

The Kurds

Brief Essay

The Kurds have historically inhabited a geographical area called Kurdistan - the mountainous regions south of Lake Van (Turkey) and Lake Urmia (Iran) to northeast Syria and north Iraq. Under the Arabs, this region was divided between Al-Arminiyya and Al-Jazeera. These historical geographical names no longer exist. Arab tribes from Yemen, Basra, and various parts of Arabia were resettled in Al-Arminiyya. According to medieval historian Al-Baladhuri (820-892), the Al Jazeera region comprised three provinces: Diyar Bakr, Diyar Mudar, and Diyar Rabia named after the major Arab tribes that were settled there in the 7th century by Caliph Muawiyah (593-680).

By the end of the 9th century, the Arab Caliphate fell into decay. In different Caliphate regions, governors and military leaders started creating their semi-independent formations like principalities or counties. Some of those territories became parts of the Salarid, Ravvadid, and Buyid states.

The Salarids ruled first in Azerbaijan and the northwest of Iran and then, in the territories up to Derbent (941-981). Origin: Daylamite (now non-existent Persian-speaking people), the capital is Ardabil, currently, a city in Iran (South Azerbaijan).

The Ravvadids ruled in Azerbaijan and the northwest of Iran in 981-1071. They were of Arab origin (Yemenis from Basra) and were resettled in northwestern Iran under Caliph Al-Mansur (Caliph in 754-775). Capitals: Maragha and Ardabil, currently, cities of Iran (South Azerbaijan).

The Buyids ruled in the Fars region (Iran) and then, in 945-1055, in the territories from Baghdad to Kerman. Origin: Daylamite (now non-existent Persian-speaking people), the capital is Baghdad, currently, the city of Iraq.

From a scientific standpoint, the origin of the Kurds is controversial. Kurdish studies (studying the history, language, and culture of the Kurds), which are an integral part of Iranian studies, discover a lot of unknown historical facts.

For many centuries, a term such as ‘Kurdish people’ has not existed. There were tribes with their leaders, languages, and customs. Almost every village belonged to a certain ashiret (tribe). Sometimes several tribes lived in a single settlement.

It is believed that the first book about the history and origin of the Kurds is *Ansab al-Akrad* (The Origin of the Kurds), a chronicle written in Arabic by Abu Hanifa al-Dinawari (815-895). The book is considered lost. The famous Muslim scholar was widely assumed to be a Persian or an Arab. His work *Kitab al-Akhbar al-Tiwal* (The Book of General History), which is the first attempt to integrate Persian and Islamic history from Persian-centric positions, has come down to us. This book has been revised and published several times. His writings served as the primary source for studying the history of the Kurds, although they cannot be considered reliable. Armenian scholars, e.g., have distorted history for several centuries from antiquity to modern times.

The Department of Armenian-Kurdish Relations of the Institute of Armenian Studies under the Yerevan State University, the Institute of Oriental Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia, and the Institute of Autochthonous Peoples of the Caucasian-Caspian Region are actively involved in Kurdish studies in Armenia. Armenia is currently very successful in this matter.

By the beginning of the 11th century, the Arab Caliphate fell into decay, and the confrontation between the Byzantines and the Seljuks began. Byzantium virtually captured the Al-Arminiyya region. The emperors settled Armenian feudal lords with their families in the eastern lands of the Empire to ensure their support during invasions from outside. Armenians settled in Sivas, Kayseri, Mush, Van, Diyarbakir, Marash, Adana, Mersin, Antakya, Hatay, and other regions (all of them are now part of Turkey). Armenians and Kurds dispute some of these areas, calling them their ancient territories.

Greek, Latin, Armenian, Syrian and other sources tell nothing about the Kurds in the pre-Seljuk period, until the middle of the 11th century. Since the 11th century, the ‘Kurmanji’ term has appeared, actively used by the Kurds as a self-name.

In his work *Nuzhat al-Qulub* (Bliss of Hearts), which, in fact, is the only source from the Ilkhanate era, Persian scholar Hamdallah Mustawfi Qazvini (1281-1350) defines the state provinces in 20 chapters, where the name Kurdistan is also listed.

Some authors call the Seljuk State Kurdish, and its founder a representative of the Kurdish Jalali tribe. Such claims are completely absurd. The Seljuks were representatives of the Oghuz Turkic Qiniq tribe. Jalali was an Arab tribe, later Kurdized.

Seljuk gave his name to the new dynasty that united the eastern Islamic world and played a huge role in the fight against the 1st and 2nd Crusades. The well-known

commander, the Sultan of Egypt and Syria, Salahaddin (1137-1193) also fought against the Crusaders, especially during the 3rd Crusade. Salahaddin's ancestors were from Dvin. His grandfather's, father's, and uncle's names were, respectively, Shadi, Ayyub, and Shirkuh. Some sources report that Shadi originated from the Kurdish Ravvadid tribe. According to Vladimir Minorsky (1877-1966), a Russian orientalist, Salahaddin could have had Arabic roots. According to some sources, Shirkuh, the uncle of the Great Commander, was a representative of the Turkic Zengid dynasty, the rulers of Syria and Mesopotamia of the Seljuk state. Having become the vizier of Egypt, Shirkuh distributed land plots and provinces between his soldiers and comrades-in-arms for faithful service. His army consisted of more than 2,000 horsemen of Nuraddin (Turkic Atabey of Syria), 6,000 hired Turkmen cavalymen, 500 Turkic Mamluks, and a small number of Kurds. According to some sources, the Ravvadids were Arabs and ruled northwestern and western Iran. By the beginning of the 10th century, they were Kurdized and concentrated in Tabriz (Iran) and Maragha (Iran). However, here the question arises: "How did the Arabs, the rulers of the region, become Kurds?" According to another version, the Ravvadids were Arabs from Basra, however, as a result of mixed marriages, were identified as Kurds. Another version claims that Salahaddin was a descendant of one of the branches of the Kurdish Hadrabani or Hadhabani tribe, who lived in the area between Erbil (Iraq) and Urmia (Iran). In the 10th century, they immigrated to the north of Lake Urmia, and later split into several branches and spread throughout Azerbaijan and the Caucasus. If the Ravvadids were Kurdized, then why did the most prominent emir of Azerbaijan from this dynasty, Vahsudan initially restrain the onslaught of the Turkmen tribes with the help of his Kurdish neighbors, although he later recognized the power of the Seljuks? Anyhow, it is reliably known that Salahaddin was an Arab and served the Seljuks.

The etymology of 'Kurd' is highly controversial, and its origin is not known exactly. In their places of residence, the Kurds are not autochthonous, they are newcomers, and the earlier history does not mention them.

Kurds are divided into many tribes, which, in turn, split into a certain number of clans. If a Kurd does not know his genealogy and ashiret, then he is considered rootless. Tribal fragmentation hinders the consolidation of the ethnos, and is an obstacle to unification.

According to Sharaf Khan Bidlisi, the ethnonym 'kurd' means 'hero' and 'brave.' In Parthian, 'gurd' (gwrt) meant 'hero.' In Farsi, the word 'kord' still exists with the same meaning. In Turkic languages, this means 'wolf.'

Unfortunately, some scholars make grave mistakes or falsify history for political reasons. Interpretation of the word 'kurd' translated into Russian from Turkish means 'wolf.' E.g., the name Kurt Ali in Turkish or Qurd Ali in Azerbaijani means courageous, brave Ali. The Russian translation is written as Kurd Ali. Many

understand this as Ali is a Kurd by ethnicity. Thus, all Kurts and Qurds became Kurds.

According to some Kurdish and Armenian scholars, the Kardukh tribes are the ancestors of present-day Kurds. In the 2nd and 1st centuries BC, there was an ancient historical region of Corduene or Gordiene at the junction of present-day Turkey and Syria, whose inhabitants were called Kardukhs.

Some scholars believe that the Kurds are descendants of the Medes, nomadic Iranian tribes.

In Persian chronicles, the term 'kurd' was used to refer to nomadic Iranian tribes living in northwestern Iran.

Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, many scholars tried to find out the origin of the Kurds and the Kurdish language. There were various theories. Some believed that Kurdish was closely related to the Turkic languages, and others argued that it was a Persian dialect.

According to the Armenian version, the Kurds appeared only in the 10th century AD, when the Arab Caliphate fell into decay, and Turkic tribes moved to Iran and Anatolia. Some of them mixed with the Persians and settled. They are now called Kurds. Gradually, many of the Christians merged with them.

Some scholars argue that the ethnonym 'Kurd' originated from the Arabic 'akrad.' This means 'nomad.' The Arabs called all the nomads of Iran and Mesopotamia 'akrad.'

The province of Kurdistan was first formed as part of the Ottoman Empire in 1847. The centers of the province were the cities of Van, Mush, and Diyarbakir. In 1847, it was renamed the province of Diyarbakir.

Sharaf Khan Bidlisi (1543-1602) - the author of the first historical work describing the history of the Kurds 'Sharaf-name' is considered the founder of Kurdish historiography.

In 1860-1862, Russian historian-orientalist V.V. Velyaminov-Zernov (1830-1904) published the Persian text of 'Sharaf-name' in St. Petersburg. The first volume consists of 459 pages and tells the history of the Kurds and Kurdish dynasties, and the second one is the author's conclusion ('Hatima') chronologically describing the events of the late 13th-16th centuries. In 1868, the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, highly appreciating this publication, awarded V.V. Velyaminov-Zernov with the III Class Order of the Medjidie. In 1869, Shah of the Qajar, in turn, awarded the scholar with the II Class Order of the Lion and the Sun and a Breast Star.

Sharaf Khan was born in 1543 in the Garmrood village of Merkezi province (Iran). In 1533, the Ottoman Empire captured the Bitlis beylik, which was earlier a part of

the Safavid (Qizilbash) State. Sharaf Bey was killed, and his son Shemseddin (Sharaf Khan's father) and about a thousand people from the Ruzaki tribe fled to the Qizilbash.

By his maternal grandfathers, Sharaf Khan belonged to the Qizilbash Turks since she was the daughter of Amirkhan Mawsillu (Turkman), who was the Beylerbey of Azerbaijan (1577-1585). From 1551 to 1555, as a representative of the Qizilbash nobility, he was brought up at the court of Shah Tahmasp together with the Shah's sons. From 1557 to 1560, he was in Hamadan under the guardianship of his maternal uncle Muhammadi Bey, the ruler of Hamadan. Sharaf Khan later married his daughter. In 1566, he was hailed Emir of the Ruzaki tribe and spent two years in Qazvin at the Shah's court. In 1576, he was appointed Emir of the Kurdish tribes of Iran. Sharaf Khan was the ruler of Nakhchivan in 1577. In 1578, Sharaf Khan came over to the side of the Ottomans and received the rule of Bitlis from Sultan Murad III. In 1601-1602, the Beylerbey of Van made several raids on Bitlis. At the same time, Sharaf Khan died, and the rule of Bitlis passed to the Beylerbey of Van.

Interpreting the word 'ruzaki' in his book, Sharaf Khan believes that it originates from the Dari language. 'Ruzaki' means 'one day.' 25 Kurdish tribes created a tribal confederation: five of them were separate tribes, and the rest made up two wings: Bilbasi and Kavalisi of 10 tribes each.

Dari (Afghano-Persian) is the language of Afghan Tajiks, Hazaras, and Charaimaks. This is one of the two official languages of Afghanistan. It is the language of interethnic communication in Afghanistan.

Among the Kavalisi tribes, the Parthav tribe had ancient Parthian roots, and the Asturk tribe had Median roots. The Suhrawardi tribe were supporters of the Suhrawardiyya tariqa (order) founded by the Persian scholar Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, a disciple of the Persian philosopher Shihab Al-Din Suhrawardi.

Russian Kurdologist E. Vasilieva (1935-2023) believes that the head of the Bilbas branch professed the Yezidi faith, and Sharaf Khan's grandfather "could be personally involved in the Yezidi faith."

Under the Qara Qoyunlu State, at the end of the 14th century, the ancestor of Sharaf Khan was appointed Emir of Bitlis.

Sharaf Bey headed the Ruzaki confederation of 25 tribes, which consisted of two wings - Kavalisi and Bilbasi. Sharaf Khan Bitlisi calls these tribes Kurdish. This was wrong. These tribes were too different and often fought with each other. To stop the bloodshed, they created a Ruzaki confederation headed by Sharaf Bey (Sharaf Khan's grandfather), who did not belong to these tribes. His mother was a representative of the Bokhti tribe. After the defeat of the Bokhti by the Aq Qoyunlu tribes (Timur gave them the rule of Diyarbakir), the remnants of the

Bokhti resigned themselves to Sharaf Bey's control. The latter and the Ruzaki confederation tribes considered the Sassanids to be their ancestors.

In his book, Sharaf Khan talks about a large Kurdish tribal alliance Bokhti, who lived in the territory of the historical region of Jazira (the north of modern Syria). Sharaf Khan also writes about a large tribal alliance Malkish (Chemishgezek), who lived in the territory of the historical region of Chemishgezek (Tunceli province, Turkey). Some scholars call them Qizilbash.

Since the 13th century, Shiism has been spreading in Asia Minor. According to the Venetian envoys, in 1514, 4/5 of the inhabitants of Asia Minor, including Eastern Anatolia, were Shiites. Nomadic Turkic tribes from Asia Minor became the basis and major force of the Safawiyye order. Under Sheikh Junayd, the order turned into a unifying center for the Turkmen and some Kurdish tribes. In 1511, an uprising of the Qizilbash broke out in Eastern Anatolia. In 1513, Sultan Selim massacred Shiites in Anatolia (lists were preliminarily drawn up), having exterminated 40-45, and according to some sources, 60 thousand people. As a result, the Qizilbash fleeing the cruelty of the Sultan found refuge in the mountains and the Kurdish tribes. Over time, they adopted the Kurdish language. Today in the Republic of Turkey, some Kurds believe that their ancestors are Qizilbash Turks who took refuge in the mountains with Kurdish tribes.

Sharaf Khan Bidlisi reports that there were disagreements in the Kurdish tribal confederations, which grew into armed conflicts. In the Ruzaki ashiret, the rivalry between the two branches strongly affected tribal life, its organization, and the issue of succession to the throne. Sharaf Khan reproaches the Kurdish tribes that they do not show mutual obedience and humility, there is no unity between them. There was neither stability nor unity among them - some tribes supported the Ottoman Empire, and some supported the Safavid State.

At the junction of Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran, Zoroastrian Persian-speaking tribes lived as far back as under the Sassanids. Under the Arab Caliphate, Muslim Arab tribes, during the Byzantine period - Armenians, under the Seljuks - Muslim Turkic tribes, and under the Hulaguids (Ilkhanate) - mainly Turkic and a few Mongolian tribes, who believed in Tengrianism, were resettled in this region. These tribes played their role in the ethnogenesis of the Kurds.

The Kurdish language belongs to the northwestern Iranian subgroup of the Indo-European languages. It exists in two literary forms - Kurmanji and Sorani. It is widespread at the junction of the territory of four countries - Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran. Kurdish is factually a Persian language with a lot of Arabic words and many borrowings from Turkish.

Among the Kurds, several groups can be distinguished:

- * Northern Kurds, currently forming the basis of the Kurdish people - Kurmanji;
- * Southern Kurds - Sorani;
- * a separate group - Gorani;
- * a separate group - Zaza, calling themselves ‘Dimli’;
- * a separate group - Kelhuri, Feyli, and Laks;
- * a separate group - Lurs.

Gorani is one of the Kurdish dialects of Indo-Iranian origin. Many of those who spoke Gorani switched to Kurmanji and Sorani. Gorani is the religious language of the radical Shiite sect Ahl-e-Haq, widely spoken among Kurds, Lurs, Persians, Arabs, and partly Azerbaijanis. The sect was founded at the end of the 14th century. Most of its members are southern Kurds living in western Iran and northeast Iraq.

In 1911, Russian orientalist Vladimir Minorsky published a monograph on the Ahl-e Haqq (‘people of truth’) sect, for which he was awarded the gold medal of the ethnography section of the Russian Imperial Society of Lovers of Natural Science, Anthropology, and Ethnography.

Zaza is considered an ethnic group of Kurds living in Turkey’s regions such as Tunceli and Erzincan and speaking the Zazaki language. They are Shia Muslims. According to some linguists, Zazaki is one of the Iranian languages, and some consider it a dialect of the Kurdish language. The differences between Zazaki and Kurdish dialects are quite deep, and their mutual understanding is problematic. Therefore, most linguists consider Zazaki to be a separate language. In terms of grammar, genetics, linguistics, and vocabulary, Zazaki is closely related to the languages of the Talysh, Tats, Mazandarani, and Gilyaks who live in Iran and Azerbaijan. For centuries of interaction and cohabitation, Kurmanji has also affected the Zazaki language. Therefore, some linguists classify the Zazaki language as Kurdish, which, however, is wrong.

Earlier, the Lurs were considered Kurds. Today they are considered to be Iranians. The Lurs live in the Zagros Mountains in the Lorestan, Khuzestan, Chaharmahal, Bakhtiari, Kohgiluyeh, Boyer-Ahmad, Fars, and Ilam provinces of southwestern Iran. Lur is the Middle Persian language belonging to the Indo-Iranian language group. Before Islam, they practiced Zoroastrianism. Currently, they are Shia Muslims.

The Kelhuri are Iranian-speaking people living in western and northeastern Iran. Some scholars consider them Kurds, and some equate them to Lurs.

The Laks are Iranian-speaking people making up about 65% of the population of the Lorestan province, most of the Kermanshah province, and some regions of the

Ilam province. Some scholars consider them Kurds and some a branch of the Lurs. They identify themselves as Lurs.

Feyli or Feylis is a Kurdish tribe, mainly living in Baghdad and the border areas between Iraq and Iran.

Yezidis (Ezdi) are Kurds who practice Yezidism. They live in the Kurdistan Region (Iraq), southeastern Turkey, Armenia, Georgia, and Russia. Yezidis are not Kurds, but in everyday life, most Yezidis speak Kurmanji. Their population is up to 1 million; more than 70% of them live in the Kurdistan Region.

Yezidism combines elements of different religions - Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism. Followers believe in the existence of a single God and seven angels, the major of which is Malak-Tawus ('Peacock Angel'). The Yezidi faith preaches that you cannot become but only be born a Yezidi. The founder of the religion is Adi ibn Musafir (1072-1163) - a Sufi Sheikh of Arab origin, revered by the Yezidis as a prophet.

About 60% of all Kurds consider themselves Kurmanji, about 30% - Sorani, and about 10% - Gorani. The Zazas, Lurs, Kelhuris, and Laks are not Kurds, they are Iranian-speaking peoples.

Most Kurds are Sunni Muslims (Shafi'i madhhab), a minority are Shiites, and some profess Yezidism, Christianity, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism.

During the First World War (1914-1918), the Kurds fought on the side of the Ottoman Empire. Yezidi and Barzan Kurds fought on the side of the Russian Empire.

There is an autonomous region in Iraq, located in northern Mesopotamia and the Zagros mountains and called Iraqi Kurdistan or Kurdistan Region.

Mesopotamia (land between the (two) rivers) is a historical and geographical region in the Middle East, located in the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Present-day states including the Mesopotamian lands are Iraq, northeastern Syria, Turkey, and partly Iran.

Zagros is the largest mountain system of present-day Iran, located partly in Iraq and southeastern Turkey.

According to the constitution of Iraqi Kurdistan, its capital is Kirkuk, but in fact, it is Erbil. The population is about 10.3 million, the area is 85,027 km². It borders with Syria, Turkey, and Iran. Kurds make up 80% of the population while more than 11% are Turkmen. Iraqi Turkman is a dialect of the Azerbaijani language.

Kirkuk is a city in Iraq, 236 km north of Baghdad and 83 km from the city of Erbil. The province's capital is Kirkuk. Kirkuk is an oil hub in northern Iraq and the center of the Iraqi Turkmen.

In 1927, oil fields were discovered in Kirkuk, and a flood of Arabs and Kurds poured into the region in search of work. At that time, the main population of the city was Turkmen. According to the 1957 census, the Kirkuk population was 37.63% Iraqi Turkmen, 33.26% Kurds, and 23% Arabs. In the 1970s, the Arabization of the region started.

After the Islamic State offensive in northern Iraq in 2014, the Iraqi army retreated from their positions in Kirkuk, and the Peshmerga (military forces of the autonomous region of Kurdistan) captured the city. Being under Kurdish control, the Turkmen and Arab residents of Kirkuk were intimidated and harassed, and some of whom were forced to leave their homes to increase the population of Kurds and strengthen their claims to the city. Without dwelling on this, on September 25, 2017, a referendum was held in the city and the cognominal governorate on its entry into Iraqi Kurdistan and the independence of the latter. The Iraqi government strongly opposed such a referendum and requested the Peshmerga to be withdrawn from Kirkuk. In mid-October 2017, Iraqi forces launched a military operation against the Peshmerga, and Kirkuk passed under the control of Iraqi government forces.

Iraqi Kurdistan has been the scene of confrontation between the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) for many years.

Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) was founded in Baghdad (Iraq) in August 1946. Mustafa Barzani (1903-1979), then living in Mahabad (Iran), was elected its chairman in absentia. Barzani's main base was his native Erbil, i.e., the Barzan region.

From August 1941 to May 1946, the northwest of Iran was controlled by the Soviet Union.

'Azerbaijani Stalin' Mir Jafar Baghirov (1895-1956) stirred Iranian Azerbaijanis and Kurds into creating their political entity. According to Baghirov's idea, the Kurdish political entity was supposed to become part of Azerbaijan as an autonomy, but the leader of the Kurds, Qazi Muhammad, abandoned this idea.

On January 22, 1945, with the support of the Soviet Union, the Mahabad Republic was established under the leadership of Qazi Muhammad. The main support of Qazi Muhammad was the Barzan tribe who emigrated from Iraq. 2 thousand Barzans, led by the tribe leader Mustafa Barzani, formed the backbone of the army. Mustafa was appointed Commander-in-Chief.

Earlier, on December 22, 1945, the Azerbaijan People's Government was established in the northwest of Iran under the leadership of Seyid Pishavari.

After a while, the United States and England supported Iran's requests for the withdrawal of Soviet troops and the restoration of territorial integrity. As a result, the USSR withdrew its military formations from Iran. Qazi Muhammad refused the proposal of the Azerbaijani People's Government to unite military forces and jointly oppose the Iranian army. He believed in the promises of the Iranian government to resolve the problems peacefully. In August 1946, he went to Tehran, met with the Prime Minister of Iran, and suggested creating a Kurdish autonomy.

On December 15, 1946, as a result of the Iranian army's actions, the Azerbaijan People's Government was liquidated. Some of the movement leaders fled to the Republic of Azerbaijan, and some were executed and killed.

Qazi Muhammad did not resist the Iranian army. As a result, he and his associates were arrested, and on March 30, 1947, he, two of his associates, brother, and cousin were strung up on the Charchar Square of the very same Mahabad.

Mustafa Barzani decided to move to the Soviet Union. His tribe returned to Iraq. Over a few months, he and his people, hiding from the Iranian army, managed to break through to the banks of the Araks River. On June 17-18, 1947, they crossed the river and ended up in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic of the Azerbaijan SSR. There were 504 of them. The Moscow envoys arrived and met with Barzani.

Mustafa Barzani and his people were sent to Baku to pass military training. The Soviet leadership assumed to use them in a fight against Iraq and Iran. After this plan went sour in 1948, Mustafa Barzani and his detachment were sent to Uzbekistan. The total number of the arrived Kurds was about three thousand.

According to some Kurdish historians, the then leader of Soviet Azerbaijan, Mir Jafar Baghirov, had a "personal dislike for Barzani"; "he intrigued against Barzani in Moscow, drew Beria over to his side, and they together discredited Barzani in the opinion of Stalin." After "the expulsion of the Kurds to Uzbekistan, Baghirov sent an envoy to his Uzbek colleague Yusupov to persuade him to persecute Barzani." All this is fiction. By the orders of Baghirov and Beria, the Soviet border guards could shoot the Kurds when they were crossing the Soviet-Iranian border.

Lieutenant General Pavel Sudoplatov (Head of Bureau No. 1 of the USSR Ministry of State Security for Sabotage Abroad) met with Barzani in Uzbekistan. In March 1952, during a regular meeting with Sudoplatov, Mustafa Barzani announced that he agreed to sign a cooperation agreement with the Soviet leadership in exchange for the USSR's assistance in creating a Kurdish republic at the junction of Iraq, Iran, and Turkey. Having discussed the demands of the Kurds with the First Deputy Chairman of the Soviet Government, Vyacheslav Molotov, and Foreign

Minister Andrey Vyshinsky, Minister of State Security Semyon Ignatiev submitted them for consideration to the top leadership who agreed to use the Kurds in Soviet intelligence. The handler of the Kurds was the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR Mikhail Suslov, who met with Mustafa Barzani and promised him comprehensive assistance from the Soviet Union in the struggle for Kurdistan autonomy in exchange for the Kurds' help in overthrowing the pro-British government in Iraq.

In 1953, several hundred Kurds were sent to study at the higher educational institutions of the USSR, and Mustafa Barzani himself graduated from the Military Academy and received the rank of General. In 1958, they returned to Iraq and continued their insurgency.

At the beginning of the 19th century, an ancestor of the Barzan tribe, Tajeddin founded a Sufi tekke (abode) in the village of Barzan, near the city of Amadiya, on the banks of the Great Zab River, the center of the cognominal district in the province of Erbil, and became its first Sheikh. His grandson Sheikh Abdel-Salam I (died in 1872) became the creator of the Barzan tribal confederation, a group of Kurdish tribes that united in the 19th century under the spiritual and secular power of the Naqshbandi Sufi Order's Sheikhs. Several villages of Assyrian Christians joined the tribal confederation. Along with Muslims and Christians, many Jews also lived in Barzan.

The Naqshbandi Sufi Brotherhood (Tariqa) emerged in the Timurid State at the end of the 14th century. Starting from Sultan Mehmet Fatih (the conqueror of Constantinople), the sultans of the Ottoman Empire, poet Navoi, Sheikh Shamil, and many others were followers of this Tariqa.

Mustafa Barzani was born in 1903 in the Barzan settlement, in the family of Sheikh Mohammed. Shortly after his birth, his father died, and Mustafa was raised by his brothers, Sheikh Abdel-Salam II and Sheikh Ahmed.

Mustafa Barzani's elder brother Sheikh Abdel-Salam II was associated with Kurdish rebel organizations, collaborated with the Russian Empire, and opposed Turkey from 1909 to 1914. After the defeat, he fled to Russia. With the outbreak of World War I, he returned to Iraq, was captured by the very Kurds, extradited to the Ottomans, and strung up in Mosul (Iraq).

Mustafa Barzani's elder brother Ahmed Barzani (Sheikh Ahmed or Khudan) subjugated many different Kurdish tribes and revolted against the Iraqi authorities. From 1931, Sheikh Ahmed (1896-1969) was in exile in Sulaymaniyah, from 1945 to 1947, he was in Mahabad; then he returned to Iraq with his tribe Barzan, where died in 1969.

Mustafa Barzani's brothers Mohammed Siddique and Babu took part in the uprisings as field commanders; they participated in Sheikh Ahmed's uprising in

1930-1931 and Mustafa Barzani's uprising in 1943-1945 against the Iraqi government and the British. After the first uprising, the brothers were captured and spent 10 years in exile in various cities of Iraq.

The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) was founded in June 1975 by Jalal Talabani as a federation of left-wing organizations. Talabani's main base was his native Sulaymaniyah (Iraq) and the Soran region in general.

The son of Mustafa Barzani, Masoud Barzani was born on August 16, 1946, in Mahabad (Iran).

In 1958, Mustafa Barzani returned to Iraq and headed the KDP leadership. Earlier, the party was led by Hamza Abdullah and Ibrahim Ahmed.

In 1950, Talabani joined the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), in 1962, he became one of the most popular rebel commanders, and in 1963, he headed the southern front. This career split the KDP. In 1964, Talabani went over to the side of the party clerisy and the First Secretary of the Party, Ibrahim Ahmed (1914-2000), against Barzani. As a result, the PUK emerged. Ibrahim Ahmed's daughter Hero Khan was the wife of Jalal Talabani.

In 1961-1991, the KDP and the PUK waged an insurgency against the Iraqi central government to gain autonomy. From time to time, they fought with each other. In March 1991, after the victory of the international coalition forces over Iraq, the KDP and PUK militant groups occupied Iraqi Kurdistan and held elections there, as a result of which, the KDP and the PUK won, respectively, 51 and 49 seats in parliament. The PUK's claims to leadership led to a civil war between them in 1994-1998. The PUK ruled in Sulaymaniyah while the KDP - in Erbil and Dohuk. The KDP was supported by Turkey, and the PUK by Iran. This is also the current situation. One feels in Erbil and Dohuk like in Turkey, and in Sulaymaniyah like in Iran.

The United States came up with the following formula to reconcile the parties.

The President, Prime Minister, and Speaker of Parliament of Iraq should be, respectively, a PUK representative, a Shia, and a Sunni. The President of the Kurdistan Region should be a KDP representative.

Aggravations in relations between the ruling parties of Kurdistan have taken place to date.

Jalal Talabani's father Sheikh Husameddin Talabani was a prominent Sufi cleric of the Kadiriyye Sufi Order.

The influential Kurdish Berzinji clan from the city of Berzinj in the province of Sulaymaniyah also belongs to this Order. Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov is

also from this Order. As in the Kurdistan Region, the Sufi Orders of Naqshbandi and Kadiriyye also operate in the Chechen Republic.

Jalal Talabani (1933-2017) was the President of Iraq from 2005 to 2017.

Abdul Latif Rashid has been President of Iraq since 2022, representative of the PUK.

Talabani's eldest son Bafel Talabani is the PUK leader. His wife is the daughter of the Commander and General of the PUK Peshmerga, Hikmat Muhammad Karim (known as Mala Bakhtiyar), who is considered one of the most influential people in Iraq.

Talabani's youngest son Qubad Talabani has been the Deputy Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Region since 2014.

Talabani's nephew Lahur Talabani is the co-chairman of the PUK.

Mustafa Barzani (1903-1979) was the leader of the insurgency in the Kurdistan Region.

Mustafa Barzani's son Ubaydullah Barzani (1927-1980) was a Kurdish politician in Iraq. He was under house arrest in Basra from 1947 to 1955, and then in Baghdad from 1955 to 1958. In 1971, he left the KDP and joined the Neo-KDP; from 1974 to 1980, he was the Minister of the Iraqi State. In 1980, he was killed under unclear circumstances.

Mustafa Barzani's son Idris Barzani (1944-1987) was the leader of the rebel movement in the Kurdistan Region.

Mustafa Barzani's son Masoud Barzani (1946) was the President of the Kurdistan Region (2005-2017) and the KDP leader.

Idris Barzani's son Nechirvan Barzani (1966) has been the President of the Kurdistan Region since 2019.

Masoud Barzani's son Masrour Barzani (1969) is the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Region.

Idris Barzani's son Rawan Barzani (1981) is the commander of the First Special Forces Brigade of the Kurdistan Region.

In Syria, there is a self-proclaimed Autonomous Administration of Northern and Eastern Syria - Rojava, also called Syrian or Western Kurdistan. It currently controls seven regions - Afrin, Jazira, Euphrates, Er-Raqqa, Et-Tabqa, Manbij, and Deir ez-Zor.

In 2016-2019, the armed formations of the Syrian opposition, with the support of Turkish troops, occupied part of the Syrian territory, earlier occupied by Kurdish

armed formations. In October 2019, Syrian government troops crossed the Syrian-Turkish border and entered the territories controlled by the Kurds. At the request of Turkey, Kurdish detachments were withdrawn from the border by 30 km. Russian military police controlled security in this zone together with the Turkish military.

The center of illegal administration is the city of Ayn Issa. The area is 60,073 km², and the population is about 5 million.

The population of northeast Syria is multinational. About half are Kurds, the rest are Arabs, Turkmen, Assyrians, and small communities of Armenians, Circassians, and Chechens. Most Syrian Kurds speak Kurmanji and are Sunni Muslims. Syrian Turkman is a dialect of the Azerbaijani language.

Since 2003, the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) has operated in Syria, and since 2015, its militant wing has been the People's Defense Units (YPG). Many consider the YPG to be the Syrian branch of the PKK. The PYD leader is Salih Muslim Muhammad (1951). He graduated from the Istanbul Technical University in 1977 and worked as a chemical engineer in Saudi Arabia. Under the influence of Mustafa Barzani, he joined the insurgency in Iraq and returned to Syria in the 1990s.

In Iran, Kurds live in the provinces of Kurdistan, Ilam, Kermanshah, Hamadan, West Azerbaijan, and North Khorasan. The total population is about 8 million.

The Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan was founded by Qazi Muhammad in Mahabad (Iran) in 1945. It is banned in Iran. The KDPI is calling for self-determination of the Kurdish people and is waging an armed struggle. The party opposed the Shah's regime and cooperated with the Iraqi government during the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988). Since 2016, it has resumed the armed struggle against Iran.

Since 1979, the Komala party - a social democratic ethnic group in Iranian Kurdistan has been operating in Iran. Iran and Japan consider this group a terrorist organization. It has been a registered lobby in the United States of America since 2018.

Komala participated in the guerrilla war against the Iranian government during the 1979 Kurdish uprising and the Iran-Iraq war. It was also involved in the armed conflict against the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan in the 1980s and early 1990s. In mid-March 1979, a Kurdish uprising broke out against the Islamic regime. In 2017, the organization announced the resumption of the armed conflict with Iran.

The PKK, KDPI, and Komala fighters are based in the mountains of the Kurdistan Region. The Turkish army is conducting warfare in northern Iraq and northern

Syria against PKK and Rojava militants. The Iranian army launched rocket and bomb attacks on the KDPI and Komala bases.

Among the countries of the former USSR, the Kurds live in Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia. By the end of the 19th century, the Kurds moved en masse from Turkey and Iran to Transcaucasia due to crop failures and famine. In 1937, the Kurds of Armenia and Azerbaijan, and in 1944, Georgian Kurds were deported to Central Asia. There are about 500,000 Kurds in the countries of the former USSR.

From 1923 to 1929, the Kurdistan Uyezd or Red Kurdistan existed as part of the Azerbaijan SSR, which included the Kalbajar, Gubadli, and Lachin regions of Azerbaijan. The entire region's population was 52 thousand, of which 73 percent were Kurds, 0.5% were Armenians, and the rest were Azerbaijani Turks.

The establishment of the Kurdish autonomy on the territory of Azerbaijan was connected with the international situation and had a political background. The Russian Empire planned to create an autonomous Kurdistan near the southern borders of Russia and resettled Kurds from Turkey and Iran in the Transcaucasia. Then the communists started resettling Kurds posing as communists from Turkey to the region. However, the autonomous formation, designed to raise the authority of the communists among the Eastern peoples, could not last long. The Kurds were not united, and most of them had no education or political training. The attempts of the Azerbaijani leadership to ensure the economic and social development of the region also did not help. Thus, in the early 1930s, the Kurdish alphabet was created, textbooks for primary schools were published in the Kurdish language, and Kurdish schools were opened. A Kurdish department was opened in the Shusha Pedagogical College, and Kurdish Pedagogical College was established in Lachin. All laws, decrees, and decisions were also translated into Kurdish.

Currently, the Ronai Kurdish National Cultural Center is operating under the Republican Cultural Foundation, and the Dange Kurd ('Voice of the Kurd') newspaper is occasionally published. In 2003, by the order of the Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan, curricula for secondary school grades 1-4 were approved in several languages of the people of Azerbaijan. The Diplomat newspaper, closed in 2012, was also published in Kurdish. It was considered the press organ of the PKK.

Distortions of historical facts have reached such a scale that almost all sources indicate that the revolutionary Chingiz Yildirim (1890-1941) was an ethnic Kurd. He served as People's Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs (1920), People's Commissar for Posts and Telegraphs and Communications (1920-1924) of the Azerbaijan SSR, Deputy Head of Construction of the Magnitogorsk Metallurgical Plant (1930-1932), and Deputy Head of Construction of the Kryvyi Rih Metallurgical Plant (1932-1937). In 1937, he was arrested on the charge of

participating in a counter-revolutionary sabotage and terrorist organization and shot on July 7, 1941.

Chingiz Yildirim Sultanov was born in the Gubadli village in 1890. His paternal cousin Khosrov Bey Pasha Bey Sultanov (1879-1943), born in the Kurdhaji village of Zangazur Uyezd of Elizavetpol Governorate, was a prominent state and political figure of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. He is reported as an ethnic Azerbaijani or a Kurd. Chingiz Yildirim was born into a landholder's family, and Khosrov Bey came from a large bey family of the Sultanovs, who owned copper deposits in Kapan (Armenia), crop areas along the Bargushad River, livestock in Chalbair, and a butter and cheese factory in Gurdhaji.

Pasha Bey Sultanov and his sons Khosrov Bey Sultanov, Sultan Bey Sultanov, and Isgandar Bey Sultanov, as well as Yildirim Bey Sultanov (father of Chingiz Yildirim), waged an armed struggle against the Armenians and their leading executioner Andranik Ozanyan in Zangezur. They were all on the side of the Musavat government, and Chingiz Ildirim was on the side of the Bolsheviks. For this reason, his biography was changed. His father, uncle and cousins were ardent nationalists who left Azerbaijan with the advent of Soviet power.

The Gubadli village is now the city of Gubadli (Azerbaijan), and the Kurdhaji village is located northwest of the city of Lachin (Azerbaijan). According to the Administrative Division of the AzSSR publication prepared in 1933, as of January 1, 1933, the Kurdhaji village, which was the center of the cognominal village council in the Lachin region of the Azerbaijan SSR, counted 53 households and 253 people (144 men and 109 women). Turks (Azerbaijanis - 99.1%) made up the national composition of the entire village council (Arakhishi, Erikli, Garabayli, Garasaghal).

It was one of the historical and central settlements of the Turkic Oguz tribe Gasimushaghi, a branch of the well-known Teke-Turkmen Salur tribe. Under the Karabakh Khanate (1750-1822), the village was called Gasimushaghi and was part of the Hajisamli region.

Under the Russian Empire, in the 1850s, the village was called Qurdhaci (Gurdhaji), but in Soviet times, it was written and pronounced in Russian as 'Kurdgaji', and then translated from Russian back into Azerbaijani as Kurdhaji, as written in all documents.

The separatists claim that most Azerbaijani Kurds have adopted local customs, culture, and language. They remember their ethnic roots but no longer speak their native language.

But why then the Kurds of Armenia, Turkmenistan, or Kazakhstan speak Kurdish and have not adopted local customs?

The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) is a Kurdish paramilitary organization seeking to establish an independent Kurdish state. It wages an armed struggle against Turkey. It was created with the direct support of the USSR and Syria.

It was recognized as a terrorist organization by Turkey, the USA, the EU, Sweden, Germany, Iraq, Iran, Syria, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Russia, etc.

On July 6, 2023, the Stockholm District Court for the first time found ethnic Kurdish Yahya Gungor guilty of attempted extortion under aggravated circumstances, possession of weapons, terrorist financing, and fundraising in support of the PKK.

PKK insiders in different countries have been performing propaganda activities and fundraising in support of the PKK for several decades.

The German intelligence services' annual report states that the PKK remains the largest foreign terrorist organization in the country. There are about 14,500 terrorists and PKK accomplices in Germany. In 2022, the PKK raised 16.7 million Euros in Germany. German Interior Minister Nancy Faeser stated that Berlin's stand on the PKK terrorists has not changed, and the authorities intend to continue the fight against this criminal organization.

Information on the involvement of PKK terrorists in drug trafficking has also been provided in many Western reports since the 1990s. According to law enforcement agencies, from 2022, the coverage of drug trafficking in Europe by PKK terrorists increased from 60-70% in the 1990s to 80% in the 2010s.

The PKK was founded as a left-wing socialist party on June 27, 1978, by Abdullah Öcalan (1949), who has been serving whole-life tariffs in Turkey's Imrali prison since 1999. He studied at the Faculty of Political Science of Ankara University (did not graduate from it), joined the communists, led the anti-state activity, created military camps and detachments, and arranged terrorist acts and armed attacks. About 40,000 people were killed as a result of the PKK terrorist activity.

In February 1999, the Turkish secret services began the process of arresting Ocalan. First, on October 9, 1998, he flew from Syria to Athens. The Greeks did not allow him to stay and requested to leave the country. From Greece, he went to Moscow (and was offered to leave the country). On November 4, 1998, he flew to Rome, where he was arrested and then expelled from the country. On January 16, 1998, he returned to Moscow (Russia). With the help of the Greek security services, on January 29, he flew on a private plane first to Athens (Greece) and then to Minsk (Belarus). All these countries, as well as the Netherlands, refuse to grant him political asylum. Kenya became the last country for Ocalan to flee. On

February 15, 1999, Turkish security services took him in at Nairobi airport and brought to Ankara.

If earlier the PKK sought to establish an independent state, now the official goal of the party is to create autonomy within Turkey.

In 2012, the Peoples' Democratic Party was created, which is the political wing of the PKK. Officially, it is a left-wing political party defending the interests and rights of ethnic minorities. It is winning 10-11% of votes in parliamentary elections.

Among Ocalan and the PKK supporters, there were representatives of the Kurdish clerisy, musicians, actors, etc.

Kurdish poet and singer Ahmet Kaya (1957-2000) was one of the most famous singers in Turkey in the 1990s. Ahmet was born in Malatya to a Kurdish father from Adiyaman and a Turkish mother. His uncle Yusuf was a singer and musician who inspired him. His musical career was also influenced by his father, who bought him a baglama (or saz - a stringed musical instrument) for his birthday.

In the early 1970s, he lived in Germany for a year and a half with his maternal uncle. Ahmet Kaya was first a communist and a Marxist. At the age of 14, he became a member of the People's Art Organization, like other members of the organization - musicians, actors, and journalists, many of whom adhered to left-wing political views. Over time, Ahmet Kaya started leading a seminar on capitalism. In 1977 he was charged with political propaganda and arrested for 5 months.

As an anarchist and communist, from the very beginning of his career, he positioned himself as an opponent of the government. He was a strong supporter of the PKK, especially during concerts and rallies.

During the military coup on September 12, 1980, many of his comrades were arrested on charges of political crimes. Ahmet Kaya attended political circles and gatherings. On one of them, in 1984, Ahmet Kaya was arrested for 3 months - a firearm was found on him. Just since 1984, Abdullah Ocalan has started hostilities against Turkey under the slogan of the independence of Kurdistan. Further Ahmet Kaya became a Kurdish nationalist.

At one of his concerts in Germany, he performed with the PKK flag in the background and supported its leader Abdullah Ocalan. At the music awards ceremony on February 11, 1999, he announced his intention to release an album in Kurdish, which was banned in Turkey. Since 1980, songs and cassettes have been performed in Kurdish, despite the official ban that was lifted in 2005.

Ahmet Kaya raised the 'Kurdish issue' in every TV program and concert. After moving to Paris, he gave concerts in France and Germany, recorded new songs,

shot videos, and participated in TV programs. In Turkey, he was sentenced in absentia to 3 years and 9 months in prison for anti-state propaganda and separatism. He died on November 16, 2000, in Paris from a heart attack.

From the beginning of the 18th century, with the crisis and weakening of the power of the Ottoman Empire and the Safavid, Afsharid, and Qajar States, the Russian Empire became their major opponent. Russia started actively using Armenians and Kurds in its political intrigues. In the 19th century, Great Britain joined Russia. Russia managed to annex some territories of the Ottoman Empire - first the Crimea, then part of Georgia and Armenia, and from the Qajars - the present-day Republic of Azerbaijan and the main part of Georgia and Armenia.

By the First World War (1914-1918), Armenians completely went over to the side of Russia, France, Great Britain, and the USA. About 250,000 Armenian soldiers and officers fought on all fronts against the Ottoman Empire. The Kurds fought on the side of their Muslim brothers. There were several uprisings of some Kurdish tribes instigated from outside, but they did not cause any changes.

After World War I, the Soviet Union was actively involved in the Kurdish issue, using socialist and communist ideas. They were successful in Iraq and Turkey, and temporarily in Iran (1941-1946). However, by the end of the 20th century, the US completely took control over this region, especially since the 1990s, after the US became more active in Iraq. Russia is active in Syria.

Russia uses the Kurdish factor as an important element of its regional policy, especially in Syria. Herewith, it stands for the territorial integrity of states where the Kurdish population lives compactly. This suggests that the key goal of Russian geopolitics in Syria is not the question of the self-determination of the Kurds but their use as a lever of pressure.

As for the US, Washington has been very active in the region since 1979. The Americans virtually solved all issues in Iraq. From time to time, they increase pressure using the Kurdish factor in Turkey itself and on its borders with Iran, Iraq, and Syria. Their key aspiration is to overthrow the regimes in Iran and Syria.

France patronizes Armenian and Kurdish organizations, including armed ones, and allows them to open branches. The goal is the same: to have a lever of pressure on Turkey and Azerbaijan.

And therefore, establishing a separate and unified Kurdish state seems impossible. The internal linguistic, tribal, and confessional contradictions between the major Kurdish groups in Iraq (Barzani and Talabani) are also driving a wedge in the unity of the Kurds. The leaders of the Turkish and Syrian Kurds are not representatives of strong tariqas and tribes. Herewith, the Kurdistan Region leaders often visit Turkey to maintain and expand political and economic ties. Moreover, on January

17, 2020, the President of Iraqi Kurdistan, Nechirvan Barzani, openly stated that Syrian Kurds should sever ties with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). According to Barzani, Syrian Kurds made concessions to the Turkish authorities 'too late.'

On January 26, 2023, Kurdistan Region President Nechirvan Barzani visited Turkey and met with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. On July 18, 2023, Nechirvan Barzani visited Azerbaijan and met with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev. Regional issues and trade and economic cooperation were discussed at these meetings.

The Kurd issue should be resolved within the borders of the countries they live. To do this, an agreement should be reached with the leadership of those countries, and the Kurds should become their full-fledged citizens.

Kurds and Turks, Kurds and Persians, Kurds and Arabs are mostly Muslims and brothers for centuries. The US and Russia are interfering in their internal affairs, pursuing their political goals in this region, and bringing more and more pain and blood.