kurdistan

The Shaikhs provided the opportunity for the integration of more diverse elements of Kurdish society in the nationalist struggle and the tribal tradition supplied the military strength. The integration of these elements into a modern nationalist movement with objectives that transcended class and regional allegiances, however, began with the emergence of urban nationalist organizations. Kurdish urban nationalism began in exile among displaced elites in cities like Istanbul, Teheran, Baghdad, and Damascus. Despite efforts to create bases of support in Kurdistan when the political context allowed, state repression has generally ensured that urban nationalism continues to have a primarily exilic character. The first Kurdish newspaper, called *Kurdistan*, printed in both Kurdish and Turkish, was published in Cairo in 1898 by a member of the aristocratic Badr Khan family (Kendal, 1993). Kurdish publishing houses were also subsequently established in London and Folkestone, England (McDowall, 1992).

The emergence of a Kurdish urban working class probably occurred first in Iran and Iraq, largely as a result of the effect of employment in the oil industry. The southern border of Iraqi Kurdistan for example, cuts directly through Iraq's largest oil reserves and the Kurdish presence in this region, particularly in the area of Kirkuk, increased significantly as a result of both the attraction of employment opportunities and rural land loss. Until the 1930s, Kirkuk was predominately a Turkoman city, but by 1959, close to half the population was Kurdish (McDowall, 1996). With the oil boom of the 1950s, Iraqi cities were rapidly expanding as a result of continuous influxes of unskilled and illiterate rural poor. The profits of the oil industry were controlled by the Iraq Petroleum Company, British interests and the Monarchy, benefited a few large private fortunes, and were not invested in the national economy (Farouk-Sluglett & Sluglett, 1990).

The result was that by the time of the Second World War, a much more diverse cross-section of the Kurdish population was participating in the nationalist and other opposition movements in Iraq, and a new urban class of political activists was developing. The Iraqi Communist Party (ICP), founded in 1934, initially attracted the

support of many urban Kurds, and although this support dropped off when the party abandoned its commitment to Kurdish independence, it continued to have a Kurdish wing named *Azadi*. In 1940, a new urban Kurdish nationalist party (*Hiwa* or Hope) was formed that gathered together the disparate activist elements that had formed in several Kurdish cities. *Hiwa* also moved quickly to form linkages with the emerging nationalist coalition centred in the city of Mahabad in Iran. While the party's nationalist rhetoric was attractive to middle-class intellectuals, it was less attractive to rural aghas and landlords (and the peasants they controlled), and was quickly suppressed after the defeat of the first Barzani rebellion. In *Hiwa's* place emerged a party called *Rizgari Kurd* (Kurdish Liberation) which launched a formal appeal to the United Nations for the independence of a united Kurdistan. This agenda brought it into ideological conflict with the Iraqi Communist Party which regarded the Kurdish issue as a minority problem within the Iraqi state (McDowall, 1996).

In Syria, the urban population of Kurds was relatively small compared to the agrarian Kurdish society of the Jezireh and Kurd-Dagh where the segmental clan system dominated. The poverty of the Kurdish quarter in Damascus and the increasing activism of the Arab Nationalists in the 1930s and 1940s which threatened Kurdish interests, helped to politicize many urban Kurds. Many poorer Kurds were encouraged to join the Syrian Communist Party because its leader, Khalid Bakdash, was a Kurd (Khoury, 1993).

In Iran, after years of sedentarization, progressive urbanization, and growth of educational institutions, the towns were becoming sites of class-based nationalist organization rather than aristocratic agitation. Abd al Rahman Zabihi and the other founders of one of Kurdistan's first political parties based on an urban working class, Komala-I Jiyanawi Kurdistan (The Committee for the Revival of Kurdistan) came from a diversity of occupations such as petty traders, junior civil servants, and school teachers (McDowall, 1996). The Komala was one of the first urban Kurdish parties to attempt to coordinate efforts with urban Kurdish movements across official boundaries in Kirkuk and Sulaimaniya as well as in Turkey. Its most radical departure was the explicit attack against the interests of *aghas* and shaikhs. For example, one of Komala's first publications, a magazine called Nishtman (Fatherland) addressed the *aghas* directly.

> You, the aghas and leaders of Kurdish tribes, think for yourselves and judge why the enemy gives you so much money ... they give it because they know it will become capital to delay the liberation of the Kurds and hope that in a few years this capital will create intrigues detrimental to the Kurds. (quoted in McDowall, 1996:238)

Mulla Mohamad, a radical reformer from Koi-Sanjaq, created even more controversy by attacking Kurdish religious leaders.

> The mullahs are traitors, they praise the shaykhs but do not tell people the truth about God and their religion. ... As long as shaykhs and mullahs remain in Kurdistan, there is no hope of a new life. All of them are Sufis with beards and beads, thick necks and big bellies. ... How can they, with their begging bowls and poverty, be expected to push forward the Kurdish cause or serve in a Kurdish state? (quoted in McDowall, 1996:238)

The Soviets became more involved in supporting Kurdish agitation only after Iran had rebuffed its efforts to secure oil concessions. However, despite what would seem to be Komala's revolutionary rhetoric, the Soviets encouraged the party to accept the leadership of Qazi Muhammad, a respected hereditary judge and religious figure in Mahabad. Soviet support of the Kurds was part of a larger plan to extend its influence over all of northwestern Iran, which included the creation of an Azerbaijani state, as well. The Soviets had met with little success in their attempts to find a suitably compliant leader among various Kurdish tribes and opted for Qazi Muhammad instead (Roosevelt, 1993). Qazi Muhammad established a new party, the Democratic Party of Kurdistan (KDP), which absorbed Komala's members and published the following manifesto:

1. The Kurdish people in Iran should have freedom and self-government in the administration of their local affairs, and obtain autonomy within the limits of the Iranian State.
2. The Kurdish language should be used in education and be the official language in administrative affairs.
3. The provincial council of Kurdistan should be immediately elected according to constitutional law and should supervise and inspect all state and social matters.
4. All state officials must be of local origin.
5. A single law for both peasants and notables should be adopted and the future of both secured.
6. The Kurdish Democratic party will make a special effort to reestablish unity and complete fraternity with the Azerbaijani people and the other peoples that live in Azerbaijan (Assyrians, Armenians, etc) in their struggle.)

7. The Kurdish Democratic Party will strive for the improvement of the moral and economic state of the Kurdish people through the exploration of Kurdistan's many natural resources, the progress of agriculture and commerce, and the development of hygiene and education.
8. We desire that the peoples living in Iran be able to strive freely for the happiness and progress of their country. (quoted in Roosevelt, 1993:127-128)

On January 24, 1946, the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad was proclaimed and Qazi Muhammad was elected as President. As indicated by its manifesto, the KDP pursued an essentially social democratic platform trying to balance the various factions supporting it. Kurdish became the official language of administration and education and a variety of Kurdish publications appeared. For the first time, a Kurdish nationalist movement began to encourage significant participation in social and political life by Kurdish women (Ghassemlou, 1993). Some land belonging to landlords who had fled the region was redistributed to peasants. However, to avoid alienating those *aghas* who had decided to support the movement, there were no significant efforts toward land reform (Ghassemlou, 1993).

The Mahabad Republic lasted only one year, but was indicative of many of the social transformations taking place throughout Kurdistan. It represented the greatest success achieved to date by an urban Kurdish nationalist movement and became, as a result, the inspiration for other urban-based nationalist movements, such as the Iraqi KDP, the KDPS in 1957 (Kurdish Democratic Party Of Syria), as well as a KDPT in Turkey. These movements competed with, and drew from many of the same ideological influences as, various Marxist and Communist opposition groups, whose social agenda was more revolutionary than nationalist. Clashes between the leftist opposition, which disdained the nationalism of the Kurds as reactionary, and the Kurdish urban nationalists, who were attempting to fuse revolutionary and nationalist programs, became increasingly common.

Tribal opposition to the Mahabad Republic was significant. As was often the case in Kurdistan, the mere fact that one tribe would support a nationalist movement would be enough to encourage a rival tribe to oppose it. Such opposition could have proved fatal to the fragile republic if it had not been for the arrival from Iraq of Mulla Mustafa Barzani and his supporters. At the end of 1945, Barzani, his family members, and about 3000 men

(tribal members, refugees, and adventurers) arrived in Mahabad armed with British rifles captured from the Iraqi army (Roosevelt, 1993). After the Soviets withdrew their support, many tribal leaders abandoned their support for the Republic and only Barzani fought to defend it with any resolution. As the military balance shifted towards the Iranian army, many of the tribes began to actively support its efforts to retake rebel territory.

The experience of the Mahabad Republic also indicates the growing influence of global power-politics on Kurdistan. The dramatic reversal of the Soviets was a response to British and American pressure and the conclusion of an agreement with Tehran to form a joint Iranian-Soviet oil company (McDowall, 1996). International coordination against the Kurdish threat was becoming increasingly prevalent. In 1937, during the Dersim rebellion, Turkey signed the Saadabad Pact with Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Afghanistan with the aim of resisting Russian interests in the region, promoting coordination on security issues (primarily arising from the Kurds), respecting existing boundaries, and preventing interference in each others' internal affairs. While these agreements did not end the policy of assisting the Kurdish rebellions across the border to destablize a rival state, they did facilitate a coordinated response whenever any of these rebellions threatened to become too successful.

The defeat of the Mahabad Republic also indicated the different strategies Iran adopted for its restive minorities. While both the Azeri and Kurdish Republics attempted to negotiate a settlement with Tehran, the Azeri efforts met with greater success. In exchange for the return of Iranian administration, the old Azeri province of Iran was reestablished, this time also including Kurdish areas. Sadr Qazi, Qazi Muhammad's brother, was an elected member of the Iranian parliament, and helped in the Kurdish negotiations. Nevertheless, the Iranian government had little interest in reaching a deal with the Kurds that might in any way legitimate their distinct status. In the hope of reaching a peaceful accommodation, on March 31, 1947, Sadr Qazi invited the Iranian army into Mahabad after which, he, Qazi Muhammad, and a cousin were hanged in the town square.

Finally, the Mahabad experience was a turning point in the development of Kurdish nationalism in being the first overt involvement of Mustafa Barzani and his supporters in a determined effort to achieve independence for Kurdistan. Barzani remains

the most influential and likely the most enigmatic of Kurdish resistance leaders. He achieved prominence during a time of rapid industrialization, urbanization, and growth of a literate population. Yet Barzani was fundamentally a tribal leader, who left no written manifestos or articulated descriptions of his nationalist ideals. It is difficult, as a result, to determine the extent of his ambitions for independence. Whatever his intentions, after the defeat at Mahabad, the Kurdish struggle took on a distinct regional character, with Barzani in particular, concentrating his energies on Iraqi Kurdistan and willing to undermine other regional Kurdish struggles if it served his interests.

Barzani unified the Kurdish Nationalist movement through a combination of force, calculation, and charisma, inspired the diffusion of a populist nationalist ethos known as *Kurdayeti*, developed a nationalist warrior class known as *peshmurga* ('those who face death'), and encouraged the invigoration of Kurdish cultural practices in Turkey where they had long been suppressed (Panel 12: *Kurdayeti* – The Barzani Years). On the other hand, Barzani's personal ambition and domination of the movement left it with bitter and crippling divisions, provoked disdain for traditional nationalist values among many Kurds, often turned the *peshmurga* into tribal or factional mercenaries, and, as a result of his own political miscalculation, brought about the movement's devastating defeat.

The Iraqi Kurdish Democratic Party was, before the Iraqi Revolution in 1958, a conservative party dominated by tribal elements and the Kurdish landed class. During the same period more radical movements were taking shape in the urban areas. Anti-imperial feeling in Iraq increased after Iran nationalized its oil industry in 1951. The rise of Nasser and his anti-imperialist stance gave a substantial boost to Pan-Arabist feeling in Iraq – especially in the army. The Iraqi Communist Party (ICP), however, was the only opposition group able to claim something close to mass public support (in the urban areas), particularly after labour unions were allowed to form after World War II. It was the ICP, not the KDP, which organized peasants against the *agha* classes (McDowall, 1996). When mass demonstrations against the monarchy occurred in 1947 and 1948, the ICP was the most prominent organizer. Kurdish *aghas* feared the rising power of the ICP and the Arab Nationalists and appealed to Britain for support for an anti-Communist, independent Kurdistan (Farouk-Sluglett & Sluglett, 1990).

Panel 12: *Kurdayetî* – The Barzani Years
As related by Kurds from Iraq in Winnipeg

The Iraqi government made an offer to Barzani to live in Baghdad if he didn't start his rebellion. Barzani said "No", he just wanted to live in his village of *Barzan*. Qasim offered him everything he wanted – a big house, gold. Barzani went back to start his rebellion.

In 1965 Mullah Mustapha called an official gathering of the Kurdish people. He asked them to form the *Peshmurga* and to fight the government.

Between 1961and 1975, I was in Dahuk. The government controlled the towns and the Peshmurga lived in the hills. The Iranian government supplied them with guns and money.

Barzani had 9 sons, two sons were killed. The first son was killed during negotiations. The second son was killed by the government. Barzani knew his sons were killed by the government.

Between 1971 and 1972, people from Baghdad sent 'religious leaders' to Barzani. They were really secret service agents. They blew up Barzani's house, Barzani was not hurt, but one body guard was killed.

In 1975, Saddam Hussein called the Iranian government – the Iranian government was helping Barzani. Saddam Hussein wanted to cut Kurdish supplies from Iran. Saddam gave Iran the Shat-al-Arab, the Gulf Islands, the *Jezireh*. So the Shah cut the supplies.

The Kurdish people divided into 2 groups. The 1st group surrendered and laid down their arms. Mullah Mustapha Barzani went to Iran where he was not allowed to engage in politics.

(An older Kurdish refugee, a Barzani supporter)

In July 17, 1964, there was the first Birakuji inside the KDP. Birakuji is 'brotherhood killing'. All Kurds are brothers.

The *Jash* are those fighting with the Iraqi Government. In 1966, when Talabani fought with the Iraqi Government, the Kurds gained a university in Sulemaniyeh and broadcasts in Kurdish. We gained many things.

The *Peshmurga* were very strong at that time – you could have 3 or 5 *peshmurga* against the whole army. When Mama Resha [a *peshmurga* hero] was a child, the Iraqi army eradicated his village and his family. As a result he became anti- government and was especially active around Kirkuk. He was very brave, very smart. He was killed in 1985 or 1986 by Tahasin Shawais.

(A younger Kurd, who generally supported Talabani, Barzani's rival)

Urban Kurds were active members of the ICP and influenced the development of themore radical component which came to dominate the KDP politburo. As the KDP moved closer to the ICP, it included nationalization of the oil industry as part of its program. The ICP, on the other hand, never ceased to be critical of the Kurdish autonomist agenda. The amalgamation of conservative rural and radical urban nationalists was a constant source of friction within the KDP, particularly as it became personalized in the conflict between Barzani and Jalal Talabani. Nevertheless, it strengthened the KDP to the point where it could not only dominate the Kurdish countryside, but could achieve a status as a power-broker unequaled by any other Kurdish nationalist party.

An important difference between Iraq and the other states with Kurdish populations has been that, because of the heterogeneity of the state, it is difficult for any one segment of Iraqi society to dominate the others. The predominately rural north has been dominated by the Kurds, while the predominately rural south is dominated by Shi'a Arabs, who comprise the majority of Iraq's total population. Sunni Arabs occupy a smaller area of central Iraq, focussed around Baghdad, and have traditionally dominated the government. Since the 1958 Revolution, political power has been contested by communists, Arab nationalists, Pan-Arabists, Iraqi Nationalists, and Kurdish Nationalists.

In 1958, General Abd al-Karim Qasim and a small group calling themselves the Free Officers, overthrew the monarchy and withdrew from the anti-Communist Baghdad Pact of 1955. These measures were met with such widespread approval in Iraq, that the western powers elected not to intervene (Ciment, 1996). Qasim had no popular base that could secure his position, and he was forced to broker deals with both the Kurds and the Communists to stay in power. To offset the power of the ICP, Qasim invited Barzani back to Iraq from the Soviet Union, where he had lived in exile after the fall of Mahabad. Barzani was given arms and equipment to establish a power base in Iraqi Kurdistan and was recognized by the Government as Chairman of the KDP. In response to demands from the ICP, Qasim introduced the Agrarian Reform Law , which established significant limits on the size of landholdings. Barzani assisted the government in suppressing the resulting tribal agitation, forcing rival tribal leaders across the border, and strengthening his own hold on Iraqi Kurdistan (Farouk-Sluglett & Sluglett, 1990).

During the next ten years, a fractious and deadly power triangle emerged between the Communists, the Kurds, and the Pan-Arabists. Mullah Mustafa Barzani was perhaps the most effective manipulator of this unstable political environment, certainly outlasting most of his competitors in Baghdad until the Baathists came to power in 1968. Both the KDP and the ICP helped the government quell a Baathist uprising in Mosul in 1959. After Qasim had managed to purge the Baathists from his government, both he and Barzani took steps to limit the power and influence of the Communists. With a wedge driven between the Kurds and the ICP, Qasim could also attempt to distance himself from Kurdish nationalism generally, and from Barzani in particular. The KDP politburo, led by Jalal Talabani and Ibrahim Ahmad, upset over delays in recognizing Kurdish autonomy, began to publish calls for resistance and demands for Kurdish rights. Qasim responded by closing down KDP offices and banning its publications. Barzani isolated himself in Kurdistan and initiated sporadic rebellions against government authority. Qasim's efforts to subdue the rebels through indiscriminate bombing of Kurdish villages, only encouraged more tribal leaders to side with Barzani (McDowall, 1996).

Whenever the ability of the state to extend direct rule into Iraqi Kurdistan was reduced, the old patterns of leadership reasserted themselves. Barzani gained control of a large area of Kurdistan by virtue of his personal leadership abilities, his lineage position, his personal wealth, his former state-connections, his growing military strength and his success on the battlefield. The eventual split between Barzani and the KDP politburo reflected the major divisions within Kurdish society: the conflict of rival personalities and lineage coalitions, conservative versus radical ideologies, competition for state sponsorship, and competition for control of the land and wealth of Kurdistan. A similar split, characterized by Hassanpour as a conflict between traditionalists and modernists, occurred in the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran in the late 1960s.

> Unlike the traditionalists, the modernists combine the struggle against national oppression with a struggle to overcome backwardness maintained by the native oppressor – i.e. feudalism and tribalism. This struggle includes the organizing and politicizing of the peasantry, literacy campaigns, organizing women, students, the urban masses, and others, distribution of land among the peasants, and other forms of radical political action. (Hassanpour, 1992:61)

Initially, the KDP of Iraq declared a similar policy as did the Iranian KDP: autonomy for Kurdistan and democracy for Iraq. In practice, the former became the dominant goal as neither the Kurds nor other Iraqis had had much experience with democracy. The merger of the KDP, Barzani, and various tribal contingents did result in the consolidation of a formidable Kurdish nationalist force. The KDP and its urban politburo could provide a coherent set of demands for autonomy and national rights as well as an organizational structure that allowed for the conversion of irregular bands of tribal warriors and Kurdish fighters into *peshmurga* – warriors for the Kurdish nation. This movement would also result in the coalescing of an articulated nationalist ethos or normative ideal called *Kurdayeti*:

Kurdayeti has undergone substantial changes and has been subject to heated dispute, largely as a result of the growing influence of Marxist and Socialist Kurdish groups which have always criticized what they see as its tendency toward ethnic chauvinism. Nevertheless, its core assumptions remain intact. External political analysts have tended to ignore its influence and, as a result, criticize what they see as a confusing pattern of demands among Kurdish nationalists for a status ranging from local autonomy to complete independence. The core assumption of *Kurdayeti* is that the Kurds are not simply an ethnic group or cultural minority, but a legitimate nation, with a history and identity equal to that of Turks, Arabs, or Persians. The basis of the legitimacy of all Kurdish claims for status within the international order is this argument for Kurdish nationhood. Practical considerations may encourage Kurds to negotiate for limited autonomy within the dominant state, but Kurds have consistently demanded some form of constitutional recognition of their rights based on the fact of being a legitimate nation.

The governments of Iran, Iraq, and Turkey have often justified their refusal to negotiate agreements for Kurdish rights by arguing that such negotiations would only further the Kurds' ultimate goal of independence. While there are certainly still many Kurds who believe that their protection can only be guaranteed by an independent Kurdish state, there has yet to be a credible alliance of Kurdish nationalist forces across a national boundary since Mahabad. The only consistent demand of the leaders of the various regional movements is some degree of local autonomy within existing boundaries.

The demand for recognition of Kurdish nationhood has less to do, therefore, with the practical achievement of a Greater Kurdistan, than with the normative matrix it supplies to the Kurdish struggle. It legitimates all other Kurdish claims for some measure of self-government. If the Kurds are, as their opponents argue, just another minority within a diverse state, united by a broader national identity as Iraqis, Iranians, Syrians, or Turks, then the extent of claims they may legitimately make within that state is no greater than that of any other minority. Given that each of the states in question is rigidly authoritarian, that each is centralized around a national identity that has become merged with the cultural identity of the dominant group, and that any challenge to the unity of that identity is construed as fundamentally treasonous, the range of demands open to any particular minority is negligible. Kurdish nationalists do not need the recognition of their nationhood only to secure an independent territorial state, but also to legitimate their demands for self-rule within those states.

The assumption of Kurdish nationhood is also necessary for the mythic coherence of that normative matrix, particularly as it relates to a narrative of national renewal. By encouraging a far-reaching horizontal solidarity among Kurds, *Kurdayeti* is able to encourage individual sacrifice on behalf of that nation. Those Kurds who have opposed the interests of *Kurdayeti* and worked for the oppressors, have been derided as *jash* (little donkeys), and intra-Kurdish feuding is lamented as *birakuji*, or 'brother-killing.' Nevertheless, the attainment of independent nationhood may be conceptualized as far into the distant future as the ideal of original mythic unity is imagined in a primordial past. Politics is, after all, the art of the possible. In negotiations with the Baath Party in 1970-1971, Jalal Talabani made the distinction quite clearly:

> Talabani defined the Kurds as people (*sha'b*) with their own legitimate national (*qawmi*) rights, including self-determination. The latter, he said, "includes the right to set up an independent state" of their own. But, he added, ... Kurdish national interests made it preferable not to exercise that right and to refrain from secession (*infisal*) from Iraq. In the existing circumstances, he maintained, autonomy was the optimal solution. As for the future, this would depend on changing conditions and on "the attitudes of the Arab people to their fraternal people, the Kurds." (Bengio, 1998:118)

Although Barzani frequently came close to securing significant agreements for Kurdish autonomy, Kurdish territorial demands have been the most frequent obstacle to their formalization. Outsiders have often labelled the Kurds as 'ethnonationalists,' a classificatory tendency reflective of the "misplaced ingenuity" criticized by Kedouri (1994). Most nationalist movements have historically been flexible, multi-faceted, and instrumental in their priorities for identification and objectives for national integration. Kurdish nationalism is no exception, but as with other nationalist movements, the territorial aspect of its identity politics is the most enduring feature – to the point where it may even take precedence over the ethnic factor. Thus, while many Kurds have opposed the nationalist movement, many non-Kurdish minorities within Kurdistan have supported it. The appearance of a contradiction arises only if one insists, as a basic assumption, on the identity of the Kurds as an ethnic minority rather than as a territorial nation.

While a deeply emotional and romantic attachment to the land of Kurdistan has long been a recognized quality of *Kurdewari*, its political importance became much more significant after the oil-boom along Kurdistan's southern periphery. It has, moreover, proved to be the single-most divisive issue between the Kurds and the regional governments. It is also this implicit threat to the territorial integrity of established states, along with the violent response of those states to this threat, that has transformed the generalized lack of structural protection for a Kurdish identity, into a chronic vulnerability to mass displacement.

In summation, the Kurds were not only denied political and cultural protection within the states that incorporated them after the First World War, but were also marginalized economically and often subjected to violent repression. The Kurds have always resisted their exclusion from an international order of nation-states and their categorical denial within the national order of things. The denial of a Kurdish identity was most thoroughly and aggressively pursed in Turkey, which has always reacted to Kurdish nationalism as a contaminating threat to its own nationalist ideal of cultural purity and as a treasonous assault on its own categorical integrity. Iran has been equally determined to nullify the Kurdish threat but has generally pursued a calculated policy of co-optation and absorption of Kurdish identity rather than exclusion and assimilation. Nevertheless, nationalist and revolutionary movements have always drawn support in

Iranian Kurdistan not only because the Kurds are mostly Sunni in a Shi'a state, but because of the experience of both cultural oppression and economic marginalization under the monarchy.

In Syria, the denial of protection to the Kurds did not become systematic until the Baath Arab Nationalist Party took power in the 1960s. This denial was mitigated somewhat by the coming to power of Hafiz al-Asad who needed the support of the Kurds and has manipulated Kurdish nationalism in Turkey for his own political interests. Iraq is the only state that incorporated parts of Kurdistan along with International recognition of the need for protection of Kurdish rights. With the withdrawal of the British mandate and this minimal degree of protection was progressively removed.

The Kurds responded to the denial of protection and legitimacy with a succession of nationalist rebellions centred in Kurdistan and calling for the creation of an independent Kurdish state. These rebellions were initially led by Kurdish religious leaders and brought a wider cross-section of Kurdish society into the nationalist movement. The Turkish government used the threat posed by these rebellions to implement a rigidly nationalist system of government that violently suppressed any advocacy of a non-Turkish identity. Each state also manipulated the tribal and religious character of these rebellions to co-opt rival Kurdish leaders and landlords into supporting the central government. The combination of a parasitic landlord class and the underdevelopment of Kurdistan encouraged the stagnation of the rural economy and increasing rural to urban migration.

The growth of an oil industry along with rural out-migration encouraged the development of an urban working class of Kurds – particularly in Iraq and Iran. By the end of World War II, a much more diverse cross-section of the Kurdish population was participating in nationalist and other opposition movements in all parts of Kurdistan. The greatest achievement of the urban nationalist was the creation of the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad. The defeat of the Republic indicated both the persistent divisions within Kurdish society but also the growing influence of global power politics in the region. After Mahabad, Kurdish nationalism took on a pronounced regional character and Mulla Barzani became its most influential and successful leader. His deft manipulation of Iraqi

politics gained the Kurds a larger measure of autonomy than they had previously achieved and encouraged the diffusion of *Kurdayeti* as a populist nationalist ethos.

Kurdayeti gave expression to the Kurdish desire to be seen as a legitimate nation equal to the Arabs, Persians, and Turks. Kurdish nationalist leaders have increasingly focused on the pragmatic achievement of autonomy within existing state boundaries, but *Kurdayeti* still serves to both legitimate those claims and to encourage ordinary Kurds to struggle for a resolution to their shared predicament. The Kurdish nationalist movement remains divided however between traditionalists and those dedicated to modernist or revolutionary programs who have become increasingly critical of *Kurdayeti*. A significant amount of this division was the result of the tactics of Barzani himself as well as the complete defeat of his movement in 1975. This defeat and its implications for Kurdish vulnerability to mass forced migration will be explored in Chapter 7.

CHAPTER 7
TRANSIENTS IN HISTORY:
KURDISH VULNERABILITY TO MASS DISPLACEMENT

This chapter will explore the geopolitical context of the Kurdish nationalist struggle for protection and legitimacy as a nation, with the objective of demonstrating the root causes of Kurdish vulnerability to mass displacement. It will begin with an analysis of the collapse of the Barzani movement which provided the opportunity for the Iraqi government to initiate a demographic war on Kurdistan in an effort to eliminate the Kurdish threat. This will be followed by a discussion of the impact of the Iranian Revolution and the Iran-Iraq War on Kurdish mass displacement. The genocidal *Anfal* campaign against the Kurds will be analyzed in terms of its impact on Kurdish society, particularly in creating the context for the mass exodus from Kurdistan that occurred after the Second Gulf War. Finally, I will examine the failure of the safe haven to address the root causes of the Kurdish problem of protection, and the role of Turkey in preventing the achievement of durable solutions.

7.1 *Ash Batal*: The Roots of Mass Displacement

Iraq is the only state to have negotiated and concluded autonomy agreements with the Kurds. In each case the regime failed to implement the agreements and generally used the interruption of hostilities as an opportunity to build a power-base secure enough to allow the resumption of military measures. Barzani, who fundamentally distrusted the Baghdad government no matter who was in power, employed essentially similar tactics.

In 1963, Barzani negotiated a truce as part of a secret agreement with the Baath Party to allow it to stage a coup. In return he hoped for a guarantee of autonomy (Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, 1990). After the coup, negotiations with the Baath broke down over Kurdish demands for the inclusion of control over Kirkuk in any autonomy agreement. After the Baath were thrown out of power in the same year, Barzani negotiated a deal with the new regime which allowed for the readmission of government administration into the 'Northern Region' and made no mention of Kurdistan or self-

government. In return, President Arif, who needed time to strengthen his regime, threatened the use of the air force against any who would oppose Barzani, whom he supplied with money and weapons (McDowall, 1996). When urban members of the KDP opposed the deal, Barzani expelled Talabani and the politburo from Iraq. Barzani, at the same time, refused to allow the government administration into Kurdistan and resumed his rebellion in 1965.

Barzani's political maneuvering helped him outlast a succession of unstable regimes between 1958 and 1968 and to maintain a situation of de facto autonomy in Iraqi Kurdistan. The relationship with Baghdad was similar to that which prevailed in previous centuries between stubbornly autonomous Kurdish chieftains and central administrations unable to extend direct control over the Kurdish periphery. The price of this strategy was increased division between conservative or tribal nationalists and urban nationalists, as well as between Kurdish tribes, with those who opposed Barzani supporting the government. While Barzani was successful in preserving his own power, he failed to achieve sustainable protection for the Kurds generally, both because of his insistence on control of Kirkuk, and because successive regimes reneged on signed agreements. However, the most important factor in both Barzani's defeat, and the increased vulnerability of the Kurds to mass displacement was the role of Cold War geopolitics.

As a result of its proximity to the USSR and its oil reserves, Kurdistan became part of the front-line in the Cold War conflict. So successful were Barzani's campaigns against the Iraqi army that he increasingly became attractive to external powers as a useful tool in the struggle against global communism. The role of Cold War powers such as the USA, the USSR, Britain, France, and Germany in building up the military capacities of Iran, Turkey, Iraq, and Syria, gave these states decreasing motivation to negotiate with the Kurds and stronger incentive to search for a final solution to the threat they posed.

Iran was the first to provide assistance, fearful of Iraq's friendly relations with the Soviet Union, and in return, Barzani denied Iranian Kurds access to Iraq. This gave the Iranian Kurdish movement no refuge from the army and significantly limited the power of Kurdish nationalism in Iran until the late 1970s. By the end of 1966, Barzani was also receiving financial aid from Israel that not only made him very difficult to defeat, but also

earned him widespread condemnation in Arab circles. Two deeply cultural and territorial nationalisms were no longer just bitterly opposed, they were now aligned on either side of the global cold war divide.

The Baath came back to power in a coup in 1968 and to buy time to build its strength, the civilian faction of the new Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), dominated by Saddam Hussein and President Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr, offered to negotiate a solution granting the Kurds a large measure of autonomy. Their strategy of offering autonomy to the Kurds, though a contentious issue in Baath Party circles, was necessitated by the fact that Iran had increased the level of military support to Barzani, including heavy weapons and air support. In addition, in 1969 the CIA had also begun to supply him with weapons (Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett (1990).

The Baath Party philosophy, like the Kemalist movement in Turkey, was founded on a fervent dedication to racial unity, which became particularly evident in their attitude towards cultural minorities. In the 1947 Baath party statutes, an Arab was defined as anyone "who speaks Arabic or lives on Arab soil or aspires to live there or believes in his belonging to the Arab nation." (quoted in Bengio, 1998:110) Similarly, Arab scholars published books claiming that the Kurds were originally Arabs, and most Baath believed that the ancestral Arab homeland included all of Kurdistan. While the Baathists were not as extreme as the Kemalists in denying the existence of the Kurds absolutely, they did insist that Kurds were really Arabs who had 'forgotten' their true identity. Saddam Hussein, for example, claimed that Salah al-Din was an Arab and that there was no contradiction between a Kurdish identity and their membership in the Arab Nation.

As a result of this strategic subordination of Kurdish to Arab identity, Saddam Hussein was able to justify granting a wide-ranging autonomy to the Kurds in 1970 while insisting that they were still an integral part of Iraq. The March Proclamation (Appendix 1) offered:

- full recognition of Kurdish nationality, autonomy within four years,
- a Kurdish Vice-President of the Republic,
- five Kurdish ministers in the cabinet,
- to make Kurdish an official language with Arabic,
- to allow the formation of Kurdish political parties and cultural organizations,
- integration of the *peshmurga* into the border guards and army, and
- a census and plebiscite to determine the status of Kirkuk.

While the Kurds stubbornly referred to the March Proclamation as an 'agreement' (*ittifaq*), the Baath deliberately insisted on calling it a 'proclamation' (*bayan*) to demonstrate that it was a unilateral offer from a sovereign state power to its subjects, not an agreement between equals (Bengio, 1998). This distinction is crucial because, for the Kurds, the guarantee of protection within the Iraqi State depended upon a recognition of the equal status of Kurds and Arabs as nations. Their place within Iraq was not autonomic or given, but depended upon a voluntary union (*ittihad ikhtiyari*) (Bengio, 1998). The use of this language always infuriated the Baath, who found it treasonous and a threat to the territorial integrity of the Arab Nation. More pragmatically for the Baath, by insisting that the rights the Kurds enjoyed had been granted to them by the unitary sovereign state, they also implied that these rights could be unilaterally withdrawn if conditions demanded.

Although partial implementation of the less contentious aspects of the March Proclamation began in 1970-71, the more important issues involving recognition of the Kurds' 'national rights,' the acceptance of Barzani's candidate for Vice-President, the teaching of the Kurdish language in schools, and the territorial issues, were continually delayed. Even if the Baathists had been sincere in implementing the other provisions, the last issue would still have provided the breaking point. Barzani insisted that Kirkuk be the capital of the new autonomous region, while Hussein insisted on Arbil. The reasons for the delay became obvious to the Kurds as the Baath began, in Barzani's words, "to create demographic facts." (Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, 1990)

While an official census had not been undertaken since the 1950s, when the Kurdish population of Kirkuk was about 50 percent, it is likely that by 1970 the Kurds were a clear majority in the region (Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, 1990). The Kurds accused the Baath of paying Arabs from the south to relocate to Kirkuk or even to marry Kurdish women. At the end of 1971, the regime began deporting 50,000 Faili Kurds (a Shi'ite Kurdish minority) to Iran claiming that they were not originally Iraqi citizens. By 1972, Barzani was dealing with Iran again and securing more armaments. He was also dealing with U.S. Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, from whom he believed he had 'cast iron' assurances of support. In 1976, when the Pike Report on clandestine activities of the CIA was released, the extent of Barzani's miscalculation became obvious.

> We believe that the Shah would by no means welcome the official establishment of an autonomous (Kurdish) government. Both Iran and the US hope to benefit from an unresolvable situation in which Iraq is intrinsically weakened by the Kurds' refusal to give up their semi-autonomy. Neither Iran nor the US would like to see the situation resolved one way or the other." (Pike Report quoted in Vanly, 1993:169)

Barzani's downfall is generally, and accurately, attributed to his excessive dependence on foreign support. However, his vulnerability to a withdrawal of this support, was aggravated by the extent to which his dependence on external assistance encouraged him to distance himself from non-Kurdish sources of local support. A broader coalition within Iraq, particularly with the ICP which still had substantial popular support, would have weakened the position of the Baath party. Leftists within the KDP and the ICP sharply criticized Barzani's dependence on both the Shah and the CIA. The division became wider when Barzani used his own security force, *Parastin* (trained by Iran's *Savak*), to expel communists from the KDP and harass ICP members in Kurdistan. While the ICP had never been supportive of the Kurd's autonomy agenda, it had, until this time, supported a common struggle against the Baath party. The increasing isolation of the ICP eventually forced it to enter into a coalition with the Baath regime, leaving the Kurds as the only political force standing between Saddam Hussein and total authoritarian control of Iraq.

The war, which everyone had been expecting, began in 1974. Baghdad had unilaterally announced a new Autonomy Law which gave the Kurds a much more restricted definition and territorial extension of autonomy. Barzani rejected the offer and demanded a larger territorial area and a share of Iraq's oil revenues proportionate to the size of the Kurdish population (Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, 1990). Although this decision initially split the KDP, when war broke out, most Kurds chose to support Barzani. However, many Kurds, such as Hussain, were also conscripted into the Iraqi Army.

> I remember on the first of January, 1974, I was called for compulsory military service in the Iraqi army. I sold the restaurant that I had at that time to join the army and participate in a battle between the Iraqi forces and the *peshmurga* .
> My brother, Izaddin, was a *peshmurga*, because he didn't have a wife and children to be afraid about. He didn't care about his sisters, brothers,

> father, and mother. I didn't join the *peshmurga* because of them, so they would not be killed.. (Hussain, A Kurdish refugee from Iraq)

As Iran provided increased assistance to the Kurds, including Iranian soldiers dressed in *peshmurga* uniforms (McDowall, 1996), open warfare between Iran and Iraq seemed immanent. As a result of encouragement by Arab leaders, negotiations between Teheran and Baghdad took place in Algiers in 1975. In exchange for its withdrawal of support for the Kurds, Teheran demanded that Iraq recognize the Shat al-Arab as an international waterway. Iraq agreed to this substantial territorial concession (although five years later it would go to war with Iran over this and other issues) and within hours the Iranians withdrew their support for the Kurds. Iraq gave the Kurds two weeks to surrender and Iran threatened to assist in the military suppression of the resistance if it persisted (Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, 1990). On March 23, 1975, Barzani announced that he was ending the struggle and he and his family sought refuge in Iran. Over the next two weeks the movement completely collapsed with over 100,000 Kurds seeking refuge across the border.

Groups of villages in Kurdistan were often dependent upon a single mill to process their wheat, and during harvest time, when the miller had worked to the point of exhaustion, he would shout, *Ash batal*! – 'the mill has stopped' – to the disappointed villagers. According to Kurdish journalist Kamran Karadaghi, after the collapse of the Barzani movement, "the weary murmur of *Ash batal!* ... was on every lip." (Karadaghi, 1994:214) The Kurds had fought longer, more successfully, and had come closer to realizing their goals than they had at any time in the past. The collapse of the Barzani movement was, from all accounts, a traumatic, watershed experience for many Kurds.

It was, moreover, the beginning of a dramatic shift in the Kurdish struggle and the strategies each state employed to suppress it. The March Proclamation of 1970 was the last serious effort by any state to negotiate a solution with the Kurds and accord them a minimal level of autonomy. Instead, beginning with Iraq, each state has not only opted for a military solution to its Kurdish problem, but has focussed its assault on the Kurdish population generally, rather than on particular nationalist parties. The defeat of the Barzani movement provided the opportunity to seek a final solution to the Kurdish threat, and the combination of oil revenues and support from Western countries provided the

military strength and relative impunity that each state needed to wage a violent demographic war on Kurdistan. Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett describe the impact of this defeat on Kurdish vulnerability to repression as a people.

> Although the Algiers Agreement had dealt a fearful blow to the Kurdish movement, the brutal and repressive policies pursued by the regime in the area ensured that the spirit of resistance was not completely crushed. Nevertheless, it can be said that the cultural identity, and even on occasion the physical existence, of the 3 million Kurdish Iraqis has been seriously under threat since 1975. (Farouk-Sluglett & Sluglett, 1990:187)

Saddam Hussein intensified the demographic assault on Kurdistan, already begun in the disputed areas around Kirkuk, by establishing a thirty kilometer security corridor along the Iran-Iraq border destroying all the villages in the way. The Baath also embarked on a costly program of collectivizing Kurdish villages, destroying the old ones in the process, and significantly undermining agricultural activity in Kurdistan while at the same time, increasing Kurdish dependency on financial aid from Baghdad (Karadaghi, 1993). Kurdish towns and provinces were given Arabic names and Arabs were moved into former Kurdish villages. Hundreds of thousands of Kurds living in ethnically mixed areas and border regions were forcibly resettled, and their villages and infrastructure were destroyed to prevent them from returning. While the government claimed to be modernizing the Kurdish rural economy by relocating it to 'strategic villages,' according to a Vanly, Kurds experienced this as a total assault on their traditional lifestyle and livelihoods.

> The villages of Kurdistan have evolved out of a centuries-old equilibrium between man and nature. Each mountain village has its stream or river, its field, its orchards, its cemetery and, often enough, its oak forest. The strategic hamlets are like an oven in the summer and freezing cold in the winter. They represent an inadmissibly brutal intrusion into the life of a society whose equilibrium they will disrupt. (Vanly, 1993: 196)

Whatever the desired or actual economic result, the social impact was that, not only deportation, but the *threat* of deportation, became a fundamental and feared element of government relations with Kurds in Iraq. While little data is available on the number of Kurdish Iraqis who sought refuge beyond the periphery of Kurdistan, it is clear that internal displacement and forced migration across the immediate frontier was massive, both during the war with the central government and in the aftermath of its collapse. After the signing of

the Algiers Agreement, around 200,000 refugees fled to Iran (Hassanpour, 1992). Those who returned in the next few years - some in response to a general amnesty offer from Baghdad - were forcibly relocated, along with as many as 250,000-300,000 other Kurds, to the south of Iraq (Farouk-Sluglett & Sluglett, 1990:187). McDowall (1996) estimated that by 1989, Iran still hosted about 50,000 refugees from the 1975 influx in addition to at least 50,000 Faili Kurds expelled earlier from Iraq. As a result, a much wider cross-section of the Kurdish population was politicized. The large number of internally and externally displaced refugees became a steady source of recruitment for the Kurdish nationalist parties, particularly after those parties set up bases in the cleared-out border regions where many Kurds fleeing government-held areas sought refuge (van Bruinessen, 1992b).

7.2 Iran: Revolution and Forced Migration

> Although there is little prospect of a renewed Kurdish military bid for autonomy or independence in these three states, economic grievances are likely to continue to foster a sense of ethnic identity among the Kurds. (Harris, 1977, 112)

Many analysts believed, like Harris, that the Algiers Agreement was essentially the epitaph of Kurdish Nationalist militancy. It was not long, however, before the 'mill' started to turn again. Kurdish parties in Iraq reorganized themselves with a formal split between the KDP, now led by Barzani's sons Idris and Massoud, and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), a coalition of smaller parties led by Jalal Talabani. In Iran, the Kurdish struggle had long been subordinated to that of Barzani's movement in Iraq. Barzani had gone so far as to assist the Shah in repressing open rebellion by the KDP-Iran (KDPI) in 1968, creating an enduring enmity between Iranian Kurds and the Barzani leadership (van Bruinessen, 1986). The revolution against the Shah's regime in Iran provided an opportunity for the long-awaited resurgence of the Kurdish nationalist movement. The leader of the KDPI, Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou, and other Kurdish leaders returned from exile, reorganized their parties and inspired mass meetings in Kurdish towns and cities calling for autonomy for the Kurds within Iran. A Kurdish journalist reported on the political revival taking place in Iranian Kurdistan.

> The Kurdistan party grew overnight from a small network of secret cells into a large organization covering most of the three provinces of West

> Azerbaijan, Kermanshahan, and Kurdistan. Kurdish poetry, prose, drama, and music, all flourished. Even the mountains in the region seemed drunk with happiness at that time. But it was not to last. (Teimourian, 1989:30)

Ghassemlou was even elected as a deputy from Kurdistan to the Constituent Assembly established by the new Islamic regime, but chose not to go to Iran for security reasons. Ongoing discussions with the Ayatollahs by Kurdish leaders such as Ghassemlou and Sheikh Izzadin Husseini, had already indicated the regime's opposition to any recognition of Kurdish demands. According to journalist Marc Kravetz, Ayatollah Khomeini publicly regretted Ghassemlou's failure to come to Teheren: "What a shame; we would have arrested him and had him shot immediately." (in Meiselas, 1997:292) Khomeini made a show of negotiating with the Kurds until 1980, when his hold on power became more secure. Then, after declaring a holy war against the Kurds, he sent the Army and the *Pasdaran* (revolutionary volunteers) into Kurdistan. The Ayatollahs preferred to use the *Pasdaran* in Kurdistan because the Islamic regime had yet to consolidate the military under its control, and the army had already demonstrated its reluctance to attack fellow Iranians in Kurdistan for the benefit of the clergy (Koohi-Kamali, 1992). The *Pasdaran*, who made up in religious fanaticism what they lacked in military training, gained a reputation for their brutality against the Kurds.

The conflict was further complicated with the outbreak of war between Iran and Iraq in 1980. In the first years of that war, Iran was at least as determined to defeat the Kurds as it was to fight the Iraqis (Ghassemlou, 1981). It was not until 1983, that the KDPI was finally pushed out of Iranian Kurdistan (with assistance from the Iraqi KDP) into Iraq, where it remains - although it has continued to stage cross-border guerrilla actions in Iran. By all accounts, Khomeini decided to make an example of the Kurds, sending in Ayatollah Khalkhali, known as the "hanging judge" for his brutal executions of monarchist supporters. The suppression of Kurdish resistance resulted in 10 – 15,000 Kurdish deaths in battle or in mass executions (McDowall, 1992; Teimourian, 1989). A Kurdish refugee in the U.S. described the trial of his younger brother, a student arrested by the Iranian authorities while visiting an older brother active in the resistance.

> My brother said that the Shiite official in charge of the trial had asked him three questions: "What's your job?" Shahyar said, "I'm a college

> student." "What's your religion?" "I'm a Sunni Moslem." "And what's your nationality?" "I'm a Kurd." And that religious person who was in charge of the trial said, "Each of these answers is enough reason to kill you. You have given all three." The trial had taken five minutes. Then he ordered both of my brothers, and nine other people who had been captured with them, to be executed. (Interview with Farhad Rashidian by Ron Kelley in Meiselas, 1997:290)

The situation of the Kurds in Iran contrasts in many ways with that of the Kurds in Iraq. While the Islamic regime has been as ruthless as its Iraqi and Turkish counterparts in suppressing any organized Kurdish expression of dissent, it has not engaged in the same scale of demographic warfare against the Kurds. Kurdish nationalist leaders in Iran have generally been more moderate, educated, and articulate than Kurdish representatives in other parts of Kurdistan. Ghassemlou, for example, in direct contrast to Barzani, had received a doctorate in Praque and was far more conversant with international diplomacy. Unlike Barzani, his objectives did not waver and had always been clearly stated: 'Autonomy for the Kurds, democracy for Iraq." Ghassemlou insisted that his party's demands were not made "just as Kurds but also as Iranians."

> Let me make one thing clear: no political force in Iranian Kurdistan wants to secede from Iran. Our demands are framed within the context of the Iranian state. First, we want the four provinces into which Kurdistan is now divided to be unified into one. We then want this autonomous unified Kurdish region to have local elections and for the government to have clear powers of local administration. The central government should retain control over long term planning, the armed forces, foreign policy and the monetary system, but we insist on control over our internal affairs. The Kurdish language must be the official language, alongside Persian, in schools, courts and the administration. Internal security should be in the hands not of the *pasdaran* but of the *peshmargas*, the Kurdish fighters. We live in a world where many peoples of under one million have states of their own: we are six million Kurds in Iran and we are denied even regional autonomy. (Ghassemlou, 1981:17-18)

Just as in Iraq, negotiations with the Islamic regime broke down over the KDPI's insistence that the status of the Kurds as a nation be recognized. Ghassemlou's willingness to negotiate with the Islamic regime, as well as his nationalist platform, was sharply criticized by more radical groups opposed to what they saw as 'middle-class nationalism.' Among the many smaller parties operating in Kurdistan, each with a distinct

regional base, the most prominent criticism came from the Komala and the Feda'iyan-e Khalq. Both are radical leftist parties, with the former in particular rejecting Kurdish nationalism as a bourgeois conceit. Both parties, like all contemporary Iranian opposition groups, have been forced into exile. The Iranian government has not been content to obliterate the presence of opposition forces within the country, but has allowed its secret service to hunt down and assassinate leaders and activists in exile, as well. Ghassemlou was invited to meet with Iranian government representatives in Vienna in July, 1989, and was shot dead with two colleagues while sitting at the negotiating table. In 1992, the leader of the KDPI, Mohammad Sadiq Sharafkandi, and three others were assassinated in a Berlin restaurant.

The Shah had described the Kurds as the "purest of Aryans" (Teimourian, 1989) to emphasize the primacy of their Iranian identity. The Ayatollahs were no less determined to see a Kurdish identity assimilated to a wider form of communalism, although in this case, as Muslims. However, while Islamic fundamentalism provided a convenient means to reject rival nationalist claims, the Ayatollahs had few qualms concerning the merging of traditional Iranian nationalism with Shi'a hegemony. The official constitution made Persian the only official language, made no mention of Kurds or Sunnis, and specified that senior political positions could only be held by Shi'a (McDowall, 1996). Nevertheless, Khomeini remained adamant that there were no 'minorities' among Muslims.

> Sometimes the word minorities is used to refer to people such as Kurds, Lurs, Turks, Persians, Baluchis, and such. These people should not be called minorities, because this term assumes there is a difference between these brothers. In Islam, such a difference has no place at all. There is no difference between Muslims who speak different languages, for instance, the Arabs or the Persians. It is very probable that such problems have been created by those who do not wish the Muslim countries to be united ... They create the issues of nationalism, of pan-Iranism, pan-Turkism, and such –isms which are contrary to Islamic doctrines. Their plan is to destroy Islam and Islamic philosophy. (Ayatollah Khomeini quoted in Menashri, 1988:217)

In the crucial area of land reform, the Islamic regime had little choice but to make substantial changes, given the level of support the revolution had drawn from the disenfranchised classes. Between 1978 and 1980, widespread seizures of land occurred

throughout Iran, initiated both by peasants and villagers, as well as by political groups such as the Feda'iyan-e Khalq, the KDPI, and the Turkoman's People's Movement (Bakhash, 1990). A series of reform measures were introduced by the government during the 1980s with the aim of recognizing peasant claims to the seized land, but these reforms were often opposed or diluted by conservative factions within the Majlis (Iranian legislature). While significant numbers of land transfers were legalized in some parts of Iran, as in the past, little progress was made in Kurdistan. As a result, rural to urban migration increased even further with over 60 percent of Kurds residing in towns or cities by 1990 (McDowall, 1996). This uprooting of rural society has produced an unstable urban population of migrant workers living in marginal conditions in slums, but whose evident alienation has yet to be successfully exploited by opposition groups.

Since the Iran-Iraq war, this migrant worker population has merged with the refugee exodus to the extent that the economic factors underlying migration have become difficult or impossible to separate from the political factors. While the cultural rights of the Kurds are strictly limited in Iran, their political oppression and economic marginality, though perhaps more extreme in some cases, is shared with much of the Iranian population. Forced migration from Iran,, therefore, though massive, has been experienced less in ethnic terms, and more in terms of a generalized vulnerability affecting Iranians from many backgrounds. This was particularly evident during the Iran-Iraq conflict when, along with general economic collapse, thousands of Iranians, including Kurds, fled the country to escape forced conscription and the impact of the war.

7.3 The *Anfal* and The Exodus

> I shall reinforce you with 1,000 angels riding behind you... (verse 9)
> Help comes only from God. (verse 10)
> You did not slay them, but God slew them. (verse 17)
> And if thou fearest treachery in any way at the hands of a people, dissolve it with them equally; surely God loves not the treacherous." (verse 60)
> O Prophet, urge the believers to fight. If there be 20 of you, patient men, they will overcome 200; if there be 100 of you, they will overcome 1,000 unbelievers. (verse 66) (From the Koran, sura *al-Anfal*, translated by Bengio, 1998)

> Give the males to us and you can have the property. (Baath official to Kurdish-collaborators assisting in the round-up of civilians, quoted in McDowall, 1996:548)

On March 16, Moslems celebrate the anniversary of the Battle of Badr when, in 624, a small group of Muslims defeated a much larger force of non-believers and captured the city of Mecca. The story is told in the Koran in the *sura* named *al-Anfal*, where *Anfal* translates literally as 'booty,' and refers to the looting of the property of the unbelievers killed by the victorious Muslims. In an effort to win support in Islamic countries during the Iran-Iraq War, Saddam Hussein began to reinvent himself as a devout Muslim and a defender of the faith against the Iranian heretics. During the course of this war and continuing into the Second Gulf War, all of his campaigns, military units, and political rhetoric were represented in the language of the Koran (Bengio, 1998).

The Anfal campaign refers to a series of eight military assaults between February and September, 1988 by the Iraqi government against Kurdish armed resistance, the social and economic infrastructure of Kurdistan, and the Kurdish civilian population. While these campaigns are specifically referred to as the Anfal by Iraqi government documents, and are still celebrated by the Ba'athist regime, they were part of a more comprehensive effort to pacify Kurdistan which took on a new level of intensity between the beginning of 1987 and the end of 1988. It was during this period that General Ali Hassan al-Majid was put in charge of the 'northern bureau' (Iraqi Kurdistan) and was given powers of a magnitude second only to his cousin, Saddam Hussein. Furthermore, this intensified effort to destroy Kurdish resistance must be understood within the context of the ongoing policy (involving village destruction, forced relocation, and mass executions) which the Ba'athist regime had been pursuing against the Kurds since 1975.

Many of the events associated with the Anfal, particularly the chemical gas attacks on the village of Halabja, became widely known soon after they took place in 1988. However, it was after the Kurds took control of the no-fly zone in Northern Iraq, and during the creation of the safe haven, that both the scale of the Anfal's destruction and the manner of its implementation could be precisely determined from the testimonies of survivors, the investigation of mass graves and prison camps, and the discovery of several tons of government documentation. On the basis of a comprehensive analysis of this evidence,

human rights investigators have presented a compelling case that the Anfal campaign represents in its intent, in the manner of its implementation, and in its impact, a clear case of genocide committed against the Kurdish people (Middle East Watch, 1993).

Article 2 of the Genocide Convention defines genocide as "any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, such as: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group." (United Nations, 1948) Based on an analysis of campaigns conducted against the Kurds between 1987 and 1989, Middle East Watch summarized the case for accusing Iraq of genocide with the following overview of the types of human rights violations which took place.

- mass summary executions and mass disappearance of many tens of thousands of non-combatants, including large numbers of women and children, and sometimes the entire population of villages;
- the widespread use of chemical weapons, including mustard gas and the nerve agent GB, or Sarin, against the town of Halabja as well as dozens of Kurdish villages, killing many thousands of people, mainly women and children;
- the wholesale destruction of some 2,000 villages, which are described in government documents as having been "burned," "destroyed," "demolished," and "purified," as well as at least a dozen larger towns and administrative centers (*nahyas* and *qadhas*);
- the wholesale destruction of civilian objects by Army engineers including all schools, mosques, wells and other non-residential structures in the targeted villages, and a number of electricity substations;
- looting of civilian property and farm animals on a vast scale by army troops and pro-government militia;
- arbitrary arrest of all villagers, captured in designated "prohibited areas" (*manateq al-mahdoureh*), despite the fact that these were their own houses and lands;
- arbitrary jailing and warehousing for months, in conditions of extreme deprivation, of tens of thousands of women, children and elderly people, without judicial order or any cause other than their presumed sympathies for the Kurdish opposition. Many hundreds of them were allowed to die of malnutrition and disease;
- forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of villagers upon the demolition of their homes, their release from jail or return from exile;

> these civilians were trucked into areas of Kurdistan far from their homes and dumped there by the army with only minimal governmental compensation or none at all for their destroyed property, or any provision for relief, housing, clothing or food, and forbidden to return to their villages of origin on pain of death. In these conditions, many died within a year of their forced displacement;
> - destruction of the rural Kurdish economy and infrastructure.
>
> Like Nazi Germany, the Iraqi regime concealed its actions in euphemisms. Where Nazi officials spoke of "executive measures," "special actions" and "resettlement in the east," Ba'athist bureaucrats spoke of "collective measures," "return to the national ranks" and "resettlement in the south." But beneath the euphemisms, Iraq's crimes against the Kurds amount to genocide, the "intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such." (Middle East Watch, 1993:4-5)

In the international order, genocide constitutes the ultimate crime. Genocide, like the nation, has an extensive history predating this century, but has been fundamentally transformed by the development of a new international order since the First World War, particularly in the universal legitimation of the nation-state as a culturally-charged, 'bordered power-container' (Giddens, 1985). The relationship of genocide to the nation state can be clearly articulated by examining both as processes with discrete stages of development. The development of the nation requires that the nation must first be defined as a collectivity in opposition to other collectivities. Second, the nation must be politically integrated to be capable of corporate action. Third, the nation must be legitimated in the form of a state or of autonomous institutions giving it the power to sustain its self-definition and its express its 'collective will.' These three conceptual stages of *definition*, *integration*, and *legitimation* can be seen in direct opposition to developmental stages of genocide as analyzed by Hilberg (1985).

> A destruction process has an inherent pattern. There is only one way in which a scattered group can effectively be destroyed. Three steps are organic in the operation:
>
> Definition
> |
> Concentration (or seizure)
> |
> Annihilation

> This is the invariant structure of the basic process, for no group can be killed without a concentration or seizure of the victims, and no victims can be segregated before the perpetrator knows who belongs to the group. (Hilberg, 1985:267)

Middle East Watch (1993) documents the definition of the Kurds as a group to be targetted for concentration and annihilation in terms of the labelling of Kurdish peshmerga as 'saboteurs,' the implementation of a *cordon sanitaire* – called prohibited areas – across a wide swath of Iraqi Kurdistan along the Iranian border, and the use of the 1987 census to separate loyal subjects from enemies of the nation. The escalation of the counter-insurgency operations against the Kurdish peshmerga was motivated by a series of military defeats Iraq had suffered in the war with Iran. In fact, because of their concern that Iraq might be defeated by the Islamic regime, the United States, France, and the Soviet Union began supplying Iraq with weapons as early as 1984 (Hiro, 1990). However, the strategy was the same as with the Kurds in the 1960s, which was to provide enough assistance to forestall total defeat without facilitating total victory. It was the assistance of the Kurds that tilted the balance in favour of Iran.

The Iraqi KDP, led by Masoud and Idris Barzani, chose to assist Iran from the outset, and even helped the Iranian army defeat rebellious Iranian Kurds. The KDPI, under the combined assault of the Iranian army, the Iraqi KDP, and the Komala, was pushed across the border into Iraq, where it was offered refuge by the PUK. It has continued to be dependent on refuge in Iraqi Kurdistan to the present time. The KDP had established an alliance with the PKK in 1985, which allowed Kurdish rebels from Turkey to operate bases across the Iraqi border. While the PKK – KDP alliance proved to be short-lived, for a short time all the major Kurdish nationalist parties were operating within Iraq – the KDP controlling larger areas of the north and the PUK a smaller area of the south around Sulaimaniya. In 1987, the PUK and KDP established a united Kurdistan Front, joined by smaller parties in 1988, with Barzani as leader of domestic affairs and Talabani in charge of foreign relations. By the winter of 1987, the Front was assisting the Iranian army to make substantial territorial gains within Iraq and inflict severe defeats on the Iraqi army. Talabani announced at the time that an autonomous Kurdish entity was certain to emerge from the Gulf War, no matter what the final result (Gunter, 1992).

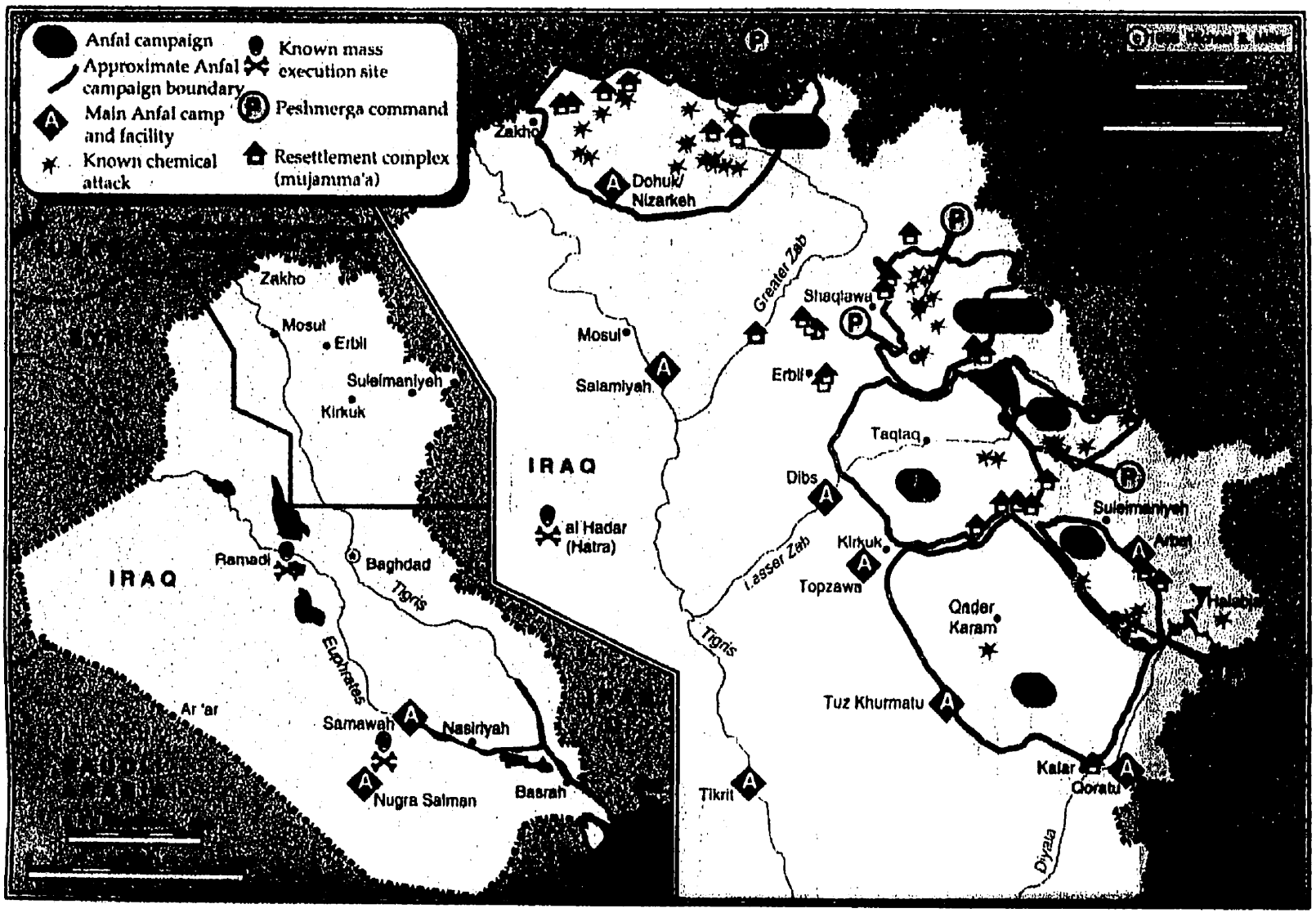

Figure 9. The *Anfal* Campaigns: February – September 1988. Reprinted from Middle East Watch, 1993:22.

In June 1987, General al-Majid issued a new set of standing orders to Iraqi Security Forces operating in the "prohibited areas," which would become the principle regions targetted by the Anfal campaign (Figure 9). All Kurds resident in the prohibited areas were declared to be "coterminous with the *peshmerga* insurgents, and they would be dealt with accordingly." (Middle East Watch, 1993:9) All were from that time forward referred to as 'saboteurs' who were automatically subject to the loss of all property rights and a shoot-to-kill policy within the prohibited zones. Clause 4 of a directive from al-Majid, dated June 20, 1987, orders security forces "to carry out random bombardments, using artillery, helicopters and aircraft, at all times of the day or night, in order to kill the largest number of persons present in the prohibited zones" and according to clause 5: "All persons captured in those villages shall be detained and interrogated by the security services and those between the ages of 15 and 70 shall be executed after any useful information has been obtained from them, of which we should be duly notified." (quoted in Middle East Watch, 1993:9) Iraqi intelligence services also prepared detailed dossiers on the families of "saboteurs" living in government-controlled areas allowing them to track down and forcibly transfer thousands of women, children and elderly Kurds to internment camps as had been done with their relatives in the *peshmerga*.

As discussed above, the census has long been a powerful technology of classification used by nation-states to quantify and legitimate the relative group status of the collectivities within its boundaries. Prior to the Iraqi Census of October, 1987, the Ba'ath Party gave residents of the prohibited areas a choice between accepting forced relocation to camps in the south – referred to as "returning to the national ranks," or of losing Iraqi citizenship and being labelled military deserters (Middle East Watch, 1993). Similarly, census legislation declared that all those who refused to be counted in the census would be treated as deserters. The census itself allowed only two choices for declaring nationality: Arab or Kurdish. Turkomen, Assyrians, or Chaldean Christians who refused to be called Arabs were labelled Kurds, and those who refused either designation were labelled deserters. Since August 1987, the penalty for desertion, for whatever reasons, was death. The census, therefore, was a crucial instrument for defining a vulnerable population and for facilitating their concentration in government-controlled areas. Four months after the census, the First Anfal campaign began.

> Each stage of Anfal followed roughly the same pattern. It characteristically began with chemical attacks from the air on both civilian and *peshmerga* targets, accompanied by a military blitz against PUK or KDP military bases and fortified positions. ... After the initial assault, ground troops and *jahsh* enveloped the target area from all sides, destroying all human habitation in their path, looting household possessions and farm animals and setting fire to homes, before calling in demolition crews to finish the job. ...Convoys of army trucks stood by to transport the villagers to nearby holding centers and transit camps, while the *jahsh* combed the hillsides to track down anyone who had escaped. (Some members of the militia, an asset of dubious reliability to the regime, also saved thousands of lives by spiriting people away to safety or helping them across army lines.) Secret police combed the towns, cities and complexes to hunt down fugitives, and in several cases lured them out of hiding with false offers of amnesty and a "return to the national ranks" – a promise that now concealed a more sinister meaning. (Middle East Watch, 1993:12)

On March 16, 1988 a unit of Saddam Hussein's *quwwat Badr* (Badr forces), launched a chemical gas attack on the border city of Halabja, killing at least 5,000 Kurds with a mixture of mustard and cyanide gas. Halabja became the most notorious incident of the annihilation phase of the Anfal campaign and has become an indelible component of the Kurdish historical narrative, as has the Anfal itself (Panel 13: The Anfal). However, chemical bombardments, village destruction, and massive round-ups of Kurdish civilians were already occurring in the month before the Halabja attack. Weeks before, Talabani officially accused the Iraqi regime of genocide, claiming that 1.5 million Kurds had been deported and 12 towns and over 3,000 villages had been completely destroyed. These claims were largely dismissed or downplayed by western governments (McDowall, 1996).

Chemical weapons were also used against the Iranian army and played a major role in encouraging the cease-fire of August 20, 1988. The first seven Anfal campaigns were concentrated largely in the areas under control of the PUK while the Final Anfal in late August and early September focused on the KDP-controlled areas in northwestern Iraqi Kurdistan. On September 6, Saddam Hussein declared a general amnesty and many of the women, children, and elderly were released from the camps. None of the men were released and it is believed that most were executed and buried in mass graves (Middle East Watch, 1993).

Panel 13: The *Anfal*

I want the whole world to listen and read very carefully what happened, because anybody who hears the name of the Kurds must remember this historical process of human eradication.

The *Anfal* is the name of the process mentioned in the Quran of the Moslems. When the Moslem fighters were attacking the countries of the people who didn't believe in God and Islam, God in his Quran gave them the right to eradicate the unbelievers, taking their women as slaves and their goods as their own. Saddam Hussein's regime chose this name for this historical process, please pay attention to the details.

In 1988, the Iraqi army with the help of some of the light aggregations and a large number of Helicopters and tanks, surrounded the villages located in the rebel areas of Kurdistan: Garmian, Saih Mansour, Gop Tappa, Agjalar, Kaitool, Firkan, Qadir Karam, Harrina, Delejhah, Sangan, Qaradakh, barry Qaradakh, Kaish Pasha, Sawduu, Nawzangana villages, Sargaloo, Bargaloo, Woolakh Luu, Balikh, Shadallah, Suny, Humar, Qawn, Daramn, Qizlar, Saqizly, Humar Mandan, Chokhmakh, Goldarah, and hundreds of other villages. The Iraqi Forces announced to the villagers to come out and don't be afraid, there will be no punishment for anyone. This is an official forgiveness from the government, for you to return back to the right way.

By this way they were able to collect 182,000 Kurds – men, women, children – with a huge number of them who had escaped from the army, and a small percentage of armed *peshmurga*. All were collected and sent to camps. Nobody was afraid from anything, everything was quiet. They didn't know that Saddam has decided to eradicate them. After shaving the hair of the men and sorting them into groups, a large number of men were sent to Saudi Arabia (exactly Ar-Ar area) and Kuwait to be sold to the Arab Muslim rich men or to be buried alive with other groups, and others are still now in special laboratories in Samarrah, for experimenting with biological weapons. Those who discovered the process soon, were able to escape to Iran or Turkey and the rest of the 182,000 are dead, only a small percentage are now of unknown address.

I saw with my eyes on the T.V. of Kirkuk, two of my cousins, Khalil Karim and Sarchil Karim, their names written on the edge of the screen: "We caught the criminals and the spies." Some of the Kurdish soldiers found their sisters sold to Arab Muslim rich men in Kuwait during the Gulf War, and others met Kurdish women who gave them letters for their families in Kurdistan, because they didn't know anything about them since the *Anfal* in 1988.

I would like all of humanity to search for other sources to know more and more about the *Anfal*. Please do not forget the *Anfal*.

- Hussain, A Kurdish refugee from Iraq

Middle East Watch estimates that between 50,000 and 100,000 people were systematically executed during the six-month period of the Anfal campaigns. Kurdish political parties have generally used a figure of 182,000, and when they confronted al-Majid with this figure during negotiations following the Gulf War, the General "exploded that the total number (killed in the Anfal) 'could not have been more than 100,000'." (Middle East Watch, 1993:xviii) While the six-month Anfal campaign was the most systematic and concentrated assault on the Kurds, massive destruction of villages and forcible relocation were prevalent over the period March 1987 to April 1989 when al-Majid controlled the 'Northern Bureau.'

The two year period of the Anfal was itself an intensification of a determined effort to destroy the Kurdish resistance during the Iran-Iraq War beginning in 1984 when the Iraqi army took 8,000 Barzani Kurds between the ages of 12 and 80 from camps in Arbil to Baghdad and executed them en masse. However, the developmental process of defining, concentrating, and annihilating the Kurdish threat can be understood only in the context of a twenty-five year campaign to achieve a final solution to the threat of Kurdish nationalism involving mass deportation, village destruction, and Arabization in Iraqi Kurdistan. Middle East Watch summarized the impact of this campaign.

> Since, 1975, some 4,000 Kurdish villages had been destroyed; at least 50,000 rural Kurds had died in Anfal alone, and very possibly twice that number; half of Iraq's productive farmland had been laid waste. All told, the total number of Kurds killed over the decade since the Barzani men were taken from their homes is well into six figures. (Middle East Watch, 1993.20)

The effects of this total assault on Kurdistan were devastating. During the last few months of 1988, 60,000 Kurds fled to Turkey bringing the total number of Iraqi refugees there to at least half a million. An additional 11,000 made it into Iran where another half million Iraqis had fled, while 40,000 were prevented from crossing the border by the Iraqi army (USCR, 1988). By the end of the war, McDowall (1996) estimates that over 4,000 villages and hamlets had been destroyed and 1.5 million forcibly resettled. This displacement did not end with the cease-fire. In fact, the end of the war gave Iraq the opportunity to continue implementing what Kurds have come to call Saddam's 'final solution.' In 1989, Baghdad ordered the evacuation of the cities of Qala Diza and Raniya

near the Iranian border. In June, Qala Diza was completely destroyed. By July 1989, the Kurdistan Front claimed that 45,000 of 75,000 square kilometres of Kurdistan had been cleared of Kurds (McDowell, 1996).

As with other instances of genocide in this century, the claims by international authorities 'not to have known' rest on arguments embarrassingly devoid of substance. The Baath party's widely-known demographic restructuring of Kurdistan since the 1970s, laid the groundwork for the later genocidal policies just as surely as the disenfranchisement and ghettoization of the Jews facilitated their extermination. Allegations of Saddam Hussein's use of chemical weapons against both Iranian troops and Kurdish civilians had been around since at least 1985. The news of Halabja was widely reported in the international press, and was confirmed in August 1988 by the U.S. State Department and, a few months later, by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (McDowall, 1996). An American agency, Physicians for Human Rights, released a detailed report including interviews with survivors of the chemical gas attacks, in October 1988. In the same year the PUK issued a formal appeal to the United Nations to investigate crimes of genocide against the Kurds. Victims of the chemical gas attacks were even being treated in European hospitals (McDowall, 1996).

The vulnerability of the Kurds to genocide is largely a result of their failure to find meaningful protection within the states which have incorporated them. However, this vulnerability is also directly related to the fact that, while various global powers have manipulated Kurdish political conflicts for their own purposes, none has been willing to support the Kurds in addressing the root causes of those conflicts. Instead, they have armed and supported each government's efforts to destroy its Kurdish threat. Iraq was saved from defeat by Iran only by the assistance provided by the U.S., France, and the Soviet Union. The means to manufacture the chemical weapons Iraq used to end the war and depopulate Kurdistan were provided by pharmaceutical companies from Germany, the Netherlands and other European countries. On audiotapes recovered by the Kurds in the safe haven, al-Majid gave direct orders to his forces concerning the destruction of the agricultural economy of Kurdistan, saying: "I don't want their wheat. We've been importing wheat for the last twenty years. Let's increase it for another five years." (quoted in Middle East Watch: 1996:348)

Iraq had become one of the most valued buyers of U.S. wheat during the 1980s, purchasing $2.8 billion worth of wheat before 1989, and increased their imports further in 1989 (after Halabja) when the Bush administration doubled Iraq's loan guarantees (Randal, 1997). After the war, Britain doubled its export credits and Germany continued to maintain a high credit facility to Iraq (McDowall, 1996). A U.S. Senate motion to remove credits to Iraq and impose sanctions was defeated by the government as detrimental to its interests and those of American farmers. McDowall argues that Western governments were loath to condemn Iraq for fear of losing out on massive post-war reconstruction projects.

> Barely a year after Halabja, Britain, France, Italy, Greece, Portugal, Turkey, as well as Eastern Bloc countries and Latin American states participated in the first Baghdad Exhibition for Military Production. The US was already engaged in the sale of sensitive equipment to Baghdad. (McDowall, 1996:353)

When a particular nation-state begins to implement genocidal policies, the only protection remaining to the targetted group is that provided by other members or multilateral institutions of the international order. The experience of genocide in this century has transformed the categorical identities of Jews, Armenians, Tutsis, and Kurds. Every national identity is founded on a sense of historical uniqueness. The experience of genocide introduces an additional element of historical singularity into the national identity of a victim group, which intensifies that sense of difference – if only in the degree of urgency it gives to the issue of protection. The failure of the international order to protect the Kurds on the one hand, and the intensified sense of vulnerability among Kurds on the other, provides the essential context for understanding the mass exodus from Iraqi Kurdistan after the Gulf War in 1991.

The destruction of the social base of rural existence in Kurdistan, along with the displacement and concentration of the majority of the Kurdish population internally, abroad, or in 'Victory Cities' (as the new settlements were called), conditioned the Kurds towards uprooting and rendered them more vulnerable to the control of the central state. In addition, the experience of chemical gas attacks, internment camps, and mass executions convinced many Kurds of the willingness of the Baath regime to employ any

means necessary to destroy them if it so desired. Therefore, the conditions had been created for a mass exodus from Kurdistan long before the Gulf War.

The impact of twenty-five years of demographic war, culminating in the Anfal campaign, forced the Kurdish nationalist parties to change tactics. Before the Iran-Iraq War, the Kurdish nationalist movement had become predominately a territorial nationalism with the principle goals of not only winning concessions of what they saw as their national rights, but of holding and administering territory. After the Anfal, the territory was largely controlled by the Iraqi military and there was not much left worth holding. The KDP and the PUK began opting for guerrilla-style tactics, even threatening installations in the Arab areas of Iraq, which they had not done before. By 1990, Iran was preparing to sign a treaty to formally conclude hostilities with Iraq, which would close the border against the Kurds. With its enemies neutralized, and with the indifference of the national powers, Iraq, McDowall argues, would have been free to completely neutralize the Kurdish threat.

> In such circumstances, Saddam Husayn's misjudged invasion of Kuwait, the international decision to apply sanctions and threaten force to compel an unconditional withdrawal, came as an almost miraculous respite for the Kurdistan Front. (McDowall, 1996:369)

The Kurds were not anxious to put their population at risk once again by supporting a foreign invasion. To remove any doubt, Saddam Hussein sent his deputy Izzat Ibrahim Duri to Sulaimaniya in 1990 to warn the Kurds: "If you have forgotten Halabja, I would like to remind you that we are ready to repeat the operation." (in Randal, 1997:39) Such threats continued in the wake of the Iraqi defeat, as the regime tried to suppress the threat of insurrection in both the south and the north of the country (Panel 14: Uprisings). However, when Saddam Hussein was forced to pull his troops out of Kuwait at the end of February 1991, the speed with which the uprisings began against his regime took everyone by surprise. While the U.S. is commonly blamed for inciting the rebellion, and others have pointed to the influence of Iran or the Kurdish opposition, only a confluence of several factors could explain such a widespread revolt.

American encouragement of the revolts is a crucial factor. Many refugees who came out of Iraq, whether Kurd or Arab, repeated the same stories of hearing U.S. army radio broadcasts urging the people of Iraq to get rid of Saddam Hussein. How many Iraqis would

Panel 14: Uprisings

Day by day, desertion from the army increased. ... The hatred of the government reached the top and was very close to explosion. After a while, the allies attacked from the ground. After 2 days, we heard that they reached Al-Nasiryah Governorate, which is about 200 km from the capital of Iraq, Baghdad.

After several days, approximately on February 25, 1990, we heard that an uprising had started in the south of Iraq. A lot of security police, government authorities, and members of Arab Baath Socialist Party [ABSP] had been killed. The revolutionary forces occupied and liberated a large area. The Iraqi forces, led by Ali Hassan Al-Majid, or Ali Chemical, started searching for the deserters from the war in Kirkuk. They captured and killed 21 innocent persons, some of them, according to eyewitnesses, didn't reach their 18th year. We were five persons moving from one area to another due to our fear of the government forces.

They announced the emergency situation in Kirkuk by helicopters. Late on, I heard about the uprising in the north of Iraq from the radio of the biggest two opposition parties in Kurdistan: KDP and PUK. They controlled Sulaimaniya, Arbil, and Dohuk completely. We were waiting for it, and the government was terrified of the attack of the peshmerga on Kirkuk.

March 21, 1990. This day is called Newroz. NAW means new and RUZ means day, so this means 'the new day,' which is the beginning of the Kurdish year. The story of Newroz is related to the Kurdish hero, Kawa who saved the Kurds from the dictator and blood-sucking Zohak. This historical event happened long ago. On this day, after years, the *peshmerga* entered and liberated and occupied 85 percent of Kirkuk. The government went crazy with violent, random bombing of the city. We couldn't believe what we saw. *Peshmerga* in Kirkuk! The Kurds took the Iraqis prisoners, the family of the security police and members of the ABSP, very kindly and gently. Even themselves, they didn't believe when they saw their persecution of the Kurds converted into a gentle treatment from the *peshmerga*. They were treated exactly as liberated Iraqis according to the orders of the Kurdish Front.

I went back to my family and congratulated them. We were very happy despite the violent bombing by Saddam's forces. My house and my factory were bombed. Only a small, roofless area remained. We called it 'the remnants' which was only enough for celebrations for Newroz and the incomplete liberation of Kirkuk.

We couldn't occupy Kirkuk. We surrounded Khalid military camp which was about 8 kms from Kirkuk for about 7 days. During this period Layla was cooking food in our destroyed house. Astee, Ashna and, for a little while, Kermanj, were organizing the plates and spoons, searching for wood for cooking. Me and Kermanj were taking the food to the *peshmerga* surrounding this goddamned camp. I was taking some medication with me for the injured *peshmerga* and bringing some of the wounded fighters with me. I was also taking the news of the injured peshmerga from their hospital to their families. So everybody knew about my participation in the uprising due to my very free, widespread movements. This prevented me for the rest of my life, or at least until now, from going back to Kirkuk after its re-occupation by the government and our escape to Iran. Kirkuk is still under the control of Saddam.

- Hussain, A Kurdish Refugee from Iraq

have risked their lives in the absence of such provocation is a question impossible to answer and difficult to separate from partisan speculation. Nevertheless, the whole staging of the Gulf War – the massive array of force, the personalization of the crisis into a battle between George Bush and Saddam Hussein, the growing recognition of most Iraqis that the Baath regime was the principle source of their problems – must have encouraged many Iraqis to believe that the American objective was to remove the Iraqi government. However, too much emphasis on the role of American instigation distracts from an equally important element of the uprising. For the first time in Iraqi history, a largely spontaneous popular rebellion against central authority had occurred in both the south and the north of Iraq.

The uprising began in the south of Iraq in the wake of Saddam's retreating troops. Contrary to Coalition propaganda, Saddam had not kept his best troops in Kuwait, but had filled the front-lines almost entirely with poorly trained and equipped conscripts from the Shi'a south and the Kurdish north. The earliest revolts took place by angry retreating soldiers, followed by crowds of civilians anxious to take revenge against the regime in the southern cities of Zubair and Abu'l Khasib (al-Jabbar, 1992). Iraqi refugees who participated in these events all attest to their largely uncoordinated nature, with revolts breaking out spontaneously in various cities throughout the south. It was only days later that opposition groups, some in exile in Iran, arrived to try and take control of the situation. The Iranian exiles were divided between a loose coalition of dissidents and a Shi'a opposition group led by Muhammad Bakr al-Hakim. While the latter tried to assert total control of the uprisings in the south, the proximity of the Republican Guard ensured that they were suppressed fairly quickly.

Prior to the Iraqi defeat in Kuwait, when it looked like the coalition was determined to find a military solution, Jalal Talabani told reporters:

> We have fought Saddam since he assumed power and will continue to fight him until he is toppled, ... if the Arab forces liberate Kuwait, we would urge the Kurdish troops to join them ... our fighting would be Kurdish, independent, and separate ... not ... as part of foreign armies invading or fighting Iraq. (Jalal Talabani when asked if he would join the coalition forces (in Gunter, 1992:49)

When the uprisings reached Kurdistan days after the revolts in the south, Talabani words proved to be prophetic. Nevertheless, even though Kurdish leaders were better

prepared than those in the south, they were still taken by surprise by the speed with which the Kurdish population rose up against the government. A key element was the widespread revolt of the *jash* forces, who began attacking government installations even before the nationalist forces managed to give some direction to the rebellions. During the Autonomy Wars of the 1960s, many *jash* had supported the central government with some enthusiasm, if only because of tribal rivalry with the Barzanis. Over the last two decades their allegiance had become primarily instrumental based almost entirely on economic incentives. Before the uprisings, the nationalist parties had been working covertly to encourage the large detachments of Kurdish collaborators with the regime to withdraw their support from the government in the event of an allied invasion with promises of national reconciliation. With the support of the *jash*, the Kurds had won control of more of Iraqi Kurdistan than ever before in their history, including the city of Kirkuk. In the face of massive desertion and retreat of Iraqi's armed forces, Kurdish leaders were optimistic.

> I feel the result of 70 years of struggle... is at hand now. It is the greatest honor for me. It is what I wanted all my life. (Masoud Barzani in Gunter, 1992:50)

A popular uprising of such an extent could not be instigated by external prompting alone. The American-led coalition was guilty not so much of starting the rebellions, but of abandoning them. Nevertheless, many Kurds, like Hussain quoted below, feel an acute sense of betrayal by Western governments generally and the US in particular.

> The Peshmurga had time to attack Kirkuk, Dahuk and other cities. Bush said to Saddam not to use chemical warfare. Saddam bombed the Peshmurga in Kirkuk. Bush said it was okay to attack but not with chemical weapons. Saddam Hussein sent a communiqué to the United States saying, if they let the Kurds attack Kirkuk they will take Baghdad. So the U.S. should let Saddam attack. Bush agreed. We knew Bush had lied to us. How come he let Saddam kill 5000 Kurds? Saddam Hussein said to us "get used to the helicopters," so we knew that George Bush had lied to us. (A Kurdish Refugee from Iraq in Winnipeg)

The limitations of Iraqi access to the no-fly zone extended only to fixed-wing aircraft. The Iraqi Army was free to use its still formidable fleet of attack helicopters to quell the rebellions. For the Kurds, the helicopters were more feared than other aircraft. Attack helicopters had been used extensively during the Anfal campaign to deliver chemical bombardments as well as to terrorize civilian populations into flight. The

Panel 15: Exodus

The Iraqi forces threatened the citizens to use chemical bombs because they knew that they had a miserable memory with chemical bombing. They were saying indirectly: "Would you like to see Halabja again?" Nobody could withstand this fear. The international society also warned the Kurds to escape before another *Anfal* or Halabja.

In the beginning I sent Layla and the children to Sulaimaniya because it was close to the border with Iran. Then the secretary of the Kurdish Front, Jalal Talabani, announced that the people should run away before another Anfal or another Halabja. The people started leaving Kirkuk gradually, then increased suddenly, then became an historical migration to Iran and Turkey after the announcement of Mr. Talabani to escape from the grasp of Saddam Hussein. When I reached Sulaimaniya, I found Layla and my four children sleeping in a mosque, after two days of searching. I told her that I think we will never see Kirkuk again and please don't ever think about what we had there. We have to find a way to Iran.

The next day, we woke up to see the greatest migration in the history Kurdistan. Three million, five-hundred thousand Kurds following each other in a long arm, like an octopus, by cars, animals, or by foot. A sight that nobody will forget until the end of history. I saw women throwing away their new born babies because they didn't have breast milk, blind old people who lost their relatives, 4-5 month-old babies crying for their lost parents, silent people shocked from what happened, people fighting each other for a piece of bread, several revolutionary young men committing suicide. Iranian soldiers beating Kurds with their GRC machine guns to prevent them from crossing the border. Dead cows and people from the mines planted by the government and sad songs everywhere! I thought that even God was supporting Saddam by this non-stop raining. The majority lost their faith and believed in nothing!

When I saw my children and Layla sleeping on the wet ground covered by wet blankets – my body was also quite wet and the rain was not stopping – I lifted my head to the sky and prayed for God to kill me before I see my children dying in front of my eyes! My tears mixed with the drops of rain, only my sound showed that I was crying.

I didn't sleep for five days. Thousands were before me and thousands were behind me. We were only following each other. Nobody knew where we were going. We reached Iran after eight days. The local authorities took us to halls. Men in special halls and women and children in others because it was an Islamic Republic. They forced the females to cover all their body completely. ... After 20 days, we were sent to Saray Camp between Bokan and Saqz Governorates. Hundreds of tents were surrounded by barbed wire and control points everywhere around the camp. Going out was prevented completely. They started treating us like war prisoners after they saw Jalal Talabani, the secretary of the Kurdish Front kissing Saddam and negotiating with him about the fate of the Kurds.

We saw Kurdish refugees who had been there for five years. They had escaped from the chemical bombing of Halabja in 1988. I realized that the Iranian authorities were stealing international aid for the Kurds when I saw American sacks of rice in the shops that we passed on our way back to the North of Iraq. ... They forced us into big trucks, just like animals, and then they threw us out on the border.

- Hussain, A Kurdish Refugee from Iraq

Kurdish forces, equipped only with captured light weaponry, were no match for the heavy artillery, napalm, and phosphorous bombs of the Iraqi army (Gunter, 1992).

The scale of the mass exodus from Kurdistan that followed the uprisings took all sides by as much surprise as had the uprisings themselves. For the second time, the initiative for political developments within Kurdistan was taken at the popular level rather than with the political classes. However, this time, the population of Kurdistan was 'voting with their feet' and leaving in the hundreds of thousands for the mountainous borders regions with Iran and Turkey. The nation denied, after two decades of forcible uprooting, constant warfare, and genocidal assaults by the same forces which now pursued them again, had become a nation in flight (Panel 15 - Exodus).

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees called it "the fastest refugee movement in the 40-year history of the UNHCR." (De Almeida e Silva, 1991:13) In fact, refugees had been pouring out of Iraq since before the war, with 700,000 Iraqis having left by mid-January, 1991. Nevertheless, in the first two weeks of April, the refugee population in Iran went from 50,000 to 560,000, while the UNHCR estimated a quarter of a million refugees on the Turkish border. By the middle of May at least 1.4 million Iraqis had fled to Iran while another 500,000 were clustered on the border with Turkey for a total of close to 2 million refugees having joined the exodus in a month's time (De Almeida e Silva, 1991:13). After seventy years of struggle, it was not the nationalist movement, or the protocols of the United Nations which were making the most persuasive demands for secure protection, it was the Kurdish population itself, using the only argument it had left, its undeniable vulnerability.

7.4 The Safe Haven

> We're going to withdraw and I'm not confident we're going to leave behind a security force to protect these people. I'm afraid we're just transients in their history, doing them a good turn on the way by. There is no bright star on their horizon. The minute we leave all these people are going to get massacred. (U.S. Army Major William Gawthrop quoted in Nagel and Whorton, 1992)

Prior to the mass exodus from Kurdistan, events had unfolded according to the prevailing interests of the international coalition. Saddam Hussein was defeated and weak, but still in power. McDowall, citing unattributable briefings, argues that the U.S.

preference was to allow Iraq to defeat the uprisings, after which a hoped-for coup from inside the regime would remove Saddam Hussein. The priority of the international coalition was not to solve the fundamental issues of protection that still remained in Iraq for both the Kurds and other Iraqis, but to mollify its nervous allies – Turkey and Saudi Arabia, in particular. The former had no desire to see an autonomous Kurdish entity emerge in the north, and the latter had no sympathies for the Shi'a majority in the south. However, even with the disruptive effect of the mass exodus from Iraqi Kurdistan, the coalition forces could have extricated themselves from this 'regional problem' had the Turkish government not decided to close its border to the refugees with the explicit intention of forcing international intervention. Turkey made it clear that the refugees were not welcome.

> Attention!
> This Is a Warning!
> Do not approach the border. The border of the Republic of Turkey is closed to any kind of entry. No form of asylum will be granted. If you make any attempt to cross the border your life will be in danger. Do not attempt. Retreat from the border line. We do not wish to harm you.
> (Leaflet dropped by Turkish helicopters on Kurds fleeing the uprising at Deshte Tak, Zakho, Iraqi border, March 1991, in Meiselas, 1997:331)

Had Turkey not refused to admit the refugees, leaving them exposed to both the elements and to the TV cameras, the coalition might have been able to pull out and rely on the international refugee regime to sort out the problem of massive forced migration. Once again the humanitarian relief network, operating in the conflicted interstices of the international order, would have absolved members of that order from confronting the root causes of Kurdish vulnerability to forced migration. For Turkey it was not simply a refugee problem they were faced with, but a national crisis.

Turkish support had been essential for the success of the coalition efforts, and Turkey has long been a loyal NATO partner. In return, Western governments supplied Turkey with the military technology it needed to suppress its own Kurdish insurrections. For the Turks, the prospect of another half-million Kurds destabilizing southeastern Turkey even further, was unconscionable. The only viable alternative was to somehow convince the refugees to return to Iraq. On April 16, 1991, the U.S., Britain and France began 'Operation Provide Comfort' and started airlifting food to the refugees. They soon created a security

zone near the border to allow refugees to return to transit centres near the Kurdish city of Zakho and also declared a no-fly zone for fixed-wing Iraqi aircraft above the 36th parallel.

The creation of the safe haven was an ad hoc and incremental adjustment by the external powers to a dynamic and unpredictable situation on the ground. Turkish President Ozal, anxious to rid himself of these unforeseen consequences of the Second Gulf War, had suggested to Britain that 'protective enclaves' be created within Iraq to allow for the return of refugees. In the process of negotiations between Britain, Turkey and the U.S., the name was changed to 'safe haven' because it suggested less of a compromise of Iraq's territorial integrity (Gunter, 1992). Because of the threat such a territorial anomaly might present for international order, the incremental adjustments to the size of the safe haven were undertaken tentatively and with reluctance.

The threat to the principle of 'national sovereignty' was apparent from the outset. Iraq predictably denounced the safe haven as "a flagrant interference in the internal affairs of Iraq, an independent country and member of the United Nations." (in Gunter, 19892:56) The UNHCR, in order to continue to repatriate refugees to the safe haven, concluded a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Iraqi Government, which obliged the UN and NGOs "to preserve the political status quo ante, implicitly accepting the results of Baghdad's previous policy of depopulation and destruction in Kurdistan." (Bäcker & Ofteringer, 1994:41) The MOU had to be continuously renegotiated, and with each renewal it called for more recognition of Baghdad's authority. NGOs participating in the resettlement of Kurdish refugees, for example, had to cooperate with the Iraqi government or lose the protection of the UN. UNICEF was obliged to purchase kerosene and gasoline for Kurdish areas from the Iraqi government at exorbitant prices (Bäcker & Ofteringer, 1994:41).

While the UN implicitly recognized Baghdad's authority by virtue of the MOU NGOs operating in the region increasingly defied its limitations and, as a result, exposed themselves to attack from the Iraqi government. Their refusal to work within the MOU forced the UN to compromise Iraq's national sovereignty further by signing an agreement with donor countries allowing NGOs to provide assistance to the Kurds outside of the MOU, under the protection of UN Security Council Resolution 688. As a result, the UN, using the NGOs now working independently of the MOU, could coordinate its activities with the emerging Kurdish administration, giving the latter some measure of de facto recognition.

Resolution 688 (Appendix 1), which provided the legitimate framework for the intervention, set groundbreaking precedents. For the first time, members of the international order had intervened on behalf of the Kurdish population, even if it had been primarily an effort to salvage their own interests. It was the first time the principle of national sovereignty had been legally and expressly overridden by the UN to provide protection to a refugee population. Finally, although it recognized the territorial integrity of Iraq, it was also the first international agreement since the League of Nations decision over the Mosul vilayet in 1925-26, to recognize the Kurds by name (McDowall, 1996).

The emergence of an autonomous Kurdish administration in the safe haven' was a result of the collapse of negotiations between the Kurdistan Front and the Ba'ath Party. The Kurds had little choice but to attempt a negotiated settlement, given the unambiguous indications from the coalition forces that they would pull out of the region at the earliest opportunity. However, Saddam Hussein offered no substantive guarantees for his initial concessions towards autonomy and progressively reduced the scope of those concessions in anticipation, no doubt, of the inevitable collapse of the coalition's support for the Kurds. Following the failed negotiations, the safe haven did become ungovernable. The Iraqi Forces had drawn back behind a cease-fire line stretching from the Iranian border south of Kifri to the Turkish border near Zakho (Figure 10), leaving the Kurds in control of a territory roughly similar to that offered by Iraq in 1975. Iraq blockaded the entire region, cutting off its fuel shipments, preventing the trade in food and other products, and withholding salaries to government employees in Kurdistan which it had previously maintained to demonstrate it's authority. The Kurdistan Front, an unwieldy coalition at the best of times, was increasingly incapable of administering an isolated region slowly being strangled by the combined impact of international sanctions and the Iraqi blockade.

To address this crisis, the Kurds took a radical step, once again working against the prevailing interests of the global powers to secure protection against a hostile regime. On May 19, 1992, they held the first democratic election that had ever taken place within Kurdistan. The fact that there was freedom of political organization, and that it was recognized as free and fair by international observers, distinguished it, as well, from any election that has taken place in Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey (where Kurds can only legally

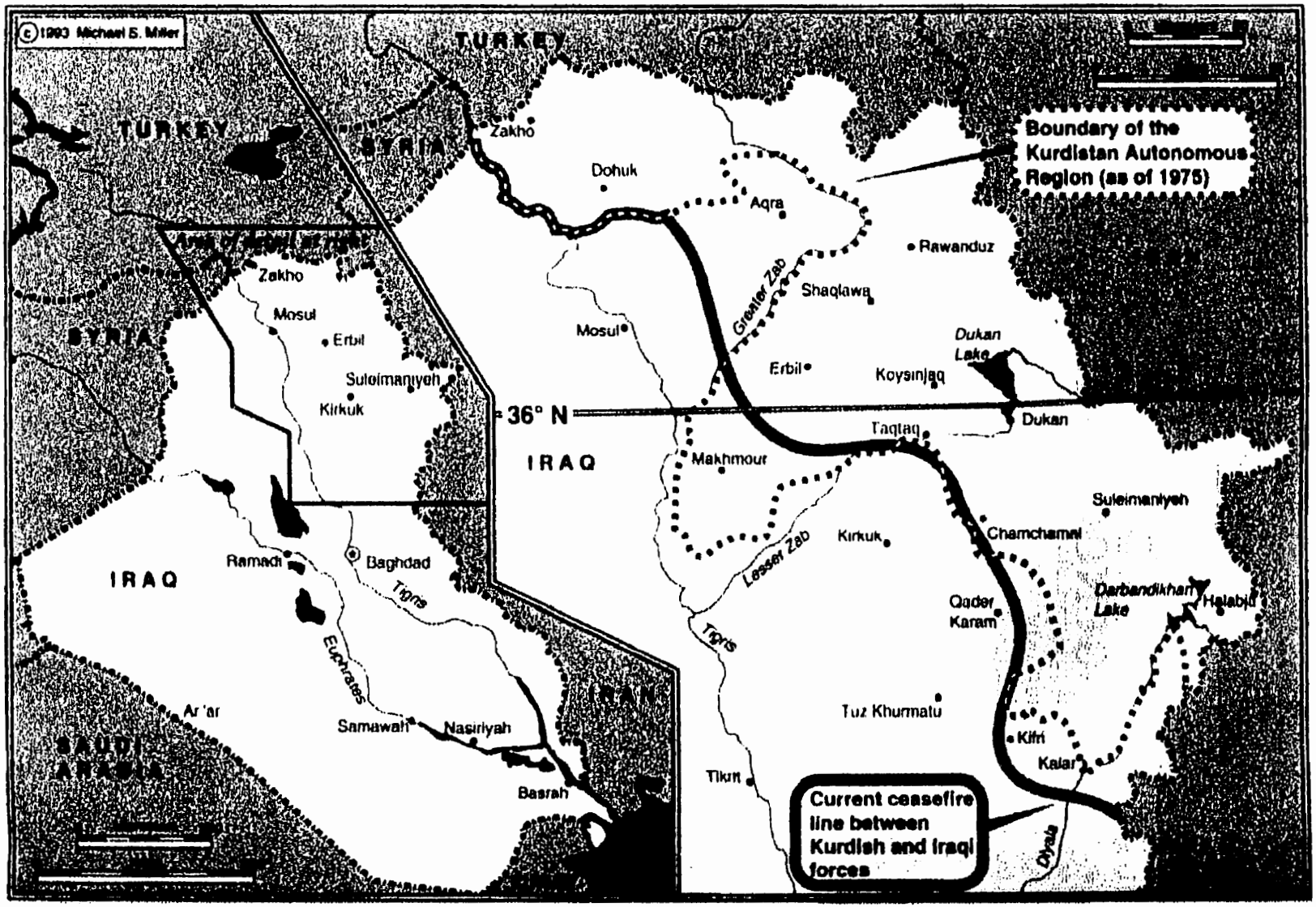

Figure 10. Kurdistan in Iraq. Reprinted from Middle East Watch, 1993:2.

participate as Turks). The election took place on the basis of proportional representation requiring a threshold of 7 percent to win seats. The KDP won 45 percent of the vote while the PUK won 43.6 percent with the rest distributed among smaller parties. In the election for the leadership of the Kurdistan Front, Masoud Barzani won 48 percent and Jalal Talabani won 45 percent, and, with encouragement from the U.S. government, a decision was made by Massoud Barzani and Talabani to rule jointly (McDowall, 1996).

The Parliament of the Kurdish Regional Government established in Arbil, had 105 seats, with the PUK and KDP given 50 seats each and the remaining five set aside for the Assyrian parties (McDowall, 1996). Neither Barzani nor Talabani chose to sit in the parliament, a decision which fundamentally compromised its future, as they still were the two principle powers within Iraqi Kurdistan. The parliament became structurally deadlocked with a KDP and PUK member sharing responsibility in each ministry, eventually creating a system of parallel administration extending down to the level of the police and the teaching staff in schools (McDowall, 1996).

The ongoing failure of the safe haven to provide sustainable protection for the Kurds and a long-term solution for the root causes of Kurdish vulnerability is a result of the distorted economic character of the region, the political dynamics between various Kurdish factions, and the destabilizing role of external powers. Economically, the western (Badinan) region of Iraqi Kurdistan, controlled by the KDP, had experienced less destruction from the Anfal than the eastern region centred around Sulaimaniya, controlled by the PUK. By 1998 the agricultural economy had recovered to the extent that all areas of Iraqi Kurdistan were harvesting bumper crops of wheat. However, to offset the impact of sanctions on all Iraqis, in 1997 the UN negotiated an 'oil-for food' deal with Baghdad and flooded all of Iraq, including Kurdistan, with international wheat. The UN refused to buy local wheat from Kurdistan because of international sanctions, and the local market vanished with the arrival of UN food rations. The glut of wheat on local markets has undermined efforts to assist Kurds in moving out of the collective towns and reestablishing their traditional farming villages (Evans, 1998), an essential step in the long-term rebuilding of Kurdistan's agricultural economy.

The lack of an independent economic base for Kurds has left them dependent on a political economy hinged upon smuggling and party patronage. From the beginning of

the safe haven, the combination of an economy crippled both by the Anfal and by the double blockade, left taxation on goods smuggled across borders and internal checkpoints as the only significant source of revenue for the new Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). The refusal of the principal political leaders in Kurdistan, Talabani and Barzani, to submit to the authority of the elected government, left them in control of these revenues. Barzani had the advantage of controlling the Turkish border regions, where revenues from smuggling are estimated at about $35 million U.S. dollars annually (al-Khafaji, 1996). In 1994, the KDP accused the PUK of absconding with about $19 million from the Central Bank of Kurdistan, controlled by Talabani, and retaliated by refusing to share revenues from the border traffic (al-Khafaji, 1996). The result was a de facto partitioning of Iraqi Kurdistan with customs points along an "internal border" and both sides extracting 'import' and 'export' taxes on goods moving in either direction. Barzani even imposed a $500 dollar tax on Iraqi Kurds wanting to leave the country (Sulaiman, 1994).

After several decades of war in Kurdistan, many *peshmerga* leaders have come to act as independent warlords with a quasi-tribal base, selling their loyalty to the various parties. The lack of a functioning formal economy has meant that many Kurds have had little option other than to sell their labour power as mercenaries to these warlords. The situation was further complicated by the emergence of an Islamic party, the Islamic Movement of Kurdistan (IMK), led by Mulla Uthman Abd al Aziz, funded by Iran and fiercely opposed to the leftist tendencies of the PUK. By 1994, all three parties were engaged in armed combat. The ideals of *Kurdayeti* were now becoming thoroughly subverted by the bloodletting of *Birakuji* – literally 'brother-killing.'

The deterioration of political relations within the safe haven was primarily a result of the isolation and economic stagnation that aggravated ongoing social tensions across the same tribal, regional, and ideological divisions that have long characterized Kurdish society. In addition, several decades of wars, coups, and political oppression have prevented the development of democratic traditions in all parts of Iraq. Both major political parties organized their own security and intelligence agencies (*Parastin* for the KDP, *Zanyari* for the PUK) which harassed and interrogated those Kurds suspected of

being supporters of the opposition. A journalist reported on the 'politics of yellow and green'.

> Although the Kurds have by no means replicated the reign of terror under Saddam Hussein, the grip of their own enforcement organizations has grown considerably. Stories were rampant of youths being beaten for wearing yellow shirts in Talbani's zone or green shirts in Barzani's zone, the colors of the KDP and the PUK respectively. (al-Khafaji, 1996:36)

In February 1995, Amnesty International released a detailed report on human rights abuses in Iraqi Kurdistan since 1991 accusing both parties of allowing their peshmerga and security forces to arbitrarily arrest civilians, to torture and execute detainees, and actively undermine existing juridical institutions (Amnesty International, 1995). Refugees had continued to flee the region because of its economic deterioration (Panel 16 - Safe Haven?). As the conflict between the PUK and KDP intensified during 1994-95, refugees began to flee from a Kurdish civil war and Kurdish cities became crowded with *awara* (aliens) who were recruited to fight their "fraternal enemies." (al-Khafaji, 1996) Fighting continued sporadically until 1996 punctuated by cease-fires negotiated by France and the U.S. that failed to have any lasting effect. In 1996, sporadic conflict erupted into international crisis when the PUK was forced to conclude an agreement with Iran which prevented it from sheltering Kurdish dissidents from Iranian Kurdistan. The cross-border pursuit of KDPI rebels by the Iranian army gave Barzani an excuse to invite the Iraqi army into Kurdistan. Baghdad pulled outs its army only after being threatened with international intervention, but had achieved its objectives of helping the KDP defeat the PUK and capturing and killing many leaders of the opposition front, the Iraqi National Congress. The PUK managed to take back much of the territory it had lost once Baghdad withdrew its forces and has succeeded in re-establishing the pre-1996 status quo.

The failure of the safe haven to provide meaningful and sustainable protection for the Kurds was not only a result of economic stagnation and Kurdish political in-fighting, but was, in many ways, a predictable outcome of its initial design. First, the primary motivation for its establishment was not to address the root causes of Kurdish vulnerability, but to assist the West's regional allies in avoiding the repercussions of that vulnerability. In effect, the safe haven was less successful in protecting Kurds or

Panel 16: Safe Haven?

We went to Erbil, to my brother Burhan's house. His situation was good. We started working in a factory for making agricultural machines. My situation became much better because the farmers started seeding their lands after pushing away the government control. They were encouraging us. After four months, bad luck caught me again when the government started its economical embargo on the North of Iraq. So we became under two embargoes, an international and a national. The necessary materials became rare and expensive. People started using wood for cooking. I saw with my own eyes, women collecting cartons and pieces of wood for cooking or as fuel. So my work also stopped – on September 19, 1990.

Our situation became very dangerous because we spent all that we had. So we sold everything. We obtained 800 Iraqi Dinars which equals twenty U.S. dollars. We reached Zakho on April 4, 1991. I heard people talking about refugees who had been accepted in Syria because of the birthday of their president, Hafez Al-Asad. Our money completely finished, we found a place in the remnants of an ancient church. We were receiving food from the opposing Kurdish parties. We were living on fishing from Al-Khapoor river between Iraq and Syria, because the food was not enough.

We became able to cross the river illegally to Syria. In Syria, the Syrian intelligence agents treated us violently and told us that the refugees were accepted because of an occasion which was the President's birthday. There is nothing for refugees here, only members of the opposition parties in Iraq will be accepted. They forced us to return back, to be received by beatings and kicks by the peshmerga officials on the border. They dismissed us from the church, so we started living in a destroyed building in front of Al-Abbassi Bridge in Zakho. We received some food and blankets from the Taxi Driver who took us to this building.

We started begging for food and everything from the bases of the political parties until we met a Pasteur. He started asking us questions. He knew that we were Muslims. I was sure that deep from his heart he was ready to help us, especially when he realized that we were from Kirkuk. He took us in his personal car to all the human rights organizations and different places until he obtained for us a tent, plates and spoons, clothes for everybody and all the necessary things for a family.

I became able to find a job in a factory for fixing agricultural machines, then in fixing the metal parts of the Turkish cars. It was a good job. I gained 130 US Dollars. The necessary materials for the job were decreasing day by day from the market. My job stopped with the absence of these materials completely. After that I obtained a fake Iraqi passport for 1200 Iraqi Dinars, then a transit visa to Turkey for ten days.

- Hussain, A Kurdish Refugee from Iraq

refugees, than it was in protecting Turkey and the stability of the prevailing state system from mass displacement from Kurdistan.

The safe haven, in many ways, duplicates the geo-politics of previous centuries by acting as a buffer zone between the interests of conflicting states. Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and Syria have each attempted to establish patron-client relations with particular Kurdish factions to undermine a rival party or government. The Kurds, on the other hand, have attempted to make strategic use of regional rivalries to gain access to military and financial support in order to secure autonomous power for their own parties which have taken the place of feudal emirates. As before, Kurdish leaders have come to depend primarily upon conflict to sustain their positions of power, while the governments of each state have intensified and manipulated local conflicts and rivalries to avoid the unsavory prospect of a united Kurdish movement.

However, to reduce the failure of the safe haven to a perpetuation of, or descent into, segmental, feudal, and imperial-style political relations is to ignore the substantial changes that have occurred in Kurdish society over the last several decades. The Kurdish leadership and the leadership of regional governments may be exploiting the same political strategies that have long kept Kurdistan fragmented and dependent, but there are indications that political organization at the popular level has become much more resilient and creative in developing new approaches to conflict-resolution, both within and outside Kurdistan. For example, opposition to the KDP and PUK policies of inviting foreign armies into Kurdistan was widespread not only among Kurds generally, but also from within each party. Thousands of Kurds, organized by the Sulaimaniya Women's Federation, demonstrated against the PUK alliance with Iran in the core of PUK-controlled territory. Party members reportedly "took out their membership cards and trampled them under foot to express their humiliation and indignation." (al-Khafaji, 1996:37)

Kurdish exile organizations have been actively involved in efforts to encourage conflict- resolution between the parties and reestablish a unified, democratic government in the autonomous region. Kurdish leaders of the Paris-based Kurdish Institute and the Kurdish National Congress of North America brought representatives of the feuding parties together to negotiate a settlement and draft constitution for the KRG signed on

July 22, 1994 (Gunter, 1996). The agreement was never implemented, not only because of the intransigence of the party leaders, but, more importantly, because of the direct opposition of the Turkish government, which saw it as tantamount to the establishment of a Kurdish State.

The opposition of the Turkish government is perhaps the single most important factor in preventing the achievement of sustainable conflict-resolution in the region, despite the lack of attention this role has generally received. Since 1995, the American government has been regularly involved in attempting to encourage a rapprochement between the PUK and the KDP to facilitate the formation of a united opposition to Saddam Hussein. It has not, however, explicitly endorsed the legitimacy of an autonomous Kurdish entity in Northern Iraq, even though a recognition of this legitimacy within the international order would likely provide a substantial incentive to the various parties to cooperate in the establishment of a stable administration. The USA had not given such an endorsement primarily to avoid offending its staunch ally, the Turkish government, which fears any precedent which would support the position of its own oppressed Kurdish population. The politics of stalemate which have come to dominate the safe haven are, therefore, sustained directly by the politics of appeasement with regard to Turkey.

7.5 Turkey's Invisible War

The development of a modern nationalist movement in Turkey occurred somewhat later than in Iran and Iraq for reasons discussed above. When its development did begin in the 1960s, the movement increasingly drew from a more diverse social base than was the case in other parts of Kurdistan. Turkey began each decade from 1950 to 1980 with a military coup. Periods of liberalization between the coups allowed for the creation of urban-based opposition groups from across the political spectrum. Organization among the urban working class was facilitated by the passage of the Trade Unions Act of 1963 which allowed for collective actions and strikes (Cengiz, 1996). Among the left-wing organizations established was the Kurdish DDKO, (Eastern Revolutionary Cultural Association) as well as the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Turkey. Many of the Kurdish leaders who became prominent in later years were active in

a series of mass student demonstrations beginning in 1969 when Kurdish nationalist parties began to separate themselves from the Turkish left. In 1970, the Workers Party of Turkey (TIP), whose leaders were Kurdish, became the first party with representation in the Turkish National Assembly to officially recognize the "Kurdish people," after which it was banned.

Following each coup, the military administration took steps to reverse the growing power of opposition groups that had developed since the previous coup. After the 1971 coup, many leftist Turkish and Kurdish organizations were banned and their members imprisoned. However, with the restoration of civilian government, opposition and labour activity intensified once again. According to Cengiz (1996), a Kurdish analyst of industrial worker's organizations in Turkey, the period of 1975 – 1980 was characterized by more strikes and collective actions in the Kurdish areas of Turkey than had occurred since 1960. Both Kutschera (1994) and van Bruinessen characterize the 1970s as a period of intense factionalization of the left and nationalist formations.

> During the 1970s, Turkey experienced an unprecedented political polarization, hand in hand with increasing political violence. Rival organizations of the left and the right fought for control of the squatter settlements in the cities and later also of the rural districts. Kurds could be found both among the right- and left-wing groups, but from the middle of the decade increasingly in separated Kurdish organizations. (van Bruinessen, 1992b:57)

It was in this context that the Partiya Karkaren Kurdistan (Kurdistan Workers Party), or PKK, was formed by militant Kurdish students in Ankara in 1978. The PKK called for an independent Kurdistan and the establishment of a communist society. All the Kurdish organizations were split by divisions arising from personal rivalries, ideological differences, and tribal affiliations, and none could secure anything but a small territorial base. The inhabitants of Southeastern Turkey were caught between the conflicts of various opposition groups and suffered, as well, from the efforts of the military to suppress these organizations. Tens of thousands of refugees who found it impossible to remain neutral in these conflicts, fled to the cities of Turkey and Western Europe (van Bruinessen, 1992b). According to Kutschera, the military coup in 1980 was followed by the most extensive repression of opposition activity since the 1930s.

> The repression of the 1980s, both in numbers of persons seized and imprisoned and in the extent of systematic torture, was far worse than before. The few journalists who managed to attend trials in Diyarbakir wrote that prisoners were sometimes brought to court in metal cages loaded on trucks, hardly able to walk or stand. Prison conditions were so harsh that prisoners staged prolonged hunger strikes that lasted more than a month at a time, or, in more than a few cases, committed suicide. (Kutschera, 1994:13)

Most Kurdish organizations were destroyed and the PKK was forced into exile to Damascus. With assistance from Syria, it began to train its militants for combat in Lebanon. The PKK referred to its fighters as guerrillas, not *peshmurga*, to distinguish itself from the 'feudal KDP.' The PKK targeted not only institutions of what it viewed as a colonial, imperialist regime, but also what it considered to be collaborators with that regime: landlords, police officers and even school teachers. It was these tactics, which earned the PKK its reputation and condemnation by the U.S. and many of its allies, as a terrorist group. Between 1987 and 1989 for example, the PKK, destroyed about 137 schools which it condemned as instruments of assimilation (Kutschera, 1994). By 1989, the Turkish government had recruited 16,000 village guards from among the Kurds to help fight the PKK. Village guards were also attacked by the PKK as collaborators.

To secure its dominance in Southeastern Turkey, the PKK became involved in violent clashes not only with state institutions, but also with rival Kurdish organizations that the PKK denigrated as "primitive nationalists." (Gunter, 1997) In 1988, various Kurdish parties formed a front against the PKK called *Tegver* ("The Movement") led by Kemal Bukay, now Secretary General of the Socialist Party of Kurdistan (PSK) which opposes both the violent tactics of the PKK and the Turkish state. In 1989, several senior leaders of the PKK were arrested, and shortly after that the PKK changed its emphasis from attacking civilians to attacking economic and military targets. The party established alliances with both the PUK, and Turkish leftist groups such as Dev Sol, which gave it more logistical support in the towns. However, the PKK continues to be involved in violent conflicts with the KDP in Northern Iraq.

The conflict between the PKK and the Turkish army continues to be seen by many Western governments as a battle against terrorism – despite a dramatic transformation of the dynamics of that conflict in the 1990s. While the PKK continues to

target village guards and teachers, by 1990 it had begun to direct most of its efforts against the Turkish military and police presence in Southeastern Turkey. The Turkish military on the other hand, has increasingly targetted the general Kurdish population, provoking unprecedented levels of displacement, destroying thousands of Kurdish villages, and consistently earning condemnations from international agencies for its abuse of human rights. According to one of the few Western Journalists to report regularly from southeastern Turkey during this period, the result was a massive shift of support among the Kurdish population to the PKK.

> Feelings toward the PKK grew warmer as the security forces upped their pressure. The PKK might come in and kill a pro-government *mukhtar* and his family, but the security forces would detain a whole village, beat the men and women, ransack houses and then kill a couple of people just for show. By the end of the 1980s, the army had banned villagers from grazing animals and farming on the mountains into which the PKK retreated after attacks. Tractors were confiscated and nightly curfews were enforced. Villagers fled to nearby towns. (Marcus, 1994:18)

Beginning in 1990, the Turkish government renewed its own demographic war against the Kurdish population, creating the context for the ongoing vulnerability of that population to massive displacement. Regional governors in Southeastern Turkey for example, were given the power to evacuate villages in areas of PKK support and to send the populations into internal exile (USCR, 1991). By 1993, human rights activists in Turkey estimated that more than 800 villages had been destroyed and one million people had been internally displaced (USCR, 1994). Most displacees moved to larger urban centres such as Ankara and Istanbul, which, along with the Martial Law restrictions barring access by the press and external observers, makes accurate estimation of their numbers difficult. However, a government minister admitted in 1994 that at least two million people had been internally displaced with nearly 1,400 villages and hamlets emptied in the province of Tunceli (Dersim) province alone. According to USCR (1995), the minister characterized his own government's policies as 'state terrorism,' although under pressure he later revised his remarks.

The massive displacement overpopulated many of the region's cities, worsened already depressed economies, and encouraged the ongoing exodus of refugees from Turkey to Europe. The government continues to blame the exodus on the PKK, but interviews in the

region by human rights agencies indicate that much of the evacuation results from the actions of Turkish security forces. In particular, villagers reported being forced or intimidated into leaving after refusing to join the village guard system or after having been accused of sheltering or supporting the PKK. Eyewitness reports also reported the use by the Turkish army of US military equipment such as armoured personnel carriers, helicopters, and trucks in the evacuation and destruction of villages (USCR, 1995).

The war between the Turkish army and the PKK has caused destruction and displacement on such a scale that the demographic character of Southeastern Turkey has been dramatically transformed with much of its population having moved to the cities. Istanbul now has one of the largest urban concentrations of Kurds anywhere. Nevertheless, the Turkish government has continued to pursue a military solution, despite repeated unilateral cease-fires by the PKK and calls for negotiations. Even after PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan was forced out of Syria and, like so many other Kurds, became a refugee seeking asylum in Europe (Panel 17 – Asylum Claim of Abdullah Ocalan), Turkey has continued with its hard-line approach. Turkey is able to continue in this way because of the extent to which the military continues to dominate an ineffective succession of coalition governments and the ongoing support of allies such as the US, Germany, and, most recently, Israel.

The obsessive focus of both the Turkish government and its western allies on the PKK as the source of the problem has also served to obscure the ongoing efforts of Kurdish activists to work within the Turkish parliamentary system, often at great personal cost. Kutschera describes the transition towards more active Kurdish participation *as Kurds* within this system.

> The Kurds of Turkey are in a paradoxical position. Cultural repression in Turkey is fiercer than in Iraq or Iran, yet Turkey is also where at least the formal attributes of democracy are most respected. Scores of Kurds have served in the Turkish parliament over the years, but in the past these have been landed notables with long-standing ties to Ankara and no wish to advertize their Kurdishness. Since 1983, though, the several legislative elections have provided an arena in which militant younger Kurdish politicians have been able to seize very limited maneuvering room. The elections of October 1991 were the first to witness the emergence of a genuine and explicitly Kurdish bloc, when 18 deputies elected on the Social Democratic (SHP) ticket broke off to join the small People's Labor Party (Halkin Emek Partisi, HEP). It was a mixed group- some

Panel 17: Asylum Application Submitted To The Italian Courts by PKK President Abdullah Ocalan (excerpts)

The underlying basis for my need of asylum relies on the fact of the Kurds being one of history's most ancient peoples whose last waves are driven to the four corners of the world and even now beating on the shores of Italy; a people confronted by a broad-based genocide. I established the Kurdistan Workers Party for national survival, identity and freedom, to facilitate a political solution under the leadership of the party. In accordance with Italy's legislation I use my right to travel around in Europe where Turkey is party to many European bodies. I would like further to elaborate as follows:

a) Despite the fact that the history of the Kurds and Kurdistan is known to date back at least 2500 years, the Turkish Republic denies this nation's history, culture and social structure. This is the official ideology and policy of what is known as Kemalism. In short, in Turkey there is but one country, one government, one nation, one language and the culture of a single people. The implementation of this policy is tantamount to genocide in international law. ...

b) ... We had no choice but to rely on our right to resist, as have other nations. Not only our national identity, freedom, right to organise and to describe ourselves, but also to retain our own names for our children and our mountains. Everything has been Turkified! Even our own primary schools are illegal.

c) ... Objectively, all the world's official bodies including NATO, the European Union, the Islamic Conference, the Turkic Republics and also the UN are consciously on the side of Turkey. This constitutes a great injustice against humanity, law and peace ...

d) Our struggle is being waged in order to put an end to this genocide and to let the world know about it. ...

e) For this reason, there can be no military solution. To insist on that is tantamount to committing genocide. This should be explained properly to the European Union and also internationally. ...

f) Despite the vast imbalance of power our party unilaterally accepted and signed the Geneva Convention. .... Turkey has avoided becoming a signatory to this Convention so as not to be bound by its jurisdiction in law. But in the daily press and broadcasting media everyone from the President to the Chief of Staff accept the fact of war by describing it either as a "hidden war" ...

g) They take cover behind the term "terrorism" to avoid legal liability. This is done by relying on the support of certain foreign powers and in particular the USA. ... According to official figures, in the violence directed against us they killed 20,000 of our people and themselves lost around 10,000. According to the official report of the Prime Minister on the Susurluk affaire, there have been 4,500 extra-judicial killings by state-sponsored death squads, 4,000 Kurdish villages have been depopulated and 3.5 million people forced to migrate. All this proves the extent of the state's terrorism and its crimes against humanity, officially declared and known to all.

h) The greatest falsehood against me both in Turkey and the outside world, is to call me a terrorist. ... I accept my responsibilities as one side in the war. It is impossible that such a huge balance sheet can be the result of terrorist action. The official figure of 30,000 dead can only be the consequence of war. ... The victim of this merciless terror is a nation, is humanity itself. And of me personally, the prime minister, Mesut Yilmaz said: "I will not stop at anything to wipe out every trace of him behind me." So, in fact, it is we who are in the situation of being the greatest victims of terrorism.

i) For all the reasons adduced, primarily those affecting the Kurds, to explain the realities of those peoples faced with annihilation ... and if possible to find a political solution, I found it inevitable that I should go to Rome, Europe's historic capital city, the main door of which is the seat of the European Union. Furthermore, this European nation's democratic identity, its government's democratic structure and the recent refugee migration encouraged me. I didn't come here to be tried but to explain the merciless truth to European public opinion and to seek the chance to create a political opening. ...

(Translation from Turkish original by "Public Relations" <Public-Relations@pkk.org>)

> saw themselves as close to the PKK, while others were more traditional social democrats and nationalists. (Kutschera, 1994:15)

In 1991, under pressure from its allies, the Turkish government removed the ban on the Kurdish language, although not in state institutions such as law courts. The newly elected Kurdish deputies immediately tested the reformist rhetoric of the new government by wearing Kurdish costume and speaking Kurdish in the national assembly. After the leader of the HEP, Feridun Yazar, called for "the equality of the Turkish and Kurdish peoples within the framework of the legitimate principles of law," (Kutshera, 1994) the HEP was banned. The HEP quickly reformed as the Party of Democracy (DEP), but this party was also banned and seven of its deputies charged with crimes against the state. Many of them are still prison. The most famous is Leyla Zana (Panel 18 "On Trial for Being a Kurd"), the first Kurdish woman elected to the Turkish national assembly, who has won several human rights awards and has twice been nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize. The Turkish courts recently increased her prison sentence.

The European Community has pressured Turkey to improve its human rights record, particularly as it concerns the Kurds, and particularly in relation to the harassment, imprisonment, and torture of human rights activists, journalists, and parliamentarians. Although the European community has stressed such improvements as the necessary condition for admission to the EEC, Turkey has made little more than cosmetic changes to its national security legislation. By suppressing all forms of non-violent dissent among Kurds, Turkey's policies further encourage support for violent resistance on the part of organizations like the PKK. This, in turn, allows Turkey to continue to counter any calls for a negotiated settlement as 'support for terrorism.' As a result of this combination of political deadlock in the Turkish government and an unrestrained mandate in Southeastern Turkey for the Turkish military, the forced migration of Kurds continues. In may ways, however, it is an invisible war in that it has yet to attract the level of concern devoted to the Kurds of Iraq within the international order.

In summation, after the defeat of the Barzani movement each state has, to varying degrees, not only been determined to secure a military solution to its Kurdish problem, but has also targetted the Kurdish population in general. Deportation and forced resettle-

Panel 18: "On Trial for Being a Kurd" by Leyla Zana

On Thursday, I and seven other Kurdish members of Turkey's parliament risk the death penalty when the State Security Court returns its verdict in our case. What crimes have we committed to warrant such punishment from a court established by the military dictatorship in 1980? Just one: bearing witness to the Kurdish people's immense tragedy in Turkey.

For seventy years the Kurds' very existence has been denied and their language, identity and culture banned. This systematic cultural genocide in recent years has involved rural depopulation and destruction of Kurdish villages, forests and traditional society. Turkey's human rights minister himself acknowledged that in the past two years the army has evacuated and destroyed at least 1,390 Kurdish villages. Some two million Kurds have been displaced, a dozen towns depopulated and 5 million to 6 million Kurds forced into western Turkey by state terror and economic collapse because of war now in its 11th year.

Elected in 1991 by Kurds to represent and defend their interests and aspirations, we obviously could not remain silent. Our duty as legislators was to speak out, explore all paths to end this frightful war which has torn our country asunder, and seek a peaceful settlement for Turkey's 15 million Kurds in a framework of democracy and existing frontiers.

To speak freely in a country ruled by an anti-democratic constitution and laws imposed by military dictatorship is risky-even for legislators. Death squads have killed more than 2,000 political and human-rights activists uninvolved in the fighting. Among them were 82 activists of our democratic party and 34 journalists and newspaper distributors. Such is the price for challenging the official, military version of events.

For similar reasons, 106 journalists, academics and writers are imprisoned. Mehdi Zana, my husband and former mayor of the main Kurdish city of Diyarbakir, spent 15 years in prison for speaking out and is back serving a four-year jail term for testifying before the European Parliament. ...
I am 33. For 14 years I've lived with persecution and watched many friends tortured or killed for wanting to live in peace and democracy with Turks on the sole condition they respect Kurds' identity and culture. I have two children, a husband and many dear friends. I love life. But my passion for justice for my people, who are suffering for dignity and freedom, is greater. What value is a life of slavery, humiliation and contempt for what you hold dearest-your identity? I will not knuckle under to Turkey's inquisition.

Beyond my fate, I'm concerned about the Kurdish and Turkish peoples. Turkey will not settle the problem of its 15 million Kurds by sending eight Kurdish legislators to the gallows, Turkish extremism risk provoking a general catastrophe for both peoples and for the West, which counts on Turkey as a forward base in a strategically important region. The west should realize Turkey is not just a locale for military bases and electronic eavesdropping. It's a country of passions and conflicts, which can, like the shah's Iran, spill over into the irrational.

If Turkey's warlords assassinate hopes for the peaceful solution that we legislators represent, the road is open for Kurds to switch massively to the camp of violence and Islamic fundamentalism. And if the Kurds, next door to Iran's Islamic revolutionaries, switch, then all Turkey will follow suit. And woe on us all.

Source: The Washington Post, December 5, 1994

ment have become a fundamental and feared element of government relations with the Kurds. As a result, a much wider cross-section of the Kurdish population has become politicized along with their increased vulnerability to displacement.

After the Ayatollahs 'confiscated the Iranian Revolution,' (Ghassemlou, 1993) the Iranian government has attempted to obliterate the presence of opposition forces not only within the country, but those operating from exile as well. Since the Iran-Iraq war, the migrant worker population has merged with the on-going refugee exodus to the extent that the economic factors underlying migration have become difficult to separate from the political factors. While the cultural rights of the Kurds are strictly limited in Iran, their political oppression and economic marginality is shared with much of the Iranian population. Forced migration from Iran, therefore, though massive, has been experienced less in ethnic terms, and more in terms of a generalized vulnerability affecting Iranians from many backgrounds.

The *Anfal* campaign in Iraq represented the culmination of more than ten years of the Baath Party policy of village destruction, forced relocation, and mass executions in Kurdistan. The destruction of the social base of rural existence in Kurdistan, along with the displacement of the Kurdish population, conditioned the Kurds towards uprooting and rendered them more vulnerable to the control of the State. In addition, the experience of chemical gas attacks, internment camps, and mass executions convinced many Kurds of the Baath regime's willingness to take extreme measures against them. These conditions provided the root causes for a mass exodus from Kurdistan after the 1991 Gulf War.

The creation of the safe haven in response to this exodus was an unprecedented intervention in the territory of sovereign state on behalf of refugees. However, in practice it has been more effective in protecting neighbouring states from Kurdish refugees than in protecting Kurds themselves. The continuation of a double blockade from both Iraq and the international community has undermined the economic viability of the safe haven. The lack of a formal economy has exacerbated intra-Kurdish rivalries and the lack of international support has undermined the Kurdistan Regional Government. The civil war between Kurdish parties that has resulted has encouraged the continuation of forced migration from Northern Iraq.

Mass displacement from southeastern Turkey has been chronic, not only as a result of the violent actions of the PKK, but increasingly from the efforts of the Turkish army to destroy the demographic base of support for the PKK by uprooting Kurdish rural society. The obsessive focus of both the Turkish government and its western allies on the PKK as the source of the problem has obscured the ongoing efforts of Kurdish activists to work within the Turkish parliamentary system. Of the states with a Kurdish population, Turkey is the only one that selects its government on a democratic basis. Nevertheless, the government remains determined to prevent meaningful participation by Kurds within that system. In addition, Turkey remains opposed to any recognition of Kurdish autonomy in neighboring countries and its repeated invasions of Northern Iraq – generally ignored by the international community – further undermine the stability of the safe haven. The implications of the combined denial of protection to the Kurds in Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria and of the Kurds' chronic vulnerability to forced migration will be examined in a concluding chapter.

CHAPTER 8
CONCLUSION

This study has explored the Kurdish problem of protection in three dimensions. First, this problem was examined in terms of the refugee regime developed within the international order to respond to forced migration emergencies. Second, this problem has been explored in the context of cultural and categorical order – the national order of things. Finally, it has been analyzed in terms of the political, cultural, and economic denial of protection to the Kurds in Iraq, Iran, Turkey, and Syria, and in terms of the Kurdish response to this denial –a diverse succession of nationalist and oppositional movements. This study has demonstrated the relationship between the violent suppression of these movements and the Kurds' chronic vulnerability to forced migration. For many Kurdish refugees, the problem of protection is not reducible to individualized persecution, but is an integral part of their shared predicament as Kurds – as a nation denied protection and legitimacy in the international order.

The refugee regime that developed after World War I defined the problem of protection primarily in terms of national groups left stateless after specific historical events. Its mandate was both temporary and solution-oriented, even if the system of nation-states obstructed the pursuit of those solutions. The UNHCR, as the organizational instrument of the current refugee regime, has maintained both an emphasis on the temporary, palliative approach to protection, and a contradictory, though diminished, orientation towards solution. The international order's creation of the safe haven, and the UNHCR's role in repatriating and reestablishing Kurdish refugees in Northern Iraq, was the first of several interventions indicating a new willingness of the refugee regime to sanction an operational capacity in the territory of sovereign state. The economic stagnation and periodic conflict within the safe haven have ensured that Kurdish refugees from Iraq, along with those from Iran, Turkey and Syria, continue to seek asylum throughout the world. The intervention by the international order to provide collective protection to Kurdish refugees has been just as temporary and detached from durable solutions as the refugee's regimes palliative protection of individual refugees.

The international order, under which the pre-UNHCR refugee regime was developed, was still unstable enough to allow for a categorical approach to refugee protection. The impact of two world wars on Europe had so ruptured the national order of things, that it remained conceivable to transfer populations en masse back to the homelands from which they had fled or been deported, or, more frequently, resettle them in an existing or newly-created nation-state. The Kurds achieved two benchmarks of Kurdish independence during this period that have secured a mythic place in the Kurdish narrative of national struggle: the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres, which opened up a space within the categorical order for a potential Kurdish State, and the 1946 Republic of Mahabad, created in the political space opened up by geo-political rivalries.

During the Cold War the principle of national sovereignty became more entrenched and the categorical order was less open to adjustment. Several states were willing to exploit Kurdish nationalist ambitions for their narrow political interests, but not one has supported the actual achievement of Kurdish independence. The refugee regime that prevailed under the UNHCR during the cold war tended to emphasize the individual aspect of the denial of protection, particularly as that organization took on a more global mandate. Since the end of the Cold War and the development of a global refugee dilemma, the rigidity of the categorical order has been intensified by the increasing restrictiveness of states in allowing refugees access to asylum. The recent history of interventions against the sovereignty of nation-states to protect refugees has been influenced more by a strategy of refugee containment than of protection leading to solution.

The recent history of Kurdish forced migration displays many of the features of a refugee regime increasingly unable to provide the palliative protection at the core of its organizational mandate. Kurdish refugees continue to risk considerable danger to cross international borders only to become trapped in a legal limbo in states that do not grant them asylum, but often attempt to transfer the refugee burden to neighboring states. Only a small proportion are selected for resettlement or granted asylum. Canada's asylum determination procedures indicate the extent to which the regional background of Kurdish refugees affects their chances of positive status determination. Kurds from Iraq

are more likely to be admitted to the categorical order of legitimate refugeeness than Kurds from Turkey.

Refugees threaten the categorical integrity of the international order. This integrity is reinforced by a normative cultural order that sorts peoples into legitimate types and categories. As the nation has become the principle guarantor of protection, an inherent connection between access to protection and national legitimacy has been established. The refugee regime can be seen, as a result, as a means to protect the international order against the destablizing effects of forced migration. The palliative protection extended by international agencies, such as the UNHCR, is intended to mediate the liminal arc of the refugee from protection denied to protection restored. The threat of the refugee is neutralized through repatriation to a state of origin or naturalized by integration into a new nation-state. The combination of restricted access to asylum and resettlement along with the failure of in-country protective measures such as the safe haven, have arrested this liminal transformation and confined refugees to a limbo zone 'betwixt and between' the categorical order.

Kurdish refugee communities in Canada replicate many of the social divisions and conflicts of the countries they have fled. They have also preserved a sense of shared predicament as Kurds and a normative ethic towards unity and solidarity on behalf of Kurdistan. Given access to the technologies of communication and opportunities for organization denied to them in Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria, the Kurds of the diaspora have endeavored to transform this shared predicament and normative ethos into a transnational imagined community. The linkages of information and communication between Kurdish communities are often as strong or stronger across national boundaries than within them. The efforts of these Kurds demonstrate their desire to remain connected to the historical predicament of Kurdistan. It also indicates that the problem of protection for many Kurds has to be understood as a collective dilemma.

By bringing together the discourses of refugee protection and nationalism it is possible to understand the liminality of the individual refugee reflected in the collective liminality of the refugee's imagined community. Although the Kurds have a long history of expressing a distinct identity, the thorough politicization of that identity in this century has made even the most basic facts about the Kurds a subject of intense dispute. For

centuries Kurdistan was known as the *home of the Kurds* . Today its existence as a homeland is denied and its analysis as a geographic unit contested. Similar controversies apply to all contemporary debates concerning Kurdish culture and demographics.

The Kurds are not *in essence* any more divided or conflictual than Turks, Arabs or Persians. Each of the latter, however, has had the advantage of state institutions to standardize and legitimize national identities, languages, and histories. During the imperial order dominated by the Ottomans and successive Persian dynasties, all of these peoples shared a similar configuration of protective relations determined by relative position in religious, lineage, and feudal hierarchies. Ethnicity was of limited practical relevance in securing protection or power. While all of these peoples experienced the collapse of this order at the turn of the century, for the Kurds, this collapse was accompanied by a process of fragmentation and incorporation into more complex political systems. The creation of a new international order, in which the communal identities under the former imperial order were transformed into national identities, externalized the Kurds who have remained, as a result, a liminal and threatening category.

The nation-state became the principle legitimate guarantor of protection, the sole universal value of the international order, and the idealized instrument of social change. The response of the Kurds to their denial of protection and legitimacy in the international order has taken the form of diverse nationalist and oppositional movements each with the objective of forcing a reconfiguration of the state system to recognize their right to cultural freedoms, political autonomy, and economic progress. Nationalism, however, does not derive its power from symbolic and normative values alone. The persistence of nationalist movements requires organization and a sustained commitment by members of its imagined community towards political struggle.

For most of this century, the governments of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria have been successful in dividing, co-opting, and defeating the Kurdish resistance movements. They have taken advantage of persistent social divisions within Kurdistan, their superior military capacities, and the economic underdevelopment of Kurdish regions. Kurdish nationalist resistance has continued as a result of the armed struggle of Kurds in an isolated and mountainous territory, the manipulation by Kurdish leaders of geo-political

rivalries, and the growing support of the Kurdish population united by *Kurdayeti* or revolutionary ideals.

Internal divisions have, as always, played a prominent role in undermining the success of the Kurdish nationalist struggle. However, the principle sources of this struggle's failure to achieve its goals arises from the opposition by the principle powers of the international community to Kurdish self-government and the inflated military capacities of Turkey, Iran, and Iraq which allows them to pursue a military solution to the Kurdish problem. The combination of international opposition or indifference to the Kurdish struggle, and access to weapons of mass destruction by the region's states, has resulted in a demographic war against the Kurds that reached genocidal proportions in Iraq, and has made all Kurds vulnerable to forced migration.

The conflict between an individualized, legalistic determination of protection within the international order and the political and military struggle for categorical legitimacy has important implications for finding a durable solution to the Kurdish problem of protection. The political interests and military power of the legitimate member states of the international order will not allow for the creation of a bordered power-container called Kurdistan. In the absence of a total collapse by any of the regimes involved, the ideal of a Kurdish state will remain an externalized and destabilizing threat to the hegemonic topography. The only other option for the Kurds is to gain protection within the international order as presently constituted, despite a history of direct attacks by those Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and Syria on the Kurds as a people. Most Kurdish political movements have come to emphasize this option and have framed their political objectives around gaining a measure of cultural recognition, self-government, democratization, and economic reform within the current state-system.

Under the present circumstances there is little basis for optimism for a durable solution to the Kurdish problem of protection. The chance of the Kurds gaining meaningful protection and legitimacy within the current state system are not much better than those of attaining an independent Kurdish state. The Kurds of Iraq have attained a higher level of autonomy than those of Iran, Turkey, or Syria. Nevertheless, their position remains unstable and insecure as a result of internal strife, economic stagnation, and the ever-present threat that the Baath regime will renew its efforts to secure a 'final solution'

to the Kurdish problem. The Kurds of Iran are caught between the willingness of the Islamic regime to use its full military power to suppress any political movement that threatens the unity and hegemony of a theocratic state, and the tentative reform process of a new political administration. The latter has made only tentative steps toward liberalization for Iranians generally, and no significant movement towards a recognition of Kurdish cultural and political rights.

The Kurds of Syria have entered into a new and more vulnerable phase of their relationship with the Baath regime following the departure of the PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan. If a new stable PKK leadership emerges with Syrian support, the marginal protection enjoyed by Syrian Kurds, as a result of the patronage relationship between Damascus and the PKK, could continue. If the PKK ceases to be useful to the Asad regime, the Syrian Kurds may become the next to suffer mass forced migration or deportation.

The situation of the Kurds in Turkey remains the most paradoxical. They have suffered the extreme denial of their identity as well as the mass depopulation of southeastern Turkey from a intense and largely invisible war between the government and the PKK. In this context, any political expression of a Kurdish identity is construed as support for 'terrorism.' At the same time, the Turkish parliamentary system holds the greatest promise for enfranchising the Kurdish political program within a civil, representative institution. However, the opposition of the Turkish military and political elites to opening the parliamentary system to meaningful participation by Kurds ensures continued support for the armed struggle, even without Abdullah Ocalan.

Durable solutions to the Kurdish problem of protection will require a measure of categorical recognition acceptable to most Kurds within each of the states concerned. However, the orientation of the international order to this problem remains focussed on its effects – refugees – rather than on its root causes. As a result, the vulnerability of Kurds to forced migration as individuals, as families, and as a people remains unresolved.

REFERENCES CITED

Amirahmadi, Hooshang (1987) A Theory of Ethnic Collective Movements and Its Application to Iran, Ethnic and Racial Studies, 10(4), October.

Amnesty International (1995) *Iraq: Human Rights Abuses in Iraqi Kurdistan since 1991*, London AI Index: MDE 14/01/95

Anderson, Benedict (1991) *Imagined Communities*, London, Verso.

Anter, Musa (1992) My Memoirs, translated by Iskender Ozden, Kurdistan Report, #10

Antonius, Rachad (1994)): Between Mosaic and Wave: Instrumentalist Ethnicity in the Middle East, Cahiers de Recherche Sociologique; 1993, 20

Appadurai, Arjun (1981) Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy, Public Culture, Vol. 2, No. 3.

Bhabha, Homi (1990) *Nation and Narration*, New York, Routledge.

Baker, Ron (ed) (1983) *The Psychosocial Problems of Refugees*, London, The British Refugee Council and European Consultation on Refugees and Exiles.

Barkey, Henri J. and Graham E. Fuller (1997) Turkey's Kurdish Question: Critical Turning Points and Missed Opportunities, Middle East Journal, 51:1, 59-70

Barth, Fredrik (1953) *Principles of Social Organization in Southern Kurdistan*, Oslo, Broderend Jorgensen

Bengio, Ofra (1998) *Saddam's Word: Political Discourse in Iraq*, New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press

Blum, Carolyn Patty (1995) Heeding the Alarm: A Reaffirmation of the Principles of Refugee Protection, Journal of Refugee Studies, Vol. 8, No. 3.

Bulloch, John and Harvey Morris (1992) *No Friends But The Mountains: The Tragic History of the Kurds*, London, Penguin

Carnegie Endowment for the Arts (1924) The Treaties Of Peace, 1919-1923, New York

Cengiz, Seyfi (1996) Workers Movements in Turkish Kurdistan translated by Senem Güneşer,published by the Kurdish Study Group, Sydney, Australia

Chaliand, Gérard (1994) *The Kurdish Tragedy*, London and New Jersey, Zed Books Ltd.

Chaliand, Gérard and Jean-Pierre Rageau (1995) The Penguin Atlas of Diasporas, New York, Penguin Books USA Ltd.

Chaliand, Gérard editor(1993) *A People Without A Country: The Kurds and Kurdistan*, New York, Olive Branch Press

Chyet, Michael (1991) *And A Thornbush Sprang up Between Them: Studies on Mem û Zin, a Kurdish Romance,* Ph. D dissertation, University of California at Berkeley.

Ciment, James (1996) *The Kurds: State and Minority in Turkey, Iraq, and Iran*, New York, Facts on File

CMCN (1996) *Situational Analysis Calgary Kurdish Community*, Calgary Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, Calgary, 1996

Coles, G.J.L. (1988) The Human Rights Approach to the Solution of the Refugee Problem: A Theoretical and Practical Enquiry in *Human Rights and the Protection of Refugees Under International Law*, edited by Alan E. Nash, Halifax, The Institute for Research on Public Policy.

Comaroff, John L. (1987) Totemism and Ethnicity: Consciousness, Practice and the Signs of Inequality Ethnos; 1987, 52:3-4

Connor, Walker (1978) A Nation is a Nation, is a State, is an Ethnic Group, is a...., Ethnic and Racial Studies, 1:4, pp. 379-88.

_____ (1993) Beyond Reason: The Nature of the Ethnonational Bond, Ethnic and Racial Studies. 6:3, July

De Almeida e Silva, Manoel (1991) Persian Gulf Exodus Stretched Resources Refugees, No. 87, October, Geneva, UNHCR

de Voe, Dorsh Marie (1981) Framing Refugees as Clients, International Migration Review, Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 88-94.

Dewdney, John C. (1971) *Turkey*, London, Chatto & Windas

Dillon, Michael (1998) The Scandal of the Refugee: Some Reflections on the "Inter" of International Relations, Refuge, Vol. 17, No. 6, December.

Douglass, William A. (1988) A Critique of Recent Trends in the Analysis of Ethnonationalism, Ethnic and Racial Studies, II(2), April

Eagleton, W. (1963) *The Kurdish Republic of 1946*, London, Oxford University Press

Edmonds, C.J. (1925) A Kurdish Newspaper:'Rozhi-i Kurdistan', Journal of the Royal

Central Asian Society, Vol. XII, 83-90.

_____ (1957) *Kurds, Turks, and Arabs*, London, Oxford University Press

_____ (1971) Kurdish Nationalism Journal of Contemporary History, 6:1

Entessar, Nader (1992) *Kurdish Ethnonationalism*, Boulder & London, Lynne Rienner

Evans, Dominic (1998) Kurdish Farmers Have Bumper Wheat Crop, No Buyers, Reuters, July 1

Farouk-Sluglett, Marion and Peter Sluglett (1990) *Iraq Since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship*, London, New York, I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd

Fried, M. (1968) On the Concept of Tribe and Tribal Society' in *Essays on the Problem of the Tribe*, edited by June Helm, Proceedings of the 1967 Annual Spring Meeting of the American Ethnological Society.

Geertz, Clifford (1963) The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States, in Clifford Geertz (ed.) *Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa*, New York, Free Press

Gellner, Ernest (1983) *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford, Blackwell

Ghassemlou, A.R. (1965) *Kurdistan and the Kurds*, London, Collet's Ltd.

_____ (1993) Kurdistan in Iran in *A People Without a Country: The Kurds & Kurdistan*, Gerard Chaliand ed., New York, Olive Branch Press

Giddens, Anthony (1985) *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism, ii. The Nation-State and Violence*, Cambridge, Polity Press

Goodwin-Gill, Guy S. *The Refugee in International Law* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983)

_____ (1988) Human Rights and the Protection of Refugees under International Law in *Human Rights and the Protection of Refugees Under International Law*, edited by Alan E.Nash, Halifax, The Institute for Research on Public Policy.

Gordenker, L. (1987) *Refugees in International Politics*, New York, Columbia University Press.

Guest, Iain (1998) Refugee Protection in a Lawless World, *On The Record*, Vol. 2, No. 6

Gunter, Michael M. (1992) *The Kurds of Iraq: Tragedy and Hope*, New York, St. Martin's Press

_____ (1996) Civil War in Kurdistan: The KDP-PUK Conflict in The Middle East Journal, 50(2), Spring

_____ (1997) *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, New York, St. Martin's Press

Hansen, A. and Oliver-Smith, A., eds. (1982) *Involuntary Migration and Resettlement*, Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press.

Harris, G.S. (1977) Ethnic Conflict and the Kurds, The Annals, Vol. 433, September

Hassanpour, Amir (1992) *Nationalism and Language in Kurdistan, 1918-1985*, San Francisco, Mellen Research University Press

Hathaway, James C. (1988) International Refugee Law: Humanitarian Standard or Protectionist Ploy? in *Human Rights and the Protection of Refugees Under International Law*, edited by Alan E.Nash, Halifax, The Institute for Research on Public Policy.

_____ (1995) New Directions to Avoid Hard Problems: The Distortion of the Palliative Role of Refugee Protection, Journal of Refugee Studies, Vol. 8, No. 3

Hiro, Dilip (1991) *The Longest War: The Iran-Iraq Military Conflict*, New York, Routledge

_____ (1992) *Desert Shield to Desert Storm: The Second Gulf War*, London, Harper Collins

Hobsbawn, Eric (1983) Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe 1870-1914, in *The Invention of Tradition*. Ed. Eric Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press

Holborne, Louise W. (1975) *Refugees: A Problem of Our Time: The Work of the United Nations High Commissioner fro Refugeees, 1951-1972*, Metuchen, N.J., Scarecrow Press)

Hyman, Anthony 1988 *Elusive Kurdistan: The Struggle For Recognition*, London, Centre for Security and Conflict Studies

Immigration and Refugee Board (1996) *Turkey: The Situation of the Kurds*, Question and Answer Series, Research Directorate, Documentation, Information and Research Branch, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa, Canada.

Izady, Mehrdad R. (1992) *The Kurds: A Concise Handbook*, Washington, Taylor & Francis

_____ (1993) Exploring Kurdish Origins, Kurdish Life, Number 7, Summer

al-Jabbar, Faleh Abd (1992(Why The Uprisings Failed, Middle East Report, May-June,

Jaeger, Gilbert (1995) A Comment on the Distortion of the Palliative Role of Refugee Protection, Journal of Refugee Studies, Vol. 8, No. 3.

Jamil, Pevine (1995) Les Kurdes, Droits de l'Homme sans Frontières, No. 1-2

Joly, Danielle (1992) *Refugees: Asylum in Europe?*, Boulder, Westview Press

Jwaideh, Wadie (1960) *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement: Its Origins and Development*, Ph.D Dissertation, Syracuse University)

Karadaghi, Kamran The Two Gulf Wars: The Kurds on the World Stage, 1979-1992 in *A People Without a Country: The Kurds & Kurdistan*, Gerard Chaliand ed., New York, Olive Branch Press

Kedouri, Elie (1994) Nationalism and Self-Determination in Hutchinson, John and Anthony D. Smith editors, *Nationalism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press

Keller, S.L. (1975) *Uprooting and Social Change*, New Delhi, Manohar Book Service

Kendal (1993a) The Kurds under the Ottoman Empire in *A People Without a Country: The Kurds & Kurdistan*, Gerard Chaliand ed., New York, Olive Branch Press

_____ (1993b) Kurdistan in Turkey in *A People Without a Country: The Kurds & Kurdistan*, Gerard Chaliand ed., New York, Olive Branch Press

_____ (1993b) The Kurds in the Soviet Union, in *A People Without a Country: The Kurds & Kurdistan*, Gerard Chaliand ed., New York, Olive Branch Press

al-Khafaji, Isam (1996) The Destruction of Iraqi Kurdistan Middle East Report, October-December

Khoury, Philip S. (1987) *Syria and The French Mandate*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press

_____ (1993) Syrian Urban Politics in Transition: the Quarters of Damascus during the French Mandate in *The Modern Middle East*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, edited by Albert Hourani, et al, University of California Press

Kinnane, Derk (1964) *The Kurds and Kurdistan*, London, New York, Oxford University Press

Koohi-Kamali, Fereshteh (1992) The Development of Nationalism in Iranian Kurdistan in The Kurds: A Contemporary Overview, edited by Philip G. Kreyenbroek and Stefan Sperl, London and New York, Routledge

Kreyenbroek, Philip (1991) On The Kurdish Language in The Kurds: A Contemporary Overview, edited by Philip G. Kreyenbroek and Stefan Sperl, London and New

York, Routledge

Kunz, E.F. (1973) The Refugee in Flight: Kinetic Models and Forms of Displacement, International Migration Review, Vol. 7, Number 2, pp. 125-146.
_____ (1981) Exile and Resettlement: Refugee Theory, International Migration Review, Vol, 15, Number 1, 42-51

Kurdish Institute at Brussels (1989) *The Kurdistan File*, Brussels, Kurdish Foundation.

Kurdish Library (1992) Kurds and Kurdistan: Facts and Figures in Kurdish Studies, An International Journal, , Vol. 5, Numbers 1 & 2 Spring-Fall 1992.

Kurdish Life, Spring (1995), Centre for Research, The Kurdish Library, New York

Kushner, David (1977) The Rise of Turkish Nationalism: 1876 – 1908, London, Frank Cass and Company Ltd.

Kutschera, Chris (1994) Mad Dreams of Independence , Middle East Report, July-August, 1994

Laizer, Sheri (1996) *Martyrs, Traitors and Patriots: Kurdistan After The Gulf War*, London, Zed Books

Langer, Beryl (1990) From History to Ethnicity: El Salvadoran Refugees in Melbourne, Journal of Intercultural Studies, 1990, Vol. 11, No. 2.

Leach, E.R. (1940) *Social and Economic Organization of the Rowanduz Kurds*, Monographs in Social Anthropology, no. 3, London, School of Economics and Political Science

Leezenberg, Michael (1993) Gorani Influence on Central Kurdish: Substratum or Prestige Borrowing? Amsterdam, Institute for Logic, Language and Computation, University of Amsterdam, ILLC Prepublication, Series X--93-03.

Lewis, Bernard (1968) *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, London, Oxford University Press

MacKenzie, D.N. (1961) The Origins of Kurdish, Transactions of the Philological Society, pp. 68-80

Malkki, Liisa H. (1995) *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology Among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press

Marcus, Aliza (1993) Turkey's Kurds After the Gulf War: A Report from the Southeast in *A People Without a Country: The Kurds & Kurdistan*, Gerard Chaliand ed., New . York, Olive Branch Press

_____(1994) City in the War Zone, Middle East Report, July-August, 1994

McDowall, David (1985) *The Kurds*, London, Minority Rights Group Ltd, Report No. 23

_____ (1992) *The Kurds: A Nation Denied*, London, Minority Rights Publications

_____ (1996) A Modern History of the Kurds, London, New York, I.B. Tauris

Meiselas, Susan (1997) *Kurdistan: In The Shadow of History*, New York, Random House

Menashri, David (1988) Khomeini's Policy Towards Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Milton Esman and Itamar Rabinovich, *Ethnicity, Pluralism and the State in the Middle East*, Ithaca and London

Middle East Times, 8-14 September 1992.

Middle East Watch (1996) *Genocide in Iraq: The Anfal Campaign Against The Kurds*, New York, Human Rights Watch

Minorsky, Vladimir (1943) The Guran, Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, Volume XI, pp. 75-103

Naamani, Israel T. (1966) The Kurdish Drive for Self-Determination in The Middle East Journal, Volume 20:3, Summer, pp. 279-295

Nagel, Joane and Brad Whorton (1992) Ethnic Conflict and the World System: International Competition in Iraq (1961 –1991) and Angola (1974-1991) in Journal of Political and Military Sociology, 20:1, pp. 1-35

Nazdar, Mustafa (1993) The Kurds in Syria in *A People Without a Country: The Kurds & Kurdistan*, Gerard Chaliand ed., New York, Olive Branch Press

Nezan, Kendal (1996) The Kurds: Current Position and Historical Background in *Kurdish Culture and Identity*, edited by Philip Kreyenbroek and Christine Allison, London and New Jersey, Zed Books.

Nisan, Mordechai (1991) *Minorities in the Middle East: A History of Struggle and Self-Expression*, Jefferson N.C. and London, McFarland & Company, Inc.

Northedge, F.S. (1986) *The League of Nations: Its Life and Times 1920 – 1946*, New York, Homes & Meier

Norwegian Forum for Freedom of Expression (1996) *Freedom of Living in Turkey*, Oslo

Nyers, Peter (1998) Refugees, Humanitarian Emergencies, and the Politicization of Life, Refuge, Vol. 17, No. 6

Olson, Robert (1989) *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion, 1880-1925*, University of Texas Press, Austin

_____ (1991) Five Stages of Kurdish Nationalism: 1880-1980 Journal of the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs, Volume 12:2, July

Olzak, Susan (1985) Ethnicity and Theories of Ethnic Collective Behavior, Research in Social Movements, Conflicts, and Change, Vol. 8, pp. 65-85

Ofteringer, Ronald and Ralf Bäcker 1994, A Republic of Statelessness: Three Years of Humanitarian Intervention in Iraqi Kurdistan, Middle East Report, March-June,

Parsons, Talcott (1952) *Essays in Sociological Theory Pure and Applied*, Glencoe, Illinois, The Free Press

Project Ploughshares (1998) *Canadian Military Industry Database Report*, Waterloo, Ontario; Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies

Rambout, L. (1947) *Les Kurdes et le Droit*, Paris, Editions du Cerf.

Randal, Jonathon C. (1997) *After Such Knowledge, What Forgiveness?: My Encounters With Kurdistan*, New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux

Reflex, (1991-1997) A monthly digest of cases prepared by Legal Services, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa.

Renan, Ernest (1882) *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation*, translated by Ida Mae Snyder, Calmann-Levy, Paris

Richmond, Anthony H. (1988) Sociological Theories of International Migration: The Case of Refugees, Current Sociology, Vol. 36, Number 2, pp. 7-25,

Robinson, Richard D. (1963) *The First Turkish Republic: A Case Study in National Development*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, U.S.A.

Robinson, Vaughan (1990) Into the Next Millennium: An Agenda for Refugee Studies. Journal of Refugee Studies, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 3-15.

Roosevelt Jr., Archie (1993) The Kurdish Republic of Mahabad in *A People Without a Country: The Kurds & Kurdistan*, Gerard Chaliand ed., New York, Olive Branch Press

Shacknove, Andrew E. (1985) Who Is A Refugee? Ethics 95, January, 1985

Shakely, Ferhad (1992) *Kurdish Nationalism in Mam U Zin of Ahmad-I Khani*, Kurdish Institute of Brussels

Shaw, Stanford J. and Ezel Kural Shaw (1977) *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Volume II: Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808-1975*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, U.K..

Sim, Richard (1980) Kurdistan: The Search For Recognition, *Conflict Studies* 124, London,. Institute for the Study of Conflict

Smith, Anthony (1984) Ethnic Myths and Ethnic Revivals Archives Europeennes de Sociologie; 25,2

_____ (1994) The Origins of Nations in *Nationalism* , edited by John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, Oxford, Oxford University Press

Statistics Canada, Canadian Census Data published between 1986 and 1998, Ottawa, Ministry of Industry, Science and Technology.

Stein, Barry N. (1986) The Experience of Being A Refugee: Insights from the Research Literature in *Refugee Mental Health in Resettlement Countries*, edited by Carolyn Williams and Joseph Westermeyer

Stirling, Paul (1965) *Turkish Village* , Copyright 1965, 1994, Paul Stirling

Turner, Victor (1967) *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*, Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press

UNHCR (1988) *Handbook on Procedures and Criteria for Determining Refugee Status*, Geneva, HCP /IP /4 / Eng. Rev. 1

_____ (1993) *The State of the World's Refugees 1993: The Challenge of Protection* United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees., London, Penguin, 1993

USCR, 1984-1998: World Refugee Surveys, published annually by the U.S. Committee for Refugees, Washington, American Council for Nationalities Service

van Bruinessen, Martin (1978) *Agha, Shaikh and State: On the Social and Political Organization of Kurdistan.* Rijswijk, Holland: Europrint. (Published by Zed Books Ltd, London, 1992)

_____ (1989) The Ethnic Identity of the Kurds in *Ethnic Groups in the Republic of Turkey*, edited by P.A. Andrews, Wiesbaden, Ludwig Reichert

_____ (1992) *Agha, Sheikh, and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*, London, Zed Books

_____ (1992b) Kurdish Society, Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Refugee Problems in The Kurds: A Contemporary Overview, edited by Philip G. Kreyenbroek and

Stefan Sperl, London and New York, Routledge

Vanly, Ismet Sheriff (1992) The Kurds in Syria and Lebanon in The Kurds: A Contemporary Overview, edited by Philip G. Kreyenbroek and Stefan Sperl, London and New York, Routledge

_____ (1993) Kurdistan in Iraq in *A People Without a Country: The Kurds & Kurdistan*, Gerard Chaliand ed., New York, Olive Branch Press

Vryonis, Speros (1991) *The Turkish State and History: Clio Meets The Grey Wolf.* Thessaloniki, Institute For Balkan Studies

Wahby, Tawfiq (1965) The Origins of the Kurds and Their Language cited in Hassanpour, 1992.

Wahby, Tawfiq and Edmonds, C.J. (1966) *A Kurdish-English Dictionary*, London, Oxford University Press.:

Waldron, S. (1988) Working in the Dark. Why Social Anthropological Research is Essential in Refugee Administration, *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2.

Wallerstein, Immanuel (1987) The Construction of Peoplehood: Racism, Nationalism, Ethnicity Sociological Forum; 1987, 2, 2, spring

_____ (1994) Reply to Eric Wolf, Current Anthropology, Vol. 35,No. 1

Warner, Daniel (1998) Refugees, UNHCR and Human Rights: Current Dilemmas of Conflicting Mandates, *Refuge*, Vol. 17, No. 6

Weber, Max (1978) *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, Berkeley, University of California Press

Weeks, Richard ed. (1974) *A World Ethnographic Survey*, 2nd Edition, U.S.A.

White, Jenny B. (1995) Turks in Germany: Overview of the Literature, Middle East Studies Association Bulletin, 29, July, 1995

Wilson, A.T. (1931) *Mesopotamia 1917-1920. A Clash of Loyalites*, Oxford University Press

Winter, Roger P. (1988) The International Refugee Protection System in Nash, Alan E. ed., *Human Rights and the Protection of Refugees under International Law*, Halifax, The Institute for Research on Public Policy.

Wolcott, Harry F. (1990) *Writing Up Qualitative Research*, London, Sage Publications.

Wolf, Eric (1994) Perilous Ideas: Race, Culture, People, Current Anthropology, Vol. 35, No. 1

Wong, Len (1997) Inland Refugee Claims In Canada in *Refuge*, 16:6, December

Zana, Mehdi (1998) unpublished statement to the Washington Kurdish Institute's Kurdish Conflict Resolution Forum, at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, DC, July 28, 1998

Zetter, R.W. (1985) Refugees, Access and Labelling, in Wood, G. editor, *Labelling in Development Policy*, London, Sage.

Zolberg, Aristide and Astri Suhrke, Sergio Aguayo (1989) Escape From Violence: Conflict and the Refugee Crisis in the Developing World, New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press

APPENDIX 1

TREATIES, PROTOCOLS, AND RESOLUTIONS

Page

1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.....239

1967 Protocol Relating To The Status of Refugees.....240

The Treaty of Sèvres (August 10, 1920).....241

The 11 March 1970 Proclamation.....242

Resolution 688 (1991).....243

1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees
Article 1, Sections A, B, & C*

A. For the purposes of the present Convention, the term "refugee" shall apply to any person who:
(1) Has been considered a refugee under the Arrangements of 12 May 1926 and 30 June 1926 and 30 June 1928 or under the Conventions of 28 October 1933 and 10 February 1938, the Protocol of 14 September 1939 or the Constitution of the International Refugee Organization; ...
(2) As a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

...

B. (1) For the purposes of this Convention, the words "events occurring before 1 January 1951" in Article 1, Section A, shall be understood to mean either:
(a) "events occurring in Europe before 1 January 1951" or
(b) "events occurring in Europe or elsewhere before 1 January 1951"

and each Contracting State shall make a declaration at the time of signature, ratification or accession, specifying which of these meanings it applies for the purpose of its obligations under this Convention.

...

C. This Convention shall cease to apply to any person falling under the terms of Section A if :
(1) He has voluntarily re-availed himself of the protection of the country of his nationality; or
(2) Having lost his nationality, he has voluntarily re-acquired it; or
(3) He has acquired a new nationality, and enjoys the protection of the country of his new nationality; or
(4) He has voluntarily re-established himself in the country which he left or outside which he remained owing to fear of persecution; or
(5) He can no longer, because the circumstances in connexion with which he has been recognized as a refugee have ceased to exist, continues to refuse to avail himself of the protection of the country of nationality;
Provided that this paragraph shall not apply to a refugee falling under section A (1) of this Article who is able to invoke compelling reasons arising out of previous persecution for refusing to avail himself of the protection of the country of nationality;
(6) Being a person who has no nationality he is, because the circumstances in connexion with which he has been recognized as a refugee have ceased to exist, he is able to return to the country of his former habitual residence.

---

* United Nations *Treaty Series*, vol. 189, p. 137

1967 Protocol Relating To The Status of Refugees - Article 1

The States Parties to the present Protocol,

Considering that the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees done at Geneva on 28 July 1951 (hereinafter referred to as the Convention) covers only those persons who have become refugees as a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951,

Considering that new refugee situations have arisen since the Convention was adopted and that the refugees concerned may therefore not fall within the scope of the Convention,

Considering that it is desirable that equal status should be enjoyed by all refugees covered by the definition in the Convention irrespective of the dateline 1 January 1951,

Have agreed as follows:

Article 1
General Provision

1. The States Parties to the present Protocol undertake to apply articles 2 to 34 inclusive of the Convention to refugees as hereinafter defined.

2. For the purpose of the present Protocol, the term "refugee" shall except as regards the application of paragraph 3 of this article, mean any person within the definition of article 1 of the Convention as if the words "As a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and..." and the words "... as a result of such events", in article 1 A (2) were omitted.

3. The present Protocol shall be applied by the States Parties hereto without any geographic limitation, save that existing declarations made by States already Parties to the Convention in accordance with article 1 B (1) *(a)* of the Convention, shall, unless extended under article 1 B (2) thereof, apply also under the present Protocol.

---

* United Nations, *Treaty Series*, Vol. 606

The Treaty of Sèvres, 1920

(from: The Treaties of Peace 1919-1923, Vol. II, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, New York, 1924.)

SECTION III.
KURDISTAN.
ARTICLE 62.

A Commission sitting at Constantinople and composed of three members appointed by the British, French and Italian Governments respectively shall draft within six months from the coming into force of the present Treaty a scheme of local autonomy for the predominantly Kurdish areas lying east of the Euphrates, south of the southern boundary of Armenia as it may be hereafter determined, and north of the frontier of Turkey with Syria and Mesopotamia, as defined in Article 27, II (2) and (3). If unanimity cannot be secured on any question, it will be referred by the members of the Commission to their respective Governments. The scheme shall contain full safeguards for the protection of the Assyro-Chaldeans and other racial or religious minorities within these areas, and with this object a Commission composed of British, French, Italian, Persian and Kurdish representatives shall visit the spot to examine and decide what rectifications, if any, should be made in the Turkish frontier where, under the provisions of the present Treaty, that frontier coincides with that of Persia.

ARTICLE 63.

The Turkish Government hereby agrees to accept and execute the decisions of both the Commissions mentioned in Article 62 within three months from their communication to the said Government.

ARTICLE 64.

If within one year from the coming into force of the present Treaty the Kurdish peoples within the areas defined in Article 62 shall address themselves to the Council of the League of Nations in such a manner as to show that a majority of the population of these areas desires independence from Turkey, and if the Council then considers that these peoples are capable of such independence and recommends that it should be granted to them, Turkey hereby agrees to execute such a recommendation, and to renounce all rights and title over these areas.

The detailed provisions for such renunciation will form the subject of a separate agreement between the Principal Allied Powers and Turkey.

If and when such renunciation takes place, no objection will be raised by the Principal Allied Powers to the voluntary adhesion to such an independent Kurdish State of the Kurds inhabiting that part of Kurdistan which has hitherto been included in the Mosul vilayet.

The 11 March 1970 Proclamation

(1) **The Kurdish language shall,** side by side, with the Arabic language **be an official language** in the areas populated by a majority of Kurds...
(2) It has been one of the main concerns of the revolutionary government to secure **participation by our Kurdish brothers in Government** ...
(3) in view of the backwardness experienced in the past by the Kurdish nationality in the cultural and educational domain, a plan should be worked out ... in regard to the **language and cultural rights of the Kurdish people** ...
(4) In the administrative units populated by a Kurdish majority, **government officials shall be appointed from among Kurds or persons well versed in the Kurdish language** as long as these are available ...
(5) The Government recognizes **the right of the Kurdish people to set up student, youth, women and teacher's organizations** of their own ...
(6) ... Workers, government functionaries and employees, both civilian and military, shall go back to service. ... **[demilitarization]**
(7) (a) A committee of specialists shall be formed to speed up **the uplift of the Kurdish area** in all respects...
(b) The economic plan shall be drawn up in such a way as to ensure equal development ... with due to attention to the backward conditions of the Kurdish area...
(c) Pension salaries shall be made available to the families of members of the Kurdish armed movement ...
(d) Speedy action shall be taken to bring relief to aggrieved and needy persons. (8) The inhabitants of Arab and Kurdish villages shall be repatriated to their places of habitation ...**[an end to 'Arabization']**
(9) Steps shall be taken to **speed up the implementation of the Agrarian Reform Law** in the Kurdish areas ...
(10) It has been agreed to **amend the Interim Constitution** as follows;
(a) The people of Iraq are composed of two principal nationalities: the Arab nationality and the Kurdish nationality ...
(b)..."the Kurdish language shall be , beside the Arabic language, an official language in the Kurdish area.
(c) This all shall be confirmed in the Permanent Constitution.
(11) The **broadcasting station and the heavy arms shall be given back** to the Government ...
(12) **One of the Vice-Presidents of the Republic shall be a Kurd.**
(13)The **Governorates Law shall be amended** in a way conforming with the contents of this Manifesto.
(14) The State shall endeavour to develop this administrative unity and deepen and broaden the Kurdish people's process of exercising their national rights, as a measure of ensuring self-rule. **[provision for a census in contested areas]**
(15) The Kurdish people shall **contribute to the legislative power in proportion to their ratio of the population** of Iraq.

(adapted from Gunter, 1992:15-16; emphasis and comments added)

Resolution 688 (1991)

Adopted by the Security Council at its 2982nd meeting on 5 April 1991

The Security Council,

Mindful of its duties and its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security,

Recalling of Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter of the United Nations,

Gravely concerned by the repression of the Iraqi civilian population in many parts of Iraq, including most recently in Kurdish populated areas, which led to a massive flow of refugees towards and across international frontiers and to cross-border incursions, which threaten international peace and security in the region,

Deeply disturbed by the magnitude of the human suffering involved,

Taking note of the letters sent by the representatives of Turkey and France to the United Nations dated 2 April 1991 and 4 April 1991, respectively (S/22435 and S/22442),

Taking note also of the letters sent by the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations dated 3 and 4 April 1991, respectively (S/22436 and S/22447),

Reaffirming the commitment of all Member States to the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Iraq and of all States in the area,

Bearing in mind the Secretary-General's report of 20 March 1991 (S/22366),

1. Condemns the repression of the Iraqi civilian population in many parts of Iraq, including most recently in Kurdish populated areas, the consequences of which threaten international peace and security in the region;
2. Demands that Iraq, as a contribution to remove the threat to international peace and security in the region, immediately end this repression and express the hope in the same context that an open dialogue will take place to ensure that the human and political rights of all Iraqi citizens are respected;
3. Insists that Iraq allow immediate access by international humanitarian organizations to all those in need of assistance in all parts of Iraq and to make available all necessary facilities for their operations;
4. Requests the Secretary-General to pursue his humanitarian efforts in Iraq and to report forthwith, if appropriate on the basis of a further mission to the region, on the plight of the Iraqi civilian population, and in particular the Kurdish population, suffering from the repression in all its forms inflicted by the Iraqi authorities;
5. Requests further the Secretary-General to use all the resources at his disposal, including those of the relevant United Nations agencies, to address urgently the critical needs of the refugees and displaced Iraqi population;
6. Appeals to all Member States and to all humanitarian organizations to contribute to these humanitarian relief efforts;
7. Demands that Iraq cooperate with the Secretary-General to these ends;
8. Decides to remain seized of the matter.

APPENDIX 2

KURDISH POPULATION TABLES

Page

Table 9. Total Number of Kurds in Turkey.....245
Table 10. Total Number of Kurds in Iran.....246
Table 11. Total Number of Kurds in Iraq.....247
Table 12. Total Number of Kurds in Syria.....248
Table 13. Kurdish Diaspora: The Former Soviet Union.....249
Table 14. Kurdish Diaspora: The Middle East.....250
Table 15. Kurdish Diaspora: Europe, North America, and Australia.....251

Table 9. Total Number of Kurds in Turkey*

YEAR	TOTAL POP.	TOTAL KURDS	%	SOURCE
1997		**20,000,000**		Kurdistan Parliament in Exile*
	63,528,225	12,700,000	20%	CIA Factbook*
		13,000,000		Randal, 1997
		15,000,000		Kurdish Human Rights Project*
1996		**18-20,000,000**		Nezan, 1996
		15,000,000	25%	Ciment, 1996
		10-12,000,000		Immigration and Refugee Board, Canada, 1996
1995		**14,000,000**	24%	Jamil,1995
1994		7,557,000		Chaliand, 1994
1992	59,000,000	15,000,000	25.42%	Nezan, 1996 citing "Turkish Sources" 1992
	56,700,000	**13,700,000**	**24.1%**	Kurdish Library, 1992
		10,000,000	**24%**	Kurdish Institute at Brussels, 1989
		9,000,000	20%	Bulloch and Morris, 1992
1988		9,000,000		Hyman, 1988
1987		9,600,000	19%	McDowall, 1992
	52,800,000	3-10,000,000		Library of Congress, U.S.A
1984		3,400,000		Weeks, 1984
1980		8,455,000		McDowall, 1985
	45,182,000	8,700,000		Sim, 1980
1977		4,000,000		Harris, 1977
1975	40,200,000	7,500,000	19%	van Bruinessen, 1992
1970	**35,700,000**	**8,500,000**	**23.8%**	Kendal, 1993
1967		3,200,000		Edmonds, 1971
1965	31,391,000	2,219,000	7.1%	Dewdney, 1971
		4,600,000		Ghassemlou, 1965
1964		2,500,000		Kinnane, 1964
1963		2-3,000,000		Eagleton, 1963
1960		4,000,000		U.S. Senate, 1960
1955	24,000,000	1,500,000		Turkish Government in van Bruinessen, 1992
		>3,000,000		van Bruinessen, 1992
1952		2-3,000,000		Great Soviet Encyclopedia in Ghassemlou, 1965
1950	20,974,188	1,854,569		U.N. Demographic Yearbook, 1950, in Ghassemlou, 1965
1945	18,790,173	1,476,562		U.N. Demographic Yearbook, 1950, in Ghassemlou, 1965
1935	16,157,000	1,480,000	9.3%	Dewdney, 1971

***Bold** figures indicate Kurdish sources

Underlined figures indicated official census results

Table 10. Total Number of Kurds in Iran*

YEAR	TOTAL POP.	TOTAL KURDS	%	SOURCE
1997	67,540,002	4,700,000	7%	CIA Factbook*
		6,500,000	10%	Randal, 1997
		6,500,000		Kurdistan Human Rights Project*
1996	57,000,000	**8,000,000**	**14%**	Nezan, 1996
		6,500,000	12%	Ciment, 1996
	60,100,000	4,207,000	7%	Iran Net: Farhang va Andisheh Institute*
1995		**7,000,000**	**16%**	Jamil,1995
1994		5,190,400		Chaliand, 1994
1992		4,000,000	11%	Bulloch and Morris, 1992
1990	**55,600,000**	**6,600,000**	**12.4%**	Izady, 1992
1989		**6,000,000**	**16%**	Kurdish Institute at Brussels, 1989
1987		5,000,000	10%	McDowall, 1992
1984		3,000,000		Weeks, 1984
1980	**39,000,000**	**4,800,000**	**12.4%**	Izady, 1992
	38,146,000	4,500,000	8.5%	Sim, 1980
		3,701,000		McDowall, 1985
1977		2,000,000		Harris, 1977
1975	34,000,000	3,500,000	10%	van Bruinessen, 1992
	32,440,000	**5,190,400**	**16%**	Ghassemlou, 1993
		5,800,000		Vanly in van Bruinessen, 1992
1970	**28,258,800**	**4,521,280**	**16%**	Ghassemlou, 1993
	28,700,000	**3,500,000**	**12.2%**	Izady, 1992
1967		1,800,000		Edmonds, 1971
1965		**3,000,000**		Ghassemlou, 1965
		4,500,000		Vanly in van Bruinessen, 1992
1964		1,400,000		Kinnane, 1964
1963		1,500,000		Eagleton, 1963
1960	**22,600,000**	**2,710,000**	**12%**	Izady, 1992
		2,500,000		U.S. Senate in Ghassemlou, 1965
1956	18,960,000	1,060,000	5.5%	Shahin, 1960 (in Hassanpour, 1992)
1953	18,549,800	1,632,400	8.8%	Aliyev,1966 (in Hassanpour, 1992)
1952		2-2,500,000		Great Soviet Encyclopedia in Ghassemlou, 1965
1950	**17,500,000**	**2,100,000**	**12%**	Izady, 1992
1940	**13,800,000**	**1,660,000**	**12%**	Izady, 1992
1930	**12,100,000**	**1,510,000**	**12.5%**	Izady, 1992

***Bold** Figures indicate Kurdish sources

Underlined Figures indicated official census results

Table 11. Total Number of Kurds in Iraq*

YEAR	TOTAL POP.	TOTAL KURDS	%	SOURCE
1997		**5,000,000**	**28%**	Kurdish Democratic Party*
		4,000,000		Kurdistan Human Rights Project*
	22,219,289	3- 4,400,000	15-20%	CIA Factbook*
	18,000,000	4,200,000	23%	Randal, 1997
1996		4,000,000	20%	Ciment, 1996
1995		**4,500,000**	**27%**	Jamil,1995
1994		2,800,000*		Chaliand, 1994
1992	**18,800,000**	**4,400,000**	**23.5%**	Kurdish Library, 1992
		3,000,000	23%	Bulloch and Morris, 1992
1989		**3,000,000**	**27%**	Kurdish Institute at Brussels, 1989
	17,215,000	2,582,250	15%	ArabNet*
1988		4,000,000		Hyman, 1988
1987	16,278,000	3,100,000		Library of Congress, USA.
		3,900,000	23%	McDowall, 1992
1984		2,900,000		Weeks, 1984
1980	13,134,000	3,000,000		Sim, 1980
		3,105,000		McDowall, 1985
1977		2,500,000		Harris, 1977
1975	10,500,000	2-2,500,000	23%	van Bruinessen, 1992
	11,124,000	**3,000,000**	**28%**	Vanly, 1980
1967		1,550,000		Edmonds, 1971
1965		**1,400,000**		Ghassemlou, 1965
1964		1,200,000		Kinnane, 1964
1963		1,200,000		Eagleton, 1963
1960		1,500,000		U.S. Senate, 1960 in Ghassemlou, 1965
1957	6,339,960	1,042,774	16.44%	Republic of Iraq in Ghassemlou, 1965
1952		1,200,000		Great Soviet Encyclopedia in Ghassemlou, 1965
1947	4,816,000	900,000 (estimated)	18.6%	Edmonds, 1957
1935			23%	in van Bruinessen, 1992
1922-24			23%	Wilson,1931

***Bold** Figures indicate Kurdish sources

Underlined Figures indicated official census results

Table 12. Total Number of Kurds in Syria*

YEAR	TOTAL POP.	TOTAL KURDS	% OF TOTAL	SOURCE
1997	16,137,899	1,500,000	9.7% (Kurds, Armenians, and other)	CIA Factbook*
	13,000,000	>1,000,000	9%	Randal, 1997
1996		**1,500,000**		Nezan, 1996 citing "Kurdish Sources
		1,250,000		Ciment, 1996
1995		**1,200,000**	**9%**	Jamil,1995
1994		825,000		Chaliand, 1994
	13,800,000	**1,000,000 (KHRP*)**	**11%**	Al-Ba'ath, February 6, 1995, p 4. (source: KHRP*)
	12,600,000	**1,300,000**	**9.2%**	Kurdish Library, 1992
		750,000	8%	Bulloch and Morris, 1992
1989		**800,000**	**9%**	Kurdish Institute at Brussels, 1989
1988		800,000		Hyman, 1988
1987		900,000	8%	McDowall, 1992
1984		800,000		Weeks, 1984
1980	8,534,000	600,000		Sim, 1980
		734,000		McDowall, 1985
1976	7,500,000	825,000	11%	Nazdar,1980
1975	7,300,000	500,000	8.5%	van Bruinessen, 1992
1967		320,000		Edmonds, 1971
1965		**400,000**		Ghassemlou, 1965
1964		250,000		Kinnane, 1964
1963		200,000		Eagleton, 1963
1960		500,000 (including USSR)		U.S. Senate, 1960
1952		300,000		Great Soviet Encyclopedia in Ghassemlou, 1965)
1939		110,000		Rondot, 1937 (in van Bruinessen, 1992)

***Bold** Figures indicate Kurdish sources
Underlined Figures indicated official census results

Table 13. Kurdish Diaspora: The Former Soviet Union*

COUNTRY	YEAR	TOTAL KURDS	SOURCE
Former Soviet Union	1996	500,000	Nezan,1996
		330,000	Ciment, 1996
	1995	350 - 500,000	Jamil,1995
	1994	278,463	Chaliand, 1994
	1992	300,000	Bulloch and Morris, 1992
	1989	350,000	Kurdish Institute at Brussels, 1989
	1988	300,000	Hyman, 1988
	1987	300,000	McDowall, 1992
	1980	200,000	Sim, 1980
	1980	265,000	McDowall, 1985
	1980	265,000	Kendal, 1993
	1979	115,858	Akiner, 1983 (in Hassanpour, 1992)
	1975	100,000	van Bruinessen, 1992
	1970	88,930	Akiner, 1983 (in Hassanpour, 1992)
	1967	80,000	Edmonds, 1971
	1964	60-100,000	Kinnane, 1964
	1963	100,000	Eagleton, 1963
	1959	58,799	Akiner, 1983 (in Hassanpour, 1992)
	1939	45,866	Great Soviet Encyclopedia in Ghassemlou, 1965
	1926	69,184	Akiner, 1983 (in Hassanpour, 1992)
Azerbaijan	1996	200,000	KHRP, 1996
Georgia	1996	40,000	KHRP, 1996
Armenia	1996	75,000	KHRP, 1996*
	1995	60,000	Kurdish Life, Spring,1995

Table 14. Kurdish Diaspora: The Middle East*

COUNTRY	YEAR	TOTAL KURDS	SOURCE
Capital Regions (Iran, Iraq, Syria, Turkey	1994	2,000,000	Omer Sheikmous in Jamil, 1995
	1989	4,000,000	Kurdish Institute at Brussels, 1989
Afghanistan & Pakistan		200,000	Great Soviet Encyclopedia in Ghassemlou, 1965
Lebanon	1995	100,000	Jamil,1995
	1992	60,000	Hassanpour, 1992
	1992	60,000	Bulloch and Morris, 1992
	1989	100,000	Kurdish Institute at Brussels, 1989
	1980	60,000	McDowall, 1985
Israel	1996	100,000	Nezan,1996
	1995	150,000	Jamil,1995
	1989	150,000	Kurdish Institute at Brussels, 1989
Jordan	1995	20,000	Jamil,1995

Table 15. Kurdish Diaspora: Europe, North America, and Australia

COUNTRY	YEAR	TOTAL KURDS	SOURCE
Kurdish Diaspora	1996	1,500,000	Laizer, 1996
Western Countries	1989	600,000	Kurdish Institute at Brussels, 1989
Europe	1996	500,000	Ciment, 1996
Greece	1994	1,000	Omer Sheikmous in Jamil, 1995
Western Europe	1997	700,000	Randal, 1997
Austria	1994	20,000 to 30,000	Omer Sheikmous in Jamil, 1995
Western Europe	1996	750,000	Nezan,1996
Germany	1997	400,000	Randal, 1997
		4-500,000	Barkey and Fuller, 1997
	1996	500,000	Laizer, 1996
	1994	300,000 to 350,000	Omer Sheikmous in Jamil, 1995
France	1996	50,000	Laizer, 1996
	1994	60,000	Omer Sheikmous in Jamil, 1995
Netherlands	1996	50,000	Laizer, 1996
	1994	30,000 to 40,000	Omer Sheikmous in Jamil, 1995
Italy	1994	1,000	Omer Sheikmous in Jamil, 1995
Spain	1994	1,000	Omer Sheikmous in Jamil, 1995
Switzerland	1994	15,000 to 20,000	Omer Sheikmous in Jamil, 1995
England	1994	20,000	Omer Sheikmous in Jamil, 1995
Denmark	1994	12,000 to 13,000	Omer Sheikmous in Jamil, 1995
Belgium	1994	10,000	Omer Sheikmous in Jamil, 1995
Sweden	1994	16,000 to 18,000	Omer Sheikmous in Jamil, 1995
Norway	1994	4,000 to 5,000	Omer Sheikmous in Jamil, 1995
Australia	1994	4,000	Omer Sheikmous in Jamil, 1995
Canada	1996	4,225	Statistics Canada
United States	1994	7,000 to 8,000	Omer Sheikmous in Jamil, 1995
	1992	35,000	Izady, 1992