Volume 15 Issue 43
Originally issued as D2



Global Journal of human-social science: D
History, Archaeology & Anthropology
Volume 15 Issue 2 Version 1.0 Year 2015
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal
Publisher: Global Journals Inc. (USA)
Online ISSN: 2249-460X & Print ISSN: 0975-587X

The Kurdish Peshmarga Force 1943-1975

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GJHSS-D Classification : FOR Code: 430199p



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I. Introduction

The roots of the modern-day Peshmarga force, particularly in regards to training, can be found in the early efforts of the Ottoman Empire to generate an organized Turkish-Kurdish military force. In 1891, Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II (1876-1909) created the Suwaren Hamidi (Horse soldiers, hereafter Hamidiya Knights), merging Turkish leadership with Kurdish tribal troops. This force had two primary objectives: to defend the Cossack Region from a possible Sovietthreat (McDowall 2004:59; O'shea 2004:78) and secondly, to decrease the possible of Kurdish-Armenian collaboration (Safrastian 1949: 66). Dividing two of the biggest minority groups in the region guaranteed the Ottoman Empire control of Eastern Anatolia and countered current losses of its western lands to the expanding European powers. The Hamidiya Knights might urther more have been started to produce a feeling of "Pan-Islam", especially in light of a perceived possible British- Russian-Armenian Christian alliance (Olson 2013:8; Zakhoyi 2005: 20).

Although efforts were prepared to assimilate select Kurdish fighters in the Ottoman military previous to the (Hamidiya Knights), most, if not all, Kurdish mounted troops and riflemen were faithful only to their local tribes or regional sheikhs. To join the fighting capability of the Kurds into the Ottoman armed forces, Hamid II's administration employed many of the durable tribes in Eastern Anatolia (McDowall 2004:59; O'shea 2004:79). According to Zakhoyi, authoritative tribes, such as the Mirans, the Tayans, the Batwans, the Duderis, the Kachans and the Shernakhs were to supply nearly 40 battalions. Smaller tribes, such as the Heiderans, the Jibrans, the Jallals and the Mugurs were only to donate units. Ottoman frontrunners, after selecting which tribes were to contribute in the Hamidiya Knights, summoned the corresponding chiefs to Constantinople and endowed them with military ranks. These chiefs and their associates, armed frequently with atamans (Zakhoyi 2005:22), kandjarrifles, and Russian Winchester cavalry rifles, were coached to newcomer troops and form units. After recruiting, thetribal chiefs and taking place groups of Kurdish leaders were sent to the Hamidiya Suvari Mektabi, a special military school in Istanbul (Olson 2013:9). Although Greene states that these units were to be cavalry units exclusively, it is uncertain as to how accurate his interpretations were and whether or not positive Kurdish tribes were structured as infantry units (Lortz 2005:6).

With the purpose of differentiate themselves from other cavalry troops under the Sultan's command, the Hamidiya Knights were delivered distinctive costumes consisting of large black wool caps with brass badges on the front (Lortz 2005:6). This headdress was seen during their "ground" operations, whereas some elements of the Cavalry were observed wearing Cossack-style costumes (McDowall 2004:59) and costumes worthy of being paraded before the Sultan earlier to the 1897 war with Greece (Safrastian 1949: 67). According to Italian diplomatic correspondence, "some wore a uniform similar to that of the Cirassian's, others like that of the Cossacks, and finally others,

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instead of the kalpak worn by the first group, were wearing the keffeyia like Arab horsemen" (Lortz2005:6).. The rank organization of the Hamidiya Knights reflected Turkish distrust in the Kurdish leadership. With the aim of limiting Kurdish development and control, the pre arranged arrangement of the officer corps was a commanding Turkish cavalry overallin charge for all cavalry forces, a Kurdish brigadier general commanding up to four Hamidiya Knights regiments, four colonels per regiment (two Kurds and two "prescelti" – a shadowing Turkish officer of comparable rank used to ensure conformity), four lieutenants (two Kurds and two prescelti), two majors (one Kurd and one prescelti), and two adjutant-majors (one Kurd and one prescelti) (Lortz2005:6).Generally, the Hamidiya Knights was included of 48 to 76 regiments, each having roughly 400 to 600 men. In total, there were around 50,000 troops in the unit (Kreyenbroek & Stefan 1992: 197).The Hamidiya Knights was in no way a cross-tribal force, notwithstanding their military presence, institute, and possible. Simply when smaller tribes were incapable to fully man their unit necessities were other tribal warrior's integrated (McDowall 2004: 59).

As tribal commanders regularly took benefit of their newfound power and state connection, great tribes, such as the Jibran tribe, which retrieved four regiments, found it easy to control, frighten, and terrorize smaller non-Hamidiya tribes. These chief officer repeatedly used Hamidiya Knights and equipment to settle tribal variances. Instructions also came from the state as tribes in the Hamidiya Knights were called upon to overpower "recalcitrant tribes" (Olson 2013: 9). The "benefits" of being involved in the Hamidiya meant getting not only artilleries and exercise, however a confident level of prestige. Hamidiya majors and militaries rapidly acknowledged they could only be tried through a military court martial (Lortz 2005:7) and not through civil administration. Understanding their immunity, Cavalry leaders speedily turned their tribes into "lawful robber brigades". Hamidiya soldiers would every so often steal grain, reap fields not of their possession, drive off herds, and agreeably steal from storekeepers. The Hamidiya Knights was moreover used by the Ottoman Empire to overpower Armenian revolts in Eastern Anatolia. The Sultan's militaries, including the Hamidiya Knights, made no distinction between pro- or anti-government Armenians as the European powers improved their desire for Armenian Christian concerns. Massacres happened in numerous Armenian areas, with victims reaching the thousands in several towns (McDowall 2004: 60). Hamidiya strategies during these raids were principally cavalry in nature although unorganized Kurdish "brigands" conducted most dismounted occurrences. In total, more than 200,000 Armenians were killed between 1894 and 1896(Lortz 2005:7).

After the overthrow of Sultan Abdul Hamid in 1908, the Hamidiya Knights was disbanded as asystematized force. Select few units were kept in administration service nevertheless, renamed "Tribal Regiments", and deployed to Yemen and Albania. Sent to subdue trouble on the fringes of the Ottoman Empire, the performance of these former Hamidiya units was poor at best. According to McDowall, they not only sustained heavy losses, however also acquired a "reputation for savagery" (McDowall 2004:63).The Hamidiya Knights is showed as a military disappointment and a failure because of its contribution to tribal feuds and "one of the darkest stains in Kurdish history" (Lortz 2005:7) because of its role in the Armenian massacres. Despite these charges, it remains integral to the history of the Peshmarga. Many Kurds received their first training in non-tribal warfare from the Hamidiya Knights, learning strategic military strategy, and acquiring "knowledge of military technology and equipment and the experiences to use it" (Olson 2013: 15). Many of the same officers that led Hamidiya Knights troops would play alike roles in future Kurdish revolutions and influence future Kurdish military organization (Lortz 2005:7).

II. Kurdish Forces during the First World War

As the Ottoman Empire resisted to stay together during World War I, it once again called on the Kurds, with their newly-acquired military experience, to enhancement the Turkish armed forces. According to Safrastian, most military age Kurds not already in the light cavalry regiments were drafted into the Turkish army and refreshed to fight with their Muslim Turkish brethren against the Christians and Armenians (Safrastian 1949: 75).Because of the anti-Christian and anti-Armenian advertising, the Turkish armed forces fielded enough Kurds to entirely man numerous units. Among the all-Kurdish units were the eleventh Army, headquartered in Elazig, and the Twelfth Army, headquartered in Mosul. Kurds similarly made up a mainstream of the Ninth and Tenth Armies and supplied enough troops for many frontier units and 135 squadrons of reserve cavalry (Olson 2013:18). These militaries, with their experience and acquaintance of the terrain, were crucial in fighting the Russian hazard to the Eastern Ottoman Empire. The end of World War I brought forth a new era in the prospective for an organized Kurdish armed forces. Due to the Sykes-Picot Treaty of May 1916 (McDowall 2004:115).

Kurdistan was no longer the unauthorized buffer between the Ottoman and Persian Empires, but a region divided between several new nations (Iraq, Syria, Turkey, and Iran). With a majority of Kurds fragmented between British-controlled Iraq (Southern Kurdistan) and the newly dismantled nation of Turkey (Northern

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army. Despite their physical division, the increasing number of Kurdish intelligentsia endeavored to take advantage of the regional dismay and lobby for a Kurdish nation-state (Izady 1992:59). Originally, Kurdish ideas of independence went well as Britain, the reigning Allied superpower in the region, agreed to sponsor an independent nation in Southern Kurdistan in 1918. Accordingly, British support would be limited to political and administrative advice only. The Kurdish people would responsible for all else, including their own administration, judiciary, revenue, and military. Once established, the Kurdish armed force was to be comprised in part from local Kurdish levies trained by British Major Denials as well as the cavalry forces of Sheikh Mahmud Barzinji, head of the Qadiri Sufi Order and a landed aristocrat. According to Eskander, Sheikh Mahmud was "by far the most influential Kurdish personality in southern Kurdistan during and after the war" (Eskander 2005:143).

Thoughts of political autonomy and a possible Kurdish military would soon be eliminated however. Neither the British nor the developing Kemalist Turkish government wanted to see an independent Kurdistan, expressly one able to defend itself (Eskander 2005: 145; McDowall 2004:126). For the British, the notion of a recognized nation in Southern Kurdistan was believed unreasonable due to the incapability of the Kurds to govern themselves. The British were also worried with the prospect of oil in the Kirkuk, Kifri, and Erbil regions. Henceforth the British need to pull to pieces the Kurdish Republic, and assume command of the Assyrian-Kurdish Levies. By May 1919, months into the "new" British policy, Kurdish officers amongst the Levies decreased from 36 units under Kurdish self-government to nine. British officers rapidly took charge of units and conscripts from the Kurdish region were "forced into service under the British government" (Eskander 2005:157).

The possible for a Kurdish armedforces in Northern Kurdistan was pretty different from that in the south due to the growth of Mustafa Kemal and Turkish nationalism. Numerous Kurdish forces, both former Hamidiya and non-Hamidiya tribes, were once again united under Ottoman and pan-Islamic propaganda. These armed forces commonly participated in battles to liberate Turkey from the so-called "foreign invaders", namely the Greeks and Armenians. Led by Miralay (Colonel) Halid Beg Cibran, former commander of the Second Hamidiya Regiment, Kurdish troops expelled numerous Russians and Armenians from Eastern Anatolia. Under Kemal's original plans, Turkey was to become a land of Turkish rule with the Kurds assimilated within the society (McDowall 2004: 191).

By the end of the 1920s, political boulevards of independence and the capability to lawfully create their own armed forces were all however closed for the Kurdish people both in northern and southern Kurdistan. Both the Turks and the British had used the Kurds for their own regional interest purposes and given the Kurds diminutive in return. For the common Kurd, equality and sustenance was seen merely at the local level, where sheikhs became not only the biggest religious authorities, but then again political and military leaders too. According to Van Bruinessen, the inter-tribal effect of the Kurdish sheikhs developed them into "astute political operators, who succeeded in imposing their authority on even the largest tribal chieftains of their regions" (Martin 1999:15).The improved power of the sheikhs furthermore led to the assumption of regional military commands, as sheikhs and their followers saw no choice however to take up arms in the struggle for regional appreciation. Two sheikhs in particular, Sheikh Said of Piran in Northern Kurdistan and Sheikh Mahmud Barzanji in Southern Kurdistan, would lead their followers the future Peshmargain military struggles and attempt to influence the politics of the principal powers(Lortz 2005:8).

III. Sheikh Mahmud of Barzanjirebellion

Even though both the Turks and the British used Kurdish tribes to originate cross-border conflicts, local sheikhs recruited Kurds to revolt against the regional player powers. The first of these Kurdish call-to-arms happened in British controlled Southern Kurdistan in May 1919. Shortly before being selected governor of Sulaymaniyah, Sheikh Mahmud Bazanji ordered the arrest of all British political and military officials in the region (Eskander 2005:157.153). After seizing control of the region, Barzanji raised anarmed force from his Iranian tribal followers and announced himself "Ruler of all of Kurdistan". Tribal fighters from both Iran and Iraq rapidly allied themselves with Sheikh Mahmud as he became more effective in opposing British rule. According to McDowall, the Sheikh's forces "were largely Barzinja tribesmen, the Hamavand under Karim Fattah Beg, and disillusioned segments of the Jaf, Jabbari, Sheikh Bizayni and Shuan tribes". The admiration and numbers of Sheikh Mahmud's multitudes only increased after their ambush of a British armed forces column (McDowall 2004: 158).

Among Mahmud's many supporters and troop leaders was 16-year-old Mustafa Barzani, the future leader of the Kurdish nationalist movement cause and commander of Peshmarga forces in Kurdistan of Iraq (McDowall 1996: 26). Barzani and his men, following the orders of Barzani tribal Sheikh Ahmad Barzani, crossed the Piyaw Valley on their way to join Sheikh Mahmud Barzanji's forces. Despite being ambushed several times along the way, Barzani and his men reached Sheikh Mahmud's location, albeit too late to help in the revolt (Barzani 2002:22). The Barzani fighters were only a part of the Sheikh's 500-person force. As the British

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became aware of the sheikh's developing political and armed forces power, they were forced to respond militarily. Two British brigades were positioned to defeat Sheikh Mahmud's fighters (McDowall 2004: 158) at Darbandi Bazyan near Sulaymaniyah in June 1919 (Ghassemlou 1965: 63). Sheikh Mahmud was eventually arrested and exiled to India in 1921(Olson 2013:61).

At the root of the revolution, Sheikh Mahmud's leadership appealed to both Kurdish nationalist and religious feelings. Even though he knew he could not directly defeat the British, Sheikh Mahmud expected to seek recognition of Kurdish nationalism (Eskander 2005: 153) by supporting a 'free united Kurdistan'. Using his ability as a religious leader, Sheikh Mahmud called for a jihad against the British in 1919 (McDowall 2004: 158) and therefore acquired the support of many Kurds indifferent to the nationalist struggle. Although the passion of their struggle was motivated by religion, Kurdish peasantry seized the idea of "national and political freedom for all" and endeavored for "Andevelopment in their social standing" (Ghassemlou 1965: 63). Despite opposition by other regional tribes, feasibly fearful of the sheikh's developing power, Sheikh Mahmud's troops continued to oppose British rule after the sheikh's arrest (McDowall 2004: 158). Even though no longer organized under one leader, this inter-tribal vigor was "actively anti- British", engaging in hit-and-run bouts, killing British military officers, and contributing in local uprisings. The fighters sustained to be inspired by Sheikh Mahmud's capability to "challenge British interference" (Eskander 2005: 153).

The success of the Kurdish fighters' anti-British upheavals forced the British to recognize Kurdish political autonomy in 1923 (McDowall 2004: 159). Returning to the region in 1922, Sheikh Mahmud continued to indorse raids against British militaries (Lortz 2005:8). Once these uprisings were subdued, the British government signed Iraq over to King Feisal and a new Arab-led government (McDowall 2004: 158). After having to retreat into the mountains, the defeated Sheikh Mahmud signed a peace harmony with the new Iraqi government and settled in the new Iraq (Ghassemlou 1965: 66).

IV. Sheikh said of Piranuprising

As Sheikh Mahmud battled for Kurdish political autonomy and liberation in Southern Kurdistan, similar revolutions were happening throughout Northern Kurdistan against the unexperienced Turkish government. Of these revolts the chiefly tribal Kuchgiriup rising of 1920 was possibly the most prominent as Kurdish fighters struggled for political autonomy and were clever to seize many Turkish arms and supplies (Olson 2013:32). The defeat of these revolutions inspired the Turkish government to deal with the "Kurdish question" by enacting laws limiting both Kurdish identity and the governing capability of sheikhs (O'Ballance1973:15). As the Turkish nationalist position became firmer, attacks on the democratic rights of the Kurds improved (Ghassemlou 1965: 51).

Forced underground, Kurdish nationalist leaders formed the political group Azadi (Freedom) in Dersim, Turkey in 1921 (McDowall 2004: 192). Dissimilar earlier Kurdish nationalist collections, the core of Azadi was comprised of practiced military men, not the urban Kurdish intelligentsia (Bruinessen 1992:280). According to Olson, Azadi' sbelligerent forces included various tribal armed forces and several former Hamidiya regimental leaders, all equipped with rifles and other weapons previously owned by the Turks The strength and expansion of Azadi would lead to its downfall. During a Turkish military expedition in September 1924 more than a few Azadi leaders mutinied, fleeing into the mountains with various artilleries and hundreds of lower-ranking Kurdish soldiers (Olson 2013:50). Over 500 officers and soldiers – three companies of one battalion and one company of another left the Turkish ranks to join the Kurdish army (Bruinessen 1992:284).

In reaction to the revolution, the Turkish government, recognizing the strength of Azadi, quickly arrested many of the organization's leaders, both mutineers and conspirators (Olson 2013:50). With their leadership exhausted, a power vacuum formed in the political-military arrangement of Azadi. Out of the remnants of Azadi emerged Sheikh Said of Piran, a Naqshbandi sheikh related through marriage to Khalid Beg, Turkish Army colonel and Azadi founder (Bruinessen1992:281). The remaining Azadi substructure supported the Sheikh's leadership, considering a sheikh could generate more support than amilitary officer. Once persuaded to join the uprising (Olson 2013:94), Sheikh Said directly began assembling contributors and forming a chain of command. As Van Bruinessen demonstrated Sheikh Said "knew what he wanted, had the capacity to convince others and had a great reputation for piety, which was useful when his other arguments were insufficient" (Bruinessen 1992:281).

As a new leader, Sheikh Said, similar Sheikh Mahmud years earlier, appealed to the Kurdish sense of Islamic unity. In addition the usual fighting attendants of a Kurdish sheikh, Sheikh Said was able to increase his ranks during his tour of Eastern Anatolia in January 1925. New recruits answered the call to arms as Said issued fatwasfor war (Call for holy war), gave speeches denouncing the secular Kemalist policies, and wrote letters inviting numerous tribes to join in a jihad against the government (Olson 2013:95). Said similarly met personally with tribal leaders and their representatives, including Barzan tribal representative Mullah Mustafa Barzani (Mc Dowall 1996:27).

Although some tribes rejected to follow Said, he was acknowledged definitely in many towns. The Sheikh's rise to power permitted him to declare himself

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'emir al-mujahidin' (commander of the faithful and fighters of the holy war) in January 1925. Overall, 15 to 20,000 Kurds mobilized in support of Sheikh Said and Azadi. Many of these fighters were armed with horses, rifles, or sabers (Olson 2013:95)attained from the various munitions depots across the countryside. Other Kurdish armament was either personally owned earlier to the rebellion or taken from the Armenians, despite Turkish attempts at Kurdish disarmament (Safrastian 1949:82).With sufficient firepower recruited from the tribes, a plan of outbreak was set in place. In generating a battle strategy, Said and the other prominent remaining Azadi leadership recognized five major fronts to be commanded by regional sheikhs (Bruinessen 1992:292). These sheikh leaders were aided by former Hamidiya Knights officers who provided military construction to the revolution. After institute, unit responsibility was distributed among nine areas. The overall headquarters of Said's armed force was located in EgriDagh and protected by a force of 2,000 men (Lortz 2005:14). Duringthe onset of the revolution, Said's fighters, facing nearly 25,000 Turkish troops (Olson 2013:107), gained control of a Vilayet near Diyarbakir (Lortz 2005:14). Besides seizing Turkish land and acquiring additional munitions, early victories instilled confidence in the rebellion and garnered further Kurdish support. Throughout the conflict, Said's fighters used both conventional military tactics, including multi front attacks and efforts at urban seizure, and alternative warfare, including guerrilla tactics (Olson 2013:110). An example of the conventional military organization was evident in the assault on Diyarbakir, where reports saw "three columns of 5,000 strong, under the personal command of Sheikh Said". The formation of conventional sophisticated levels of Kurdish armed forces command may moreover be assumed as documents written by foreigners were lectured to a 'Kurdish War Office'. These official papers, found by Turkish forces, may have been propaganda nevertheless, designed to create the illusion of international support for the Kurdish revolution (Lortz 2005:15).

Despite the valiant efforts of Said's fighters, the Kemalist administration was able to rapidly amass forces to overpower the rebellion by early April 1925 and arrested Sheikh Said as he endeavored to flee to Iran on 27 April 1925 (Bruinessen 1992:290). After his arrest, Sheikh Said was punctually trained for his actions against the Turkish administration. Said, along with a number of his factions, was hung on 29 June 1925(Olson 2013:127). Similar the Iraqi Kurds under Sheikh Mahmud, Sheikh Said's persisting followers did not halt their assaults after the removal of their leader. Throughout 1925 and 1926 their attacks sustained as they conducted guerrilla maneuvers against Turkish military units (Bruinessen 1992:290). After their arrest, these remaining armed forces proclaimed themselves to be 'the unvanquished tribe of the nation' (Lortz 2005:15). Whether or not these thoughts of nationalism were articulated by all the remaining followers cannot be strong-minded, though, according to Van Bruinessen, "neither the guerrilla troops, nor the leaders of the Ararat revolt that followed, used religious phraseology" units (Bruinessen 1992:299).

Because of growing Kurdish awareness, nationalism, despite its primary urban, intellectual, and political individual roots, had become a military reason in and of itself, separate from religious inspirations. Even though recruitment continued based on tribal or sheikh allegiances, the Kurdish nationalist struggle became anauthentic call to arms. By fighting for "Kurdistan," Kurdish troops, the future Peshmarga, separated themselves from the mujahedeen, their regional religious combatant brethren (Lortz 2005:15).

V. The Ararat Uprising

Despite the failure of Sheikh Said and Azadi, Kurdish intellectuals and nationalist leaders sustained to proposal for an independent Kurdistan (McDowall 2004: 202). Many of these nationalists met in October 1927 and not only declared the independence of Kurdistan, but then again moreover formed Khoybun (Independence), a "supreme national organ … with full and high-class national and international powers" (Safrastian 1949: 84)..102 This new organization's leadership supposed the crucial to success in the struggle for an independent Kurdistan lay not in tribal loyalties, however in a "properly conceived, planned and organized" military initiative (McDowall 2004: 203). In showing the need for a proper military construction, Khoybun nominated IhsanNuri Pasha Commander-In-Chief of the Kurdish National Army. Nuri Pasha, besides being a former Kurdish member of the "Young Turk Movement", showed his loyalty to the Kurdish question when he led the mutiny within the Turkish military earlier to the Sheikh Said Uprising (Bruinessen1992:284;Izady 1992:62).

After forming leader ship of Khoybun sought the assistance of many influential European forces to help supply the Kurdish nationalist military attempted (Ghassemlou 1965: 54). Despite their irritation with the Kema list regime, however, neither the British nor the French gave much support to Khoybun. (McDowall 2004: 203). According to Safrastian, the European powers, once supportive of Kurdish independence, were persuaded through Turkish media and press reports (Safrastian 1949: 85). With little assistance from Europe, Khoybun eventually settled for the support of the Armenian Dashnak Party, the Shah of Iran (McDowall 2004: 204), and fellow Kurds such as Sheikh Ahmad of Barzan, leader of the Iraqi Kurdistan Barzani tribe (Izady 1992:62). Syrian Kurds also came to the assistance of Khoybun, cutting railroads, pillaging Turkish villages, and conducting guerrilla assaults (Mella 2005 103).

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By 1928, Nuri Pasha had assembled a small clutch of soldiers' armed force with modern weapons and trained in infantry tactics. This force initiated the Khoybun revolution, marching towards Mount Ararat (McDowall 2004: 203). Nuri and his men not simply achieved success in reaching Mount Ararat, nonetheless they were capable to secure the towns of Bitlis, Van, and most of the countryside around Lake Van (Izady 1992:62)., establishing a notable area of Kurdish resistance (Mella 2005 103)..Along with their weapons, organization, and ability, Kurdish strength was enhanced by the positioning of the rebellion. Although Turkish forces attempted to suppress the revolt as early as 1927, their success was tempered by a lack of Persian cooperation, as Mount Ararat lay in the Turkish-Persian border (McDowall 2004: 204). By 1930, however, Turkish forces began to take the upper hand. Beginning in May, the Turkish army went on the offensive, surrounding Mount Ararat with over 10,000 troops by late June. Troop numbers on both sides sustained to cultivate as Kurdish tribes were enlisted to join the cause and roughly 60,000 more soldiers were called up by the Turkish government (Lortz 2005:17).

Besides facing acumulative numerical disadvantage, the Khoybun resistance slowly saw its regional support disappear. Pressured by the Turkish government, French administrators in Syria and British administrators in Iraq restrained much of the southern support for Khoybun (Izady 1992:63). Preceding to Turkish persistence, Barzani military assistance from Southern Kurdistan included 500 horsemen from the Mosul district brought by the "Sheik of Barzan". Other Kurdish tribal chiefs such as Hatcho and Simqu, both from Syria, came to the assistance of Khoybun in 1930. The biggest blow to Khoybun's Ararat revolution, nevertheless, came from Persia. Although initially sympathetic of Kurdish resistance, the Persian government did not fight Turkish military developments into Persia to surround Mount Ararat (Mella 2005 104). Persian frontier guardsmen similarly stigated to close the Persian-Turkish border to non-essential travelers, including Kurdish tribes endeavoring to reinforce the revolt. Persia would ultimately completely submit to Turkish operational demands, trading the land surrounding Mount Ararat for Turkish land near Qutur and Barzirgan. The organized revolution on Mount Ararat was beaten by the fall of 1930, although then Turks waited until the following spring to attack any outstanding tribal dissenters. Similar to the consequence of previous Kurdish revolutions, the Turkish government was merciless to the rebels and anyone supposed of assisting them, destroying villages and killing hundred thousands of Kurds (Mella 2005: 104).

Despite the defeat, Khoybun and the Ararat revolt are significant to the historical roots of the Peshmarga for three reasons. First,never before had a military force been constructed specifically for the Kurdish nationalist ideal. The influence of the tribal sheikh as military commander was increasingly reduced as nationalism became a more important reason for Kurdish military actions. Second, the Khoybun revolt showed a growing relationship between the Barzani tribe and Kurdish nationalism. Although Mullah Mustafa Barzani had been involved in Sheikh Mahmud's revolt and had met with Sheikh Said, the military support granted to the Khoybun cause from the Barzani tribe (as led by Sheikh Ahmad and commanded by Mullah Mustafa) was unprecedented. This level of support would continue to grow as future Peshmarga, specifically from the Barzani area, would again be called on to defend attempted Kurdish nation-states. Finally, the Khoybun revolt began a pattern of international cooperation against Kurdish nationalism. Exchanges of land between neigh bouring countries would be seen again as regional powers temporarily put aside their differences in an attempt to suppress Kurdish military ability (Lortz 2005:18).

VI. The Role of Barzani Tribe in the Kurdish Issue

Before exploring more the early history of the Peshmarga and its role in Kurdish revolts, the influence of the Barzani tribe and their sheikhs must be discoursed. Not simply would the leaders of this tribe (Sheikh Ahmad and Mullah Mustafa) play a great role in early Kurdish nationalist conflicts, however it is their fighters who defined what would become the Peshmarga– those who face death. The influence of the sheikhs in the village of Barzan was first noted in the early 19th century with the emergence of Taj ad Din, the first Barzani sheikh (Bois 1996: 50). Located in the northernmost part of Iraqi Kurdistan (Barzani 2002:17), "in the mountain vastness northeast of Arbil in Iraq, on the Greater Zab River and in the highlands above it" (Eagleton 1963: 47), Barzan is illustrated as a small village with "no outstanding features except for the solid stone houses of the sheikhs". On the other hand, nondescript their residence, Barzani villagers had a long-standing reputation as great armed forces. This reputation applied particularly to those who followed the resident sheikh. According to Eagleton, the idea of the Barzani people as capable fighters, combined with support from members of outside tribes, allowed the Barzanis to defend themselves despite being outnumbered by neighboring enemies. After the execution of Sheikh Abdul Salam in 1914 by Turkish authorities, his 18-yearold brother, Ahmad Barzani took charge of the Barzani tribe. Ahmad, defined as "young and unstable", continued to rule as his brother had, seizing both religious and political power and becoming sheikh of the region(Eagleton 1963: 47).

Sheikh Ahmad's growing religious authority would eventually lead to conflict. According to Mir

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Hadilzady, Ahmad instituted a new religion in 1927, attempting to combine Christianity, Judaism, and Islam for the sake of unifying the "religiously fragmented" Kurdish populace (Izady 1992:64). Persuaded of Ahmad's divineness, Mullah Abdul Rahman proclaimed the sheikh to be "God" and declared himself a prophet. Although Abdul Rahman was killed by Shaikh Ahmad's brother Muhammad Sadiq, the ideas of Ahmad's divineness spread. Sheikh Ahmad's eccentricities would become the target of rival tribes by 1931 (Izady 1992:64). As the numerous tribal strikes and counterstrikes involving the Barzanis began to wave the countryside, the new Iraqi government, having recently agreed to independence with Britain, attempted to destroy the contentious Barzani tribe (McDowall 2004: 179). According to Masud Barzani, the Iraqi intent to subjugate the Barzanis was "without foundation because there was already a civilian administration in the Barzan region, and Sheikh Ahmad was not in opposition to it". Masud Barzani further asserts that the Iraqi objective was to "vanquish Barzan because of its firm patriotic stand". Conflict between the Barzanis and the Iraqi forces initiated in late 1931 and continued through 1932. Commanding Barzani fighters was Sheikh Ahmad's younger brother, Mullah Mustafa Barzani. Mustafa would intensification to prominence against the Iraqi forces (who were supplemented by British commanders and the British Royal Air Force). Despite his young age, the 28-year-old Mustafa Barzani displayed "excellent defensive and offensive military superiority" and his "outstanding abilities raised the morale of his fighters and their trust in his leadership".

Iraqi numerical superiority and air power overcame Kurdish bravery, nevertheless. By June 1932 Sheikh Ahmad Barzani, his brothers, and a small contingent of men were forced to seek asylum in Turkey. Although Ahmad was separated from his followers and sent to Ankara (Barzani 2002:28), Mullah Mustafa and Muhammad Sadiq continued to fight Iraqi forces for another year before surrendering. After swearing an oath to King Faysal of Iraq, the Barzanis (sans Sheikh Ahmad) were allowed to return to Barzan in spring 1933, where they found their "devoutly loyal" forces had kept their organization and weapons (McDowall 2004: 180).

Eventually Mullah Mustafa was reunited with Ahmad Barzani as the Iraqi government arrested the brothers and exiled them to Mosul in 1933. The two Barzanis were transferred to various cities in Iraq throughout the 1930s and early 1940s. During this time their stops included Mosul, Baghdad, Nasiriya, Kifri, and AltinKopru before finally ending in Sulaymaniyah. In the meantime, back bone in Barzan, the remaining Barzani tribal fighters were faced with constant pressures of arrest or death. Although initially a tribal dispute, the involvement of the Iraqi government inadvertently led to the growth of Sheikh Ahmad and Mullah Mustafa Barzani as prominent Kurdish leaders. Throughout these early conflicts, the Barzanis consistently displayed their leadership and military prowess, providing steady opposition against the fledgling Iraqi military. Additionally, exile in the main cities exposed the Barzanis to the ideas of urban Kurdish nationalism, movements they had only been a part of militarily (Barzani 2002:49). This exposure was especially important for Mullah Mustafa Barzani as he increasingly recognized the need for an organized armed force to coincide with Kurdish nationalism, realizing tribal disagreement could never defeat the Iraqi government. As Barzani military had strong point, with its disdain for the Iraqis and desire for political autonomy, merged with the growing nationalist-oriented Kurdish intelligentsia, Barzani influence in Iraqi Kurdistan became even greater (McDowall 2004: 290).

VII. Appearance of Mullah Mustafa Barzani's Forces 1943-1945

As World War II instigated to occupy the attention of the world's nations, the Barzanis and their tribe were still internally separated and remained at odds with the Iraqi government. The British occupation of Iraq in 1941 and their seizure of Baghdad, presumably to ensure Iraqi compliance with the Allied cause, would indirectly lead to a reunion between Mustafa Barzani and his people and again pose a challenge to Iraqi authority (McDowall 2004: 290).Two years after the British occupation, in 1943, with inflation gripping Iraqand the British showing little unease about the Kurdish issue, the Barzani family found themselves unable to subsist on their meager government stipend. Still in exile in Sulaymaniya, the Barzani financial situation became so dire the family resorted to selling their rifles and their gold jewelry just to survive (O'balance 1973:21). The indignation of having to part with their family fortune and their methods of self-defense led Mustafa Barzani to plot his return to Barzan (Barzani 2002:43).

The impetus for Barzani's return was strictly economic, not nationalist nor caused by a desire to counter any anti-British sentiment in Kurdistan (McDowall 2004: 290), although Barzani did have contacts within Kurdish nationalist circles in Sulaymaniyah who may have assisted him in his escape. After receiving permission from Sheikh Ahmad Barzani, Mullah Mustafa, along with two close friends, fled Sulaymaniyah and crossed into Iran. Once in the Iranian town of Shino, Barzani reunited with resettled members of the Barzani tribe and made his way to Barzan. (Barzani 2002:43) Upon his return, Mullah Mustafa became "the immediate object of attention from his own followers, the chiefs of neighboring tribes, Iraqi government officials who wished to reinter him and members of the Kurdish nationalist movement" (Eagleton 1963: 51). This latter group included Mir Hajj

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Ahmad and Mustafa Koshnaw, Kurdish officers in the Iraqi army and members of Hiwa, an underground Kurdish nationalist movement (McDowall 2004: 293).

Upon his return to Barzan, Mullah Mustafa recruited a force to challenge regional Iraqi authority. Numbering virtually 750 in only two weeks, Barzani fighters began small operations such as raiding police stations and frontier posts (Barzani 2002:44). These early raids demonstrated the growing military organization of Barzani's forces. Although still mostly tribal, enrollment in Barzani's force grew to nearly 2,000 within months as local Kurds, including those deserting the Iraqi army, joined the ranks (O'balance 1973:24). With the purpose of organizing this growing force, Barzani created combat groups of 15-30 men; appointed Muhammad Amin Mirkhan, Mamand Maseeh, and Saleh KaniyaLanji commanders; and instilled strict rules of soldierly conduct. These rules included the need for fighters to obey and carry out guidelines, the need for commanders to stand with their fighters as equals and treat them like brothers, instructions on how to treat civilians and prisoners, and how to disperse the spoils of war. Barzani adhered strictly to his own instructions, refusing privileges of command and sharing duties such as mounting guard (Barzani 2002:44).

Throughout 1943 Barzani and his fighters seized police stations and re-supplied themselves with Iraqi arms and ammunition. Barzani used these primary skirmishes as well as future battles to classify who among his force was best suited for leadership positions, who was best in handling logistics, and who might fill other supervision positions (Barzani 2002:45). Once levels of command were formed, Barzani established his headquarters in Bistri, a village halfway between Rawanduz and his Barzan forces. Barzani's conclusions to develop command and control, combined with intense feelings of reliability and camaraderie among the Barzani troops, led to victories in the Battle of Gora Tu and the Battle of Mazna. During these battles, Barzani forces were able to defeat trained, organized, and well-supplied Iraqi armed forces units (Lortz 2005:23).

Consequently of his developing regional control, augmented reliability, and developing military power, Barzani appealed the Iraqi government for political autonomy as well as the release of Kurdish prisoners, including Sheikh Ahmad Barzani. Even though the political autonomy request was denied, the Iraqi government did negotiate with Barzani throughout the early 1940s (McDowall 2004: 293). These negotiations not only led to the release of Sheikh Ahmad in early 1944 (Eagleton 1963: 48), but also brought the word government collaborator "Jash" into common Kurdish usage. Barzani used the term, meaning "donkey" in Kurdish, as a way to openly criticize Kurds who collaborated with the Iraqi government, derogatively labeling them the "jash police". Due to Iraqi recognition and Barzani's extensive influence and power, Kurdish loyalists began to rally around Barzani, viewing him their respect and turning him into the "national beacon of the Kurdish liberation movement" (Barzani 2002:45).

Relations between Mustafa Barzani and the Iraqi government began on a positive note, partially due to more than a few Kurdish sympathizers within the Iraqi government. After the resignation of the Iraqi cabinet in 1944, a new ruling body took over, one far less willing to give into Kurdish aspirations (Eagleton 1963: 52). Consequently, previous concessions were overlooked and pro-Kurdish diplomats were dismissed, opening a new round of Iraqi-Kurdish hostilities (Barzani 2002:45). With his position only reinforced by the previous administration, Mustafa Barzani continued his demands while simultaneously preparing his forces for additional military actions (McDowall 2004: 293). Knowing a conflict was imminent, Barzani separated his forces into three fronts: a Margavar - Rawanduz front, commanded by former Iraqi official Mustafa Koshnaw; an Imadia front, led by Izzat Abdul-Aziz; and an Aqra front, led by Sheikh Suleiman Barzani. All fundamentals would be responsible to Mustafa Barzani, the self-proclaimed "Commander-In-Chief of the Revolutionary Forces" (Barzani 2002:77).

Knowing tribal discord and inefficiency of the Kurdish general public could hinder his forces, Barzani, with the approval of Sheikh Ahmad Barzani, formed the Rizgari Kurd (the Kurdish Freedom Party) in early 1945. Consisting primarily of Kurdish officers, government officials, and professionals, Rizgari Kurd intended to unify the Kurds, form autonomy or independence within Iraq, and continue to create armed units to defend Kurdistan. Despite Barzani's order to his armed forces to "not initiate fighting", conflict erupted in August 1945 in the town of Margavar. This violence led to the death of prominent Kurd Wali Beg and numerous Iraqi police officers (Barzani 2002:73). As a result of Beg's demise, the Kurdish populace, without any armed forces authorization, overran the police stations in Margavar and Barzan (Lortz 2005:24).

Barzani speedily returned from arbitrating a local tribal dispute and took command of the revolt (Barzani 2002:73). Against British advice, the Iraqi government attempted to mollify the region, declaring martial law, threatening military action, and demanding Barzani's surrender. With diplomacy no longer an option, the Iraqis deployed numerous armed forces units to the region to subdue the developing rebellion (Lortz 2005:24).In preparation for the conflict, Mustafa Barzani met with Sheikh Ahmad Barzani to decide who should command the forces against the looming Iraqi threat. The Barzanis decided that Mustafa Barzani himself should lead the Aqra force; Muhammad Siddique Barzani, brother of Sheikh Ahmad and Mullah Mustafa, would lead the Margavar-Rawanduz front; Haji

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Tahalmadi would lead the Balenda-Imadia front; and As'adKhosavi was given the responsibility of both surrounding the Bilah garrison and supplying the forces of the Aqra front. With command in place, the Barzani forces were able to dominate the early battles. The Iraqi army, attempting to seize the eastern slopes of Mount Qalandar, was driven back to the GaliAli Beg Gorge. Although victorious, the Barzani forces did sustain numerous losses, including a serious injury to Commander Muhammad Siddique Barzani (Barzani 2002:89).

On 4 September 1945 the Iraqi assault continued, as army units from Aqra and Rawanduz and a police unit from Amadia were deployed towards Barzan (Lortz 2005:25). A few days later in the Battle of Maidan Morik, Barzani fighters once again held their own against Iraqi mechanized and artillery batteries. As the battles degenerated to hand-to-hand combat, the Iraqi army, presumably losing command and control, was forced to retreat temporarily from the region (Barzani 2002:89). However the undervalued abilities of Barzani's military harshly dampened the morale of Iraqi ground armed forces, Iraqi air raids sustained unabated (Lortz 2005:25).Despite the primary victories, by the end of September 1945 the Iraqi government turned the tide of the battle, resounding regional tribes to oppose the Barzanis and aid in suppressing the revolt. These tribal fighters, including members of the Zibrari, Berwari, and Doski tribes, and "elements of the 'Muhajarin' trustworthy to several of the sons of Sayyid Tahaof Shemdinan (and led by Abdul Karim Qassim)" (Eagleton 1963: 53) attacked Barzani and his men, uprooting them from their "defensive strong holds" and preventing them from further attacking Iraqi troops in the region (Lortz 2005:25).These "treasonous" assaults, combined with the Iraqi occupation of Barzan on 7 October, forced Barzani to order his forces to retreat from the region and cross into Iranian Kurdistan. Once there, the Barzani family and their supporters settled in various towns in the Mahabad area, joining the Kurdish autonomous movement in the region and setting the stage for the official creation of the Peshmarga. The early 1940s are extremely important in the history of the Peshmarga. Although still without an official title, the core of the Peshmarga was definitely created when Mustafa Barzani returned to Barzan in 1943 (Barzani 2002:94).

By taking advantage of World War II and the British occupation of Iraq, Barzani was given the time to mold anarmed force that superseded tribal affiliation, an idea that the Ottoman Empire, with its Hamidiya Knights, had failed in creating. Without Barzani's leadership and organizational and tactical ideas, it is doubtful his forces would have been capable to achieve the results they did or, more outstandingly, conduct the tactical retreat that kept most of the command structure together in Iranian Kurdistan. It is uncertain however, how much of the military loyalty given to the Barzanis was due to their tribal standing and how much was because of their struggle against the Iraqi government (Barzani 2002:95). Even the nationalist leanings of the revolt are not completely clear. McDowall dismisses the notion of Mustafa Barzani as an ardent nationalist at this point and claims that the Barzani revolts were initiated simply to increase the tribe's regional power(McDowall 2004: 293). Barzani's creation of the Rizgari Kurd, however, reinforces the idea of Barzani as nationalist leader, albeit with a tribal based force. Combined with the emerging Kurdish administration in the Iranian-Kurdistan town of Mahabad, Barzani's influence and the prominence of his troops would continue to change the politics of the region (Lortz 2005:25).

VIII. The Peshmarga in Thekurdistan Republic

The Mahabad Republic stands as the high point of the Kurdish nationalist liberation movement. This short period of national identity marked the formal formation of the Peshmargaand cemented the role of Mustafa Barzani as a military hero of the Kurdish people. During the short life of this nation-state, the idea of a Kurdish homeland finally came into being. Unfortunately for the Kurds, the Republic lasted only 11 or so months, from January 1946 to December 1946 (Yassin 1995:140). In the opening years of the Cold War, as the British re-occupied Iraq, the Soviet Union seized northwestern Iran to ensure the "uninterrupted flow of vital supplies to the Soviet Union". Central control of Iran, similar to the occupation of Iraq, included a diminished capability to undermine the growing Kurdish nationalist movement (Jwaideh 2006:713).Nearsighted a window of opportunity, the newly-formed Komala-iJiyanawi Kurdistan (The Committee for the Revival of Kurdistan - Komala), a predominantly middle class democratic nationalist party, originated to negotiate with the occupying Soviets with the idea of creating a Soviet-sponsored Kurdishre public, independent of Iranian control (Lortz 2005:26). Leading the nascent Kurdish republic and fully endorsed by the Soviets was Qazi Muhammad, the religious and ostensible leader of Mahabad. Muhammad, who had become democratic Komala's sole leader – a position the communist Soviet leaders were comfortable with was stress sedthrough the Soviets to leave Komala and generate a more centralized party (McDowall 2004: 240).

In September 1945, for example, the Kurdish leadership, including Muhammad, was taken to Soviet Azerbaijan where the Soviets agreed to supply the Kurds with money, military training, and arms, including tanks, cannons, machine guns, and rifles, thereby ensuring autonomy from Iran (Eagleton 1963: 44). In exchange for the support the Kurds had to abandon Komala, which Soviet Azerbaijan President Bagherov labeled "an instrument of British imperialism" and create

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the "Democratic Party of Kurdistan Iran" (KDP-I). Bagherov also warned the Mahabad leaders not to trust Mullah Mustafa Barzani, whom Bagherov called "a British Spy" (Eagleton 1963: 46). Dismissal of Mustafa Barzani was not straightforwardly accomplished however. Knowing tribal opposition to a less-than-democratic ideal could derail his position as leader (Lortz 2005:27). Qazi Muhammad, upon his return from Soviet Azerbaijan, met with Barzani in an endeavor to attach Barzani's prestige and his troops to the KDP-I cause (Barzani 2002:99). Barzani approved to support Muhammad and the KDP-I in exchange for billeting and supplies for his family and forces, 3,000 of which would be stationed in Mahabad. Barzani may have met previously with Soviet representatives through his Iranian Kurdistan contacts so as to "dispel their well-known suspicions regarding his previous associations and orientations" (Eagleton 1963: 57). With the purpose of procuring their trust, Barzani approved to collaborate with Muhammad and to avoid the "public eye" due to the possible unwanted pressure on the Soviet Union by the governments of Iraq and Great Britain (Barzani 2002:99).

With Barzani's collaboration guaranteed, Muhammad, along with 60 tribal leaders, including Barzani, established a KDP-I party platform, created a Kurdish People's Government, and raised the official Kurdish national flag(Eagleton 1963:57). As the people of Iranian Azerbaijan moved towards their own neighboring Soviet-sponsored state, Qazi Muhammad was elected the first Kurdish president and on 22 January 1946 the Mahabad Republic was born. Subordinate to the new Kurdish president was a government consisting of a Prime Minister, a 13-person parliament, and various ministers, including Minister of War Mohammad Hosein Khan SeifQazi, Qazi Muhammad's cousin and former honorary captain of the Iranian gendarmerie. SeifQazi was responsible for an emerging Kurdish army that included Amr Khan Shikak, Hama Rashid, Khan Banei, Zero Beg Herki, and Mullah Mustafa Barzani, all of whom received the rank of marshal. Each of these "marshals" was outfitted with Soviet-style uniforms, "complete with high boots, stiff shoulder-straps, and red-banded garrison caps" (Lortz 2005:28). The forces under these commanders were further advised and organized by Soviet military officer Captain Salahuddin Kazimov. The Soviets continued their influence, sending at least 60 Kurds to Soviet Azerbaijan for additional military training. In total, the Mahabad army consisted of 70 active duty officers, 40 non-commissioned officers, and 1,200 lower-enlisted privates(Eagleton 1963 :78).

Mustafa Barzani, as one of the higher-ranking commanders, was again responsible for doling out titles among his men. Barzani appointed Major Bakr Abdul-Karim commander of the first regiment and Mohammed Amin Badr Khan, Mamand Maseeh, and Faris Kani Boti his company commanders; Captain Mustafa Koshnaw was to be commander of the second regiment with Sa'idWali Beg, Koshavi Khalil, and Mustafa Jangeer his company commanders; and Captain Mir Haj Ahmad was appointed commander of the third regiment and SalihKani Lanji, Haider Beg Arif Beg, and Wahab Agha Rawanduzi were his company commanders (Barzani 2002:100).

Many of these men had served under Barzani since the police raids of 1943. Now under the banner of the Mahabad Republic, they remained extremely loyal to Barzani. Besides appointing higher levels of command, Qazi Muhammad helped to literally define who his forces were. On orders from Muhammad, a committee of "hand-picked litterateurs and writers" constructed distinct terms for positions in the Kurdish military. Among the many words the committee helped standardize was the Kurdish word for soldier – "Peshmarga" – a term meaning "one who faces death" or one willing to die for a cause in April 1946 (Lortz 2005:29). Despite protests leading to Sheikh Ahmad Barzani's dismissal from Mahabad, Qazi Muhammad and the Kurdish Parliament's first deployment of the Peshmarga was to put down resisting tribes in the region (Jwaideh 2006:749).

These were minor conflicts however, compared to the new army's first test against Iranian forces eager to reclaim their land. Knowing Iranian intentions and fearing a withdrawal of Soviet aid, many of the Peshmarga, including much of Mullah Mustafa Barzani's forces, were deployed on the republic's southern boundary. On 29 April 1946, only five days after the Mahabad Republic signed a military collaboration accord with neighboring Azarbaijan, the First Kurdish Regiment, located in the southeast corner of the republic in Qahrawa, and faced 600 Iranian soldiers reinforced with weaponry and cavalry. Regional support for the Mahabad Peshmarga included numerous small Kurdish tribes "always ready for fighting and looting" (Lortz 2005:29).

The Peshmarga under Barzani's command quickly showed their abilities against Iranian forces, ambushing the first Iranian units to reach Qahrawa, killing 21, wounding 17, and capturing 40. Although short lived, the ambush was considered the first military victory for the Kurdish Republic. The Mahabad Peshmarga also engaged Iranian reconnaissance teams in the region as the Iranians attempted to mass forces throughout timely May 1946 (Eagleton 1963:90). Kurdish offensives were limited to minor skirmishes due to the removal of Soviet influence in the region that month, possibly due to a Soviet-Iranian oil agreement. A ceasefire agreement signed 3 May 1946 between Kurdish forces and Iranian General Ali Razmara discouraged major attacks, promoted withdrawals, and allowed each side to further equip their forces in the region(Lortz 2005:29).

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By mid-May 1946 Kurdish forces included approximately 12,750 Peshmarga, 1,800 of which were dedicated infantry under the command of Mustafa Barzani. The majority of the armed forces were cavalry-based, which according to Eagleton, "could still terrify an ill-armed or badly organized force, but it could not prevail against trained infantry carrying repeating rifles and concealed by the rugged terrain of Kurdistan" in 1946 (Eagleton 1963:93).

On 15 June 1946 the period of preparation ceased as the fighting positions of the Second Kurdish Regiment at Mamashah (Mil Qarani) were attacked by two Iranian battalions supported by weaponry, tanks, and aircraft. The purpose of the Iranian attack was two-folds: first, to seize the highest point of Kurdish occupation in the area and second, to stop Kurdish snipers from attacking Iranian supply vehicles. Although accounts of the Battle of Mamashah vary, the Peshmarga again demonstrated their expert use of cover and concealment (Barzani 2002:103). Among the Peshmarga killed during the battle was Khalil Khosavi, a Kurdish soldier who "demonstrated capable leadership and utmost courage." Mustafa Barzani correctly predicted that the surrender of Khosavi's hilltop position would only come with his death (Eagleton 1963:96).

Khosavi's actions in the battle earlier to his death were at the root of the battle's conflicting accounts. According to Masud Barzani, after Iranian forces seized the initial "upper hand," Khosavi led Peshmarga forces, reinforced by the First Kurdish Regiment, in a successful counterattack, repelling the Iranian assault (Barzani 2002:104). Other accounts portray the battle as an Iranian victory, albeit a victory for Kurdish morale and increasing the regional confidence in the Peshmarga (O'balance 1973:31). According to Eagleton, neither Kurdish nor Soviet reinforcements arrived, leaving the Barzani forces stranded in their defensive positions and allowing Iranian forces to seize the hill(Eagleton 1963:96).

McDowall also explores the question of Kurdish supports in the area, stating the apparent lack of assisting forces may have been due to tribal disunity. According to McDowall, regional Kurdish tribal leader Amr Khan simply brought tribal fighters from the Shikak and Harki tribes south after getting a Soviet bribe. These fighters, lacking the dedication of the Barzani Peshmarga, were quick to flee the battlefield as fighting intensified (McDowall 2004: 243). As a result of the Kurdish military defeat in the Battle of Mamashah, the Iranian military was able to seize the highland, erect military watchtowers, and ensure a military presence in the area (Barzani 2002:105)

Lack of tribal unity continued to hinder the cause of the Mahabad Republic following the Battle of Mamashah. As tribal interest in Qazi Muhammad's government waned, the Barzani Peshmarga were left as Mahabad's lone fighting force. Despite their loyalty, Barzani's fighters had their own difficulties with the government as lack of food and diminished sanitary conditions caused a typhoid outbreak, hindering their fighting ability (Lortz 2005:30). Consequently, the cause of the Mahabad armed force was all but lost by late 1946 as even assured Soviet support failed to arrive. The Mahabad Republic faced its most difficult challenge as Iranian forces planned to reclaim Mahabad following the seizure of Iranian Azerbaijan in December 1946 (Mella 2005: 84). Initially the Mahabad government resisted Iranian developments positioned the Peshmargain both Saqqiz and Mahabad (Barzani 2002:112). Shortly thereafter, negotiations began with the purpose of ensuring the peaceful reoccupation of Mahabad. Important to the agreement was the withdrawal of Barzani forces from Mahabad. Afterthe Barzanis, including the Peshmarga and their families, withdrew to Naqada on 15 December 1946, the Iranian military entered Mahabad, officially ending the one-year life of the Kurdish Republic (Lortz 2005:30).

IX. The Fate of Peshmarga post-Kurdistan Republic

Following the fall of Mahabad, the Barzanis and their Peshmarga again faced the struggle of resisting national powers without the support of a recognized nation. After leaving Mahabad and ordering the establishment of defensive positions between Mahabad and Naqada, Mullah Mustafa and several of his officers were ordered by Iranian officials to dismiss the Peshmarga, lay down their arms, and integrate into Iranian controlled areas. If they failed to do so, the Iranian government stated they would order military action against the Barzanis (Barzani 2002:113). Although Mullah Mustafa may have agreed with the proposal, Sheikh Ahmed Barzani put up defiant, stating the Barzanis and their Peshmarga would stay until the spring thaw when they would then travel back to Iraq (Eagleton 1963:117).

With both sides at a political impasse, conflict became inevitable. As he did prior to earlier conflicts, Mustafa Barzani divided his Peshmarga into several fronts and assigned command. Barzani appointed Ali Khalil, SalihKaniya Lanji, and Kako Mullah Ali commanders of the Nalos-Sofiyan Front; Hassan Ali Suleiman Kakshar, Sultan Mar'an Agha, and Mahmud Mira commanders of the Qalatan Front; ArisKhano and Mahmud Ahmad Babkayi commanders of the Albeh-Koyek Front; and As'adKoshavi, Mohammad Amin Mirkhan, and Sheikh-Omer Shandari commanders of the Margavar Front. Although several of the aforementioned had led Peshmarga forces earlier, including SalihKaniyaLanji and Mohammad Amin Mirkhan (both of whom had commanded since the 1943 raids on Iraqi police stations), the loss of many officers to executions in Iraq and Iran forced Barzani to make changes in

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Peshmarga command (Barzani 2002:121;Nerwiy 2012:32).The Barzani Peshmarga, again outnumbered by their opposition, was well armed in anticipation of the conflict. Despite Iranian attempts to disarm the remnants of Mahabad, the Barzani Peshmarga was able to smuggle out 3,000 rifles, 120 machineguns, numerous hand grenades, and two 75 mm artillery cannons (Eagleton 1963:115). These cannons fell under the command of former Iranian officer Tafrashiyan and six other trained Kurdish officers. Iranian forces, on the other hand, were numerically superior and aided by American experts and weaponry (Barzani 2002:121).

In March 1947, the Peshmarga finally faced their Iranian foes (Lortz 2005:32). During the conflict the Peshmargaonce again fought with tenacity and dedication (Ghassemlou 1963: 78). In various battles throughout mid-March, the Peshmargade fended themselves against numerous offensives as Iranian forces continued their attacks, often recruiting rival tribes to oust the Barzanis (Eagleton 1963:120). Even though many Peshmarga were killed in the fighting, more Iranians died as the Kurds claimed early victories. Among these victories was the Battle of Nalos, where Peshmarga forces effectively used their artillery to kill many Iranian soldiers, including Colonel Kalashi, the Iranian regimental commander (Barzani 2002:121). The Peshmarga also took many Iranian officers and soldiers captive, further decreasing Iranian armed forces effectiveness. Other Peshmarga high lights during their various post-Mahabad battles include ambushing an Iranian military column, killing 50 enemy soldiers and capturing Iranian Lieutenant Jahanbani, son of General Jahanbani. Lieutenant Jahanbani was used as a bargaining chip to save the Barzanis from Iranian air force attacks, the only Iranian method of punishing the Barzanis that at the time minimized Iranian casualties (Eagleton 1963:121).

With his forces withering under the continuous attack, Mustafa Barzani realized the need to flee Iran and cross the border into Iraqi Kurdistan. The Barzani plan of escape was two-fold: first, Sheikh Ahmad Barzani, after receiving a written guarantee of amnesty from Iraqi authorities, would cross into Iraq with a majority of the tribe, including the former Iraqi military officers who had led the Peshmarga. The second wave of Barzanis fleeing the Mahabad region was to be led personally by Mustafa Barzani and included most of the Peshmarga. The return plan faced mixed results. Once the first group crossed the Kalashin Pass the Iraqi army immediately seized the ex-Iraqi officers and brought them to trial, executing many (Chapman 2008:48). Among the Kurdish Army officers put to death were Izzat Abdul-Aziz, Mustafa Khoshnaw, Muhammad Mahmud, and Khayrullah Abdul-Karim. At their death, each of these officers yelled patriotic slogans praising the ideal of Kurdish nationalism (Jwaideh 2006:766). The second wave of Barzani followers also faced Iraqi forces upon their return. Prior to crossing the border, Barzani divided his forces into five sections and appointed Sheikh Suleiman, As'adKhoshavi, Mamand Maseeh, Muhammad Amin Mirkhan, and Mustafa Mizori commanders. These commanders led their Peshmarga into Iraqi Kurdistan, defeating Iraqi police and jash forces. After their victory, Mustafa Barzani and his commanders were finally able to lead their troops into Barzan on 25 April 1947(Barzani 2002:127).

Almost immediately, the Iraqi government, after arresting Sheikh Ahmad Barzani and other family members, sought the surrender of Mullah Mustafa Barzani (O'balance 1973:34). Knowing arresting Mustafa Barzani would not be a simple task, the Iraqi military began mobilizing forces towards the Barzan region. Once the attack became imminent Barzani realized he had to flee yet again. Because both Turkish and Iranian Kurdistan could no longer be regarded as safe haven, Barzani decided to take his Peshmarga to the relative security of the Soviet Union (Eagleton 1963:128). The Peshmarga journey to the Soviet Union began in late May 1947. Receiving accommo dations and supplies from Kurdish villages along the way (Barzani 2002:133).

Barzani and his forces were able to weave their way along the Iran-Turkey border and made their way north to the USSR. Often, as the Barzani-led forces crossed into Iranian territory, they had to prepare for potential Iranian military assaults. Using their well-refined skills in cover and concealment, the Peshmarga were often able to elude the Iranian military presence. In areas where stealth was impossible, the Peshmarga did not hesitate to engage their adversaries with their guerrilla tactics. On 9 June 1947, for example, the Peshmarga attacked the flank of an Iraqi army column. During the two-front attack, led by both Mustafa Barzani and As'adKhoshavi, the Peshmarga killed hundreds of Iranian soldiers, destroyed several tanks, rendered an artillery battery ineffective, and downed an Iranian aircraft. After evading or engaging the Iranian army throughout their trip, the Barzanis, along with over 500 Peshmarga and their families (Barzani 2002:135), crossed the Araxes River into the Soviet Union on 18 June 1947. In total, they traveled nearly 220 miles in 14 days (Eagleton 1963:128).

The period from 1945 to mid-1947 was integral to the development of the Peshmarga as a recognized fighting force. First and foremost, the soldiers of the Mahabad Republic were given the title of Peshmarga, a Kurdish term, rather than serbaz, the Persian word for soldier. Defining who they were in the Kurdish, rather than the Persian context, only added to the fighters' loyalty and morale. As they were being "named", the development of the Peshmarga military structure grew dramatically during the period of the Mahabad Republic. No longer was the military organization confined to fighters of the Barzani tribe. The Mahabad administration effectively merged officers and soldiers

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from Iranian and Iraqi Kurdistan, creating a unified Kurdish force that crossed tribal lines (Lortz 2005:34).

The downfall of the Mahabad Republic, however, destroyed the Kurdish Army's organization, as many fighters returned to their respective tribes. As a result, the Barzani Peshmarga and others loyal to Mustafa Barzani were left as the only force willing to defy the Iranian government in the name of Kurdish nationalism. Unfortunately, with their limited numbers and lack of national recognition, Barzani's trek to the USSR can be seen as his only realistic avenue of escape. With their commander leaving and their hopes for a free Kurdistan dashed, many Peshmarga had little choice but to follow Barzani into the Soviet Union (Eagleton 1963:129).

X. The Barzani's Peshmargaforce in The Soviet Union 1947-1958

Life for the Peshmarga failed to develop upon entering the Soviet Union. They were rapidly brought to an unprepared compound surrounded by barbed wire and guarded by Soviet troops. According to Masud Barzani, the Kurdish exiles were interrogated, given bread and soup, and treated as prisoners of war. The Peshmarga also were soon deprived of their leader. Within weeks of their arrival, Mustafa Barzani was escorted to Nakhichevan, Soviet Armenia, where he stayed until being transferred to shush and finally to Baku, Soviet Azerbaijan. Ultimately, many of the Peshmarga leaders were separated from the rank and file and their families. Among those separated were Sheikh Suleiman, Ali Muhammad Siddique, Sa'id Mullah Abdullah, and Ziyab Dari. The separation would not last however, as the rest of the Barzani tribe and their Peshmarga were brought to Baku by the end of 1947. While in Baku, the Peshmarga were reorganized under the command of As'adKhoshavi. Under Khoshavi, Sa'idWali Beg, Mohammad Amin Mirkhan, Mamand Maseeh, and MistoMirozi were appointed company commanders. Once reconstituted and given Soviet uniforms and weapons, the Peshmarga conducted training in "regular" military operations under the tutelage of several Soviet military officers(Lortz 2005:35). After their first few years in the Soviet Union, the Peshmarga and other followers of Barzani saw their training cease, quickly becoming subject to government manipulation. For long periods the Peshmarga were separated from their leadership with many forced into hard labor. Only after Barzani personally wrote to Soviet leader Josef Stalin did conditions finally According to Dana Adams Schmidt, Barzani inquired about refuge for him and his men in the U.S. while in a meeting with U.S. Ambassador George V. Allen in Tehran improve for his followers(Schmidt 2008:104.). The Peshmarga were finally reunited with their command in late 1951. Under their developed conditions in Tashkent, Soviet Uzbekistan, the Barzanis and the Peshmarga developed their lives dramatically. Many took advantage of the opportunity and became literate, with some even attaining degrees of higher education (Barzani 2002:143). This period of relative prosperity for the exiled Kurds also led to the interesting phenomenon of Kurdish men marrying blond haired, blue eyed Soviet women, many of whom were widows of deceased WWII Soviet soldiers (Lortz 2005:38).

Finally, after nearly 20 years, the followers of the Barzanis were allowed to live "normal" lives. Conditions also developed for Mullah Mustafa Barzani as he was eventually granted the privileges of a leader-in-exile. Throughout his years in the USSR, Barzani was capable to broadcast through Soviet radio (Edmonds 2008:62) and attended courses in language (and politics. Although many sources claim Barzani was given the rank of general in the Soviet Army (Kinnane 1964: 59).Masud Barzani denies that this occurred. Possibly most significant, however, was Barzani's ability to correspond with Kurdish exiles throughout the world, including Jalal Talabani and IsmetCherifVanly (Barzani 2002:140). Meanwhile, the successful coup d`etat of Brigadier Abdul Karim Qassim and his followers in Iraq on 14 July 1958 opened a new chapter in Iraqi-Kurdish relations. Shortly after taking power, Qassim pardoned Sheikh Ahmad Barzani and allowed Mullah Mustafa, his followers, and his Peshmarga to return to Iraq (Edmonds 2008: 150) . The Barzani exile in the Soviet Union ended after 12 years, and upon their return, the Peshmarga would once again play a prominent role in Iraqi regional politics(Lortz 2005:38).

XI. The Peshmarga in the New Republic of Iraq and Kurdish War 1958-1961

The 1958 Revolution, similar to the post-WWI political re-alignment, offered the Kurds a chance to again push for independence or political autonomy through political means. Optimism ruled as many Iraqi Kurds found a voice in the Democratic Party of Kurdistan (KDP). According to the new Iraqi governing body, power in the nation was to be shared among the Sunni, Shia and Kurdish populations (McDowall 2004: 302).After Barzani's return, the Peshmarga and other Barzani followers were allowed back into Iraq. Through a joint Soviet-Iraqi attempt, the Soviet ship Grozia carried nearly 800 returnees from the port of Odessa to Basra port in southern Iraq. Upon their arrival, the former government dissidents were warmly greeted and granted general amnesty (Barzani 2002:187). As he had with Qazi Muhammad in Mahabad in 1946, Mullah Mustafa Barzani placed himself and his Peshmarga under the command of Abdul-Karim Qassim in 1958 (Stansfield 2006:4).Qassim was knowing the Peshmarga's proven ability, employed them to suppress numerous uprisings throughout 1959. In the first of these

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skirmishes, the Peshmarga successfully defeated a major demonstration by pan-Arab nationalist officers in Mosul "disillusioned by Qassim's 'betrayal'" and intent on creating a strictly pro-Arab Iraq. Although Kurdish fighters fought "at the behest of Mullah Mustafa Barzani" (McDowall 2004:304). However, Barzani did not personally command any of his Peshmarga at these attacks (Kinnane 1964: 61).

In July 1959, the Peshmarga again came to the assistance of Qassim to defeat a second revolt. Supported by anti-Iraq forces in Turkish and Iranian Kurdistan, Sheikh Rasid rose against the Qassim government, seizing police stations and surrounding pro-government forces in Sidakan. Once more Qassim called upon Barzani and his fighters to quell the uprising. After calling up 1,000 Peshmarga, Barzani was capable to defeat Sheikh Rashid's forces and in two days drive the dissenters into Iran (Barzani 2002:215). For Barzani and his Peshmarga the offensive was worth the effort, asearlier Barzani conflicts with Sheikh Rashid were among the several reasons the Feisal government attacked the Barzanis in 1931-1932(Jwaideh 2006:b24). The cooperation between Peshmarga forces, led by Barzani, and the Qassim government only served to strengthen the ties between the Kurds and the Iraqi Arabs. Among the Kurdish gains during this time were the inclusion of a Kurdish sun dish on the Iraqi flag (Izady 1992:67), placement of Kurds in high government positions, and mention in the provisional constitution of a joint Arab- Kurd "homeland"(Jawad 1990:38). The removal of pro-Arab Colonel Abdul Salam Arif, Qassim's Deputy Premier and Minister of the Interior, was also seen as a step towards Kurdish appeasement, although Arif was also regarded as a threat to Qassim(Lortz 2005:38).

Despite these acts of concession, Kurdish optimism began to wane. Throughout northern Iraq many of the traditional tribal enemies of the Barzanis, including the Harkis, Surchis, Baradustis, Jaf, and Pizhdar tribes, and followers of the late Sheikh Mahmoud, opposed the return of Mullah Mustafa Barzani and the Peshmarga and their growing ties to the Qassim regime. These tribes also began to violently revolt against the new Iraqi government in objection to the 1959 Agrarian Reform Law. Although the tribal leaders tried negotiating with Qassim, their efforts were in vain. Once again, the Peshmarga, supplemented by Iraqi military forces, were ordered to suppress dissention (McDowall 1996: 27). The Peshmarga support for Qassim ceased to be reciprocated however, as Qassim began to grow fearful of Barzani's growing political and military influence. After pardoning Baradost and Pizhdar rebels(McDowall 2004: 307).Qassim began to supply these and other anti-Barzani tribes with weapons and support throughout 1959 and 1960(O'balance 1873:39). Barzani became aware of this attempt to undermine his power after several of his tribesmen intercepted Iraqi logistic trucks on their way to the Zibari tribe. These trucks were stocked with rifles and automatic weapons and included a letter by anIraqi military officer (Schmidt 2008:75). Although Qassim denied supporting anti-Barzani tribes, relations had permanently deteriorated between him and Barzani. As tension continued to grow between Qassim and Kurdish political, tribal, and military leaders throughout 1960, Mustafa Barzani endeavored to garner support for an inevitable conflict(Lortz 2005:38).

During a visit to Moscow on 3 November 1960, for example, he spoke with "high-level" Soviet officials, including Nikita Khrushchev, and asked for Soviet aid. Although military support was not promised, the Soviets pledged to support the Kurdish Democratic Party and continued broadcasting propaganda to the Iranian Kurds(Barzani 2002:231). Barzani left the Soviet Union a "bitter and disillusioned man", unhappy with the meager support(Lortz 2005:38).The Peshmarga returned to action upon Barzani's return to Barzan in 1961. Barzani quickly used his men to take advantage of the tribal disunity in northern Iraq. Although hesitant to attack government troops, Peshmarga forces were ordered to seize strategic passes and bridges and defeat tribes unfriendly to the Barzanis (O'balance 1873:39). By the end of 1961, Barzani was able to control most of Iraqi Kurdistan(McDowall 1996: 27).

The Qassim regime, disappointed with Barzani's growing power, used a strike on Iraqi forces by Sheikh Abbas Muhammad's tribal Arkou fighters to justify air strikes throughout Iraqi Kurdistan, including Barzan (O'balance 1873:48). These strikes only solidified Kurdish resolve, unifying the tribes and bringing Mullah Mustafa Barzani officially into the conflict. According to McDowall, Qassim had "brought together two distinct Kurdish tribal groups, the old reactionary chiefs … and Mullah Mustafa whose agenda was a blend of tribalism and nationalism"(McDowall 2004: 310).

XII. The Role of the Peshmarga in the Kurdish-Iraqi War 1961-1970

As Barzani joined the still-tribal rebellion against the Iraqi government, Mullah Mustafa Barzani began to consolidate his forces and provide a system of organization to supplement his already established Peshmarga. Under Barzani's lead, non-Barzani tribal forces were used as irregulars and instructed to conduct guerrilla attacks on Iraqi military positions(Lortz 2005:39). Barzani's involvement and the recognition of the rebellion also led to the defection of thousands of Iraqisoldiers, including officers (Schmidt 2008:61). These Kurdish soldiers, who comprised as much as one-third of the Iraqi military, increased the professionalism and organization of the Peshmarga(Chapman 2008:56).

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By fall 1962, after nearly a year of conflict, Barzani had nearly 15 to 20,000 troops at his command, including the 4 to 5,000 original Peshmarga. Among his other forces was a rotating reserve of 5 to 15,000 soldiers serving in six-month rotations and 10 to 20,000 local reserves serving as home guards or "territorials"(Schmidt 2008:62). Barzani divided the Peshmarga into groups of 10 (dasta), 50 (pal), 150 (sur-pal), 350 (lek), and 1,000 (surlek). With many new recruits and the deaths of several long-time Peshmarga veterans such as Mohammad Amin Mirkhan and Shaikhomer Shandari (Barzani 2002:359), Barzani was forced to make numerous leadership decisions. Appointments were made in regards to rank, with fighters becoming officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates. Among the officers, Barzani appointed Assad Khoshewi commander of the northwest sector, accountable for nearly one-third of the Kurdish force. Other command appointments included tribal leaders Abbas Mamand Agha and Sheikh Hussein Boskani (Barzani 2002:360).

With the purpose of engaging the Iraqi forces, the Peshmargaand the other miscellaneous Kurdish fighters armed themselves with Lee-Enfield bolt-action rifles, old bolt-action German rifles, Czech-made Brno rifles,(Chapman 2008:57)Soviet Seminov semi-automatic rifles, and Soviet Glashinkov machine guns. Numerous arms captured from Iraqi forces were moreover used, including the Degtyarov machine gun (Lortz 2005:40). Other weapons purchased from arms bazaars in the region were smuggled into Iraq by Syrian, Iranian, or Lebanese Kurdish benefactors (O'balance 1873:55). Unfortunately for the Peshmarga, lack of ammunition and defective rounds were a problem for their most often used weapon, the aforementioned Brno (Schmidt 2008:64). Although Chapman claims Kurdish marksmanship was poor overall, Peshmarga veterans are quick to proclaim their marksmanship prowess during battle (Chapman 2008:58).

Logistics were also an obstacle for the Peshmarga despite rules limiting distracting nonessentials from the fighting corps. Although only items necessary for the upkeep of soldiers were allowed to be carried, supplying this material proved to be difficult. As combat increased, the Peshmarga established supply points in caves throughout the region where items such as sugar, cheese, grain, rice, and excess weaponry were often available. Supporting peasantry were furthermore encouraged to set aside 10 percent of their produce for the cause as Peshmarga carried little to no money (Schmidt 2008:64). Outside sources, such as sympathetic Kurds from Iran and Turkey moreover contributed supplies to the revolution(Chapman 2008:58). By the end of the war, Iran supported the Kurdish cause with heavy weaponry and Israel sent numerous Israeli commandos who not only fought alongside the Peshmarga, however also offered "very good advice"– including setting up a communications network and training the Peshmargain sabotage and demolitions (Lortz 2005:41).

The U.S., through its clandestine agencies such as CIA, also allegedly supported the Peshmarga. (McDowall 2004: 325)Despite their ample supply, the Peshmarga faced plentiful challenges moving and carrying items. Although they had unimpeded access to major roads at night and secondary routes during the day (Chapman 2008:59).Tactical mobility dictated the Peshmarga move much of their logistics via man or donkey, neither of which carried mass quantities. Many Peshmarga were forced to maximize the little they had, incorporating homemade bombs and explosives into their arsenals (O'balance 1873:55).Besides weapons and food, the Peshmarga considered captured Iraqi military radios among their most coveted supplies. With numerous former Iraqi soldiers among the ranks, the Peshmarga were able to decipher many Iraqi transmissions and provide key intelligence for Kurdish operations. Operational decisions using this intelligence were made by Peshmarga commanders, including Mustafa Barzani, stationed in highly-mobile, makeshift command centers. Schmidt describes one "headquarters" as "a blanket under a tree above a mountain torrent" with rifles hanging from tree branches and "a canvas bag, apparently containing some papers, hung from another branch"(Schmidt 2008:64).Despite their stolen information and impressive guerrilla tactics, this lack of command and control limited head-on Peshmarga offensives and prohibited Operations consisting of more than one sarpel (150-250 troops)(Chapman 2008:59).

After realizing conflict was inevitable and exhausting all avenues of political reconciliation, the KDP finally joined the revolution in December 1961. The KDP leadership rapidly established a triangular area of command from Raniya in the north, Sulaymaniyah in the southeast and Kirkuk in the southwest. This area was divided into four sectors with separate commanders appointed to each, although Mustafa Barzani was still regarded as the "senior and presiding Kurdish leader"(Kinnane 1964: 69). Among the leaders of the KDP military were party secretary Ibrahim Ahmad, commander of the Malouma Force; Jalal Talabani, commander of the Rizgari Force; Omar Mustafa, commander of the Kawa Force; Ali Askari, commander of the Khabat Force; and Kamal Mufti, commander of the Third and Fourth Forces of Qaradagh (Stansfield 2003: 71).

The KDP forces varied little from the northern Barzani-led Peshmarga. Although even the smallest unit of the new "Kurdish Liberation Army" was assigned a political instructor, a majority of the fighting forces came from regional tribes and not Kurds from urban areas (Kinnane 1964: 69). Like Barzani's forces, these troops were also assisted in organization and tactics by

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deserting Iraqi officers(McDowall 2004: 325). Using this support, the KDP was eventually able to create five battalions and a military "academy" led by a former commander of KingFeisal's Royal Guard. Despite mention of the Peshmarga fifteen years earlier, as O'Ballance, and McDowall provedthat the KDP-created force was the first to be labeled "Peshmarga" (O'balance 1873:55;McDowall 2004: 326). Similar to the armed forces of the Mahabad Republic, this Peshmarga force was also willing to face death for the idea of a recognized Kurdistan autonomous status. In the ranks of Talabani and Ahmad the leadership of the Kurdish Liberation Army became known as "sarmerga" "leading death".(Chapman 2008:60).

Initially only 20 Iraqi battalions and six mobile police units opposed the growing Kurdish rebellion. By 1963, nearly 3/4 of the Iraqi army was engaged in combat operations (Lortz 2005:43). Unlike the Peshmarga, these troops were reinforced by heavy weaponry, armor and various types of Soviet-made air support (Schmidt 2008:64). The Iraqis were also supported by the Jash(Chapman 2008:60). As they did in earlier conflicts with the Barzanis, the Iraqi government recruited numerous Kurds to fight for the government. Although many were from tribes staunch in their hatred for the Barzanis, some Jashwere unemployed Kurds seeking payment through any means(McDowall 2004: 312). Many of the tribal Jashwere placed under the command of their respective tribal leadership (O'balance 1873:57) although a select few were assigned to "The Saladin Cavalry" – a new Kurdish mercenary force(Schmidt 2008:71). At its peak, the Iraqi military employed nearly 10,000 Jash. This number decreased however, as the impartial Kurds grew tired of fighting their fellow people (O'balance 1873:57).

With their limited supply and smaller numbers the Peshmarga were forced to use nonconventional tactics such as roadblocks, ambushes, sniper attacks, and other tactics designed to "starve out" the government's soldiers. Unlike earlier Iraqi Kurdistan conflicts, the use of cavalry was limited, if not nonexistent. Peshmarga strategy was primarily infantry based and focused on the need for endurance, speed, movement by night, and deception skills advantageous in the mountainous Kurdish homeland. By 1963, the numerous battles and skirmishes between both the Barzani and KDP-led Peshmarga and the Iraqi military had become a stalemate. The Peshmarga kept control of Iraqi Kurdistan and the Qassim regime refused to grant Kurdish autonomy. Qassim was eventually overthrown by pro-Arab Baathists led by Abdul Salaam Arif. Under Arif, the pattern of Iraqi assaults and Peshmarga guerrilla counter-assaults lasted throughout the decade (McDowall 2004: 313;Lortz 2005:43).

Along with the ability to continue operations for nearly 10 years, the Kurdish-Iraqi War saw Kurdish women assist the Peshmargain ways not seen before. As members of the Kurdistan Women's Federation assisted the war effort through clandestine means (Chapman 2008:63), Margaret George, an Assyrian Kurd, led her own small Peshmarga unit near Akre. A former hospital attendant, George decided to fight after Jash forces attacked her village. After leading her unit for several years and killing a prominent Jash officer, George left to tend to her father. According to Schmidt, she was removed from command after many Peshmarga found her too impetuous to lead (Schmidt 2008:160). After her death, George became a heroine to the Kurds – the "Joan of Arc of Peshmarga".(Lortz 2005:44) Thousands of Peshmarga carried a photo of her in remembrance (Schmidt 2008:160). George remains idolized among Peshmarga, who describe her as "brilliant", "valiant", and a "great guerrilla fighter"(Lortz 2005:44).

The 1960s conflict is one of the most important eras in Peshmarga history, second only to the short-lived Mahabad Army. Kurdish soldiers again proved their skill in battle against an enemy far superior in numbers and equipment. Unlike earlier conflicts however, during the 1960s there was neither a retreat nor surrender. Because of the Peshmarga, negotiation became the only Iraqi means to victory. Although Peshmarga forces saw action in Mahabad, their force structure was unlike that of any earlier Kurdish army. As the conflict progressed from tribal-based revolts to a full-out war, three distinct Kurdish militaries developed. While some tribes maintained their traditional tribal fighting corps, the other entities, the KDP and the Barzanis, featured their own Peshmarga forces. Each of these "militaries" were successful in controlling their own region – the tribes in the northwest, central Iraqi Kurdistan led by Barzani, and the southern forces under the command of the Ahmad-Talabani-led KDP left-wing(Schmidt 2008:160).

Like the military "boundaries" separating these fronts, these three commands were also divided along the spectrum of Kurdish political ideology. Whereas the tribal groups still fought their ongoing battle against government control, the KDP Peshmarga force was the first Kurdish army in Iraq with entirely nationalist objectives. Located in the center both geographically and ideologically was Mustafa Barzani and his Peshmarga, who fought for an independent Kurdistan, albeit one governed by Barzani tribal leadership. The fighting tactics of the Peshmarga were furthermore a mix of old and new styles. Although the use of cavalry vanished into "the romantic past"(McDowall 2004:332).

The Peshmarga employed many of the guerrilla strategies of earlier conflicts. Hiding weapons depots in the mountains, for example, was seen frequently during the 1925 Sheikh Said Revolt. Other traditional strategies included using the mountains for supply points, sniper positions, and staging areas. By applying these proven

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courses of action and utilizing modern ideas such as military organization and rank structure, the Peshmarga were able to become a more effective guerrilla force. The growing ability of the Peshmarga was not lost on the Iraqi government. During several rounds of cease-fire negotiations, the Iraqi government frequently called for the disbandment of the Peshmarga earlier to the granting of political autono my(Chapman 2008:70). Barzani believed dismissing the military force was "putting the cart before the horse", knowing the Peshmarga presence was essential to the Kurdish cause and could not be disbanded before the Kurdish people achieved their goals and objectives (Ghareeb 1981: 122).

Beyond their organization, tactics, and importance, the most dramatic evolvement of the Peshmarga during the 1960s was its expansion. No longer was the title of Kurdish soldier confined to the followers of Mustafa Barzani. The decision by the KDP to label their fighters "Peshmarga" not only increased the size of the force, but also instilled a growing level of pride in membership. To be called a Kurdish Peshmarga became a testament of those willing to face death for Kurdistan. Unfortunately, the ideological rift between the Ahmad-Talabani group and Mustafa Barzani would also grow, forcing the Peshmarga to choose what sort of Kurdistan they were willing to die for(Lortz 2005:48).

The Peshmarga and the Second Kurdish-Iraqi War 1974-1975

Although armed conflict was minimal from 1970 to 1974, tension between the Iraqi government and the Kurds continued unabated. Additional Kurdish political demands and an attempt on Mustafa Barzani's life served to drastically increase hostility (McDowall 2004:354). By 1973, Kurdish discouragement was solidified as reports circulated that the Iraqi military received supplies of"poison gas" from the Soviet Union(Chapman 2008:70). The Kurdish leadership again saw the Peshmargaas their only recourse for recognition. Even the Peshmarga were not immune to the developing rift between the Iraqi government and the Kurdish leadership. Shortly after its inception, conflict emerged over the duties and command structure of the Peshmarga border guard. Whereas the Baathist party wanted the force under the command of the national army so as to attack Iran and assist in the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, Barzani and the KDP insisted the border guard be placed under the orders of the minister of the interior. The Iraqi government also claimed the Kurds granted over 120,000 individuals paperwork identifying them as Peshmarga and exempting them from government conscription. The harshest accusations against the Peshmarga were charges of murder, kidnappings, rape, assault, and robberies similar to those levied against the Hamidiya Knights nearly 70 yearsearlier (Ghareeb 1981: 122).

Barzani, knowing conflict was forthcoming, consolidated the Peshmargaand continued to recruit throughout the early 1970s. By spring 1974, nearly 50-60,000 Peshmarga were enrolled in Barzani's ranks (Lortz 2005:48). International support also continued as Iran and Israel gave supplies and weapons, attempting to weaken the Arab nationalist regime of Ahmad al Bakr (McDowall 2004:354). The United States also assisted the Peshmarga more openly in June 1972, supplying money and weapons through the CIA, countering Iraq's ties with the Soviet Union(Chapman 2008:70). These alliances quickly drew the fury of the Baathist regime (McDowall 2004:354). With his Peshmarga larger and better equipped than ever before, Barzani, on the advice of foreign advisors (possibly Israeli, Iranian, or American), drastically reorganized his force. Earlier guerrilla tactics were abandoned and the Peshmarga were re-assigned into completely conventional units. Believing international military support would continue throughout the conflict, Barzani ordered these units to face the Iraqi enemy head-on (Ghareeb 1981: 162).

The Peshmarga units began offensive operations by seizing the town of Zakho and the surrounding Turkish frontier area after Barzani decided against further diplomacy, rejecting the Iraqi government's proposed Autonomy Law of 1974 (O'balance 1873:95). According to McDowall, Barzani's strategy was two-folds: "to hold the mountainous country along a line from Zakho to Darbandikan" and "to hold the Kirkuk oilfield in artillery range"(McDowall 2004:337). Although the Peshmarga lacked modern heavy weaponry, they were capable to supplement their own weaponry with American-style mortars and 122mm guns and Soviet-made AK-47s and RPG-7s (Chapman 2008:71). The Peshmarga furthermore received support from every aspect of the Kurdish society, as animosity towards the Iraqi government permeated through both urban and tribal Kurds (O'balance 1873:95).

The Iraqi army counterattacked in April 1974. Their strategy was also two-fold, first reinforcing their overwhelmed Iraqi Kurdistan units and second, changing to the offensive, attempting to finally eliminate the Peshmarga threat. As the Iraqis attacked deep into Kurdistan, Barzani's order to abandon guerrilla tactics and confront the Iraqi army head-on resulted in tragedy. Although the Peshmargamay have downed over 100 Iraqi planes and destroyed over 150 tanks, they lacked the firepower of the Iraqis. According to Lortz, the overmatched Peshmargaunits "stood, fought, and were blown to bits"(Lortz 2005:49). Realizing they could no longer control the cities, the remaining Peshmargafled to the mountains (O'balance 1873:95).

From their more accustomed concealed positions, the Peshmarga were capable tode crease their losses and engage the advancing Iraqi forces from hidden sniper positions. These tactics allowed the

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Kurdish military to claim a kill ratio of 20 to 30 Iraqi soldiers killed for each Peshmarga deathb (Lortz 2005:50). During the Battle of Qaladize, for example, Peshmarga were able to prevent the Iraqi army from seizing the high ground near Sulaymaniyah by accompanying their mortar attacks with hidden sniper fire. The Peshmarga did not surrender their ground despite taking many casualties due to continuous Iraqi air attacks on their positions. The success of the Battle of Qaladize was one of the few bright spots for the Peshmarga during the war. With their losses mounting, their supply lines captured, and the Iraqis maintaining their positions throughout the winter of 1974, Kurdish hopes for victory were crushed. The final blow to the Peshmarga forces came via the Algiers Accord, signed between Iran and Iraq in March 1975. In an attempt to stop one of the Peshmarga's primary benefactors, Saddam Hussein met with the Iranian Shah during an OPEC summit in Algiers, Algeria (Yildiz 2004:23).

By conceding part of the Shatt al Arab waterway and limiting support for Iranian opposition groups, the Iraqi government received assurance that the border between the two nations would close and security in the area would become tighter, thereby ending Iranian infiltration and Kurdish support (Chapman 2008:72). Once the agreement was announced, Iranian artillery and other firepower quickly marched back into Iranian territory, leaving the already-battered Peshmarga nearly defenseless. With the termination of Iranian support, the allies of Iran furthermore stopped supporting the Kurdish cause. In what many Peshmarga veterans refer to as "Kissinger's Betrayal", the U.S. government ceased providing military and financial support to the Peshmarga (Lortz 2005:50). Despite their pleas, the Kurdish leadership discovered the American objective was simply to weaken Iraq and prevent an attack on Iran not to assist in achieving Kurdish autonomy (Blum 2006: 145).

The Peshmarga fantasies of American tanks and airplanes disappeared as they once again considered themselves "abandoned" by a military superpower. Seeking to gain the upper hand, Iraqi forces attacked Peshmarga positions the day after the Algiers Accord was signed. Several Iraqi divisions advanced on the remnants of the Kurdish Army as Iraqi airplanes continued to bomb select locations, including Mustafa Barzani's Galala headquarters (Lortz 2005:50). Hundreds of Kurds, both Peshmarga and civilians, were killed as Iraqi forces seized previous Peshmarga strongholds at Mount Zozuk, Mount Sertiz, and Mount Hindran. The indiscriminate Iraqi assault, lack of foreign assistance, and dwindling supplies and ammunition caused over 200,000 Kurds to flee to Iran, including 30,000 Peshmarga. Many remaining Peshmarga gave up their weapons and surrendered to the Iraqi forces while others possibly hid their weapons, hoping to continue the fight (Chapman 2008:75).

General, the Kurdish-Iraqi War of 1974-75 nearly destroyed the Peshmarga's fightingability and with it the entire Kurdish cause. Fearing reprisals, the KDP leadership fled to Iran in March 1975; upon their return to Iraq months later they found strict controls on their activities (O'balance 1873:102). Barzani furthermore fled Iran and would not return until after his death in 1979 (Ghareeb 1981: 174). The surviving Peshmarga were either forced underground or ordered to live in settlements where they were incapable to carry their rifles (O'balance 1873:100). Kurdish culture was increasingly marginalized as the uncontested Baathist party tightened its grip on Iraq. Once proud Peshmarga veterans could only watch as thousands of Kurds were relocated, villages were destroyed, and millions were forcefully integrated into Iraqi society. After over 40 years of fighting, most for the cause of Kurdish nationalism, Mustafa Barzani's last military operation was perhaps his greatest failure (Lortz 2005:50).

XIII. Conclusion

This article has endeavored to account the development of the Peshmarga and its role in the Kurdish struggle in Iraq. While supporting the objectives of Kurdish nationalism, the Peshmarga's continuous fights and defiance of central successive governments, despite being regularlyoutstripped or overpowered, have bolstered the Kurdish warrior spirit. To indication the Peshmargain passing, as many authors have done, or to label the Peshmargaas merely "guerrilla troops", is to marginalize the involvement of the organized Kurdish fighting force in twenty century Kurdish military history. For a people who have contingent on their struggling capability for centuries with the purpose of sustaining their cultural existence, it is tough to picture the Kurdish valuesin Iraq without the Peshmarga role.The broken promises of the past have forced the Kurds to look to their own as the most reliable means of protection. As seen in this study, not only have previous internal agreements have not been implemented, nevertheless the Kurds have moreover been "abandoned" by three of the world's premier superpowers: the British in the 1920s, the Soviet Union in the 1940s, and the U.S. in both the 1960s and the 1970s. It is little shock then that after gaining power the Kurds would be hesitant to disband their only factual source of self-protection. To rely on awide-ranging "Iraqi" armed forces that seeks the best concern of the Iraqi state over that of Kurdistan region would be counterproductive to the objectives of Kurdish nationalism political autonomy or independence for Iraqi Kurdistan. Inclusion in an Arab-Kurdish force would be also against the Kurdish expression give a stranger your life's blood,in the end you will regret it. Although earlier attempts were made to merge tribal warriors in an inclusive Kurdish force, the years of Barzani leadership was the turning point in creating a Peshmargaforces. Not an academically learned man,

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Barzani learned the benefits of military association from the lessons learned in the early revolutions such as the Sheikh SaidRevolution and the Ararat Revolt, each of which trace their military roots to the Hamidiya Knights. By delivering levels of knowledge andmorals of conduct, he set the foundation for generations of Peshmarga. With a standard rank arrangement in place, Barzani's force developed compatible with other military commands, spreading from the Mahabad Republic to recent Peshmarga. Special Forces operations. As Barzani's military impact advanced, sodid the influence of the Kurdish nationalist movement. Without the triumphs of Barzani's Peshmarga, other Kurdish politicians would not have had the opportunity to impact and influence Iraqi Kurdish direction.

Unfortunately for the Peshmarga and Kurdish political aspirations, the Kurds must be reliant on regional cooperation to maintain any level of affluence or security in the recent geopolitical landscape. Kurdistan in general, especially Iraqi Kurdistan, is surrounded by land and lacks any independent way to export resources. Even with control of oil-rich Kirkuk, the Kurds must depend on pipelines crossing Turkish or Arab Iraqi lands. As long as the present landscape created by the Sykes-Picot Treaty of 1916 and the treaties of WWI positions, the Kurds are at the humanity of their neighbors. Their years of distrust and belief in Kurdistan, nonetheless, have mandated the need for an organized armed force, one willing to face death. As an introductory study on the subject of the Peshmarga, this article has endeavored to show the significance of the Kurdish military force and its relationship to the survival of Kurdish nationalism. It is suggested that study on this subject remain as to better relate to the mindset of the Kurdish nation.The ideal of the Peshmarga as "guardians" of Kurdish nationalism will carry on far beyond the generation of Qazi Muhammad; Mullah Mustafa Barzani and Masud Barzani and Jalal Talabani. As older Peshmargastage away from the battleground and assume political roles, new Peshmarga fill the ranks. Aliketo the long-standing bond the Kurdish people have with their scours, the institution of men and women willing to sacrifice their lives for an independent or political autonomous Kurdistan will keep on.Even Iraqi Kurdish children are considered future Peshmarga and their connection in the causeis observed at positively by their parents.

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