

**In Tribute to  
Dr. A. R. Ghassemlou**

Compiled by  
Mouloud Swara

# **In Tribute to Dr. A. R. Ghassemlou**

Compiled by  
Mouloud Swara





TISHK Book  
Juny 2024  
Cologne, Germany

---

**Copyright:**

Published in 2024 by TISHK Center for  
Kurdistan Studies, Cologne, Germany

© 2024 by TISHK Center for Kurdis-  
tan Studies is licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0  
TISHK Book is an open access publication.

**Open Access:** This book is published under the Creative  
Commons Attribution 4.0 International Licence, which  
permits use, copying, adaptation, distribution and re-  
production in any medium or format, provided you give  
proper credit to the original author(s) and the source.

TISHK-Zentrum für Studien über Kurdistan e.V.

P.O.: 840108

51033 Cologne

[www.tishk.org](http://www.tishk.org)

[info@tishk.org](mailto:info@tishk.org)

**ISBN:** 978-3-68939-000-6

**ISBN:** 978-3-68939-001-3 (eBook)

<https://doi.org/10.69939/TISHK1559>

The **TISHK Books** is a platform dedicated to promoting and dis-  
tributing books related to Kurdistan, Iran and the Middle East,  
and various academic disciplines. Our goal is to make these val-  
uable resources accessible to readers worldwide. TISHK Books  
is an integral part of the center's mission to promote knowledge  
and understanding of Kurdistan and the Kurdish situation in the  
Middle East. It is a publishing initiative that aims to produce  
high-quality books on various topics related to Kurdish studies.

Impressum:

Verlag:

TISHK Zentrum für Studien über Kurdistan

Verlags- bzw. Erscheinungsort:

Köln

Herausgeber & Zusammengestellt von: TISHK &  
Mouloud Swara

Redaktion:

TISHK Zentrum für Studien über Kurdistan

Druck: Eigendruck

Vertrieb: TISHK

Anschrift der Redaktion:

TISHK-Zentrum für Studien über Kurdistan

Postfach: 840108

51033 Köln

Email: [info@tishk.org](mailto:info@tishk.org)

Webseite: [www.tishk.org](http://www.tishk.org)



*TISHK Center for Kurdistan Studies*



*In Commemoration of the 35th Anniversary  
of the Assassination of Dr. A. R.  
Ghassemlou*



Contents	Page
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	VII
<i>Preface</i>	VIII
<b>Dr A.R Ghassemlou</b>	1
<b>Dr. Ghassemlou: An Exceptional Leader in the Greater Middle East</b>	3
<i>Mostafa Hejri</i>	
<b>Excerpts from Eulogy at the Funeral Service of Dr. Ghassemlou by Bernard Kouchner, Former French Secretary of State for Humanitarian Action</b>	6
<i>Bernard Kouchner</i>	
<b>My decisive meeting with Dr. Ghassemlou</b>	8
<i>Frédéric Tissot</i>	
<b>Ghassemlou the Wise: Passionate Ambassador of a Desperate Cause</b>	10
<i>Marc Krvetz</i>	
<b>An unforgettable event with an unforgettable speaker</b>	14
<i>Abdulla Hassanzadeh</i>	
<b>Why and why not; In memory of A. R. Ghassemlou (1930 –1989)</b>	18
<i>Gina Lennox</i>	
<b>Hope Instead of Despair in the Age of Democratic Backsliding: The Enduring Legacy of Dr. A. R. Ghassemlou</b>	27
<i>Ali Abdelzadeh</i>	
<b>A man of immense vision and influence</b>	34
<i>Mustafa Mauludi</i>	
<b>The political legacy of Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou</b>	40
<i>Asso Hassan Zadeh</i>	
<b>A champion of Kurdish Rights and Democratic Values</b>	43
<i>Ibrahim Salehrad (Lajani)</i>	
<b>The twentieth century is the last Century with unique leaders</b>	49
<i>Kamal Hassanpour</i>	
<b>Rahman the Kurd</b>	53
<i>Carol Prunhuber</i>	
<b>Dr. A.R. Ghassemlou: a rebel with a cause</b>	58
<i>Said Shams</i>	

<b>Dr. Ghassemlou's Views on the Economy of Kurdistan; Based on the Book "Kurdistan and Kurds"</b>	<b>68</b>
<i>Hassan Ghahramani</i>	
<b>We won't forget you, neither forgive them</b>	<b>74</b>
<i>Mouloud Swara</i>	
<b>The news coverage</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Austrian Court</b>	<b>107</b>

## Acknowledgments

---

I am grateful to a number of people who contributed their time and expertise in bringing this book to life. Special thanks to my friends Khalil Pishnemaz, Kamal Hassanpour, Asso (Yoosef) Abbaszadeh and Bayan karime.

I am also grateful to those friends who helped me prepare materials for the book, including Dr. Frédéric Tissot, Dr Françoise Brié, Dr. Carol Prunhuber and Dr. Asso Hassan Zadeh. They also provided valuable photographs published for the first time.

My thanks also go to Hamerasoul Karimi for providing the cover photo.

As a final note, it should be mentioned that the name of the party is written in two ways in English, both of which are correct:

*Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (PDKI)*

*Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI)*

*Mouloud Swara*





## Preface

---

The present volume has been prepared to commemorate the 35th assassination of Kurdish leader Dr. A. R. Ghassemlou. It brings together a number of essays by Kurdish and foreign dignitaries in tribute to Dr. Ghassemlou.

Ghassemlou became involved in Kurdish politics at a young age. Following the establishment of Republic of Kurdistan in 1946, he joined the youth association of the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (PDKI). He studied in Paris and Prague, eventually earning a doctorate in economics. Although serving as a university professor in Prague and Paris for nearly two decades, he was devoted to the Kurdish cause and was elected as Secretary-General of the PDKI in 1970.

In its heyday, PDKI had managed to establish the Republic of Kurdistan. However, the party was forced into exile in Iraqi Kurdistan following the demise of the Republic. Meanwhile, draconian state repression during the reign of the Iranian monarchy had turned Kurdistan into a desert as far as cultural and political life were concerned. Although PDKI had maintained a clandestine organization, it was not able to embark on mass mobilization for decades. However, following the 1979 revolution in Iran, Dr. Ghassemlou managed to transform the PDKI into a mass movement.

Once the Iranian revolution was hijacked by the Islamists, the de facto autonomy in Kurdistan faced an existential threat. Following Ayatollah Khomeini's deceleration of "jihad" or so-called holy war on Kurdistan, Dr. Ghassemlou mobilized Kurdish society to resist military re-occu-

pation of Kurdistan and the brave Peshmerga managed to hold territory until 1983. PDKI was eventually forced to pursue armed struggle in order to compel the Iranian state to negotiate with the PDKI. “We wage war in pursuit of negotiations”, Dr. Ghassemlou said on numerous occasions.

Following the end of the Iran-Iraq war as well as the death of Ayatollah Khomeini, President Rafsanjani made an offer to the PDKI to negotiate on the terms of autonomy for Kurdistan. Although Dr. Ghassemlou negotiated in good faith, the diplomats of the Islamic Republic assassinated him and his aides in Vienna, Austria, on July 13, 1989.

Dr. Ghassemlou was the most prominent Kurdish leader in the last quarter of the 20th century. He was a political realist, but always conveyed hope for a brighter future in his speeches and actions. His hopeful realism is much needed in these times of political extremism, war, and enduring authoritarianism in the Middle East and beyond.

I had the privilege to join the PDKI when Dr. Ghassemlou was the leader of the party. I also had the privilege to meet him on numerous occasions during those challenging years when PDKI was embroiled in a bloody war with the Islamic Republic of Iran. He has had a lasting impact on me and thousands of others in my generation who have been actively involved in the struggle for the liberation of the Kurdish nation and for democracy.

While Dr. Ghassemlou lives on in the hearts and memory of millions of Kurds and has, through his enduring political legacy, an impact on Kurdish politics to this day, I hope that this volume in the English language will provide an international audience with a keen interest in the Kurdish issue an introduction to his political ideas and enduring legacy.

*Mouloud Swara*  
*London 13th July 2024*





## Dr. A. R. Ghassemlou

A. R. Ghassemlou was born on 22 December, 1930, in the Ghassemlou valley near the Kurdish city of Ūrmiyeh. He went to primary school in Ūrmiyeh and continued his Secondary school in Tehran.

Dr. Ghassemlou's involvement in politics started early in life, and at the age of 15 he co-founded the Democratic Youth Union of Iranian Kurdistan. Due to political and national oppression in Kurdistan, his political activities mostly took a clandestine form.

Ghassemlou attended university in Paris and, later, in Prague. In Prague, he meets Helen (Nasrin) Krulich, whom he later married and they had two daughters together, Mina (1953) and Hiwa (1955).

Ghassemlou earned a Ph.D. Degree in Economics and was an Associate Professor in both Paris and Prague. He was teaching International Economics at the Vysoká škola ekonomická ("Prague School of Economics"), and thereafter Kurdish studies at Sorbonne University in Paris.

Dr. Ghassemlou authored several books, book-chapters and, articles about politics and economics. Some of them have been translated into a number of different languages. His oft-cited work Kurdistan and the Kurds (1965) has been until present days consensually recognized as a valuable source, especially regarding the political geography of Kurdistan, the political history of the Kurds, and traditional socio-economic relations in Kurdish society.

In addition to being an acknowledged scholar and one of the greatest leaders of the Kurds, Dr. Ghassemlou's excellent diplomatic skills earned him an international reputation, especially in Europe.

Those who knew and worked with him closely during his academic and political carrier, Kurds as well as Westerners, recall him as a man of quick wit and a person with a great sense of humour.

Dr. Ghassemlou was elected Secretary-General of the PDKI in 1970, and re-elected to lead the party by the PDKI Congresses until his death in 1989.

After several decades of political activity, and as the leader of the Kurdish people in Iranian Kurdistan, Dr. Ghassemlou was assassinated in Vienna by the diplomats of the Islamic Republic of Iran on July 13, 1989.



Dr. Ghassemlou was in Austria to negotiate with Iranian representatives on Kurdish rights and self-government for Iranian Kurdistan.

Dr. Ghassemlou, a resolute advocate of the rights of his people and a determined leader who did not rule out armed struggle, was also a man of peace and gave it a chance whenever possible. He went to the negotiating table in good faith. However, by assassinating the Kurdish leader, the Iranian regime lived up to the entrenched view among the Kurdish nation that it is not trustworthy, and that assassination is part and parcel of its political mindset and practice.







**Mostafa Hejri**  
Head of the Executive Body of Democratic  
Party of Iranian Kurdistan

## Dr. Ghassemlou: An Exceptional Leader in the Greater Middle East

Dr. Ghassemlou was not only the able Secretary-General of the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan, he was also a prominent personality within the democratic movement, and the opposition against the Islamic Republic in Iran.

In the early years after the Iranian peoples' revolution, when he had recently returned to the country and people did not know him well, and due to some reasons, which I don't want dwell on here, the [Communist] Toudeh party was constantly agitating against him and accused him of different things to the extent that this poisonous agitation had made some impact. However, due to Dr. Ghassemlou's wisdom and his capabilities in leading the Democratic Party, that propaganda was defused quickly and he became a pivotal personality within the broader Iranian movement.

The creation of the Kurdish People's Representative Council in 1980-1981 and the Democratic Party's as well as Dr. Ghassemlou's impact on that council, as the speaker of the council and carrying the duty of negotiation with the appointed group of negotiators by the Islamic Republic of Iran on rights of the Kurdish people, brought Dr. Ghassemlou's abilities to light.





The efforts of that council to get the approval of the Islamic Republic for the minimum level of the Kurdish people's rights and to resolve the Kurdish question peacefully did not succeed, however. This was due to the fact that the Islamic Republic's real goal was to prepare itself to attack Kurdistan, not to discuss the Kurdish people's demands. Despite that, the council acted in a way that the Kurdish people's peacefulness and the Islamic Republic's warmongering became apparent to the public opinion.

At the country level too, due to Dr. Ghassemlou's initiative to unite the different peoples of Iran, practical steps in that direction were taken, and in the autumn of 1981, the idea of gathering their representatives in the city of Mahabad to find a common mechanism in the struggle against the Islamic Republic was put forward. Unfortunately, the regime's military forces started their large-scale assault on Mahabad and that opportunity was lost.

Nevertheless, in the conduct of diplomacy Dr. Ghassemlou's charisma had lasting impact. His knowledge and ability in different areas had given him a special status, and he was extremely skillful in using this to attract the attention of people he met. His tremendous knowledge of poetry, philosophy, folklore, knowledge about western culture, economics, linguistic prowess and so forth made Dr. Ghassemlou a unique personality in the greater Middle East.

All these characteristics helped Dr. Ghassemlou to lead the Democratic Party exceptionally.

The early years of the Islamic Republic were marked by populism. Emotions and excitement clouded the judgment of Iranian citizens. Due to the leadership of this great man, the Democratic Party affirmed its independence by defying revolutionary fervor and populism, and instead acted for the benefit and the interest of the Kurdish people. An example of this independent policymaking was the condemnation of the occupation of the US embassy by a group of loyalists to the Islamic Republic, as well as the approval of 'Democratic Socialism' in the party's sixth congress, and many other approaches and decisions. In that time, each of



them generated huge publicity, both positive and negative, but since it was beneficial for the future of the party, due to Dr. Ghassemlou's efforts they were approved. This independence in decision-making and this policy within that framework protected the Democratic Party and became the guiding principle for the party line in the future.

Now, after almost a quarter of a century, when we look back, we are proud of our policies, especially when we see that during that time, many Iranian dissident organizations committed political mistakes, experienced many ups and downs, and caused huge damage to themselves and the movement.

Dr. Ghassemlou knew quite well that what could safeguard a continued democracy was the establishment and strengthening of democratic associations in every society. In addition, he strongly believed in the role of the youth and women, hence he worked hard to ensure they could have their unions so they could support democracy and the movement. Furthermore, they could attain their social rights too. The Democratic Youth Union and The Democratic Women's Union were two such associations. When the Democratic Party controlled the major parts of Kurdistan and later when the leadership of the Party left the cities and went to rural areas and later abroad, Dr. Ghassemlou spent a lot of time and effort for the establishment and development of those associations.

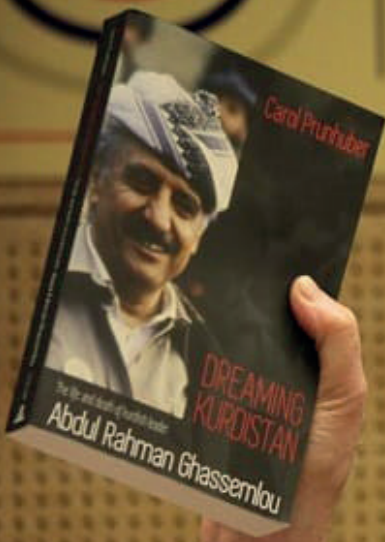
It is obvious that the role of such a charismatic leader within his party, the Democratic Party, and even the countrywide movement was decisive. At the same time, his loss was a profound and a heavy sorrow.

The Democratic Party has remained loyal to Dr. Ghassemlou's political ideals and principles. The truth is that almost fourteen years after his martyrdom, the vacuum in the party leadership has not been filled, but his path will certainly be continued.



Source: Dr. Ghassemlou: A Modern Leader, edited by Kawa Bahrami





Excerpts from Eulogy at the Funeral Service of Dr. Ghassemlou by Bernard Kouchner, Former French Secretary of State for Humanitarian Action

## Once again, here are the Kurds, assembled to mourn their dead

When I think about you, A. R. Ghassemlou I first of all think of your laugh. Your immense cultural background, the eye of an historian and an intellectual on all things; you used to make fine analyses which procured a distance which was enlarging to our vision.

You were the man of the Third World that I admired the most. Both guerilla and liberal, faithful to a strategy, holding onto a firm political line and proposing without cease. I mean, you wanted to say: Democracy.

Oh! If only all the leaders of the Third World had been as democratic as you, how many thousands of deaths would have been avoided!

In your little house: three rooms, of which one is a library, in the middle of the mountains, you told me your realistic dreams.

He wanted to speak with Khomeiny's successors. That is why he went to Vienna, despite warnings, to make peace in the name of the Kurds.

They were afraid of this message of peace so they killed the messengers.

Ghaasemlou, men of your caliber are rare as we approach the end of the century.

You are far from home. Do you have a home? Eternal exile? Here, with us, your friends, we hope that you will feel at home.

The struggle will continue, we can be sure. We know the courage of the Kurds and we, who are not necessarily Kurdish, we are here to support them. We, in any case the international organisations with means, will try to make it so that the Kurds are spoken of more, so that they are not ignored while atrocious acts being committed against them and so that international organisations, governments might finally put pressure on the authorities concerned in Iran, Iraq, in Turkey... That this situation might stop and the Kurds might finally have the legitimate rights that they are claiming, that they might acquire a minimum of autonomy so that they can become something other than a people at war, continually at war, continually oppressed.

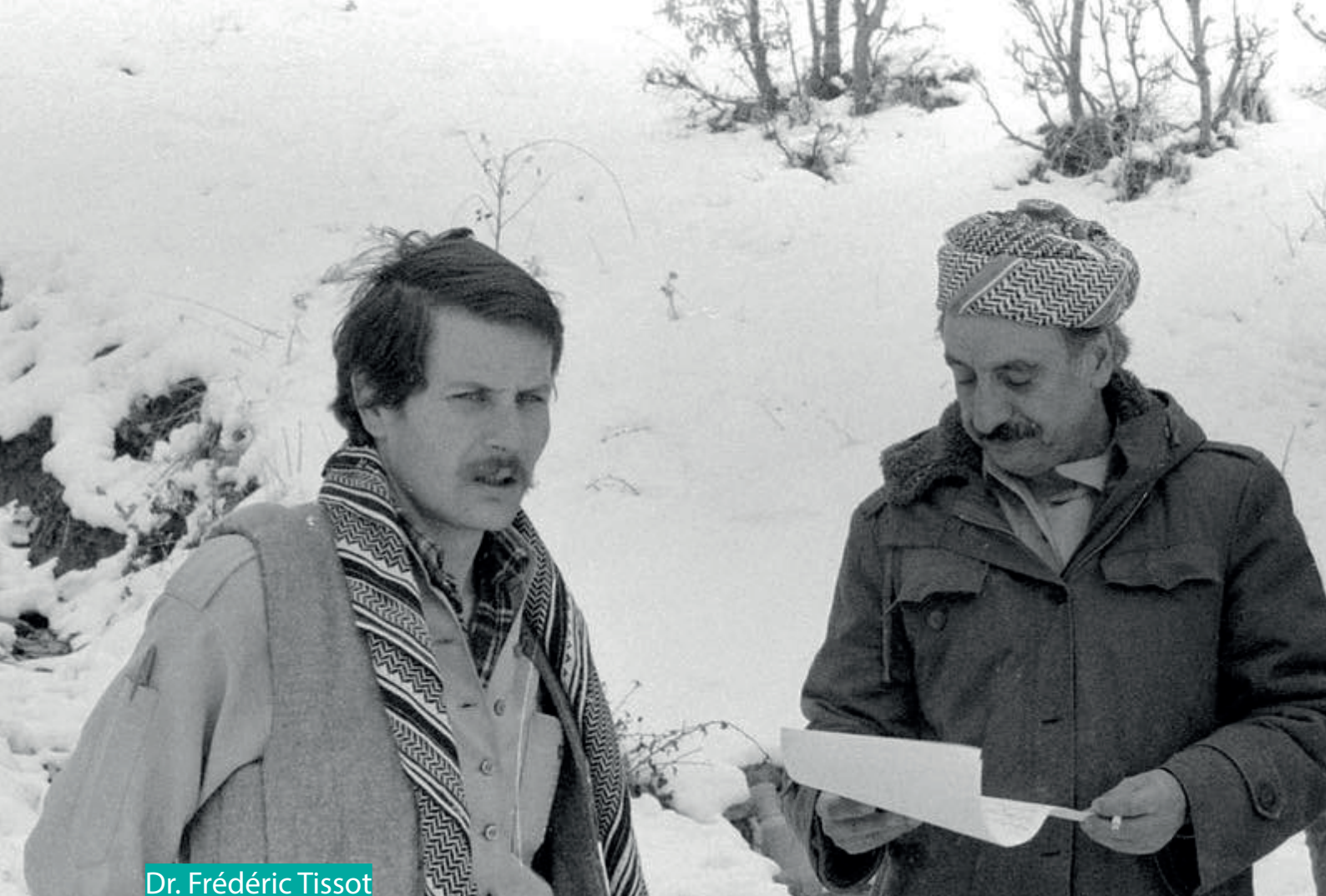
But we know, we know that the courage of the Kurds will help. We know that we must not lose hope. And we know that after Dr. Ghassemlou and the two other Kurdish militants who were so savagely assassinated there will rise other men, other militants to take over.

And we, international organisations, all present here today, have come to give family and friends our entire support. And, also to tell them that we hope to draw from this moment that is so painful to us a new energy for the triumph of the Kurdish cause, so worthy.



Source: Institut kurd de Paris, Information and Liaison Bulletin,  
Special Issue, July-August 1989





Dr. Frédéric Tissot

## My Decisive Meeting with Dr. Ghassemlou

It was in March 1981 that I first met Dr. Ghassemlou. This first meeting proved decisive.

At the time, I was working for International Medical Aid. We had crossed the mountains from Turkey to Iran. We had entered Iran's Kurdistan clandestinely — the so called Rojhelat or Eastern part of greater Kurdistan, as I learned later.

This meeting with Dr. Ghassemlou was absolutely decisive for several reasons.

Firstly, it was a meeting imbued with humanity and extraordinary rich. Meeting Dr. Ghassemlou at that time was, for me, like discovering life, discovering the world, discovering the heart and spirit of a man who represented the fabulous history of this part of the Middle East.

Secondly, this meeting was decisive for my life and that of my family. Because it was from that moment that I became completely enamored, totally in love with the Kurdish cause. And to this day my mind and heart are still filled with “Kurdishness.”

And thirdly, this meeting was absolutely fundamental on a political level, because it would lead to the creation of the first French consulate general in a part of Kurdistan, in Bashor (South of Kurdistan), in Iraq. Indeed, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bernard Kouchner, a



great friend of Dr. Ghassemlou, also a great friend of the Kurds, would appoint me the first French consul general in Kurdistan. Today there are more than thirty diplomatic representations in Erbil in Kurdistan.

And all of this because one day I met Dr. Ghassemlou who would catapult me into another world than medicine. That of diplomacy and the political relationship between France and the Kurds.

The influence of Dr. Ghassemlou has always been present at the consulate general in Erbil. Every July 14, the French national holiday, I would show Massoud Barzani this photo taken in 1982 where I am sitting next to Dr. Ghassemlou. Always to remind of the date of my birth, the founding act of my relationship with the Kurds and Kurdistan.

Of course, I am very proud of all this.

On the 35th anniversary of the brutal, tragic disappearance of my friend and my mentor Dr. A. R. Ghassemlou, I still pray, and I still work for an end to the historical injustice the Kurds had endured since the 1920s.

Long live the Kurds!

Long live Kurdistan!

Long live Dr. Ghassemlou!







Marc Kravetz\*

## Ghassemlou the Wise: Passionate Ambassador of a Desperate Cause

Abdel Rahman Ghassemlou, murdered in Vienna on July 13th 1989, was in every way an exceptional man, both as leader of one of oldest and most deeply rooted national liberation movements and in his personal magnetism — his international influence, his rare if not unique ability to express the traditions and the struggle of a thousand-year-old people in terms of the values of the late 20th century: freedom, democracy, internationalism. But he was little known to the public and many will have learned simultaneously of his existence and of his death.

Ghassemlou was not a man of shadows, nor surrounded by mystery. The Secretary General of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan of Iran, war leader when necessary but political leader above all, he saw himself as a man of contact and dialogue. He was a passionate and tireless ambassador for this cause, who travelled all over the world to make it better known. But he was happiest sharing a mud hut with his peshmergas at the bottom of some remote valley on



the Iran-Iraq border, where he was constantly on the move, taking his library with him.

He liked good books and good win — but could do without the latter more easily than the former — and was as much at ease at a Parisian table as in the spartan loneliness of the harsh mountain winter. At nearly sixty, he would have been 59 next December, he combined the serenity of an eastern sage with the dynamism of a youth, the curiosity of an encyclopaedist with the appetite of a bon vivant. As firm in his convictions as he was pragmatic in action, Ghassemlou seemed to reconcile without strain the toughness required for a political-military struggle and the elegant scepticism derived from his long academic career.

He had a doctorate in economics, loved history and literature and was an expert of Kurdish, Persian and Arabic poetry; he also readily quoted Victor Hugo, Baudelaire, Walt Whitman or T.S. Eliot. Warm, open approachable, using irony and humour as easily as the six or seven languages he spoke and wrote fluently, he inspired the same reaction in everyone who met him. Sympathizers with his movement, intellectuals, doctors, ministers, ambassadors, politicians of left or right. All, even if recalling only one long-ago conversation, admit that they fell for his charm. Few people in this century could boast such unanimity.

Ghassemlou began his political life as a communist in the Iranian Tudeh Party, in which he rose to a position of leadership. After 15 years in Prague teaching economics, he broke with the Communist Party in August 1968 over the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia. Though he abandoned the certainties of Marxist dogma he did not renounce his background. Rather, he examined its mistakes as he analysed the political situation to understand where and when justice had slipped into injustice and truth into error, or even horror and to draw the moral conclusion. He was particularly well placed to know the difficulties of political struggle in a society that was “backward”, as he used to say, because, from being cut off from the world and deprived of its rights of decision and expression, even of access to its own culture. But he was not prepared to use underdevelopment as an ideological justification for all kinds of excesses, such as the cult of violence for its own sake, the cult of the leader in an organisation, or the dictatorship of an organisation over the people.

Nor could he adopt the idea that it is quite all right to use one language for public relations and the media, and then forget about it in the field. His great pride, as he was never tired of saying, was that as far as was humanly possible the ideals of the movement were reflected in its everyday conduct. The PDKI has never mistreated prisoners, never used force against civilians, never taken hostages, never hijacked aircraft or planted bombs in the buses or markets of “enemy” towns, let alone outside the war zone. Though by no means a pacifist, Ghassemlou opposed terrorism on principle, knowing that he paid a price for that and sometimes remarking, with just a hint of bitterness, that it explained why the media showed so little interest in the Kurdish question. “Any little group can become famous by taking hostages or planting bombs,” he once wrote, “Whereas liberation movements which abstain from terrorism are generally ignored.”

In November 1979 Ghassemlou condemned, on the very first day, the seizure of the diplo-

mats and staff in the US Embassy in Tehran. Yet, contrary to the accusations of the Tehran regime, Washington was not won over to the Kurdish cause. Though American diplomacy had indeed been active during the Kurdish war in Iraq (1961-1975), for geostrategic reasons which Dr. Kissinger explains at length, and quite cynically in his memoirs, it never lifted a finger for the Kurds of Iran. Ghassemlou himself was banned from entering the US until the month of his death, when he was for the first time granted a visa. Just before leaving for Vienna, he was preparing very carefully for this trip to the US, where he hoped to do a great deal to publicise the Kurdish question, though he had no great illusions about the likely political result.

He knew all too well that however great the sympathy felt by a certain educated world opinion for the Kurdish cause, the cause would never mobilise the diplomacy of the great powers, nor even of the European democracies, since they were concerned primarily with their own regional interests. He had learned their own regional interests. He had learned this during his frequent travels abroad, especially in Europe. For although generally respected, he was rarely welcome in official circles. At best, by playing on old friendships and exploiting his membership of the Socialist International, he would now and then secure a little humanitarian aid for his people. Or, by whispering in a generous ear, would manage to resolve a problem of special importance to him.







He was a realist. So he demanded autonomy for Iranian Kurdistan, not independence for the Kurds.

Ghassemlou's death warrant was signed as early as 1979, when he was elected as the only self-confessed secularist in Iran's "constituent" assembly. For security reasons he refused to go to Tehran. Ayatollah Khomeiny publicly regretted his absence in televised speech, adding: "What a shame. We could have arrested him and had him shot at once." July 13th 1989, the day when Muslims celebrated the Id al-Kabir or "feast of pardon", was also observed by Shiites as the 40th day of mourning for the Imam. Was that only a coincidence? Or did the murders, disguised as peace envoys with an official mandate from Hshemi-Rafsanjani and passports signed by Velayati, come from Tehran deliberately to carry out the sentence on that ritual day?

\*(Liberation, August 7, 1989)





Abdulla Hassanzadeh

## An unforgettable event with an unforgettable speaker

On March 2nd, 1979, a huge meeting was held in the city of Mahabad during which the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan's legendary leader, Dr. A. Ghassemlou, announced the party's overt activities.

The following is a summary of a speech given by Mr. Abdollah Hassanzadeh, former secretary general of the party, at the 45th anniversary of that event.

First, I would like to describe why this meeting was held. The meeting was a result of some calculations and obviously, it was because we wanted to announce the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan's overt activities, but why? There were other motives behind that decision too. First of all, the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan did never stop its activities, but it has not been among the people for more than 30 years. Undoubtedly, the lack of advertisement tools, like those available to us now, had resulted in overshadowing the party's politics and agenda. Back in the day, only a limited number of people could contact the party and know about the party's views. Hence, it was necessary that on such a day, the party should introduce itself to the masses and explain what it was. There is something else which I could say: It was a moment to show our might. The Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan wanted and had to test itself. Having a history is not enough, we had to show what we were made of.

There was another reason, and it was to show the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan's stature, not only to the Islamic Republic but also to our friends. We have to keep in mind that two weeks before this gathering, some had demanded that Dr. Qasmlou should be expelled from a meeting between the representatives of the Kurdish people and the central government because



he was a member of the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan! Who has replied: “Just because I’m a member of the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan, I should attend this meeting. You don’t know what the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan is.” We had to show the people what the party’s politics were and how much influence it had among the people. At the same time, there was another goal, which was to ask people for solidarity, among themselves and with the party. We wanted to invite the political forces, both Kurdish and Iranian- at that time, besides the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan, we had some loosely organized Kurdish groups, since even Komele, as it is now, more than two months later announced its existence- we also wanted publicly invite the Islamic Republic not to continue the same politics which the previous regime, for at least the past fifty years had exercised and it was one of the most rooted problems in the Iranian society, namely the ethnic groups and in particular the Kurdish question, and resolve the issue. We thought if we requested the activity permit from the Islamic Republic, it might take several months or even years to answer, there was also a possibility that they would decline our request, but if we announced our overt activities, in those days situation which the regime has newly taken the office ad used populist slogans, would not be able to annul our decision. Hence, I want to ask for your attention, we did not call it: “ The proclamation of the legal struggle of the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan”, but we called it “The overt struggle”. It meant that we did not care about the government, we considered it to be our legal right and we made use of this right.

We heard parts of Dr. Ghassemlou’s speech that day. I would like to present you a deeper analysis of this topic. His speech that day was, in fact, the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan’s manifesto and its view of an Iran that we were about to build. It saddens me to admit that those dreams are yet to be materialized, but the program that was presented that day is still new.

The quintessence of that speech was that despite all the reservations we’ve had towards the Is-





Islamic Republic, the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan valued the Iranian people's victory, that uprising was a sacred one and it was the result of decades or even centuries of not only the Kurdish nation but other Iranian nations' struggle. We know that in this regard the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan and the Kurdish nation had a special view compared to the others. When Bakhtiar took office [as prime minister], everyone started cursing him, both Iranians and even the Kurds, were chanting, "Bakhtiar, Bakhtiar, powerless pawn". We said: we shouldn't condemn Bakhtiar, hence we chose to be silent, even when he said some negative things about the goals of the Iranian ethnic minorities, we sent him a message through the late Yahia Khan Sadeq Waziri, the brother of Saremaddin Sadeq Waziri who passed away last year, and told him what kind of talk is this? He apologized and promised not to repeat those views, and he never did. This was one of the views. The other view was to experience freedom and democracy in our country since this country is a stranger to democracy, freedom of speech, and diversity. It was manifest that despite all the influence the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan has, it did not consider itself as the ruler and the owner of Kurdistan, but not only acknowledges the freedom of opinion for all the political parties, it will safeguard it. It was a manifesto that we, the Iranian peoples, want to live together.

So, when you listen to Dr. Ghassemlou's speech we could even today learn new things from it. In that part we heard, he addresses the people, and greets them, he could say greetings to all Kurdish people, but he says greetings to the prisoners, greetings to the family of the martyrs, greetings to the workers, peasants, merchants, civil servants, the clergymen, the patriotic tribes. He recounts all and acknowledges them because he wants to say that our society is comprised of these. These are all owners of the Kurdish question, and they should be partners both in the struggle but also in the responsibilities and of course in the qualifications and the duties. It also sends a message to the freedom-loving peoples of Iran and the minorities! You heard him addressing the Christians and all others, so they all find themselves in the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan's message.

Then it comes to announcing the overt struggle, even here it salutes the previous struggle, look how appropriate this is. If we disregard the time frame, the achievements of the modern freedom struggle of the Kurdish people [in Iran] during the whole period before 1979, including the period of the Kurdistan Republic, is not as much the struggle and sacrifices during the past forty years, it's not even half of it. But it tells us that it's not because of our bravery; history is not starting from now, what we see now is the result of the decades and centuries of struggle of these people, no matter which form and methods of struggle.

After that, it comes to political views. It does not separate itself; it does not separate the Kurdish people; it wants to send the message of friendship and peace. It says our people (by our people he is referring to the Iranian people), under the leadership of Khomeini with the government, have so far achieved a great victory, but with solidarity, with cooperation, we could achieve a far greater victory. In other words, he does not say Kurdistan and Iran; he says Kurdistan and other Iranian peoples, or Iranian Kurdistan, he does not separate Iran from Kurdistan, to avoid taking a stance against the whole government of Iran and all Iranian peoples and the political organizations. But at the same time, he says: "It shouldn't be permitted that reactionary be revived, we should not let the re-emergence of dictatorship in any form." In political language, in a wise language, it tells the Islamic Republic, even your dictatorship will be treated as the Shah's dictatorship; so, while we did not tolerate that one, we won't tolerate yours either.

We should keep in mind that Monarchists were active back then, they were planning to come back to power, hence he warns about the remnants of the monarchist regime. He emphasizes



democracy saying that without democracy the rights of the Kurdish people will not be achieved. He turns to the Iranian peoples and says: We have the opportunity to build a broad unity, we have many common goals, a kind of unity which safeguards both the rights and the freedom of all of us, and at the same time it could preserve the independence of the as the country and the guarding its borders. He invites all to collaborate and beyond that, he gives ideas to the government! He says, "The government should have an economic program to develop the country, especially for the masses, those parts of the society which have not benefitted from the country's resources."

He also says that the daily and weekly working hours should be legislated so that employers won't exploit workers as they please. He draws a line to the government which is we are Iranians, and we have the right to have an opinion about how the government should be.

He also talks about foreign policy and says that Iran should leave the military pacts, stay neutral, follow a non-aligned policy, have friendly relations with all countries without interfering in any country's affairs, and not allow any country to interfere in its affairs.

He also talks about the power and says that the Gendarmerie and polis should no longer operate as they did during the previous regime, which was oppressors of the people, and that these two forces should be controlled by democratically elected councils. He demanded that Gendarmerie would be the enforcer of the law, which is stated in all constitutions. He demands that the reactionary army from the previous regime should be disbanded, build a new and patriotic one and their garrisons should not be built inside civilian neighborhoods. Since the task of the army is to protect the borders, they should be stationed near the borders and far from civilian citizens.

Finally, he talks about our work and says: "our most important weapon is organization. We should have a strong organization; our members should take the party's political belief to the people."







Dr. Gina Lennox

## WHY AND WHY NOT; In memory of Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou (1930 –1989)

Presentation on 13 July 2024, for KDPI Australia  
by Dr. Gina Lennox, Co-Chair & Public Officer, Kurdish Lobby Australia

I thank Salah Pourasad and KDPI Australia for inviting me to speak at this commemoration for Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou. My focus will be on Ghassemlou's meetings with Ayatollah Khomeini and the Islamic Republic's 'envoys' in Europe, his assassination, and what lessons can be learned.

### **A Brief Background of A. R. Ghassemlou**

Ghassemlou was 15 when he became a member of the Tudeh Communist Party's youth group. He soon realised Communists were not interested in Kurdish self-determination, so, after the KDPI was established, he co-founded its youth wing. Ghassemlou's baptism of fire as a political activist was witnessing the rise and fall of the Republic of Mahabad in 1946. Realising he needed



a world view to achieve his dreams, he left Iran to become a student and teacher at the Sorbonne in Paris, and Charles University in Prague, teaching economics and Kurdish studies. He became fluent in [nine](#) languages. In 1952, he met and married H  l  ne Krulich. The couple returned to Iran in 1953, the year Prime Minister Moseddegh was overthrown in a US and UK-instigated coup.

Throughout the late 1950s, into the 1960s, 70s and 80s, between making trips to Europe, Ghassemlou clandestinely revitalised the KDPI in Rojhelati towns, and trained Peshmerga in the Qandil mountains. It was in the mountains that his friendship with PUK leader, Jalal Talabani, became strong, especially in the late seventies with the proximity of PUK and KDPI Peshmerga bases.

In 1967, Iranian Kurdish Peshmerga joined Iraqi Kurds in their armed struggle for autonomy. Ghassemlou was elected secretary general of the KDPI in 1971, and in the early seventies he became involved in negotiations between Iraqi Kurds and the Iraqi Baathist government. In 1976, he returned to Prague, then moved to Paris, where he connected with journalists and politicians, including the Mitterrands, spreading the word of Iranian Kurdish aspirations.

In 1977 demonstrations against the Shah began, but what really ignited the large-scale strikes and demonstrations across Iran was a tragedy blamed on Pahlavi's [SA-VAK](#) in August 1978, when 400 people died inside a cinema after it was set on fire.

Over in Paris in 1978, Ghassemlou and the exiled Ayatollah Khomeini met on several [occasions](#). Another source claims Khomeini refused to meet [Ghassemlou](#) but insiders verbally confirm these meetings. Ghassemlou would have told the Ayatollah what he told everyone - that Kurds would support a revolution against the Shah on condition there was 'Democracy for Iran and autonomy for Kurdistan'. This included the right to be educated in one's mother tongue. Khomeini's exact responses are unknown, but it seems unlikely that he would have squashed Ghassemlou's enthusiasm for overthrowing the Shah, and ethnic rights back in 1978, especially as Ghassemlou returned to Iran in November full of hope for what was about to happen.

Many aspects of Khomeini's return on 1 February 1979 had been secretly planned, and 10 days later, Khomeini declared an Islamic Republic. Thereafter four Kurdish political parties formed a delegation to negotiate. The delegation was led by Ghassemlou and the progressive Kurdish cleric, Sheikh Izaddin Hussein, who had links with Komala, a social democrat Kurdish party founded in the late 1960s. They soon realised Khomeini had no interest in recognising Kurds or any other ethnicity. For Khomeini, all Iranians were in 'the community of Allah'. That Ghassemlou so strongly advocated autonomy for Rojhelat earned him Khomeini's label of an '[evil on the earth](#)'.

The clerical elite wasted no time consolidating power. By mid-March they had appointed their own clerics to represent every town and province. In response to this imposition there was a three-day uprising in Sanandaj, and clashes elsewhere. Khomeini's next step was to hold a referendum on the new government in the last two days of March. Determined to implement 'the Absolute Guardianship of the Jurist' it asked one question: 'Do you want an Islamic Republic?' Ghassemlou advocated a secular democracy, so he and Sheikh Izaddin Hussein organised a widespread boycott. Allegedly, [97 percent](#) of all voters vot-

ed ‘yes’ despite a complete lack of information about how this theocracy would function.

In April, Khomeini established the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, hereon called the IRGC or Revolutionary Guards. The IRGC would answer to Khomeini, protect the theocracy, and keep in check troublemakers and the existing armed forces. Over the next period various groups launched isolated clashes against the government, with Kurdish Peshmerga managing to take control of areas of Rojhelat. Meanwhile Ghassemlou, Husseini, and others continued their attempts to negotiate. In [August](#) 1979, Ghassemlou was elected Urmia’s representative to the Assembly of Experts, which would draft a new constitution, but a Kurdish uprising a few days before the first Assembly caused Khomeini to announce that Ghassemlou and Husseini were ‘enemies of God’, that KDPI was a party of Satan, and hereon banned. Khomeini’s final words were a declaration of a holy war on Kurds. Naturally, Ghassemlou did not attend the Assembly.

As military forces attacked different Rojhelati towns, people began to strike and demonstrate. Many non-violent political activists were executed so an armed struggle began in the last months of 1979. Kurds managed to drive government forces out of Rojhelat and keep them out for six months. In this time, Ghassemlou continued building the KDPI’s political and military capacities, establishing a KDPI headquarters in the mountains. In April 1980, government forces launched a full-scale air and ground assault for 24 days. KDPI and Komala fought back. The war killed 10,000 Kurds, displaced 200,000, and destroyed hundreds of villages. Twelve hundred political prisoners were executed. By 1982 the revolution had been squashed, except for isolated clashes that continued until 1984.

Intelligent, charismatic leaders like Ghassemlou, especially those willing to take up arms, are always going to be a threat to tyrants, so in 1984, with the Iran-Iraq war at its bloodiest, Ghassemlou returned to Europe to network with politicians and journalists.

### **First and Second Meeting in Vienna, 1988 – 1989**

This meant that by 30 December 1988, when Ghassemlou had his first meeting in Vienna with two Iranian ‘diplomats’ to negotiate Kurdish autonomy in Iran:

- He had already had personal experience of Khomeini’s devious ways.
- He had lived the hard life of a Peshmerga in the mountains.
- He had witnessed the carnage of Khomeini’s Holy War on Kurds.
- He had seen the Islamic Republic introduce lessons on martyrdom in Iranian classrooms.
- He had too many relatives and friends die fighting on either side of the eight-year war with Iraq.
- He had seen the heartlessness of Iran’s emissaries of Allah, for instance in sending up to 550,000 child soldiers as young as nine to the front lines, where they were made to advance over mine [fields](#) in ‘human wave’ attacks. Hence, in the name of Allah, these clerics had been willing to sacrifice [up](#) to [95,000](#) children who were Iran’s future;
- He survived numerous military clashes between Kurdish parties and even within the KDPI.
- And he had rejected an Iraqi government offer to support KDPI to fight Iran, in return for



a victorious Iraq bestowing autonomy on Rojhelat. Given Iraq had not given autonomy to its own Kurds, preferring to massacre and displace them, Ghassemlou was wise to [refuse](#).

I list these horrors to emphasise the big question:

- Why did Ghassemlou trust Iran's intentions and its two 'diplomats' sent to Vienna to secretly negotiate with him on 30 December 1988, and again in [January 1989, and the following July](#)?

The eight-year war had ended. Ghassemlou's overriding reason to resume negotiations was likely driven by an awareness that Iran and Iraq could team up to crush the Kurdish movement once and for all on both sides of the border.

He knew the solution to the Kurds' struggle had to be an outcome of political negotiations. He saw this offer as a window of opportunity to avoid genocide and push for Kurds' rights, at a time when the Islamic Republic was shell shocked, its treasury and manpower were depleted, and the country was facing a massive reconstruction effort on which the IRGC was about to profit. Moreover, fractures had appeared in and between the theocracy and the Revolutionary Guards. An increasing number of clerics did not trust the IRGC's interference in politics, and its growing economic [clout](#).

- But why trust a regime that had imposed its will on the Iranian people, had refused all Iraq's offers of a ceasefire, and insisted on secret meetings? Sure, Ghassemlou completely trusted his friend, Jalal Talabani. It was Talabani who had organised the first two meetings, implemented '[security measures](#)' and was present throughout, with the first meeting taking place in a PUK member's [flat](#).

- But why put all one's trust in Talabani? Ghassemlou knew Talabani was well connected with Iranian officials. Mam Jalal had a complex history of wheeling and dealing, of being involved in strategic alliances with 'the enemy', as leaders who must survive in a hostile environment often do. After all, the Iranian regime had supported Talabani to fight Iraq in the 1980s.
- Even if Talabani was squeaky clean, why trust the Iranians with whom Talabani liaised?

There were no positive outcomes of the first two meetings. The Iranian envoys were not decision-makers and did not have influence on those who were. Iran cancelled meetings scheduled for March. Hence, in July, when it was proposed Ghassemlou meet the same two envoys he had previously met, he accepted.

### **Third and Fourth Meeting in Vienna, mid-July 1989**

By this time Talabani had been sidelined.

- If Ghassemlou knew that Jalal Talabani was no longer involved, why did he agree to secretly meet the same officials without an independent observer?

Ghassemlou had requested the meeting be held in Paris, but Iran insisted on Vienna.

- Was this because Austria had armed neutrality in international affairs, and Austria and Iran were in the middle of another illegal [arms deal](#), as well as legal trade negotiations – meaning, Iran had strings to pull?
- Why meet so soon after Khomeini's death on June 3?
- Did Ghassemlou think he could take advantage of the subsequent political reshuffles?
- Did he realise that reshuffles provide a way to avoid taking responsibility for an action?

For previous meetings and the meetings on July 12 and 13 the two Iranian envoys were: Mohammed Jafar Sahraroudi, head of Kurdish Affairs in Iran's Ministry of Intelligence, and Hadji Moustafawi, head of the secret service in [Western Azerbaijan](#). Allegedly they arrived in Vienna with an IRGC officer and staunch Khomeini-supporter, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Evidence suggests that the future president's role was to collect [weapons](#) from the Iranian embassy. For both the July meetings the two envoys were accompanied by a third Iranian, described as a bodyguard: [Amir Mansur Bozorgian](#). All were ready to fly home straight after the July 13 meeting.

- Did Ghassemlou know that Ahmadinejad was in Vienna? Probably not.
- Was Ghassemlou informed about Bozorgian?

Bozorgian was another Revolutionary Guard. One source says he was in Special Forces, another that he was [Secret Police](#). Whatever the case, he arrived in Austria using a [false identity](#).

- Did Ghassemlou ask why the Iranians needed a bodyguard?
- What guarantees did Ghassemlou receive regarding the Kurdish delegation's safety? And
- Why did Ghassemlou keep these meetings secret, even from KDPI?

One source notes that Ghassemlou made an appointment to meet the chief advisor of Austria's Interior Ministry an hour before the second meeting, but the Interior Ministry cancelled.

- What did Ghassemlou want to talk about?
- What made the Austrians [cancel](#)?

For the meeting Ghassemlou was accompanied by [Abdullah Ghaderi Azeri](#), a member of the KDPI's Central Committee, and a newcomer, [Fadhil Rassoul](#), an Iraqi Kurdish university professor with Iranian connections who had arranged the meetings and organised their [location](#): an apartment in Linken Bahngasse Street in a block with tight security measures.

- How well did Ghassemlou know [Rassoul and his Iranian connections](#)?
- Was any Kurd carrying a weapon and trained to respond in case of an attack in a confined space?
- Were the six men checked for weapons before they entered the apartment?
- Had the apartment been checked for weapons?
- If not, why not?



The meeting was meant to discuss Ghassemlou's return to Iran to engage in high level discussions about Kurds gaining autonomy and cultural rights. [Ghassemlou](#) had secretly organised an audio tape recording. On this recording Ghassemlou says, "I cannot say that Iran is working for the autonomy promised." Another source talks about arranging another meeting for the next day. Whatever the case, suddenly there were multiple gun shots.

One [report](#) claims that armed men burst into the room and killed the three Kurds. This is the story that [Sahraroudi](#) told police, but this is not reflected in the audio recording, the [undamaged apartment door](#), Bozorgian's testimony, and the weapons found in a nearby [trash can](#). These weapons were traced back to the Iranian armed forces. But this story does fit the Iranian government's spread of a rumour that Kurdish radicals had barged in and carried out the assassination, as noted by H el ene Krulich in her book *A European Woman in Wolf Country*.

Ghassemlou was shot in the forehead, temple and throat. Rassoul was shot in the head and neck. Abdullah Ghaderi Azeri had received seven [shots](#). All three received a final shot to the head.

A neighbour called the police. When the police arrived, Hadji Moustafawi had already escaped. They found signs of a struggle, a wounded Sahraroudi with multiple injuries from one ricocheted bullet, and Bozorgian shouting, "They shot my [friend](#)."

The Austrian anti-terrorist police were next to arrive. Their officer, Mr Kessler, assessed the situation was an open and shut case: the Iranians had assassinated three Kurds, but noted, 'The rest is [politics](#)'.

Police took Sahraroudi to hospital where he was put under police surveillance. Nine days later, Austrian police escorted Sahraroudi to the airport and allowed him to leave the country.

Bozorgian was taken to Schottenring police station but after 24 hours was released.

- Why?
- Why did they let him go to the Iranian [Embassy, where he found refuge before being smuggled out of the country](#)?
- Why did the Austrian authorities allow three Iranian government envoys directly connected to three political assassinations on Austrian soil leave the country?
- Why was there no investigation for another four months?
- Why were the findings of that investigation not made public?
- And why did no country [execute](#) the international arrest warrants for the three assassins issued in November?

It was not the first time that political assassins on European soil were let go. And it was not the last.

Back in Iran, Bozorgian was promoted to the rank of general, and appointed head of the Pasdaran headquarters in Urmia, where Ghassemlou was born.





Jafar Sahraroudi was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General and appointed the head of the Quds Force Intelligence [Directory](#).

Hadji Moustafawi was appointed Governor of the province of Kurdistan.

And Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was elected president of Iran for two terms, from 2005 to 2013.

As for the Kurds of Iran, Ghassemlou's assassination kick started a bloody insurgency that lasted until 1996, and which only led to more persecution. No wonder Kurds ask, "When will justice be done?"

- But why would Austria re-open a case when the country has so much to hide? Reopening the case would only mean more questions:
- Why are Western countries and international organisations reluctant to hold Iranian officials to account?
- Surely the nuclear deal, years of sanctions and boycotts, and Iran's expanded Axis of Resistance operating in multiple countries mean there may never be a right time to re-open the case, especially given:
  - The failure of Krulich's 1990 [lawsuit](#) against the Viennese government.



- The failure of Austrian magistrates' investigation into Ahmadinejad's role in 2005, and finally,
- The farce of what happened to the killers of Ghassemlou's successor, Sadegh Sharafkandi in Berlin. Even after they were found guilty of the 1992 murder, and were sentenced to life in prison, in 2007 the two killers were simply released and deported back to Iran and Lebanon. This was after a Berlin court ordered an international arrest warrant for Iran's Minister of Intelligence, Hojjat al-Islam [Ali Fallahian](#), who oversaw the assassination on the auspices of Ayatollah Khamenei and President [Rafsanjani](#).

To this day, Iran denies any involvement in political assassinations on European soil.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

To conclude, there are many lessons to be learned from Ghassemlou's life and assassination, and the perilous dynamics of the Kurdish struggle.

- Surely Ghassemlou would have weighed up the risks and rewards of these meetings?
- If so, was Ghassemlou simply naïve? After all, throughout his life he had gone where angels fear to tread.
- Was he cursed with misguided trust?
- Why didn't he take precautions?
- Why didn't he insist on independent observers or mediators?

This combination of naivety and misguided trust is what many Kurdish leaders exhibit to this day, except when dealing with other Kurdish leaders.

Other lessons for surviving a long, perilous struggle, include Kurds needing to:

- Choose the battles. Prioritise. Don't get distracted.
- Prepare for worst-case scenarios, whether dealing with perceived allies or enemies.
- Act in the best interests of the Kurdish cause – the whole cause, not just for one party.
- Act in accordance with a set of principles that uphold best international standards.
- Prepare for the next opportunity. For there will be one, and
- Be ready to act when the 'stars' align – politically and militarily.

To attain self-determination, Kurds need to learn how to work within the paradigm of international transactional politics, *for the benefit of Kurdistanis*. Kurds need to position themselves as a critical factor in a broader conflict or dilemma that impacts them, as they have done in Iraq since 2005, when fighting ISIS since 2014, and in welcoming US bases in Bashur and Rojava. Importantly Kurds, need the self-confidence, awareness and skills to drive a hard bargain. If you agree, I suggest Kurds need to:

- Find common ground with other like-minded parties, even if there are disagreements. Isolate those, and
- Form a joint platform or council that includes a broad cross section of respected people from both sexes and the diaspora, and for this council to identify joint goals and enact agreed on strategies to achieve them.

- Have this body negotiate with others in and outside Iran, including those struggling for self-determination and relevant decision makers with the power to affect change.
- If there is a power imbalance, insist negotiations include impartial observers or mediators.
- Ensure the representative body gains international support and recognition. That is, a council must be credible and useful without selling out, just as Khomeini presented a case to take power in Iran and acted according to his principles, even when they were questionable. Please leave out the questionable principles! But yes, learn from enemies as well as mentors.

For more than a century Kurds have drowned in a terrible concoction of despair and hope. Both are problematic if unaccompanied by meaningful action. Could the recently elected Iranian president, whose mother is Kurdish, and who spoke Kurdish in Kermanshah saying 'Long Live Kurdistan' in July 2024, be a sign of a new era, or is he a tool for clerics to prolong the life of the Islamic Republic? Whatever the case, the people of Iran need to prepare for the day after the clerics are forced off the stage, and before the monarchists hog the theatre.

Photo: The picture was taken in Hamburg; Dr. Ghassemlou was a guest at a German Green Party event in 1984. Patrick Piel







Dr. Ali Abdelzadeh

## Hope Instead of Despair in the Age of Democratic Backsliding: The Enduring Legacy of Dr. A. R. Ghassemlou

### Introduction

Dr. A. R. Ghassemlou, one of the most prominent leaders of the Kurdish nation and former Secretary-General of the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (PDKI) in the last quarter of the 20th century, dedicated his life to the struggle for Kurdish rights and the pursuit of democracy in Iran. Born in 1930, Ghassemlou became a symbol of the quest for a peaceful solution to the Kurdish issue. As leader of the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan, he promoted a vision of a democratic Iran where Kurds and other national minorities could enjoy self-determination. Dr. Ghassemlou's life was tragically cut short on July 13, 1989, in Vienna, where he was assassinated by Iranian terrorist-cum-diplomats during peace negotiations. The assassination of this great Kurdish leader left a profound impact on the Kurdish movement and the global struggle for human rights.

Ghassemlou's unwavering belief in democracy, dialogue, and the peaceful resolution of conflicts remains deeply relevant today. As we commemorate the 35th anniversary of his assassination, it is important to reflect on the current state of democracy worldwide - a cause he passionately believed in and fought for.

As accounted for below, the current state of democracy worldwide and in particular trends of democratic backsliding are causes of concern. The same applies to the prospects for the respect of human rights and democracy in Iran. However, while the current state of affairs and the available data pertaining to democracy globally and developments in Iran might not be encouraging, if approached in the spirit of Ghassemlou, there is reason to be cautiously optimistic. Instead of despair, democratic actors around the world, both state and non-state, can reverse the trend by being realistic in the face of the challenges, yet at the same time allow themselves to be animated by hope.

The essence of Ghassemlou's political philosophy might be termed hopeful realism. He described

himself as a political realist. He was a “realist” in the sense that he advocated coming to terms with existing realities rather than wishing them away, yet at the same time allowed oneself to be animated by hope for a better future. “Realism” for Ghassemlou did not entail surrendering to the status quo. Instead, it meant a persistent quest for transcending the status quo through a careful analysis of existing constraints and opportunities, as well as through the mobilization of the power of democratic collective action to bringing about opportunities for change and a brighter future (Krulich-Ghassemlou 1989).

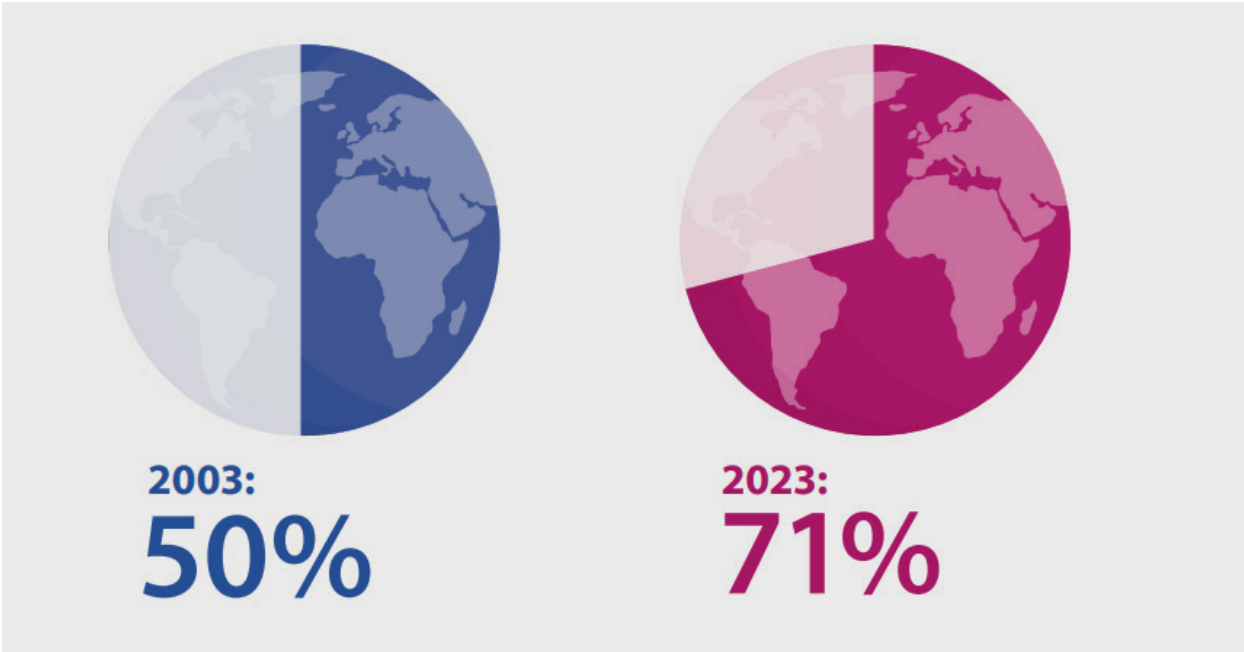
The following analysis of the current state of democracy and political developments in Iran is thus conducted in the spirit of the hopeful realism of Ghassemlou, both as an academic effort and as a tribute to one of the great leaders of the Kurdish nation as well as an exceptional leader in the Middle East.

### The Current State of Democracy Worldwide

As we stand in 2024, democracy around the globe faces a turbulent era. The latest V-Dem (Varieties of Democracy) report highlights a disturbing trend of democratic backsliding in many regions. According to the report, the world has seen a significant decline in liberal democracy, with autocratization affecting more than one-third of the world’s population. Countries that were once considered stable democracies are experiencing increasing polarization, erosion of judicial independence, restrictions on media freedom, and attacks on civil liberties. The V-Dem report emphasizes that while electoral democracy remains prevalent, the substantive aspects of democracy, such as checks and balances, freedom of expression, and protection of minority rights, are increasingly under threat (Nord et. al., 2024).

The report also highlights that the global landscape is almost evenly divided between 91 democracies and 88 autocracies. Alarming, 71% of the world’s population, or 5.7 billion people, now live in autocracies, a significant increase from 48% a decade ago (see Figure 1). Electoral autocracies account for the largest share of this population, hosting 44% (3.5 billion people). In contrast, liberal and electoral democracies are home to only 29% of the world’s population (2.3 billion people).

Figure 1. SHARE OF WORLD POPULATION LIVING IN AUTOCRACIES



Source: V-dem, 2024.



Currently, 42 countries are experiencing autocratization. Of the 28 countries that were democracies at the start of their autocratization episodes, only 15 remain democracies in 2023. In 23 countries, autocratization is occurring as a “stand-alone” process, while 19 countries are experiencing “bell-turn” autocratization, where initial democratization efforts have failed.

Freedom House’s 2024 Freedom in the World report echoes these findings, showing that global freedom has been on the decline for nearly two decades. Authoritarian regimes have become more repressive, and even in democracies, populist leaders have eroded democratic norms and institutions. Civil society, journalists, and human rights defenders are under pressure in many parts of the world, facing increased threats and violence (Freedom House, 2024).

### Situation in Kurdistan and Iran

Free, fair, and transparent elections are crucial to the legitimacy of any democratic system, ensuring that the government accurately represents the will of the people and maintaining public confidence in democratic institutions. In contrast, Iran’s political system operates as an electoral autocracy, where elections are held but systematically manipulated to maintain the dominance of the theocratic regime. Presidential, parliamentary, and local elections are tightly controlled to reflect the interests of the ruling clerics and institutions rather than the true will of the people. This system is rooted in Ayatollah Khomeini’s doctrine of the “Guardianship of the Jurist” (*velayat-e faqih*), which asserts that governance should be administered by a jurist or council of jurists acting as representatives of the Twelfth Imam, al-Mahdi, until his reappearance. Thus, the key institutions in the Islamic Republic are the “Supreme Leader” and the Guardian Council, not the Iranian parliament. The “President” in Iran is subordinate to the “Supreme Leader” and is in essence a manager rather than a decision-maker. The “Supreme Leader,” who has ultimate authority, is a senior cleric chosen by the Assembly of Experts, another body of clerics. The Guardian Council, which has the power to disqualify candidates, ensures that all electoral candidates adhere to Islamic principles as interpreted by the theocratic establishment. This control mechanism effectively rules out political competition and maintains the dominance of the clerics over the political system (Ahmedi & Abdelzadeh, 2022).

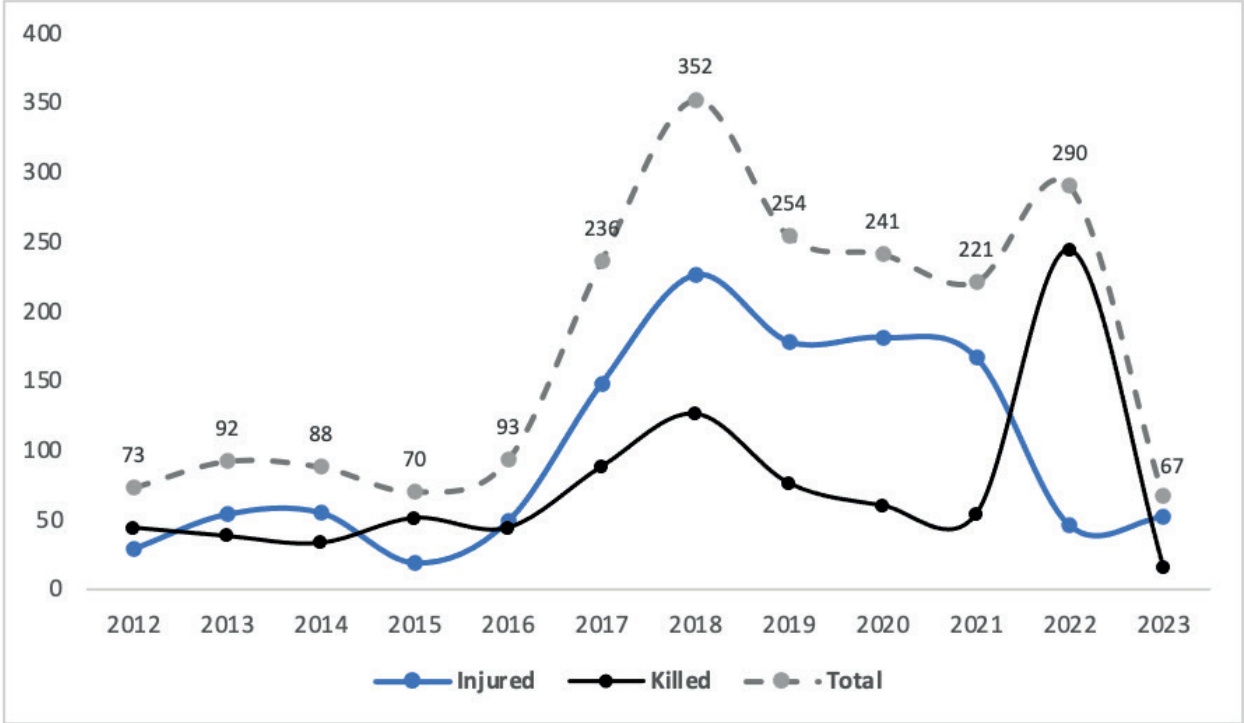
Organizing elections was a necessary evil for an elite that came to power after a broad popular revolution against an authoritarian regime in 1979, but also to claim popular legitimacy for the Islamic Republic. Since then, the Islamic regime has recognized the value of organizing sham elections to assert its legitimacy both domestically and internationally. Despite these electoral processes, however, Iran’s core nature remains one of autocratic rule, characterized by systemic human rights violations and centralized control. This reality has consistently led international assessments, such as those by Freedom House, to classify Iran as “not free,” “autocracy,” and similar classifications.

In addition to free and fair elections, essential elements of democracy include respect for the rights of national minorities and the observance of human rights. The Iranian regime, which sees itself as the earthly embodiment of God’s government, believes that it has a superior position both domestically and internationally. Domestically, this belief significantly shapes the Iranian regime’s policies toward national minorities such as Kurds, Baluchs, Ahwazi Arabs, Azerbaijani Turks, and Turkmens. Scholars are increasingly describing the systematic nature of the Islamic Republic’s oppressive policies imposed on the Kurds in terms of internal colonialism, drawing parallels with classic colonial practices and strategies used by colonial powers to dominate and exploit their subject populations (Soleimani & Mohammadpour, 2019, 2020; Mohammadpour & Soleimani, 2021).

For the past 45 years, the Islamist regime has systematically denied the national identity and rights of these national minorities. In Eastern Kurdistan, for example, the regime has enforced

policies of securitization and assimilation, including forced migration and demographic changes, to weaken the Kurdish nation. In addition, since the 1979 revolution, the Kurdistan region has suffered from deliberate economic underdevelopment and relentless exploitation of its natural resources. Underdevelopment and economic exploitation in Kurdistan have been described as part of the Iranian regime’s broader policy of internal colonialism against Kurdistan and the Kurdish people (see Mohammadpour, 2024). As a result, many Kurds, including young and highly educated youth, have been forced into “kolberi” (porterage) as a means of survival. Kolbers (porters), i.e., individuals who carry goods on their backs across the border regions between Iran, Iraq, and Turkey, face a grim reality every year, as they are killed and injured by indiscriminate gunfire from Iranian paramilitary forces and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). As illustrated in Figure 2, between 2012 and 2013, a total of at least 2,077 kolbers were either killed or injured (1,204 injured and 873 killed) by Iranian paramilitary forces and the terrorist Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). In 2022 alone, the number of kolbers killed was 244 (Mohammadpour, 2024).

Figure 2. Number of killed and injured kolbers between 2012 -2013.



Source: Mohammadpour, 2024 (The data comes from Hengaw Organization for Human Rights).

Furthermore, an additional consequence of the Iranian state’s deliberate and systematic policy of economic underdevelopment in Kurdistan is that many Kurds have been forced to migrate to central Iran in search of employment opportunities. This migration has had a profound impact on both the demographic dynamics and the socio-economic landscape of the affected parts of Kurdistan.

In addition, since 1979, the Kurdistan region of Iran has been subjected to extensive exploitation of its natural resources. For example, as part of its water policy, the Iranian regime has expanded the construction of dams in Kurdistan, not with the aim of boosting agriculture and tourism in the region, but rather to divert Kurdistan’s water resources to central Iran. This policy promotes economic development in central Iran at the expense of Kurdistan’s natural resources. At the same time, this systematic exploitation of water has not only affected Kurdistan’s economic development but has also led to environmental degradation (see Figure 3). As a result, scholars have analyzed



the ecological and socio-economic damage suffered in Kurdistan and other regions using the theoretical framework of environmental racism (see Hassaniyan, 2024). This theoretical perspective examines, among other things, how environmental policies, practices, or directives disproportionately affect individuals, groups, or communities based on race or ethnicity, highlighting systemic injustices and their broader implications for environmental and social justice (cf. Bullard, 1993; Hassaniyan, 2024).

Figure 3. shows the landscape before and before the construction of the Darian Dam on the Sirwan River.



The landscape before the construction of the Darian Dam on the Sirwan River.



The landscape after the construction of the Darian Dam on the Sirwan River.

Source: Hassaniyan, 2024.

Iran is also notorious for its high rate of executions, consistently ranking among the top countries in the world for the number of people put to death. The Iranian regime uses the death penalty extensively as a tool of political repression and control. Many of those executed are charged with vague offenses such as “enmity against God” or “corruption on earth,” which are often used to silence dissent and target national minorities, political activists, and human rights defenders.

Following the “Women, Life, Freedom” uprising in 2022, the number of executions in 2023 spiked to its highest level since 2015, a 48 percent increase from 2022 and a staggering 172 percent increase from 2021, according to an Amnesty International report (2024). Previous reports have shown that Kurds face higher rates of arrest, torture, and execution by the regime.

The self-proclaimed superiority of the Iranian regime is also reflected in its hegemonic policies outside Iran, the export of the Islamic revolution, nuclear ambitions, and other destructive policies. Driven by its ideological ambitions and worldview, the Iranian regime’s actions have destabilized the region through various means. Iran’s support for militant groups such as Hezbollah in Lebanon and various Shiite militias in Iraq and Syria has exacerbated conflicts and fueled sectarian violence. By providing financial, military, and logistical support to these groups, Iran is expanding its influence, undermining the sovereignty of neighboring states, and destabilizing the region (Jones, 2019).

In addition, Iran’s pursuit of a nuclear program has raised significant global concerns. Despite international agreements aimed at curbing its nuclear ambitions, Iran’s activities suggest a continued intent to develop nuclear capabilities that could trigger a regional arms race and increase the risk of conflict. The regime’s ballistic missile program, combined with its nuclear ambitions, poses

a direct threat to regional security and global peace (Elleman, 2024).

In conclusion, the Iranian regime poses a grave threat both to the population of Iran and to global security and peace. Internally, it perpetuates systematic human rights abuses, obliterates political dissent, oppresses national minorities, and suppresses basic freedoms. Externally, Iran's support for militant groups and pursuit of nuclear capabilities destabilizes the region and undermines international efforts for peace and security.

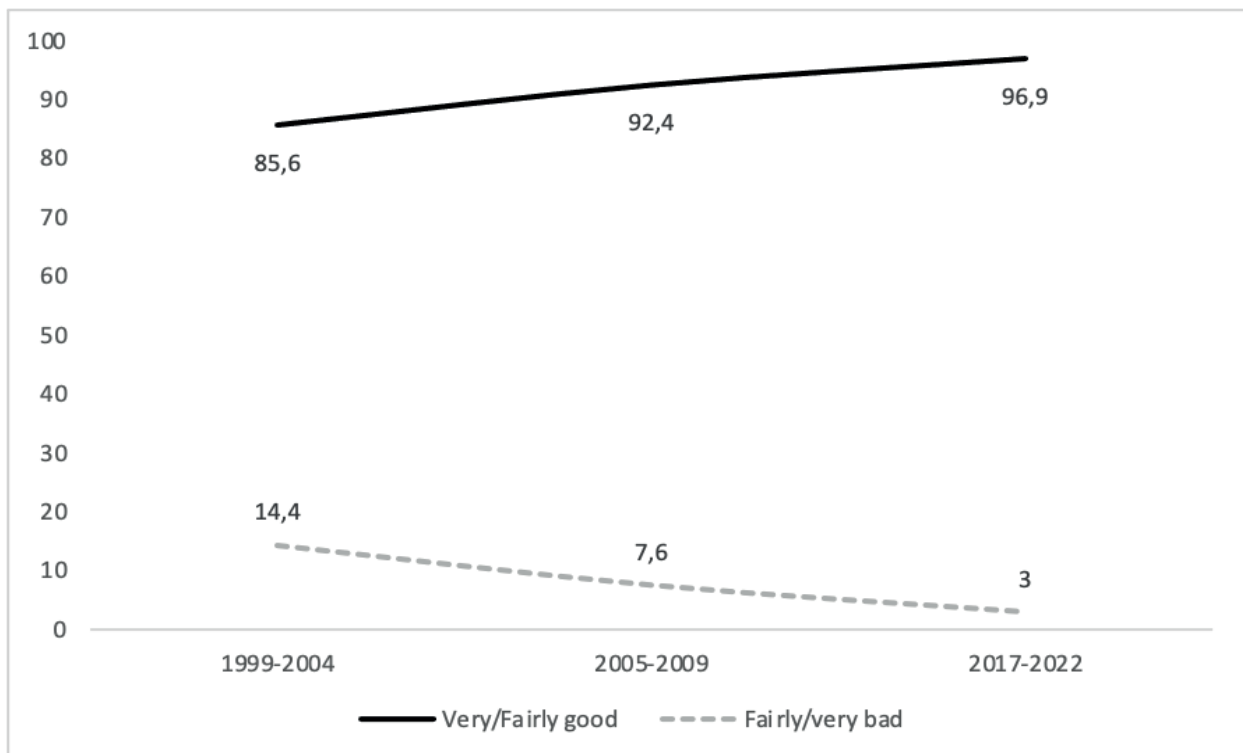
### Support for Democracy in Iran

Despite the Iranian regime's continued repression, the population of Iran demonstrates strong and growing support for democracy. Over the past several decades, the peoples of Iran have increasingly expressed a desire for democratic governance, despite facing significant repression. This trend is evidenced by data from the World Values Survey, which shows a steady increase in support for democracy.

As shown in the chart, support for democracy in Iran hovered around 86% from 1999 to 2004. In the subsequent period from 2005 to 2009, this support increased to about 92%. The trend continued, reaching approximately 97% in the period from 2017 to 2022. Overall, the data suggest a growing consensus in favor of democratic governance in Iran over the past decades, underscoring the resilience and aspirations of the people of Iran for a democratic and representative political system (see Figure 4).

The peoples of Iran's unwavering commitment to democratic ideals, even under oppressive conditions, is a testament to their resilience and enduring hope for a better future. This growing support for democracy not only challenges the current regime but also serves as a powerful reminder of the universal yearning for freedom and self-determination, especially among the Kurds and other nations that face systematic oppression on a daily basis.

Figure 4. Having a democratic political system



Source: World Values Survey (Inglehart et. al., 2014)



## Conclusion

In this repressive climate described above, the enduring legacy of Dr. Ghassemlou's struggle for Kurdish rights and democracy remains influential. His vision of an Iran characterized by democracy and respect for human rights continues to inspire Kurds and others who steadfastly pursue these aspirations despite the daunting obstacles they face. This commitment was evident during the "Women, Life, Freedom" uprising, when people in eastern Kurdistan chanted slogans such as "Ghassemlou, Ghassemlou, we will continue your path," "Freedom for Kurdistan," and "Long live Kurdistan."

The 35th anniversary of Dr. Ghassemlou's assassination is not only a moment to remember his contributions and sacrifices but also an opportunity to reflect on the ongoing challenges and progress in the Kurdish quest for autonomy and democracy. It serves as a reminder of the importance of unity, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to human rights and democratic values.

As we honor the legacy of Dr. Ghassemlou, we reaffirm our commitment to the principles he stood for and continue to strive for a future where the rights and freedoms of all peoples are respected and upheld.

## References:

- Ahmedi, I, & Abdelzadeh, A. (2022). Iran. In Denk, T. & Carsten, A. (Eds.), *Komparativ politik: elva politiska system*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Amnesty International (2024). Iran executes 853 people in eight-year high amid relentless repression and renewed 'war on drugs'. Amnesty International. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/04/iran-executes-853-people-in-eight-year-high-amid-relentless-repression-and-renewed-war-on-drugs/>.
- Bullard, R.D. (1993). Anatomy of environmental racism and the environmental justice movement. *Confronting environmental racism: Voices from the grassroots*, 15, 15-39.
- Elleman, M. (2014). Iran's Ballistic Missile Program. The Iran Primer. (2024, April 12). <https://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/irans-ballistic-missile-program>.
- Freedom House (2024) Freedom in the World – The Mounting Damage of Flawed Elections and Armed Conflict.
- Hassaniyan, A. (2024). Iran's water policy: Environmental injustice and peripheral marginalisation. *Progress in Physical Geography: Earth and Environment*, 48(3), 420-437.
- Inglehart, R., C. Haerper, A. Moreno, C. Welzel, K. Kizilova, J. Diez-Medrano, M. Lagos, P. Norris, E. Ponarin & B. Puranen et al. (eds.), (2014) World Values Survey: All Rounds - Country-Pooled Datafile Version: <https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVS-DocumentationWVL.jsp>. Madrid: JD Systems Institute.
- Jones, S. G. (2019). War by proxy: Iran's growing footprint in the Middle East [CSIS brief]. Center for Strategic & International Studies. <https://www.csis.org/war-by-proxy>.
- Krulich-Ghassemlou, A. H. (1989). The Ghassemlou Case. *The International Journal of Kurdish Studies*, 3(2), 48.
- Mohammadpour, A. (2024). Blood for bread: Necro labor, nonsovereign bodies, and the state of exception in Rojhelat. *American Anthropologist*, 126(1), 120-134.
- Mohammadpour, A., & Soleimani, K. (2021). 'Minoritisation' of the other: the Iranian ethno-theocratic state's assimilatory strategies. *Postcolonial Studies*, 24(1), 40-62.
- Nord, Marina, Martin Lundstedt, David Altman, Fabio Angiolillo, Cecilia Borella, Tiago Fernandes, Lisa Gastaldi, Ana Good God, Natalia Natsika, and Staffan I. Lindberg (2024) Democracy Report 2024: Democracy Winning and Losing at the Ballot. University of Gothenburg: V-Dem Institute.
- Soleimani, K., & Mohammadpour, A. (2020). Life and labor on the internal colonial edge: Political economy of kolberi in Rojhelat. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 71(4), 741-760.
- Soleimani, K., & Mohammadpour, A. (2019). Can non-Persians speak? The sovereign's narration of "Iranian identity". *Ethnicities*, 19(5), 925-947.



Mustafa Mauludi

## A man of immense vision and influence

Dear friends!  
Respected sisters and brothers!

Please allow me, as a representative of the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran's politburo, to welcome you to attend this event organised to honour the memory of the martyr Dr A. R. Ghassemlou. A man of immense vision and influence, he selflessly dedicated his life to the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI). His contributions and dedication to our cause testify to his unwavering commitment.

Today, we have gathered here to commemorate the 35th anniversary of the assassination of Dr Ghassemlou, the great and influential leader of the KDPI, a diplomat and a celebrated leader of the Kurds. We have now gathered to honour his memory. By attending this event, you show your respect and recognition of the important roles played by our leader, Dr Ghassemlou, who played significant roles in advancing the cause of our party and our nation's struggle.

Dear friends!

Dr Ghassemlou was well known to the Kurdish people. Most political activists and intellectuals in the region and many of the world's politicians concerned about the Middle East's political situation knew him well. They were aware of his leading role in the political devel-



opments in the region. As for us, the students and comrades of Dr Ghassemlou, many of us knew him closely. Because of our access to his writings, we had considerable knowledge of his indispensable role. Looking at the KDPI literature and writings, we learn that his contributions, knowledge, and ideas have enhanced the KDPI literature in many areas. This prominent leader's ideas, contributions, and knowledge have greatly benefitted the KDPI and the Kurdish movement. During thirty-five years since his passing, we have remembered him on various occasions, either on his birthday or the anniversary of his martyrdom, or written about his political life, connection with politics, education, and his central influence on the KDPI. No matter how much we write about him, we cannot cover the extensive amount of written works and speeches produced about him. Or at least, I cannot add anything new to his magnificent history of prolonged struggle, which was filled with glory.

That is why I ask your permission to review some of the existing writings and speeches about Dr Ghassemlou again. Once again, I will present you with selected quotations of his ideas and thoughts—those that had become central to the KDPI's politics and are now most pressing—and, if time allows, take them more critically.

Kurdish politicians, generally, especially the members of the KDPI, are well informed that Dr Ghassemlou began his political journey by joining the KDPI Youth Organisation. The KDPI Youth Organisation has been active since its formation during the Kurdistan Republic. Since its formation, it has continued its activities with the KDPI and has backed KDPI politics. It has been active in educating thousands of young people, of whom tens and hundreds have become members of the KDP. They have actively progressed the Kurdish movement and have dedicatedly performed their responsibilities and tasks.

After the fall of Kurdistan's Republic, Dr Ghassemlou was among the first to be active in the KDPI's clandestine activism. He was one of the leading members in 1955 who actively ob-





tained the KDPI's independence.

Dr Ghassemlou's role became more central in the 1970s. After signing the 1970 autonomy agreement, and once it became officially recognised, he returned to Iraqi Kurdistan. Unfortunately, the KDPI was embattled by severe and complex issues at the time. Dr Ghassemlou, as a capable cadre, with the help of other KDPI comrades, utilised the viable opportunity available. He used his immense knowledge and skills, enormous political history, and unprecedented personal and political connections with Kurds, Iranians, and foreigners to revive and reactivate the KDPI organisation.

According to those who had the honour of working with Dr Ghassemlou, during this period, he brought a renaissance to the KDPI and a new life to the declining KDPI. This was achieved mainly because of his unique personality, his well-known name, and the fact that his position was accepted and approved by different sections of the KDPI.

Additionally, he patiently and with experience dealt with everyone, including his stern opponents. He tried to bring everyone together under one objective and one manifesto. Most importantly, it is essential to recognise that Dr Ghassemlou followed our great leader's path and politics, Peshawa Qazi Mohammad.

During this period, Dr Ghassemlou had a significant impact on the KDPI. In a short period, he managed to reorganise the KDPI's structure. The KDPI launched its manifesto, published its newspaper, and, most importantly, became independent in its own political decision-making. Dr Ghassemlou taught the KDPI cadres a great deal, and until now, his teaching held a torch to light our path.

To protect the KDPI's principles, he insisted on freedom of expression. He believed in self-discipline and the value of self-confidence. He believed in the importance of organising, strengthening the party's relationship with the people, safeguarding the national interest, and sacrificing small interests to preserve the general interests. Most importantly, Dr Ghassemlou gave special value to the freedom and dignity of individuals, and in this regard, he stated: "No blessing is more precious than freedom. Freedom gives value and dignity to individuals, and it won't allow it to turn them into objects. Humans must depart from being mere objects and gain personality to become lively and active members of society."

Dr Ghassemlou's personality was exceptional in many ways. He was a forward-thinking, creative, and competent leader. In many aspects of his political and social life, he was nonpareil. In the mountains, he was a revolutionary and a Peshmerga (Kurdish fighter), an intellectual, writer, and architect of the KDPI's general politics.

Among us, Dr Ghassemlou was a people-centred and humble leader. In the outside world, he was an effective and experienced diplomat. Many foreigners have written about Dr Ghassemlou's political and diplomatic skills. Here, I only mention one of these. The renowned American journalist Jonathan Randal states: "Ghassemlou was the only Kurdish leader who could courageously and with a great authority engage with negotiations with any states. His political knowledge and relationship with European and other politicians and journalists gave Ghassemlou a "scientific" dimension to his personality. Such qualities were not visible in any other Kurdish personalities". He adds: "Many Kurds believe that if Dr Ghassemlou was alive today, he could make progress in all Kurdish affairs".

It was the combination of all these personal and revolutionary qualities that made Dr Ghassemlou a target for the Islamic Republic, the archenemy of the Kurdish nation and the KDPI. The Islamic Republic, with its reactionary politics, had deep hatred against Dr Ghassemlou and was ready to eliminate him in any way possible. That is why Dr Ghassemlou's peaceful





approach was misused deceptively. As we all have been informed, a plot was designed, and on 13 July 1989, in Vienna, the capital of Austria, he was martyred by the terrorists of the Islamic Republic.

In reality, the regime's aim was, with the assassination of Dr Ghassemlou, to eliminate the KDPI, which is why the KDPI was targeted. However, the regime's officials failed to consider the fundamental role of Dr Ghassemlou's leadership. During his leadership, Dr Ghassemlou tried to diminish the cult of personality within the party, and instead, he enhanced the role of groups, cooperation, and democratic processes in decision-making. Significantly, he left this legacy behind for the KDPI and its activists. Suppose we acknowledge these legacies and put them correctly in practice. In that case, the assassination of Dr Ghassemlou, or any other anti-KDPI plot by the regime, will not deter us in the continuation of our struggle.

Dear friends!

Dr Ghassemlou, with his valuable speeches and expert guidance, has left us with immense legacies in terms of working methods. If the KDPI activists and the students of Dr Ghassemlou learned them correctly and used them appropriately (I am confident they will do so), I am sure the Kurdish nation will never face despair. Also, Dr Ghassemlou's students will never face uncertainty. They can resolve all the challenges ahead by utilising their leader's political experiences and knowledge.

In one of his valuable speeches, Dr Ghassemlou stated: "If a nation wants freedom, it must make sacrifices to obtain it." Thus, the struggle against oppression was a fundamental issue for Dr Ghassemlou. In an interview with Behrooz Yousefzadeh, he mentioned, "A fundamental



issue, which I started my struggle against, was eliminating oppression.” He sincerely believed in democracy and worked hard to achieve democratic principles within the KDPI. He never turned from democratic principles and believed democracy was the only guarantor of attaining freedom and rights. He explicitly stated, “I prefer the worse kind of democracy to dictatorship”. He was decidedly opposed to dictatorship, individualism and the cult of personality. Concerning political unity and freedom of expression, he states: “Strengthening the politics of free expression and unity is a fundamental responsibility of all the members of the party. That does not mean that all members of the KDPI must think alike or have similar objectives because this is neither possible nor desirable for KDPI activists. Unity or solidarity does not mean taking away the freedom of thought of the KDPI members”. Having different views and democratic compromises was the key to resolving all challenges and will lead to progress inside the KDPI. From Dr Ghassemlou’s perspective, the best possible way to lead our party was linked to lively engagement and finally reaching compromises.

Dr Ghassemlou considered terrorism as a vile and inhumane act. He would condemn it under any condition or grounds. Ethics and politics were closely linked for Dr Ghassemlou. For him, the KDPI’s independent decision was above everything else. He worked hard to free the KDPI from its dependency on other political organisations. He never allowed the KDPI’s independence to be jeopardised.

Dear friends! We are here to commemorate the memories of our martyred leader, Dr Ghassemlou, at a time when the Islamic Republic’s regime, more than ever, is becoming distant from the people of Iran. A deep division is happening between the authorities and the people of Iran. The majority of people in Iran do not recognise this regime, and they wish for its overthrow. If they are given an opportunity, they will act against it and participate in its





overthrow. Although, with the increase in oil prices in the past two or three years, Iran has managed to save more than 40 billion dollars, the country is going through an economic recession, and people are suffering from poverty and inflation. Various political, social and cultural predicaments, alongside the absence of freedom, have made people weary. If we examine the regime through democratic standards, we will realise that it has lost its legitimacy among people for a long time and has only maintained its power through force. We are confident that if the slightest opportunity arises, the people of Iran will reject this regime.

We are aware that despite the continuous oppression and suffering of the people in Iran, people express their opposition and organise protests in various ways, using the slightest available opportunity. Two examples of such protests, which occurred in July last year, must be mentioned.

Firstly, the revolutionary uprising of university students at Tehran University and the following uprising of a few other universities were organised to support the student movement on July 8, 1999. Secondly, the revolutionary uprising of Kurdistan's people erupted on the 8th of July 1999. During which Showan Said Qadir was martyred in the city of Mahabad. Later, the rebellion spread through most Kurdish cities, each continuing for a prolonged period. Unfortunately, both turned into bloodshed by the mercenaries of the Ayatollah regime. However, the importance of both movements lies in the fact that they broke the fear both among the students in Tehran and among people in Kurdistan. People became more determined to struggle for the attainment of their rights.

Within the international community, the regime is facing other crises. The regime's meddling in the Palestinian and Iraqi affairs is more pressing than before. This meddling cannot be obscured from the eyes of political and international communities, especially the powerful countries. Additionally, the regime's effort in uranium enrichment and subsequently obtaining atomic weapons cannot be hidden from the world any more. We can be confident that the responsible and decision-making states are cooperating seriously to make sure the regime does not obtain nuclear weapons. This has damaged the regime's diplomatic efforts and its international reputation.

Dear friends!

By working and thinking together, cementing our solidarity and unity, the KDPI can utilise Dr Ghassemlou's knowledge and thinking, which we have inherited, as a valuable legacy. The KDPI can use its cadres and activists to fill the space of its fallen leaders and comrades. It can utilise the new opportunities and its available publicity facilities. It must continue more eagerly with its political struggle and diplomatic channels to work more closely with the organising public and to be more determined in the face of our enemies. This will open a new horizon for the people of Kurdistan and also honour the memory of Dr Ghassemlou and all our martyrs, those who sacrificed their lives for a better future and freedom.

- We salute the memory of our leader, Dr Ghassemlou, on the 17th anniversary of his martyrdom.
- We salute all martyrs of Kurdistan, and their glorious path shall continue.
- Death to reactionary and terrorism.

Mustafa Mauludi, "A man of immense vision and influence", Kurdistan Newspaper Organ of the Central Committee of the KDPI, no. 441, July 21, 2006.

Note: This text is the speech by Mustafa Mauludi, member of the Politburo of the KDPI, delivered on the occasion of the anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Ghassemlou.



Dr. Asso Hassan Zadeh

## The political legacy of A. R. Ghassemlou

Dr A. R. Ghassemlou, Secretary General of the Iranian Kurdistan Democratic Party was assassinated 35 years ago by the very people who were supposed to discuss with him, on behalf of the Islamic Republic, a political solution to the Kurdish issue in Iran.

Ghassemlou had devoted his entire life to the freedom of the Kurdish people and did everything to make this cause known at times when the Kurds were being repressed, their rights denied, and the international community was barely conscious of their plight and existence.

Ghassemlou's charisma and exceptional and multifaceted personality is not the only reason that he is still so present in the political mind and collective memory of the Kurds, especially in Iran. It is also because Ghassemlou's story is a living and continuing story.

Ghassemlou imbued the cause of the Kurds in Iran with a number of features that made it more than a cause for their national rights. He embodied the very antithesis of the philosophy of governance of the Islamic Republic. The effectiveness of his struggle led the Iranian regime to put him as a main target on the list of opponents to be eliminated. Ghassemlou's assassination marked the beginning of an intensive wave of killing opponents abroad in the aftermath of the Iran-Iraq war.

In a polarized Middle East, Ghassemlou maintained rationality and balance. He wanted to be a conciliator of tensions and contradictions surrounding the Kurdish issue and the question of democracy in the region.

Ghassemlou who would later become an oriental Marxist and a nationalist leader, was born in 1930, to an Assyrian Christian mother and a feudal lord father who had been active in the creation of the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad in 1946.



Though he came from an underdeveloped society, when he began his dissident activities against the Shah's regime, Ghassemlou followed the path of modernity and knowledge in Paris and Prague where he studied Economics. But his spirit and love for knowledge were such that his expertise went far beyond the scope of his speciality. Speaking a dozen languages, he was also accomplished in history and literature. Those who met him felt to be in the presence of a living encyclopaedia of culture.

Ghassemlou was also a man of action, with rare courage and a great sense of initiative and risk-taking. Whether during his early academic life or political career, his courageous position often put him in difficult situations. Nevertheless, he always preferred this option than to trample his own principles the most important of which was political independence. He would never accept support or an alliance at the expense of the political independence of his movement.

Ghassemlou was a firm believer in the Kurds' right to self-determination so far as to say that if one day the Kurds were to establish an independent State encompassing all the Kurds, it wouldn't constitute secession, but reunification. However, his understanding of the complexity of the Kurdish question and geopolitical realities of his time pushed him to strive for the national rights of the Kurds within a democratic Iran.

Inscribing his struggle within the boundaries of Iran did not make him indifferent to the need of solidarity between the Kurds of other countries. He believed that the Kurdish movement in every part of Kurdistan should keep in mind the interests of Kurds in other parts, especially in the context of their relations with the governments of the countries they lived in.

Despite his strong convictions and clear principles, Ghassemlou was a pragmatic politician who wouldn't submit to the dictates of dogma. The deeply secular man that he was, following the 1979 Islamic revolution, he was still elected as the only lay representative to the first constituent assembly (Council of Experts). Iranian KDP candidates were also elected in the first parliamentary elections. However, the new regime invalidated their election and Ghassemlou never attended the sessions of the Assembly because of threats to his life by Ayatollah Khomeini.

Ghassemlou always preferred political and peaceful solutions. Even after Khomeini issued the fatwa to attack Iranian Kurdistan, Ghassemlou agreed to begin negotiations with a regime he considered anachronistic. He did this, once again, at the end of the Iran-Iraq war. But it turned out that the first negotiations were only a tactic by the regime to buy time to regain control of the Kurdish areas, and the second negotiations were a trap to kill Ghassemlou himself.

Political morality, so dear to Ghassemlou, also applied internationally. Despite the Communist domination of the world where he had lived and studied, he did not hesitate to take a stand against the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968. Nor did he hesitate to condemn the hostage taking at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran in 1979. Given the anti-imperialist climate then, these stances were simply outstanding. Later, in the 1980s, while leading an armed resistance against the Iranian regime, he introduced "Democratic Socialism" into his party program. His goal was to distance himself and his party from the existing Socialism -particularly for its lack of democracy- and also to better justify and facilitate the support he was seeking from the West.

Ghassemlou was the Kurdish leader who most contributed to internationalizing the Kurdish question. At a time when the outside world showed very little interest in the Kurdish cause, he thought that Kurds could not afford to base their external relations on purely ideological criteria. Hence, he developed friendly relations with European social democrats, most of whom remained very impressed by his extraordinary personality and vision. He was also supposed to go to the United States a week after the date he was assassinated. Despite the just and progressive character of Ghassemlou's struggle, the attention and support he obtained was only humanitarian.

Ghassemlou was passionate about life, a great humanist and a true democrat. He was opposed to the cult of personality and could live in harsh conditions like his Peshmergas. He believed that the struggle for national rights of the Kurdish people must not neglect ideals of social justice and equality, especially between men and women.

Fighting against a regime that had no regard for its own precepts or the international laws, he would say, should not make us violate our own values related to human dignity. Thus he taught his Peshmergas to treat prisoners well, release them systematically, and refrain from terrorist methods, even though he knew this would mean a lack of interest in the world media.

For Iranian Kurds, Ghassemlou's story is a continuous one, because it also represents an open wound. Not only they decry a crime that deprived them of an exceptional leader by abusing his good faith. They are also outraged by the scandal and injustice committed by the Austrian government that not only freed two of the murderers but also escorted one of them to the Iran Air flight at the airport.

While there has been no judiciary pursuit to the assassination of Dr Ghassemlou, the economic and security blackmail to which the Austrian government surrendered could not prevent the German courts to declare in 1997, during the Mykonos Trial on the assassination of Ghassemlou's successor, Sadeq Sharafkandi, that the highest leaders of the Islamic Republic were responsible for the terror machine set up to eliminate its opponents abroad.

Today, Iranian Kurds feel anger and disappointment by the fact that the international community continues to turn a blind eye to their fate and that the whole question of human rights and democracy in Iran is still neglected and overshadowed by dealings between the Iranian regime and the international community around security issues such as the Iranian nuclear program.

To allow the reinstatement of Ghassemlou's murder case is not only fair and moral, but also politically productive. There will be no lasting or genuine international peace and harmony - on which national security and even economic interests of western powers depend - unless there are in the Middle East responsible governments who first respect the rights of their own citizens.

While the Middle East is in more turmoil than ever and new windows seem to be opening to the Kurdish question, all those who knew Ghassemlou believe that he was ahead of his time and that history has missed its date with him.







Ibrahim Salehrad (Lajani)

## A Champion of Kurdish Rights and Democratic Values

Thirty-five years have passed since the tragic assassination of Dr. A. R. Ghassemlou, a towering figure in the Kurdish struggle for democracy, decentralization, and minority rights. Dr. Ghassemlou's life and legacy continue to inspire Kurds and advocates of democracy worldwide, especially in Iran, where his ideas and principles remain more relevant than ever.

### Dr. Ghassemlou's Role in the Kurdish Struggle

Dr. Ghassemlou's significance in the Kurdish struggle cannot be overstated. As the leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI), he played a pivotal role in advocating for Kurdish rights within Iran. His vision transcended the demand for mere autonomy; he aimed for a democratic Iran where Kurds and other minorities would have equal rights and representation, ensuring their voices were heard and respected.

### Decentralization and Local Empowerment

At the heart of Dr. Ghassemlou's philosophy was the belief in decentralization as a means to empower local communities and ensure their rights were respected. He understood that true democracy could only flourish when power was distributed among various regions, allowing for local governance that reflects the needs and aspirations of diverse populations. This model was seen as essential in

a multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic, and multi-religious society like Iran, where centralization had often led to the suppression of minority rights and cultural identities.

Decentralization was more than a political strategy for Dr. Ghassemlou; it was a vision of societal organization where regional cultures could thrive. By advocating for a federal system, he believed that each region could maintain its unique cultural identity while contributing to the country's unity. This approach aimed to prevent the domination of one ethnic group over others, fostering a sense of belonging and mutual respect among all citizens.

### Advocacy for Minority Rights

Furthermore, Dr. Ghassemlou was a vocal advocate for minority rights not only for Kurds but for all marginalized groups within Iran. He recognized the importance of fostering a society where different ethnicities, religions, and cultures could coexist harmoniously, free from discrimination and persecution. His advocacy extended to promoting human rights as enshrined in international law, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and various United Nations covenants that protect the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples.

Dr. Ghassemlou's work emphasized that the protection of minority rights was not merely a moral obligation but a necessity for social stability and peace. He consistently highlighted the ways in which minority rights were intertwined with broader human rights issues, arguing that the marginalization of any group ultimately weakened the entire society. His dedication to these principles made him a respected figure among diverse groups and a symbol of unity in the fight against oppression.

### Dr. Ghassemlou on the International Stage

In addition to his efforts within Iran, Dr. Ghassemlou was instrumental in advancing the Kurdish cause on the international stage. He tirelessly worked to raise awareness about the plight of Kurds in the Middle East and to garner support for their struggle for self-determination and human rights. By engaging with international organizations, foreign governments, and global human rights groups, Dr. Ghassemlou sought to place the Kurdish issue within the broader context of global justice and human rights advocacy.

His diplomatic efforts involved speaking at international forums, participating in human rights conferences, and meeting with world leaders to discuss the Kurdish situation. Dr. Ghassemlou's articulate and passionate presentations helped to humanize the Kurdish struggle, presenting it as a crucial element of the global fight for justice and equality. His ability to connect the Kurdish cause with universal human rights principles earned him widespread respect and support.

Dr. Ghassemlou also sought to build alliances with other oppressed groups worldwide. He understood that the struggle for Kurdish rights was part of a larger battle against tyranny and injustice. By aligning the Kurdish movement with other global human rights efforts, he aimed to create a network of solidarity and mutual support that could exert more significant pressure on oppressive regimes.

### Dr. Ghassemlou's Impact on Iranian Politics

Dr. Ghassemlou's political acumen and commitment to democracy also had a significant impact on Iranian politics. As a staunch secularist, he vehemently opposed the Islamist regime of Ayatollah Khomeini, recognizing its threat to pluralism, freedom, and human rights. He sought to unite Iranians from all backgrounds against the repressive regime, emphasizing the common goal of establishing a democratic and secular state.



## Opposition to the Islamist Regime

Dr. Ghassemlou's opposition to the Islamist regime was rooted in his commitment to secularism and democratic values. He believed that a government based on religious ideology was inherently exclusionary and would inevitably lead to the oppression of those who did not share the dominant beliefs. His vision for Iran was one where government and religion were separate, ensuring that all citizens, regardless of their faith, could enjoy equal rights and participate fully in the political process.

His criticism of the Islamist regime was not just theoretical but based on the tangible impacts of theocratic rule in Iran. He highlighted how the regime's policies led to widespread human rights abuses, including the suppression of free speech, the persecution of religious and ethnic minorities, and the curtailment of women's rights. Dr. Ghassemlou's advocacy was therefore deeply intertwined with broader efforts to promote human rights and democracy in Iran.

## Promoting Dr. Ghassemlou's Legacy Today

Today, as we reflect on Dr. Ghassemlou's legacy, it is imperative that we continue to promote his ideas, goals, and political heritage. In Iran, where the struggle for democracy persists, his vision of a pluralistic society based on democracy, secularism, tolerance, and human rights remains as relevant as ever.

## Advocacy and Education

As Kurds in Iran and Iranians alike, we must actively work to uphold Dr. Ghassemlou's ideals and principles. This can be achieved through advocacy, education, and political engagement. We must strive to build coalitions with like-minded individuals and organizations to advance the cause of democracy and minority rights in Iran. Educational initiatives can play a crucial role in spreading awareness about Dr. Ghassemlou's contributions and the values he stood for. Schools, universities, and community organizations can incorporate his work and ideas into their curricula and programming.

Creating educational materials that highlight Dr. Ghassemlou's achievements and his vision for a democratic Iran can inspire new generations of activists and leaders. Documentaries, biographies, and academic studies can help preserve his legacy and ensure that his contributions are not forgotten. By fostering a deeper understanding of his work, we can cultivate a culture of respect for human rights and democratic principles.

## Engaging with International Organizations

Furthermore, we must continue to amplify Dr. Ghassemlou's voice on the international stage. By raising awareness about his contributions to the Kurdish struggle and his vision for a democratic Iran, we can garner support from the international community and pressure Iranian authorities to respect human rights and uphold democratic principles. Engaging with international human rights organizations, such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, as well as United Nations bodies like the Human Rights Council, can help keep the spotlight on human rights abuses in Iran and advocate for meaningful change.

International advocacy can take many forms, from submitting reports and testimonies to participating in international human rights conferences. By maintaining a consistent and vocal presence in these forums, we can ensure that the Kurdish struggle remains a visible and urgent issue on the global agenda. Additionally, building relationships with international media can help amplify our message and reach a wider audience.

## Building Alliances and Coalitions

In Kurdistan, Dr. Ghassemlou's legacy should be preserved and celebrated. His leadership and unwavering commitment to the Kurdish cause serve as a source of inspiration for future generations. Through commemorations, education initiatives, and cultural events, we can ensure that his memory lives on and that his ideals continue to guide our efforts towards a more just and democratic society. Building alliances with other ethnic and political groups within Iran is also essential. By fostering a united front against the current regime, we can work more effectively towards a shared vision of a democratic and inclusive Iran.

Dr. Ghassemlou's approach to coalition-building was based on mutual respect and shared goals. He recognized that the struggle for Kurdish rights was interconnected with the broader fight for democracy and human rights in Iran. By working with other groups who shared these values, he aimed to create a powerful and united movement capable of challenging the regime's authority.

## The Struggle Against the Islamic Regime

The struggle against the Islamic regime in Iran is deeply intertwined with the broader struggle for democracy and human rights. The regime's authoritarian nature has led to widespread repression, including the suppression of ethnic and religious minorities, censorship of free speech, and severe restrictions on political freedoms. Dr. Ghassemlou's vision of a democratic Iran is fundamentally at odds with the current regime's practices.

## Human Rights Violations

The Islamic regime's human rights record has been consistently condemned by international bodies. Issues such as arbitrary detention, torture, and executions without fair trials are rampant. Ethnic and religious minorities, including Kurds, Baha'is, and Sunnis, face systemic discrimination and violence.





Dr. Ghassemlou's advocacy for minority rights is particularly relevant in this context, as he championed the cause of those who are marginalized and oppressed by the state.

Documenting and exposing these human rights violations is a critical aspect of the ongoing struggle. By collecting evidence, publishing reports, and bringing cases to international human rights bodies, we can hold the regime accountable for its actions. Dr. Ghassemlou's emphasis on transparency and justice serves as a guiding principle for these efforts.

### Steps to Promote Dr. Ghassemlou's Ideas and Goals

To honor Dr. Ghassemlou's legacy and advance his vision, we must undertake several key initiatives:

#### 1. Strengthening Advocacy Networks

We must build and strengthen advocacy networks that can effectively lobby for Kurdish rights and democratic reforms in Iran. This includes forming alliances with international human rights organizations and leveraging diplomatic channels to put pressure on the Iranian government. By working together, we can create a more formidable force for change.

Advocacy networks can also provide support to those on the ground in Iran who are fighting for their rights. This includes providing resources, training, and international solidarity to grassroots activists and organizations. By strengthening these networks, we can enhance their ability to resist repression and advocate for meaningful reforms.

#### 2. Promoting Human Rights Education

Education is a powerful tool for change. By incorporating human rights education into school curricula and public discourse, we can raise awareness about the importance of minority rights, democratic values, and the rule of law. Dr. Ghassemlou's life and work should be highlighted as exemplary in this regard.

Educational programs can also focus on developing critical thinking and civic engagement skills. By empowering individuals to understand their rights and participate actively in their communities, we can build a more informed and active citizenry. This is essential for creating a sustainable and inclusive democracy.



### 3. Utilizing International Law

International law provides a framework for protecting human rights and promoting democracy. By invoking international treaties and conventions to which Iran is a party, we can hold the regime accountable for its actions. This includes submitting reports to United Nations bodies and participating in international human rights forums.

Engaging with international legal mechanisms can also provide protection for activists and dissidents facing persecution. By leveraging international law, we can seek asylum, legal support, and other forms of assistance for those targeted by the regime. This helps to ensure that the struggle for democracy and human rights can continue despite state repression.

### 4. Supporting Civil Society

Civil society organizations play a crucial role in advocating for democratic reforms and human rights. Supporting these organizations, both financially and through capacity-building initiatives, can enhance their ability to effect change. This includes supporting independent media, human rights defenders, and grassroots movements.

By fostering a vibrant and resilient civil society, we can create a foundation for sustained social and political change. Civil society organizations provide essential services, advocate for policy reforms, and hold the government accountable. Strengthening these organizations is therefore crucial for advancing Dr. Ghassemlou's vision of a democratic and inclusive Iran.

### 5. Enhancing Cultural Diplomacy

Cultural diplomacy can be a powerful tool for building bridges and fostering understanding. By promoting Kurdish culture and heritage through international cultural exchanges, art exhibitions, and academic collaborations, we can raise awareness about the Kurdish struggle and build international solidarity.

Cultural diplomacy can also help to counter negative stereotypes and misinformation about Kurds and other marginalized groups. By showcasing the rich cultural contributions of these communities, we can foster greater appreciation and respect. This helps to build a more inclusive and understanding global community.

### Conclusion

The 35th anniversary of Dr. A. R. Ghassemlou's assassination serves as a poignant reminder of his enduring legacy. As Kurds in Iran and Iranians, it is incumbent upon us to honor his memory by continuing to fight for the principles he held dear – democracy, secularism, tolerance, and minority rights. Only by actively working towards these ideals can we truly realize his dream of a democratic Iran where all citizens are treated with dignity and respect.

Dr. Ghassemlou's vision was not confined to the Kurdish people alone; it encompassed all Iranians yearning for freedom and justice. His life's work offers a roadmap for achieving a pluralistic society grounded in democratic values and human rights. By embracing his ideals and continuing his struggle, we can keep his spirit alive and pave the way for a brighter future for all Iranians.

His legacy is a testament to the power of courage, vision, and unwavering commitment to justice. As we continue the struggle for a democratic and inclusive Iran, let us draw inspiration from Dr. Ghassemlou's life and work. Let his principles guide us in our efforts to build a society where every individual can live with dignity, freedom, and respect.





Kamal Hassanpour

## The twentieth century is the last century with unique leaders

From a variety of perspectives, the twentieth century was the century of pioneering and some of the events which took place in that century were unprecedented in human history. We had two world wars in that century, some empires, after being in power for centuries crumbled in the twentieth century and science took giant leaps as well. Mankind succeeded in splitting the atom and using its energy for devastation, development, and prosperity. During this century the theories of anti-colonialism developed, and many freedom movements were born and a significant number of them became victorious.

During this century several unique leaders emerged and recorded their names in the history books. On an international level, we could name Gandhi, Lenin, Mao, Churchill, Roosevelt, and Mandela, and in Kurdistan, we could name Sheikh Mahmoud Barzanji, Simko Shikak, Qazi Mohammad, Molla Mostafa Barzani, Jalal Talabani, Dr. Ghassemlou, Kak Fuad and Abdullah Öcalan.

The common characteristic for all these leaders was that none became an esteemed leader overnight, but they earned their place in history through long-term and persistent work and struggle.

Dr. Qsamelou who is the reason for this article, joined the movement and started his political struggle when he was a teenager and within some decades, he could prove that he has the characteristics of a genius and unique leader.

Among the requirements for becoming a unique and able leader, one could mention these: Being a visionary, inspire those around you, being a strategic and critical thinker, having communication and networking skills, being original and not an imitator, adaptability, accountability, perseverance, and continuous improvement.

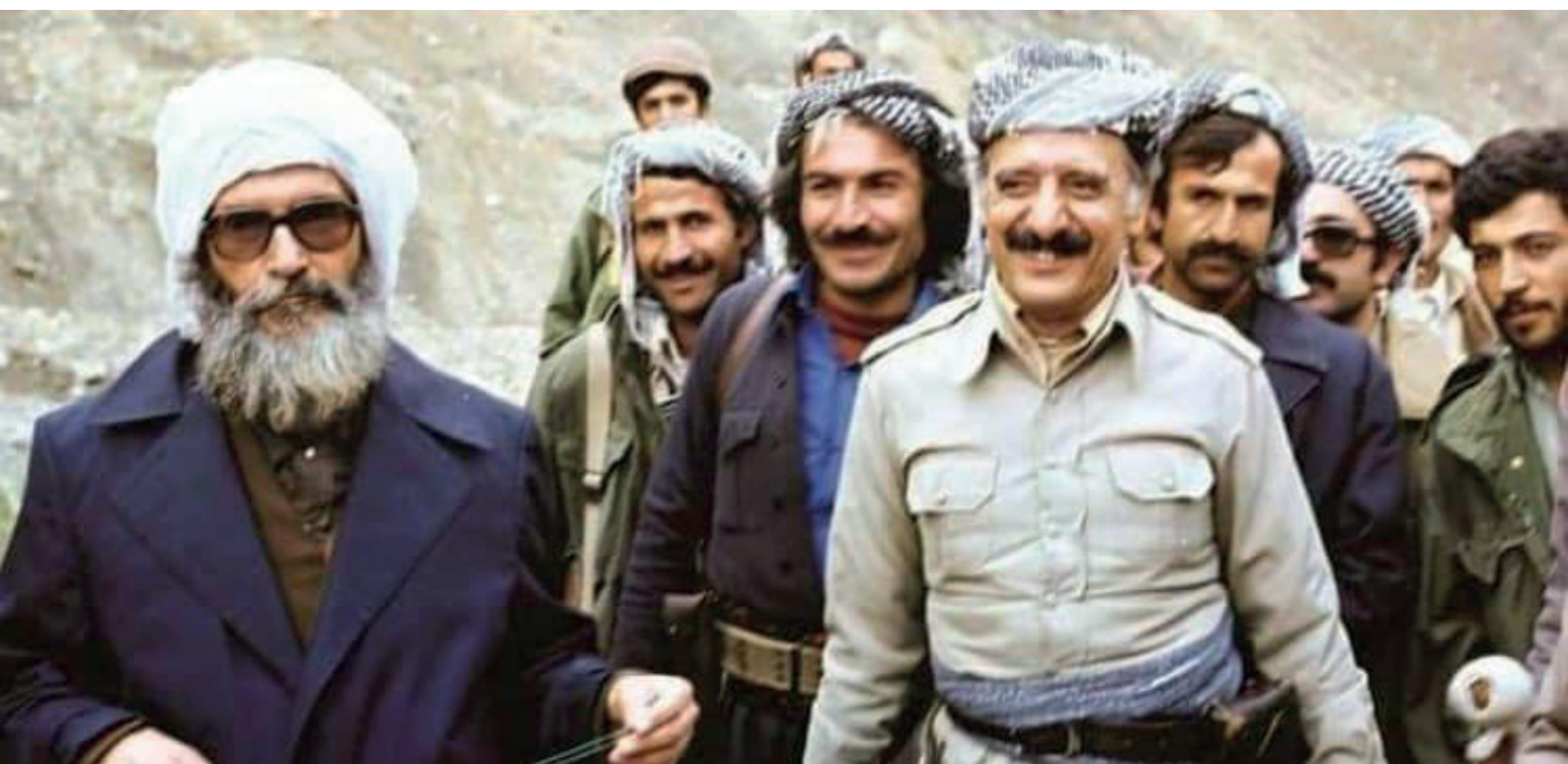
Undoubtedly, those of us who knew Dr. Ghassemloo could testify that he mastered many of these qualifications.

Here, I would like to mention some of the abovementioned characteristics that our legendary leader mastered, and both his friends and foes have admitted them.

Regarding the ability to be a visionary, one could mention his book 'Kurdistan and Kurd', the party's strategic slogan back then, establishing timely party congresses, and denouncing personality cult within the party, showing that he was a visionary leader. Regarding inspiring people around him, one could find countless narratives proving this and almost 35 years after his assassination, his name is still chanted by the young generation. We saw it during the 2022 uprising following the tragic death of Jina Amini while being apprehended by the morality police in Tehran.

When it comes to being a strategic and critical thinker, I would mention two events that show he was indeed a strategic and critical thinker. The first one is his successful move to end the Toudeh party's hegemony over the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran and the second one is his famous booklet called Kurtebas (short discussion) in which he denounced proletarian dictatorship and embraced social democracy, way before Gorbachev started his famous 'Glasnost' within the Soviet communist party.

Communication and networking were two of Dr. Ghassemloo's most prominent characteristics. His tireless efforts to present the Kurdish question and the Kurdish people's struggle for their legitimate rights and freedom made many valuable and loyal friends for the Kurdish cause.





Dr. Qasemnlou was a realist, hence he constantly adopted his tactics to move forward the party's struggle against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Regarding perseverance and taking individual responsibility, I could mention two of his slogans which have been embraced by our people and are the guiding principles for our continuous struggle until victory:

1. The best reward for our martyrs, is to continue their struggle.
2. A people who wants freedom, must be ready to pay its price.

When looking at the events at the beginning of the twenty-first century, we find out that as communication and Internet technology evolve, the phenomenon of unique leaders becomes rarer, and new sorts of leaders emerge.

For the first time in human history, Satellite TV channels, the Internet, and social media allow individuals to spread their ideas to a huge audience and receive other people's ideas. This phenomenon could be both positive and negative.

The positive aspect of reaching the masses is the ability to create widely spread movements against dictators, as we have witnessed during several revolutions in the past twenty years. It is no secret that satellite TV channels and social media could be effective tools to create networks between hundreds of thousands or even millions of people around the world.



One of the negative aspects of these technologies is the massive waves of disinformation and fake news, the emergence of leaders who are created overnight, the influencer phenomenon, populist leaders, and ignorant influencers.

Another threat in this century is the role of big global companies leading the development of AI with the enormous capability of gathering and processing big data from people and the capability of influencing people's views and choices. We all remember the Cambridge Analytica data scandal.

We are also witnessing a trend in democratic countries in the 21st century, the one that has become harder and harder for a political party to get own majority in elections. Nowadays, it is normal to form a coalition government or a weak minority government after parliamentary elections, which makes it hard to implement its politics, since they would not get the votes needed without compromising.

There have also been some examples in which a media mogul has become a politician and using their media channels to influence people's opinion, they have won elections. Silvio Berlusconi is an example of such a person.

Maybe some readers would say, "This phenomenon is typical for developed countries and does not happen in Kurdistan." But since the East Kurdistan society is still under the control of a dictator regime, derailing people's minds is always a viable threat.

There is another widespread phenomenon, especially in developed countries, which is the existence of think tank centers. They are tasked with research in a variety of fields and producing policies that could be used by their governments. That is, instead of a political leader or the leader of a political party, individually or with the help of his/her aids, coming up with policies and strategies, the product of these think tanks will be used in the decision-making process.

Do all these mean that there will not be unique leaders anymore? There is no doubt there are some now and even in the future there will be great leaders, but, in my opinion, the most successful leaders (On Kurdistan level) will be those who are talented in communicating with individuals, making contact networks, and forging alliances with other parties. The 21st century is the century of constant and fast changes, so, a successful leader is the one who prepares him/herself and the masses for this new and evolving era.

The successful leaders of today have many knowledgeable advisors around them. They resemble a conductor; they delegate tasks to able people and their task is to create harmony and lead the work towards success.

If once upon a time leaders decided the fate of peoples and countries, in coming decades, AI and the combination of bioscience and communications science will form future societies.

Remaining in 20th-century sentiment, for a leader or organization, will lead to catastrophic consequences, hence we ought to use our experiences from the past century, our successes, and failures, as a guiding star for our struggle. Every single one of us, according to our abilities, must take responsibility to advance our people's struggle toward victory.





Dr. Carol Prunhuber

## Rahman the Kurd

In 1989 when A. R. Ghassemlou decided to go and meet his nemesis in Vienna, he may have been reckless. He may have made the controversial decision to go anyway, but he knew the risks because he had been publicly warned 10 years before that he was being condemned to death, while simply watching television.

On Iranian television that day – August 19, 1979 – none other than the Ayatollah Khomeini had come to the opening session of the Constitutional Council of Experts in Tehran. This Council was going to design a Constitution for the new Islamic Republic.

Imagine the scene the television camera is broadcasting: The hall is full of venerable ulemas, their heads covered with turbans and their faces somber as they listen to the Imam.

Khomeini at the podium, with his thick eyebrows, is speaking in his soft monotonous voice; a tone he also used to express great anger.

A few days earlier, armed Kurds had defeated his troops in Iranian Kurdistan. Irate, Khomeini threatened the army with punishment and declared himself Commander in Chief of the armed forces.

Looking at the silent audience, he said: “Ghassemlou is the culprit. The KDPI is a nest of saboteurs and corrupt people. The party is banned. And Ghassemlou must be punished.

Without raising his voice, he asked: “Is Ghassemlou here?”

No one answered as people looked around at each other. Khomeini fixed his gaze upon the Council members and with all the fury concentrated in his carbon dark eyes he exclaimed: Why did you tell him that he was a “mofsed fil arz”, a corrupt person! Why did you scare him away? If that dog Ghassemlou had come today, we would have sent him directly to hell!

Reality TV, Khomeini style!

Perhaps in talking today about the many achievements of Dr. Ghassemlou we should begin with the question: Why was he assassinated?

He was assassinated not only for being the leader of the Kurds of Iran, but more than that, because of the type of man he was – his beliefs and the difficult choices he made were unlike those of other



traditional leaders in the region.

Different from other Kurds, Dr. Ghassemlou was perhaps the harbinger of real unity among the Kurdish people. His enemies had rightfully perceived his unspoken destiny and this would become a direct threat to them.

It is important to note that, Dr. Ghassemlou was not a traditional tribal leader. His ideological itinerary traveled from an orthodox Marxism-Leninism to Social Democracy in the course of his life. He was an empathetic leader and a cultivated man who spoke seven languages and possessed an inherent strength and wisdom that endeared him to his people. He had a refined sense of humor and loved life.

Unlike other Middle East leaders that fancy democratic ideals but are discouraged by the risks in pursuing them, Dr. Ghassemlou had the courage to manifest his democratic and humanistic vision, as well as put forward his political program within an Islamic society.

Not only did he defend human rights, but also women's rights – long before it became a must in the international scene. In the Kurdish society during Ghassemlou's life, women's rights were non-existent – and still they are far from being achieved.

In the unfortunate war in Iraq, there has been one beneficiary: Kurdistan. Although unity across Iraq seems difficult, Kurdistan has managed to achieve an unequalled degree of national unity under the Regional Autonomous Government.

Dr. Ghassemlou recognized that there existed a Kurdish irredentism and that integration was scarce in the countries where they live, that their language was alive despite intentions to drown their cultural identity. The Kurds, after resisting the woes that for centuries befell their nation, began to develop a national consciousness in the twentieth century.

As Dr. Ghassemlou once said, "Nowadays, it is natural to have a Kurdish demand for independence, for the realization of a national Kurdish project. An independent Kurdistan would be a state without access to the sea. Yet at the same time, it would be a state rich in oil and, especially, in possession of unique resources. Water is much coveted in the Middle East and could spark future wars in this region. Without oil, people are poor; without water, they cannot survive. As everyone knows, the great reserves of water are in Kurdistan."

Dr. Ghassemlou was the first Kurdish leader to come up with a solution that overcame the obstacles inhibiting the creation of a Kurdish state and that is why he accepted a realistic plan: to renounce independence and instead choose the path of autonomy.

He understood both the weaknesses and strengths of the Kurds. He was a tolerant man of dialogue who maintained his calm in stressful situations. Because he was respected for his political and intellectual wisdom about the Kurds, including his keen sense of diplomacy and international perspective, his vast culture and his charisma, he was able to bring opposing political parties to a negotiation table.

Dr. Ghassemlou knew that unity among the Kurds was of prime importance. In fact, he was tormented by the division among the Kurds. Politics in this part of the world paralyzed any forward movement. Nothing lasted; no agreement was respected.

For the Kurds had a tribal concept of politics, based on the unconditional support of their chief, not of a particular political program. All of this became the Achilles heel of the Kurdish movement, making it ever vulnerable to the manipulations of regional governments.

Dr. Ghassemlou understood that only through unification could the Kurds achieve their demands. He worked hard for this goal, to end fighting among the Kurds. He was a prudent man whose essential nature was to unify. His impassioned wish was to educate his people and this showed in the respect and love he held for them.

When visiting his men at the military hospital, he knew their names and would speak with them about their family, their village and listen intently to what they had to say.



Long before environmental issues came to the fore, he discouraged his people from clear cutting the forests and unnecessarily killing wildlife. This was a man who once said, “You cannot find happiness; you have to create it. If you don’t create it, you will never find it.”

This same leader played intermediary between Mustapha Barzani and Saddam Hussein in the 70’s; between Jalal Talabani and the Iraqi government in the 80’s.

He supported Barzani because he considered him to be the most important representative of the Kurds; yet over the years, Dr. Ghassemlou also questioned his stewardship on many issues.

In an interview, Dr. Ghassemlou once recalled that he had been especially incensed by Barzani’s refusal to compromise on Kirkuk in the mid 70’s, when negotiating an autonomy plan with the Iraqi government.

Can you imagine that? Barzani turned down Saddam Hussein’s proposal, first to give the Kurds 50% of the oil revenues and then 75% -- and finally Saddam made the offer that since Kirkuk was the main obstacle, they should divide the city into two parts. Even today, Kirkuk continues to be a battleground between the Kurds and Arabs.

Dr. Ghassemlou regretted this decision, for he felt it compromised the pan-Kurdish cause. He said: “The Kurds haven’t achieved anything politically because they have applied more emotion than reason to politics. They asked for all or for nothing. You cannot be black or white in politics. What’s possible today is not possible tomorrow. I think Barzani should have accepted the Kirkuk deal, consolidated autonomy and fought in the future for the rest of the Kurdish goals.

“If Kurdistan had been autonomous and Barzani kept his troops, when the revolution happened in Iran in 1979, the Iranian Kurds would have been in a better position.

“It’s normal that for those who govern Baghdad or Tehran, to want to safeguard the integrity of their country. We Kurds understand this.

“In politics it’s not intention that counts, but the relation of forces. If the Kurds had been capable of consolidating their autonomy, Baghdad would have had to accept a *fait accompli*. The failure of the March 1979 negotiations was a repetition of the failures of Kurdish history. The balance of forces was in favor of the Iraqi Kurds. They should have realized this.”

On an international level, Ghassemlou’s education and experience made him one of the few Kurdish leaders intently familiar with other cultures. He developed a true knowledge of the West from his education in Paris and Prague. Due to this developed socio-cultural awareness, he was able to justly win the ears, if not the support of foreign powers.

He held a Doctorate in Political and Economical Science and became a professor at University of Prague where he taught economic growth and development. Ghassemlou was an unusually cultivated man who would one day be reading a book of Sufi Poetry and the next a volume on European Literature, listening to a Kurdish song or a Mozart piano concerto.

He always maintained his independence. First and foremost, his primary goal and leading principle was to support the Kurdish cause. Dr. Ghassemlou never accepted the idea that a leader could sell out his Kurdish brothers across the border for the sake of personal or parochial interests. He had not forgotten the lesson of the Kurds in Iran who had been abandoned by their brothers to the hands of the Shah.

And let us not forget how similarly years later, after his death, the Islamic regime in Tehran was given a free hand to operate militarily against Kurds inside Iraqi Kurdistan.

Even though it led an armed struggle against Iran, Ghassemlou’s party was perhaps the only Third World revolutionary movement that opposed popular terrorist methods – especially at that time.

About this he said: “As a democratic organization we have always opposed all acts of terrorism, be it hijacking of planes, taking hostages, putting bombs or any action that threatens the lives and security of civilians. To renounce our principles and thus lose our image as a responsible, democratic and humanitarian party, in return for fleeting publicity is both vain and useless.”



Not only did he oppose any hostage taking in the 80's, but he was instrumental in the liberation of several French hostages, and even paid for their freedom with weapons on one occasion and another monetarily.

Trapped by the geopolitical situation of Kurdistan, Dr. Ghassemlou had lived and worked in Iraq on and off, and maintained contact with the Iraqi regime. Yet he never collaborated with Baghdad against Iran.

According to Jalal Talabani when the Iraq-Iran war began, the Iraqi government invited Ghassemlou to form a Kurdish state. They offered him money and weapons. Even the budget for the future Kurdish government would be paid by the Iraqis, who would recognize it. Baghdad wanted to divide Iran. But Ghassemlou responded that he wanted democracy and autonomy within the Iranian state.

He was not a 'business as usual' kind of man. Due to his principles, he could not be bought or cajoled into making overnight deals for the Kurdish cause.

He was in a difficult position regarding Iraq. In private he spoke about the horrors of the Iraqi regime, yet he was obliged to be discreet about it publicly.

Almost too modern for his time, Dr. Ghassemlou's political stature was a unifying force. His understanding of the ways of the world and his close ties and relations with politicians, journalists and academics in Europe and beyond, gave him a pragmatic approach that others lacked.

He had also foreseen his own end. For years he had thought about writing his autobiography, but the amount of work and the internal problems of the party did not allow him to do so.

A year before he died, Dr. Ghassemlou told me that if he ever wrote his story, it would have begun like this: "On many occasions, Kurdish leaders have been assassinated due to treason by the



Persian authorities. It happened with Jafar Agha and later with Simko, one of our most important contemporary leaders. While Simko's blood ran through the streets in a nearby house, a boy was being born. That boy would be me."

"Did it really happen like this?" I questioned.

No," he answered. "Simko was murdered June 1930, the same year I was born but not the same day. Do you realize how strong that beginning is? One a Kurdish leader dies and at the same time another is being born."

Some Kurds believe that if Dr. Ghassemlou had lived, he would have been able to further the cause for all Kurds. It is difficult today to say what role he could have played.

Were he alive today, there's no doubt Dr. Ghassemlou would look upon the progress made in Iraqi Kurdistan with hope -for its continued solidarity and growth into the 21st century.

One thing is very certain: throughout his life, A. R. Ghassemlou never limited himself to being just an Iranian Party chief.

He lived as a farsighted leader and above all, a KURD – who held a dream for Kurdistan and overarching love for his people – in the end, giving up his life while reaching for that dream.

We honor his life here today. In these turbulent times, we can remember his unwavering spirit and light that lives on in the hearts and craggy mountains of a nation called Kurdistan.

*Copyright © 2008, Dr. Carol Prunhuber. Published with permission.*





Dr. Said Shams

## Dr. A. R. Ghassemlou: A rebel with a cause

*A national community that seeks emancipation must also pay its price. No nation has attained freedom without struggle and great efforts, without sacrificing its resources, in lives and treasure. The Kurdish nation and our party, as the forerunner of the Kurdish national struggle, understand that freedom requires commitment and self-sacrifice. The ranks of our fallen comrades are ever increasing, and it may continue to be so on a greater path in the future.*

*Dr. A.R. Ghassemlou*

This is a casual translation of the late Dr A.R. Ghassemlou's words, the Secretary-General of the KDPI, from Kurdish into English. The last sentence seems to have the merit of apparent certainty, as he himself lost his life in the tragic events of July 13, 1989. In fact, what happened on that day was a carefully planned assassination of Dr Ghassemlou by Iranian authorities under the pretext of political negotiation.

We are gathered here to honour his memory and celebrate his works and achievements. Any attempt to shed light on the works and achievements of Dr Ghassemlou would immediately generate an uneasy discussion. This is because the real Dr Ghassemlou I knew was far from the myth constructed by some of his colleagues on one hand, and the notorious character portrayed by his foes and rivals on the other. The existing and real Dr Ghassemlou was neither of these extremes. He was a human being with his own strengths and weaknesses. He has been recorded as a great leader in contemporary Kurdish history, and rightly so. However, aiming to reflect on his personal-



ity and to try to separate the real and actual character from the myth made by some of his friends, or the negative portrait heavily publicized by his foes and rivals, is not an easy task. It is, indeed, a daunting task.

On the other hand, the uneasiness comes from the way he lost his life. Remembering July 13 and looking at a picture of Dr Ghassemlou's fallen body on the sofa, his white shirt stained with blood—so much so that any observer can only distinguish the shirt's colour from the blood by its thickness—would truly evoke distress. But perhaps the most significant element of uneasiness stems from the fact that the terrorizing of Kurdish leaders has become the final solution to resolve the Kurdish question in Iran. Successive Iranian governments over the past 80 years have followed this practice, and the assassination of Dr Ghassemlou is no exception. Bearing this in mind, one cannot but become conscious that the terrorizing of Kurdish leaders has been an integral component of Iranian regimes' policy in dealing with the Kurdish national movement. To grasp the irony here, one has to understand the Kurdish tragedy in modern times. But first, allow me to reflect upon Dr Ghassemlou's personality.

Within the history of any nation, national community, or social group, there are heroes, elites, and political leaders. Heroes are those who devote their lives to the people, recording many heroic episodes in their lifetime or sacrificing their lives for the sake of their people. Elites and intellectuals are those who acquire knowledge and academic training in one or more domains and work towards bridging the gaps between the requirements of the time and the norms and value systems of society and its institutional settings. However, in the history of any nation, there are few who simultaneously embody the roles of heroes, intellectuals, and political leaders. Dr Ghassemlou's personality encompassed all three roles. He started his political career as a leftist activist while pursuing his studies in France. He was then expelled from France as an undesirable political figure, largely due to pressure from the Iranian government of the time and forced to settle in Czechoslovakia. There, he seized the opportunity to complete his studies, earning his PhD in 1962 and subsequently lecturing in political economy at Prague University from 1962 onward. In 1970, he visited Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan and decided to devote the rest of his life to reorganizing the KDP, which was suffering from an acute political and organizational crisis following the sad end of the armed struggle of 1967-69. At the third conference, he was elected as the leader of the KDP, a position he held until that tragic July 13, 1989. He has now entered our history as a great leader, distinguished intellectual, and hero.

His imprint on KDPI history is such that I am tempted to say the party's history since the fall of the Kurdistan Republic into three phases: the pre-Ghassemlou era, the Ghassemlou era, and the post-Ghassemlou era. I personally benefited from his insightful thoughts following the revolution of 1979, during which I had the opportunity to know him for a short period. For me, the most notable characteristic of his management style was that, as an intellectual, he perfectly understood the need for a modernizing project within the KDPI and the Kurdish national movement. As a result, he always aimed to promote professionalism at organizational and operational levels. At the same time, he ensured that his communication approach was tailored to a particular audience and that an effective medium had been identified and selected for each case. From this point of view, his eagle eye for professionalism never failed him, even when working with people who could not share his enthusiastic reception of professionalism. This was the most important lesson I learned from him.

He was born in 1930 and very much embodied the J.K. and KDP school of thought of that time. To make my point, I have to stress that by the early 1940s, international and regional circumstances offered the Kurds an opportunity to break the vicious cycle imposed upon them. This period

was marked by the formation of J.K., the KDP, and the establishment of the Kurdistan Republic. The promising period of 1942-46 was, however, brief, and by late 1946, the Iranian government managed to restore and establish dominance in Kurdistan. In fact, there is undeniable historical significance in the policies of the two victorious Allied Powers in 1946—USA and UK—expressing their loyalty to the Persian government and forcing the Soviet forces out of Northern Iran, thus facilitating the sudden fall of the Azerbaijan People's Government and the Kurdistan Republic. The legacy of this historic juncture had a significant impact on Kurdish politics for years to come. The ruling elites in Iran, Turkey, and Syria continued to deprive the Kurds of their rights to self-determination. At the same time, European countries and a considerable number of progressive forces in Europe attempted to downgrade the Kurdish question to a mere human rights issue, completely disregarding the Kurdish nation's right to self-rule. He was seventeen years old when the Kurdistan Republic fell. He belonged to the second generation of Kurdish political activists of that period—a generation that inherited the confusion surrounding their political environment as a result of the drastic end of the Kurdistan Republic and the inhospitable international and regional political environment. As a result, he, like many other young Kurdish activists, found safe refuge in leftist ideology, particularly the dominant school of thought of the time, the Tudeh Party, and the pro-Soviet doctrine of those years. However, his affiliation with this policy line experienced some difficulties before his return to Kurdistan.

In 1970, he left his teaching position at Prague University and went to Kurdistan. After intensive discussions and negotiations with remaining officials and members of the KDP, he struck a deal to resume his political career within the ranks of the KDP. With their assistance, he soon organized the party's third conference and was elected leader, a post he held until he lost his life. Considering the difficulties the party faced following the upheaval of the late 1960s, Dr Ghassemlou aimed to win the battle of ideas, strategy, and tactics within the ranks of the party in exile. From 1970-1979, he worked hard and put immense effort into modernizing and regenerating the KDP. He drafted a new political program, which was discussed and passed at the third congress. Alongside his attempt to modernize the party's organizational structure, his core ideas and strategy centred on the slogan of "Democracy for Iran and autonomy for Kurdistan." Since then, the KDP officially became the KDPI. Until late 1978, the KDPI had approximately 100 members and was based in exile. Following the revolution of 1979 and the collapse of the monarchy in Iran, the KDPI became a mass party with a semi-army at its disposal, and Dr Ghassemlou emerged as a main Kurdish leader with popular appeal and national credibility. He was one of the main architects and staunch believers in the aim of "Democracy for Iran, Autonomy for Kurdistan," for which he invested at least twenty years of his life. His new position with mass popular support, his credibility, and his charisma across Iranian political society provided him the opportunity to implement his aim and dream. In aiming to assess his political achievements, the period between the revolution of 1979 and 1989 will be a determinant historical period.

Almost immediately after the collapse of the monarchy, there was little agreement between Kurdish nationalists and the newly established Provisional Government. The Kurds regarded the end of the monarchy as an opportunity to rectify their long-standing sense of injustice over the denial of their national rights by state-sponsored chauvinism. From late 1978, the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) revived its organizational networks alongside the Kurdistan branch of Fadayan, as well as the newly formed Revolutionary Organization of the Toilers of Kurdistan (Koma-la). These mainly secular forces, which were independent of Tehran, dominated the city councils formed following the collapse of the monarchy and practically governed the whole area in the absence of a central government infrastructure. Having armed themselves from a large army barrack



in Mahabad and gendarmerie posts throughout the region that were attacked in February 1979, these groups became powerful forces that challenged the authority of the Provisional Government.

By late 1979, two religious leaders had emerged: first Sheikh Ezzaddin Huseini in Mahabad and second Ahmad Moftizadeh in Senna. The former, a cleric with a history of nationalist struggle, called for the formation of a secular and democratic state with autonomy for the Kurds. The latter, a religious but non-clerical person, advocated an Islamic state. Since the Islamic regime had been trying to set up a foothold in Kurdistan, they relied on Moftizadeh's line as an alternative to weaken the radical, secular, and democratic ideals of the Kurdish national movement. Although Moftizadeh enjoyed popularity among some sections of the Kurdish people in Senna, the majority of the Kurds, supporting a secular and democratic policy, rallied behind the nationalist parties and groups, as well as personalities such as Sheikh Ezzaddin, quickly marginalizing Moftizadeh. The fact that Moftizadeh allied with the Islamic Republic and was soon marginalized demonstrates that, although the majority of the Kurds are Sunni and religious differences played a role in their opposition toward the Islamic Republic, the Kurdish political society was mostly secular and has remained as such.

The first confrontation occurred in late March 1979, when a disagreement between the people of the city and Safadari, Khomeini's representative in Senna, developed into an open confrontation. The army garrison intervened on the latter's side. On the eve of Nowruz (New Year), Phantom jet fighters from Tehran and helicopters from Kermanshah attacked the city, and a full-scale civil war broke out between the Kurdish forces and the new Islamic authority. A temporary cease-fire was agreed upon when a high-ranking delegation was dispatched from Tehran to the area. After hard negotiations, an agreement was signed. However, this was merely a foretaste of the future war between the Islamic authorities in Tehran and the Kurdish national movement.

Following the early clashes, the Provisional Government (PG) was careful to distance itself from the Pahlavi regime's policy towards non-Persian Iranian nationals, even though Kurdish leaders sought a peaceful solution. In February 1979, a state delegation headed by Daryush Foruhar paid a visit to Mahabad to discuss autonomy demands with Kurdish leaders. In March 1979, a Kurdish delegation, headed by Dr Ghassemlou, went to Tehran to meet Premier Bazargan, and then to Qom for extensive meetings with Ayatollah Khomeini. During his various press conferences in Tehran, Dr Ghassemlou indicated that the Kurds were prepared to support the PG as long as it appeared to be clearly promoting a democratic policy for Iran and autonomy for Kurdistan. These meetings achieved nothing concrete. Although Premier Bazargan announced that his government had accepted the idea of autonomy for the Kurdish area, the PG did little in practice to appease Kurdish antagonism. Meanwhile, pressure from Ayatollah Khomeini resulted in the PG using direct military action to crush Kurdish resistance. Subsequently, the vice-premier warned, "we do not approve of the independence of Kurdistan in any way. It is the policy of the state not to allow the secession of any part and territory of Iran's land, and such an event will be forestalled with unfettered power." This brutal warning to the Kurds was intended for them to realize that any major difficulties they caused the PG, by challenging the ideological basis of the new Iranian-Islamic state, would be repressed using the full military power of the state.

The referendum that had newly ratified the regime's change of name to the 'Islamic Republic' faced major difficulties dealing with the Kurdish issue. The Kurds, who were strongly opposed to the change, did not participate in the referendum. Kurdish nationalists, infuriated by the temporizing of the Islamic regime, declined to recognize its separate political and organizational institutions. Equally, the regime, especially the fundamentalists, was uneasy with Kurdish claims to self-rule and waited for an appropriate opportunity to disarm them militarily and undermine their

ideology. The Ayandegan affair, therefore, became a pretext for the fundamentalists to deal with the Kurdish issue. Having declared himself commander-in-chief of the armed forces, Khomeini issued a fatwa and ordered the army and the Revolutionary Guard to attack and purge Kurdistan of infidels on August 19. Following fierce fighting, the Pasdaran and army recaptured the Kurdish cities, pushing the Kurdish Peshmerga into rural areas.

The fundamentalists had won a battle but not the war against Kurdistan, and soon after, the offensive backfired. During the three-month civil war in Kurdistan, the government was unable to consolidate its authority beyond establishing a military presence in the major towns and some military checkpoints on the main roads between them. Extrajudicial executions by Ayatollah Sad-eq Khalkhali generated deep-seated resentment against the Islamic regime. More than a quarter of the population of the towns had left the occupied urban centres to live in areas under the control of the Peshmerga. As a result, the Islamic military was unable to restore order or run governmental and institutional offices effectively. In addition, following their initial withdrawal from the major towns, the Peshmerga launched a guerrilla campaign and frequently attacked Islamic military posts.

By late September and early October, the Peshmerga pushed government forces back to their barracks and virtually governed the area. Soon after the US Embassy affair, Khomeini made a U-turn on the Kurdish issue and ordered a halt to military intervention. A cease-fire was agreed upon between the two sides, and Khomeini sent a message to the Kurds, asking them to join the rest of the Iranian Muslim nation in turning their anger and rifles against the U.S. He assured them of internal self-rule within the Islamic Republic. He then sanctioned a state delegation consisting of some of the ex-PG ministers to strike a deal with the Kurds, who had formed a Kurdish People's Representation. Interestingly, throughout the negotiations, Khomeini never recognized the Kurdish delegation's legitimacy.

By late March 1980, the Islamic Republic was preparing to launch its second offensive against Kurdistan. Before I continue, I would like to divert your attention for a short while to take on a topic that seems to be misunderstood by many people, and then we will resume our journey to the end. The topic is the issue of armed struggle and its blurred boundaries with the notion of terrorism as far as the Kurdish nationalist movement is concerned. The rationale for this point is that if we are going to talk about Dr Ghassemlou's legacy, we need to get clear about the boundaries of armed struggle and terrorism. Dr Ghassemlou not only led the KDPI at the political level but also, as Secretary-General of the Party, had overall responsibility for the Kurdish armed struggle against the Islamic Republic. From the tape-recorder's cassette of the meeting of July 13, one can clearly hear his last words, assertively replying to the envoys of the Iranian regime that demanded an unconditional surrender and laying down of arms. He said, "We will never surrender our arms as long as you continue the genocide and mass murder of our people." Then you can hear the barrage of bullets whistle. You can guess that was the end of Dr Ghassemlou. Dr. Ghassemlou was always ready to negotiate a just, peaceful, and democratic solution to the KDPI and Kurdish ten-year-old struggle with the Islamic Republic within the existing Iranian borders. Several times, on his own initiative, he offered the Iranian authorities a peaceful solution, and each time they and his rivals branded him weak. When he showed his strength, he was labelled a terrorist. How can we deal with the boundaries between armed struggle and terrorism within the Kurdish national movement?

Unfortunately, like most concepts in politics and political theory, this one is contested, in the sense that there are different interpretations and normative implications. I will try to define the concept in two ways: broader and narrower senses in the hopeful anticipation that this may help



to find accommodation. In a broader sense, we may define the phenomenon as the systematic use of force to achieve political ends or aims. In this sense, one can hardly define the use of violence as a terrorist act because in any conventional war, armies resort to this kind of violence. If we all agree that war is the continuation of politics by other means, then most conventional wars can be defined as terrorist acts if we agree that terrorism is the systematic use of force to serve political ends. In this sense, the use of violence can be regarded as a technology, not an ideology.

Then we may try to define the concept in its narrower sense, which is any systematic use of coercive intimidation used to create and exploit a climate of fear among a wider target group with maximum negligence and carelessness towards the immediate civilian victims in order to publicize a cause or achieve political ends. In this narrower sense, the systematic use of force can be defined as an ideology, not a technology, as an end, not a means, and the act can be regarded as terrorist.

The fact of the matter is that under the leadership of Dr Ghassemlou, the KDPI was, and still is, a political force that, along with other Kurdish forces, most notably Komala, represented the will of the Kurdish nation in Iranian Kurdistan. In their ten-year-old armed struggle with the Islamic Republic, KDPI had never advocated a military solution and always preferred a political and peaceful resolution. But when, in the early 1980s, the Islamic Republic was convinced that it could expunge the Kurdish question by military means, persisted in its refusal to recognize the right of the Kurdish nation to self-rule, and finally launched an unprecedented military attack against Kurdistan, the Kurdish forces resorted to armed struggle to defend their people and land. During this period, the Iranian military forces committed many acts of genocide and mass murder. For example, in 1980, the entire population of the two villages of Qarna and Qalatan, including women and children, were brutally beheaded.

After this diversion, I hope that it was a helpful one, we may resume our journey. By late March and early April 1980, when the Islamic regime was launching its second military offensive against Kurdistan, Iran was passing through the most violent phase of her recent history. Following the U.S. Embassy affair, the fundamentalists had relatively outmanoeuvred their nationalist and leftist rivals on two issues: radicalism and anti-imperialism, which coincided with Bani-Sadr's presidency. Although Bani-Sadr enjoyed a popular electoral mandate, he was almost unable to secure a power base. "Politically arrogant and ambitious, he conveniently flirted with different groups at different times. He was becoming a man of all seasons." The Tudeh party, the Fadayan, and the Kurdish forces were all, for different reasons, suspicious of his real intent. Equally, the President, being aware of Khomeini's suspicions of secular groups, had tried to distance himself. His most natural partners for his crusade against the rising 'Mullacracy' were the National Front and the Islamic Liberation Movement of Bazargan. But they did not have much popular support. In practice, his most powerful partner was the Mujahedin. His alliance with them, denied until the end of his presidency, provided the ground for his final confrontation with the fundamentalists in the summer of 1981, resulting in his dismissal.

This was a marriage of convenience. The Mujahedin saw Bani-Sadr as a useful partner in their struggle against the fundamentalists, a partner who could be easily removed once the fundamentalists' downfall had been achieved because he had little support in the streets. The alliance of Bani-Sadr and the Mujahedin had a deadly effect on the fate of the Kurdish national movement against the regime. Until then, the Mujahedin had never tried to establish a base in Kurdistan and blamed the Fadayan for their involvement in Kurdistan which, according to them, had made Khomeini more suspicious of the radical groups' real intentions. Considering the ideologically hostile approach that the Mujahedin and Bani-Sadr held towards the left-wing groups in general, and the Fadayan in particular, it was the worst possible moment to launch another military offensive against Kurdistan.





Khomeini realized that the Kurds were able to mount a serious threat to the Islamic Republic. Two particular crises stand out. The first in August 1979 was when the fundamentalists attacked and easily outmanoeuvred the secular groups but faced major difficulties in Kurdistan. The second was when the Kurdish people rejected the Islamic constitution. Khomeini and the fundamentalists knew that the unresolved Kurdish issue had the potential to pose a serious threat to the Islamic Republic. Their options were either to seek a political solution with the Kurds, the most likely outcome of which would have been a Kurdish gain, or to send in fresh troops, hoping that they might have greater resolve to settle the issue. The difficulty for the fundamentalists was that even a diluted autonomy represented ‘secession,’ so instead they chose war.

Following the frequent requests of the Kurdish leaders to find a peaceful solution, Sheikh Ezzaddin Husaini and Dr. Ghassemlou met the regime’s top officials and Khomeini in April. Once again, nothing concrete was derived from the meetings. To appease the regime’s hostility, they frequently insisted that the Kurds would respect the territorial integrity of Iran. From March 1980, there were many sporadic skirmishes between the regime’s military forces and Kurdish Peshmergas, which provided a good pretext for the regime to launch a second military offensive against Kurdistan in mid-April 1980, under the banner of ‘cleansing’ Kurdistan of infidels. Khomeini appointed Bani-Sadr as the commander-in-chief of the armed forces. He accepted the appointment partially because he had no choice, and partly because he shared Khomeini’s assessment of the undesirable outcome of Kurdish demands for the Islamic Republic. The troops had been ordered “not to take off your boots until you have entirely recaptured Kurdistan.” He needed to secure a quick and easy victory to sustain his claim to power, but his calculations were flawed. Unlike the first military offensive, the Kurds held their line despite the horrendous scale of hand-to-hand combat.

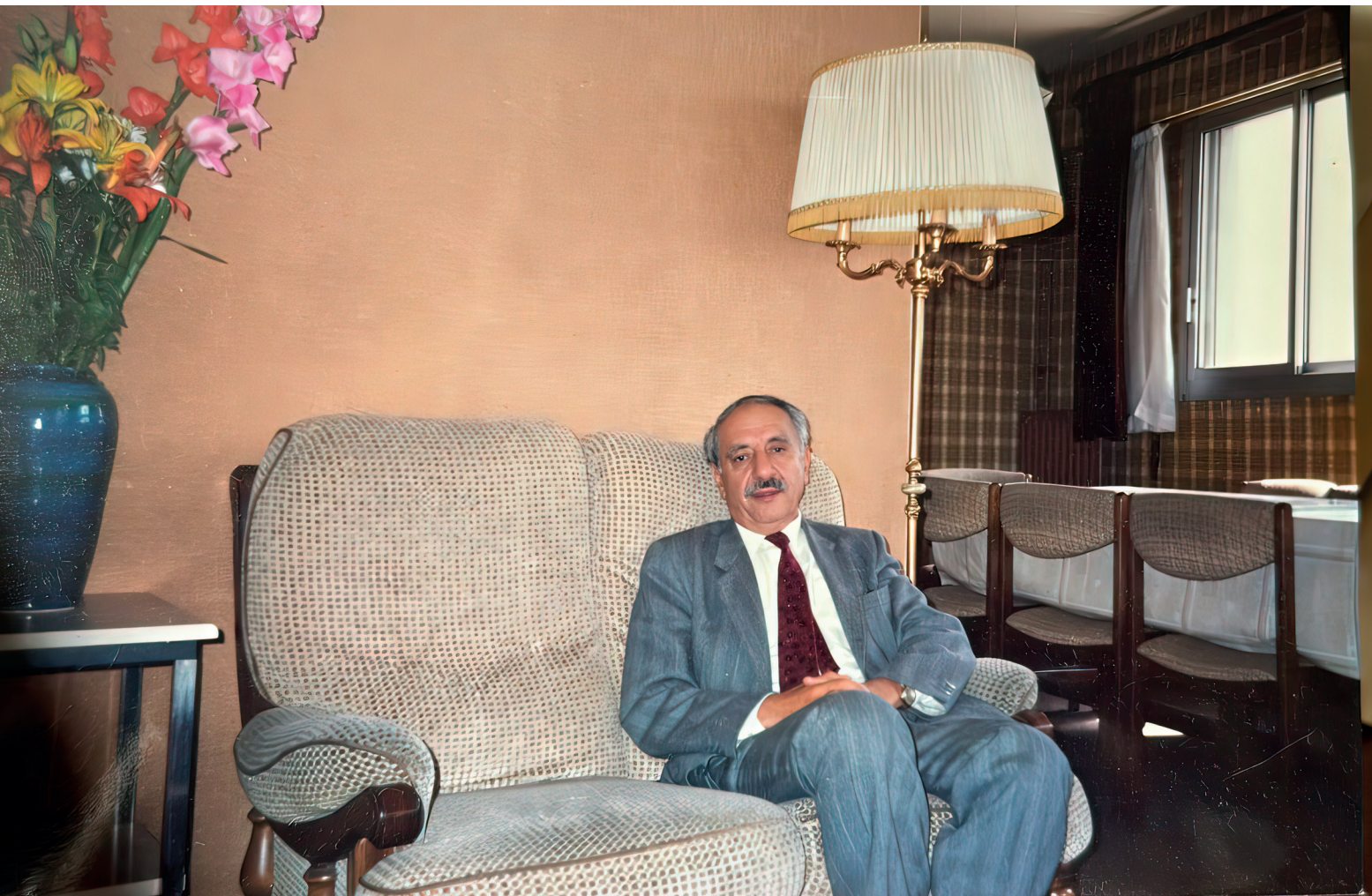
The war was concentrated in southern Kurdistan, and the main battleground was around Senna. The Kurdistan Branch of the Fadayan actively participated in the fighting, but their leadership was under constant pressure from the Tudeh party and Mujahedin, accused of not realizing the grav-



ity of the imperialist threat and playing with fire. As a result, two weeks after fighting began, the Fadayan launched a peace campaign for Kurdistan. While their guerrillas were involved in heavy fighting, the Fadayan leadership argued that civil war in Kurdistan would threaten the unity of the country and create a gap that would be impossible to bridge. The campaign had limited success. Dr. Ghassemlou and the Kurdistan committee of the Fadayan issued a unilateral cease-fire and argued they were ready to stop fighting permanently if the government agreed to do the same. Although he was not anxious to appear weak, Bani-Sadr had tried to convince the fundamentalists that continuing the war in Kurdistan would result in desertion from the army. The Pasdaran immediately issued two statements pouring scorn on the liberal-minded circles in the government that had deceived the nation over the counter-revolutionary threat in Kurdistan, and argued that they were acting under the guidance of Khomeini, and they would not cease the fight against the infidels until the whole region was 'purged.'

By 1985, along with the cities and towns, most of the countryside was under the control of Islamic military forces. Having lost all the liberated areas, the leadership of Kurdish forces and their Peshmergas were forced to move to Iraqi Kurdistan. Aided by the Iraqi regime, these forces were able to conduct guerrilla operations in both cities and villages. Dr Ghassemlou remained the leader of KDPI until his murder at the hands of the Iranian authorities in July 1989.

How can we assess the political legacy of Dr Ghassemlou? He was one of the main architects and staunch believers in the strategy of 'Democracy for Iran and Autonomy for Kurdistan.' As we have seen, he invested all his personal, organizational, and national credibility in service of this aim. In the end, he lost his life in this venture. From its very outset, the Kurdish question had been an important issue that attracted the attention of the majority of Iranian political forces. From this standpoint, we may appreciate his persistence in pursuing the strategy of democracy for Iran and autonomy for Kurdistan. To be fair to him, I have to admit that the Kurds and their major political forces, particularly the KDPI and Komala, were caught in several predicaments. In fact, Iranian society was not only divided between the fundamentalists and liberals and radical nationalist camps, but these groups were subdivided along distinct ethnic lines. Or to put it more precisely,





these groups were divided along political (the National Front, the Islamic Liberation Movement, the Fadayan, the Mujahedin, the Kurdish parties), nationalistic (Persian, Azeris, Kurds, and so on), and religious (Shias and Sunnis) lines. No secular party or major political force made any serious effort to understand these contradictions and initiate a joint project to bridge these differences and construct a democratic national front as an alternative to the fundamentalist camp.

In this political environment, Ghassemlou persistently pursued his strategy. In late 1979 and early 1980, he had some hope that the liberal elements within the Provisional Government might convince Khomeini to accept a peaceful resolution of the Kurdish question. Nevertheless, his hope faded away soon as he experienced that the Provisional Government, deriving its authority from Khomeini, was unable to offer any reliable solution to or accept any meaningful political responsibility for the resolution of the Kurdish question. By late 1980, Ghassemlou had realized that there was no room for accommodation with the Islamic regime, and that the clash between the Kurdish national movement with its secular and relatively democratic outlook, and the fundamentalists' strategy seemed inevitable. So he persistently worked to form a national coalition to fight against the fundamentalists. His first and immediate partner for this coalition was the Fadayan. From its outset, this policy line seemed to be working as the Fadayan (Majority) were in partnership with the Kurdish national movement. However, there was deep disagreement between the Central Committee and the Kurdistan Committee of the Fadayan over this issue, which was finally resolved in favor of the former. As a result, they left Kurdistan and joined the regime against the Kurdish national movement.

Last but not least, in line with their non-confrontational policy towards Khomeini, the Mujahedin kept silent over the Kurdish question until early 1981, when the fight finally broke out between the Mujahedin and the Islamic regime. In order to set up a foothold in Kurdistan, the Mujahedin leadership offered Ghassemlou and the KDPI a political coalition, ensuring that the future Iranian government under their leadership would honour Kurdish self-rule. Although Ghassemlou had major reservations about their real intent, he took the risk and joined the 'National Resistance Council.' But as you may be aware, he was soon forced to leave the coalition.

Ghassemlou wholeheartedly worked for and devoted his life to achieving the aim of democracy for Iran and autonomy for Kurdistan. His personal goal was to broaden the concept of Iranian identity to include the Kurds and other non-Persian national communities. He aimed to make the impossible possible. At any rate, his experience suggested that the strategy of democracy for Iran and autonomy for Kurdistan, without identifying any serious national partner willing to invest its political and intellectual resources to achieve a kind of democracy that would entail autonomy for the Kurds, remained futile. Ghassemlou first tried the liberal forces in the National Front and the Provisional Government, as did the Kurds, but it did not work. Then he tried the Fadayan, as did the Kurds, but it did not work. Finally, out of desperation, he reluctantly tried the Mujahedin, but it did not work. We may guess that in the end, he realized that he had exhausted all his stock of credit. The Kurds fought hard and well in the war against the fundamentalists. The Kurds were not helped by the fact that, having been prey to fragmentation and utter confusion, the non-fundamentalist camp failed to produce any kind of national leadership to challenge the fundamentalist camp.

In the end, we ask how anyone can comprehend this journey. How can anyone approach the brutal murder of Ghassemlou? How should anyone understand the Kurdish tragedy? A paradox confronts anyone who tries to understand these perplexing and persistent phenomena of 'Kurdish Tragedy'. Many people may have strong reservations and disagree with me for using the phrase 'Kurdish tragedy'. Of course, I am not unreasonable and agree that Kurds were not the only population subjected to brutal treatment by the Islamic Republic, equally by Ba'thists or Kemalist regimes in Iraq and Turkey. But being realistic, only the Kurds had been marked for total destruction and allotted no place in the New Order installed by Khomeini, Saddam Hussein, or Kemal Ataturk.



Although in 1966 that the General Assembly of the United Nations stipulated in article 27 its international covenant on Civil and Political Rights: “In those countries in which ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right in community with other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion or to use their own language”. In fact, the provision of article 27 were the minimal expression of the rights of a minority: cultural rights and the right to an identity. Nonetheless, there is undeniable evidence of the oppression and discrimination of minorities, why? Because in realpolitik the protection of minority guaranteed by the United Nations various conventions quickly came up against the principle of state sovereignty, and in the end was dependant on the good will of each state.

Late British philosopher and social theorist Ernest Gellner, a major authority in the theory of nationalism, made the point on several occasions that when state and ethnic-group boundaries do not coincide, ‘politics is apt to remain ugly’. This was true in the past century and will continue to be true in the twenty-first century. From this perspective, the paradox can be easily unravelled, thus with a little effort, one can figure out the Kurdish tragedy in its three interlocked components. If anyone can comprehend that the Kurdish strategy was, and still is, an outcome of a process. The process took the path of a campaign of linguicide, which was the killing of the Kurdish language by peaceful or violent measures. Then this policy line developed into ethnocide, which meant suppressing and wiping out Kurdish culture. These two components logically opened the way for many episodes of genocide. The Kurdish tragedy was an outcome of a unique encounter between these factors that seemed quite ordinary and common when the agenda was the construction of one state, one nation, and one language in multinational and multiethnic societies (Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and Syria). Unfortunately, even today, little attention has been paid to our voices. When compared with the awesome amount of work accomplished by experts and politicians regarding other forms of mass murder and genocide, for example, Palestinian, Darfur, and so on, the contributions of professional historians and journalists to studying the Kurdish tragedy seem marginal and negligible.

In the end, to comprehend the murder of Ghassemlou and the Kurdish tragedy, I would like to paraphrase the crucial questions drawn by Everett C. Hughes, a historian and authority in the field of the Holocaust. 1) Who are the people who carry out this crime? 2) What are the circumstances in which other ‘good’ people allow them to do it? 3) How can we ensure to prevent this dirty work in the future?

I know I am running out of time, so I will reflect briefly on the last point by suggesting three simple points. First, if he were with us today, I am almost sure that he would initiate a serious review of this strategy, as he was a realist and perfectly aware of the fact that the strategy of democracy for Iran and autonomy for Kurdistan cannot be achieved single-handedly by the Kurds, who comprise approximately 8-10 percent of the Iranian population. Therefore, all Kurdish activists owe him the task of reviewing this strategy. Second, our European friends, and the friends of Ghassemlou, by now, have realized that the Kurdish question in all parts of Kurdistan goes beyond human rights and the policy of toleration. A policy of toleration involves leaving groups free to assert their identity and express their cultural values in private or through associations of their members. Then they owe Ghassemlou, who lost his life for the emancipation of the Kurds, to ensure a transparent approach and foreign policy to support the Kurdish nation’s right to self-determination. Last but not least, 19 years ago, he was murdered at the hands of Iranian authorities, but the perpetrators are still at large, so we all owe him the struggle to reopen his case and bring it to a satisfactory conclusion. I hope, therefore, that all of you support and approve a resolution that would be proposed by the chairman.



Hassan Ghahramani

## Dr. Ghassemlou's Views on the Economy of Kurdistan Based on the Book "Kurdistan and Kurds"

### Introduction:

Dr. A. R. Ghassemlou is considered one of the leading Kurdish economists and a prominent figure throughout the Middle East. His influential book, *Kurdistan and the Kurds*, presents a scientific analysis of Kurdistan and the Kurds in four countries: Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and Syria. Despite being written nearly 60 years ago, the book remains relevant and continues to be used in prestigious universities for doctoral theses and academic research, testifying to its enduring academic value.

In *Kurdistan and the Kurds*, Dr. Ghassemlou offers a comprehensive understanding of Kurdish society, enriched with detailed data, chart analysis, and research findings. The book examines the social, economic, and political situations across the various parts of Kurdistan, providing a detailed picture of Kurdish life and their struggle for autonomy. This analysis sheds light on the cultural and historical aspects of Kurdish identity and traditions, offering deeper insights into their quest for self-determination.

Dr. Ghassemlou's contributions to Kurdish studies and economic thought were pioneering. His works provide a detailed picture of the Kurdish economy during a period of significant change, with





particular emphasis on agriculture which were fundamental to Kurdish society. He explores how these sectors were the main sources of income for the majority of Kurds and how they contributed to the local economy.

Dr. Ghassemlou's academic background is as fascinating as his writing. He earned a doctorate in economics from the University of Prague and taught capitalist and socialist economics as well as the theory of economic growth at various universities. His scholarly work and teaching solidified his reputation as a distinguished economist and academic. Through his insightful lectures and writings, Dr. Ghassemlou made significant contributions to academia, helping numerous students grasp complex economic theories and apply them to real-world challenges.

Drawing parallels to influential economists like John Maynard Keynes and Milton Friedman, Ghassemlou valued human happiness and satisfaction as measures of economic success. He advocated for good governance, transparency, and international partnerships to harness Kurdistan's economic potential. Furthermore, he stressed the modernization of agriculture and efficient water management to diversify the economy and reduce oil dependency.

In commemorating the 35th anniversary of Dr. Ghassemlou's assassination, his insights remain profoundly relevant. His work offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the economic challenges and opportunities in Kurdistan, emphasizing the need for strategic planning, effective resource management, and robust political and economic reforms.

### Historical Background and Economic Conditions

Kurdistan's history is characterized by colonialism, conflict, and a continuous struggle for autonomy. These historical conditions have significantly impacted Kurdistan's economic development. Dr. Ghassemlou points out that the economic structures in Kurdistan have been shaped by political changes in the region. The colonial powers and the subsequent governments of Iraq, Iran, Turkey, and Syria often



ignored or actively suppressed economic development in Kurdish areas.

Dr. Ghassemlou's analysis highlights how this complex history has left deep marks on the region's economic landscape. Despite facing political oppression and manipulation, the Kurdish economy has demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability. Understanding this history is crucial to comprehending the real challenges and opportunities facing Kurdistan today.

#### Natural Resources :

One of Kurdistan's most prominent economic assets is its rich natural resources, particularly oil and gas. Dr. Ghassemlou describes how these resources, if managed effectively, have the potential to transform the region's economic landscape. However, he also notes that the Kurdish population has often been marginalized from these resources due to political instability and lack of control.

#### Oil and Gas: The Main Natural Resources of Kurdistan:

Oil and gas are the cornerstone of Kurdistan's economic potential, especially in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, which boasts some of the world's largest oil reserves. These resources represent tremendous opportunities for economic growth and development.

Dr. Ghassemlou emphasizes that careful and efficient management of oil and gas resources can drive economic stability and growth. He advocates for good governance and transparency in the oil and gas sector, within a framework of effective and fair regulation supported by strong institutions. This approach ensures that oil and gas revenues are used sustainably and inclusively, with investments in long-term projects that promote economic diversification and reduce dependency on a single natural resource.

International relations and partnerships play a crucial role in developing Kurdistan's oil and gas sector. By building strong diplomatic and economic ties with other countries, Kurdistan can benefit from the technical support and investment needed to develop its resources effectively. International assistance can help improve the region's technology and infrastructure, further strengthening its economic capacity.

Dr. Ghassemlou's analysis underscores that oil and gas represent Kurdistan's most valuable natural resources. Through careful management, good governance, and strong international partnerships, these resources can contribute to sustainable and inclusive economic development. However, achieving this requires strategic and long-term planning to ensure that revenues are used in a way that benefits all residents and secures a stable and prosperous future for Kurdistan.

#### Agriculture and Water Resources:

In addition to oil and gas, Kurdistan has significant agricultural resources. The region is known for its fertile soil and historically important agricultural sector. Dr. Ghassemlou emphasizes that modernizing agriculture and better managing water resources can play an essential role in diversifying the economy away from oil dependency.

Efficient use of water is crucial for sustainable agricultural development, particularly in a region frequently suffering from water scarcity. By investing in modern farming practices and improving water management infrastructure, Kurdistan can bolster its food production and create a more sustainable and diversified economy.

#### Challenges and Opportunities for Economic Development:

One of the biggest obstacles to Kurdistan's economic development is the region's political instability. Conflicts with central governments, internal political divisions, and external military threats contribute to an uncertain economic environment. Dr. Ghassemlou identifies several critical factors that can



influence the region's economic future and development opportunities.

#### Political Relations and Stability:

Political stability is a prerequisite for economic growth. Dr. Ghassemlou emphasizes that improved relations with central governments and international actors can contribute to a more predictable and supportive environment for economic growth. Stronger diplomatic relations and cooperation with international bodies not only create security but also open doors for investment and economic cooperation.

Domestic political stability is equally important. Coordinated cooperation between different Kurdish factions is essential to avoid internal conflicts and divisions that can hinder economic progress. Domestic cohesion increases the confidence of investors and international partners, creating a safer and more stable political environment conducive to economic development.

Photo: The picture was taken in Hamburg; Dr. Ghassemlou was a guest at a German Green Party event in 1984. Patrick Piel



### Infrastructure Development:

Infrastructure development is a critical factor for economic growth. Dr. Ghassemlou emphasizes the importance of improving transportation networks, energy infrastructure, and communications technology. A thriving infrastructure creates conditions for increased economic activity and enhances the quality of life for local residents.

Improved transportation networks facilitate the movement of people and goods, essential for commercial and industrial development. Efficient transportation solutions reduce costs and time consumption, making companies more competitive and attractive for investment. This, in turn, promotes regional integration and connectivity with national and international markets.

### Education and Workforce Development:

An educated workforce is fundamental to long-term economic growth. Dr. Ghassemlou stresses the importance of strategic investment in education and vocational training to prepare the Kurdish population for the future labor market. A strong educational base enables individual development and contributes to a more dynamic and competitive economy.

Investing in basic education ensures that all individuals have access to necessary knowledge and skills. Dr. Ghassemlou emphasizes that a strong basic education is a prerequisite for further education and vocational training. By improving the quality of education and access, more young people can develop and reach their full potential.

Vocational and technical education is crucial for preparing the workforce for specific industries and occupations. Dr. Ghassemlou emphasizes the need to adapt educational programs to the current needs of the labor market. By providing relevant and practical training opportunities, the gap between labor market demands and the skills workers possess can be reduced.

Dr. Ghassemlou also suggests creating more opportunities for young people to participate in entrepreneurship and small businesses. By promoting a culture of innovation and independent entrepreneurship, new jobs can be created, driving economic growth. Support for young entrepreneurs, in the form of training, mentoring, and funding, is vital to enable them to develop and grow their businesses.

### International Relations and Economic Partnerships:

International relations and economic partnerships are crucial for the development of Kurdistan's economy. Dr. Ghassemlou analyzes how Kurdistan can benefit from international investment and trade partnerships to promote economic growth and development. He stresses that maintaining good relations with neighboring countries and international actors can attract the necessary investment and technical support.

Building and strengthening diplomatic relations with neighboring countries and world powers can lead to increased economic confidence, essential for attracting foreign investment. By actively participating in diplomatic dialogue and international cooperation, Kurdistan can demonstrate its readiness to become a reliable and stable partner on the world stage.

Trade partnerships are also a key condition for stimulating economic growth. Dr. Ghassemlou suggests that Kurdistan should seek regional and international trade agreements to open new markets for Kurdish products and services. Such trade engagement can increase exports and provide access to new technologies and innovations that can improve domestic industry and manufacturing.

Technical support and knowledge transfer from more advanced economies are additional benefits of international partnerships. Dr. Ghassemlou emphasizes the importance of leveraging technological advances and expertise from abroad to modernize and organize Kurdistan's infrastructure and industry. Cooperation with international companies and organizations can provide access to advanced



technologies and best practices, crucial for improving competitiveness and sustainability in economic development.

To maximize the benefits of international relations and economic partnerships, Kurdistan must also work to create an attractive investment climate. Ensuring political stability, legal certainty, and a favorable business climate is essential. Dr. Ghassemlou stresses that transparency, efficient bureaucracy, and investment protection are key factors in gaining the trust of international investors.

#### Trade and Exports:

Trade and exports are central to Kurdistan's economic development. With its natural resources, such as oil and gas, and agricultural products, Kurdistan can generate significant income and create jobs for the region's population. Dr. Ghassemlou highlights how improving economic infrastructure and strengthening trade relations can facilitate the export process and open new markets for Kurdish products.

Exporting agricultural products is particularly important for the local economy. Dr. Ghassemlou points out that by improving agricultural practices and investing in institutions, Kurdistan can increase the value of its agricultural products and make them more attractive in the international market. This will not only increase export earnings but also create more jobs and strengthen the rural economy.

To maximize the benefits of trade and exports, Kurdistan needs to create a favorable trade environment. Dr. Ghassemlou emphasizes the importance of improving regulations, ensuring legal certainty, and reducing bureaucratic hurdles that can deter international business partners and investors.

#### Summary:

Dr. A. R. Ghassemlou, a distinguished Kurdish economist, authored the seminal work "Kurdistan and the Kurds." This book offers an in-depth analysis of the socio-economic conditions and political dynamics across the divided regions of Kurdistan in Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and Syria. Despite being written 60 years ago, Ghassemlou's insights remain highly relevant and are frequently referenced in academic circles.

Ghassemlou's work outlines a comprehensive strategy for the sustainable development of Kurdistan. He emphasizes the region's potential for economic prosperity through meticulous strategic planning, efficient resource management, and robust international relations. His analysis underscores the importance of modernizing agriculture, improving water management, and leveraging Kurdistan's rich natural resources, particularly oil and gas, to drive economic growth.

Moreover, Ghassemlou highlights the political marginalization of the Kurds and its detrimental impact on economic development. He connects economic stagnation to the broader struggle for political rights, advocating for improved governance, transparency, and political stability as prerequisites for economic progress. His vision includes fostering international partnerships to attract investment and technological advancements, which are crucial for modernizing Kurdistan's infrastructure and industry.

In commemorating the 35th anniversary of Dr. Ghassemlou's assassination, it is evident that his work provides a valuable framework for understanding and addressing the economic challenges and opportunities facing Kurdistan. His emphasis on human happiness and satisfaction as measures of economic success aligns with contemporary economic thought, reinforcing the enduring significance of his contributions to both economic theory and Kurdish studies. Ghassemlou's legacy continues to inspire efforts toward achieving a stable and prosperous future for Kurdistan through informed and strategic economic planning.



Mouloud Swara

## We won't forget you neither forgive them

On July 13th, it's 35 years since Dr. A. R. Ghassemlou, the most famous leader of Eastern Kurdistan and the general secretary of KDP1 was assassinated. After participating in Socialist International's congress in Sweden, Dr. Ghassemlou travelled to Vienna in order to negotiate with Iranian government's "representatives" in order to find a peaceful solution to the Kurdish question in Iran.

We won't forget you neither forgive them.

Dr. Ghassemlou sought a peaceful resolution to the Kurdish question and an end to the conflict in Kurdistan, understanding that Kurds reject war because military means offer no solution to their issue. This quest was especially pertinent given the recent conclusion of the eight-year Iran-Iraq war. That is why he embarked to negotiate with the so-called Iranian diplomats without considering the security arrangements. Instead of using the opportunity to put an end to war and give the Iranian people the peaceful life they deserved, the other party, the Iranian authorities followed their previous path of deception and assassination and plotted to murder Dr. Ghassemlou and his comrades.

The Vienna assassination was not the Iranian regime's first act of state sponsored terror and they have not stopped the policy of annihilation of dissidents. From the beginning of the theocratic regime in Iran until now, more than 60 thousand Kurds in Eastern Kurdistan have been killed.

Over 400 Iranian Kurdish political activists in South Kurdistan have been assassinated by Iranian operatives, violating the sovereignty of a neighbouring country. Additionally, a dozen has disappeared without any trace of their whereabouts. Numerous European and Asian countries have become stages for Iranian assassinations targeting dissidents, which many of you are already aware of. Meanwhile, the Kurdish struggle for freedom in Kurdistan across all four countries has persisted for over a century. Despite numerous attempts to suppress it, this struggle is now recognized globally. Those familiar with Dr. Ghassemlou's beliefs understand that his philosophy could offer solutions to many of the current conflicts in the Middle East.

The question we Kurds never stop asking is how come the Austrian authorities for the sake of some economic interests with Iran's theocratic dictatorship ignored all principles of rule of law, officially allowed the terrorists involved in the Vienna assassination to return to Tehran?

How come the European countries which are the defendants of democracy in the world and they claim to be defending human rights, did not protest against this barbaric assassination?



The Kurds will never forgive the Austrian government's unlawful handling of the Vienna assassination.

Eastern Kurdistan is a vast area with a population of more than 12 million, possessing considerable natural resources is one of the richest parts of Iran. If this people could govern themselves and use the region's resources for their prosperity, not only they will have lived a decent and good life, they also could create a good and secure place for foreign investment. But despite all these natural wealth people are living a harsh life and many of them have to commute the border areas and use primitive transportation tools like horses and mules and even their body to transport goods between South and East Kurdistan. Despite the hardship, the Iranian revolutionary guards attack these goods transporters, known as porters and kill them indiscriminately. Is it justified in 21st century to get killed just to try to make a living? This is more painful considering the fact that the whole world is watching in silence.

It's widely recognized that the Islamic Republic of Iran has become a hub of terrorism and destabilization. In their quest to establish a theocratic Shia empire, the Iranian state has destabilized the entire region, and their illicit activities will continue until the international community forces them to abandon their imperialistic ambitions. Wherever Islamic terrorists operate, death and human rights abuses follow. In contrast, today the Kurds in all four countries have become a shield against terror and reactionary forces. They are at the forefront of the fight against these dark forces, sacrificing themselves in this struggle. Therefore, it would be unjust if these struggles and sacrifices, made for the sake of the entire region and beyond, are not acknowledged and remembered.

It is well known that the Kurds are the largest stateless population in the world, with many still facing persecution and denial of basic human rights. Supporting the Kurdish cause is both a matter of justice and in the interest of all parties, making it crucial to focus more on their struggle.





# The News coverage

of the assassination of  
Dr. Ghassemlou by the  
international media at the time





„Wiener Zeitung“-Mitarbeiter Hennerbichler vermittelte Kurdengespräch

# Rätsel um Schwerverletzten

Der am Donnerstagabend zusammen mit zwei weiteren Kurden ermordete Generalsekretär der kurdischen Demokratischen Partei, Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou, hat wahrscheinlich mit einem Vertreter des Iran über eine Kompromißlösung zwischen Kurden und der Teheraner Führung verhandelt, als die Bluttat verübt wurde. Über die Identität des schwerverletzten Gesprächspartners der Kurden herrscht Unklarheit.

Nach letzten Informationen der „Wiener Zeitung“ handelt es sich um den für Kurdenfragen zuständigen Spitzenoffizier der iranischen Revolutionsgarde (Pasdaran), Mohammed Rahimi. Die österreichische Staatspolizei hält dagegen den Namen des Verletzten geheim, der im übrigen noch nicht vernehmungsfähig ist. Nach Angaben der iranischen Botschaft in Wien wiederum soll es sich bei dem Verletzten um den iranischen Diplomaten Djafari Saharoodi handeln.

In einer Stellungnahme der iranischen Botschaft hatte es am Freitagabend geheißen, Ghassemlou habe in Wien mit iranischen Abgesandten über eine „friedliche Lösung“ anstehender Probleme sowie über eine allfällige „Immunität für reuige Mitglieder der Kurdischen Demokratischen Partei“ verhandelt. Die Gespräche darüber seien seit einiger Zeit geführt worden und einem positiven Abschluß nahe gewesen.

Ghassemlou hatte vor wenigen Wochen dem österreichischen Kurdenexperten und „Wiener Zeitung“-Mitarbeiter Dr. Ferdinand Hennerbichler ein Interview gegeben und darin erstmals betont, daß er bereit wäre, mit Vertretern der Revolutionsführung in Teheran nach dem Tod von Ayatollah Khomeini einen Dialog über einen Kurdenkompromiß im Iran zu beginnen. Hennerbichler — der u. a. als damaliger österreichischer Presseattaché in Athen 1984 die Geheimverhandlungen über die Freilassung westeuropäischer Geiseln aus kurdischer Gefangenschaft geführt hatte — ersuchte daraufhin seinen in Wien im Exil lebenden Freund, Dr. Fadil Rasoul, zu vermitteln und Kontakte zwischen Ghas-

semlou und Teheran zustande zu bringen.

Diese Verbindung ist vermutlich in Wien angebahnt worden. Fadil Rasoul vermittelte Ghassemlou als Gesprächspartner offensichtlich den höchsten Offizier der Pasdaran, zuständig für Kurdenfragen, Mohammed Rahimi. Dieser überlebte das Attentat schwerverletzt, ist aber nach vorliegenden Informationen bisher noch nicht in der Lage, zu sprechen und der Polizei Angaben über die mutmaßlichen Attentäter zu machen.

Die mutmaßlichen Täter werden in Teheran vor allem unter drei Gruppen vermutet:

Erstens unter Gegnern eines angestrebten Kurdenkompromisses im Iran generell,

zweitens unter Rivalen Ghassemlous in der eigenen Partei, die sich im Vorjahr von seiner Führung abgespalten haben und seither ein Bündnis mit den iranischen Volksmudschaheddin im Exil in Bagdad eingegangen sind, und drittens in Kreisen der Volksmudschaheddin selbst.

Auch die Iraker werden als Drahtzieher oder Hintermänner des Anschlages verdächtigt.

Einer der bedeutendsten Führer der irakischen Kurden, Jalal Talahani, hat an Innenminister Franz Löschnak appelliert, alle möglichen Spuren zu untersuchen und die Bluttat restlos aufzuklären. Radio Teheran erklärte am Freitag in einer ersten Analyse, Ghassemlou sei dabei gewesen, die Seiten

zu wechseln und mit dem Iran eine Friedenslösung zu zustreben.

Im Nahen Osten wird nun angenommen, daß mit dem Tode Ghassemlous die Bemühungen um eine Kurdenlösung im Iran schwieriger geworden sein dürften. Scharf verurteilt hat Freitagabend ein Sprecher von Massoud Barzani, dem Vorsitzenden der Demokratischen Partei Kurdistans Irak, die jüngsten Kurdenmorde in Wien. Auf Massoud Barzani war im Jahr 1979 in Wien ein Attentat verübt worden.

Ein Sprecher der Partei erklärte in Paris, der ermordete Ghassemlou und sein Stellvertreter Abdullah Ghasderi-Azar würden kommende Woche in Paris auf den Pere-Lachaise-Friedhof beigesetzt. Der Mord sei eine Katastrophe für die Kurden, man lasse sich aber dadurch nicht einschüchtern.

Der Sicherheitssprecher der ÖVP, Abg. Wendelin Eitmayr, forderte im Zusammenhang mit dem Attentat auf die Kurdenpolitiker am Samstag im Pressedienst seiner Partei eine stärkere Überwachung ausländischer Geheimdienste in Österreich.

Der blutige Überfall in der Bahngasse 5/12 in Wien-Landstraße am Donnerstagabend ist mit den zwei in der Nacht auf Freitag in der Linken Wienzeile in Wien-Mariahilf sichergestellten Pistolen verübt worden. Die ebenfalls gefundene MP wurde bei dem Anschlag auf vier Kurden, bei dem drei von ihnen getötet wurden, nicht verwendet.

Dies erklärte Hofrat Werner Liebhart, der Leiter der Staatspolizei, Samstag. Die Fahndung nach den Tätern verlief vorerst ohne Ergebnis.

WIENER  
Sonntag, 16. Juli 1989  
ZEITUNG





# Die Presse

Unabhängige Tageszeitung für Österreich

Freitag, 14. Juli 1989

## Terroranschlag in Wien Drei Kurden erschossen

Einem Terroranschlag fielen in einem Wohnhaus beim Wiener Stadtpark drei Iraner, darunter eine Frau, Angehörige der kurdischen Volksgruppe, zum Opfer, ein vierter wurde durch Schüsse schwer verletzt. Die durch gezielte Schüsse in den Kopf und den Oberkörper Getöteten wurden am gestrigen Donnerstagabend entdeckt. Die Staatspolizei ist dabei, die Identität der Ermordeten zu klären. Von dem Täter oder den Tätern fehlte gestern Abend jede Spur.

WIEN (red.). Donnerstag gegen 19 Uhr wurden die Gäste des Cafés „Tritsch-Tratsch“ Ecke Ungargasse-Linke Bahngasse in Wien-Landstraße durch eine ungewöhnliche Aktion aufgeschreckt. Plötzlich standen zwei Männer in der Tür. Ein blutverschmierter, etwa dreißigjähriger Ausländer wurde von einem etwa vierzigjährigen Mann herangeschleppt. Das Opfer hatte erhebliche Verletzungen am Oberkörper.

Kaum hatte der vermeintliche Helfer den Schwerverletzten vor der Tür des Lokals abgelegt, lief er über die Ungarbrücke zu der nahegelegenen Tankstelle neben dem Hauptmünzamt, kam aber wenig später zurück. Jetzt hantierte er an der Kleidung des Verletzten herum und zog daraus, wie beobachtet wurde, ein weißes Kuvert, das etwa 20 Zentimeter breit und einen Zentimeter dick gewesen sein soll. Ob sich darin Geld oder aber wichtige Dokumente befanden, ist noch unklar.

Der „Helfer“ hat eine Glatze und einen Oberlippenbart und war sichtlich überaus nervös. Er selbst führte die Polizei schließlich zum Tatort in der Linken Bahngasse 5, wo die Kriminalisten in einer Wohnung im 3. Stock auf die drei Toten stießen.

Alle drei waren, soweit dies

eingezogen. Auch Nachbarn wußten gestern zu berichten, daß es sich bei den neuen Mietern um Kurden handelte.

Zwei Männer aus dem Bekanntenkreis der Getöteten gaben sich kurz nach der Entdeckung der Bluttat - gestern am Tatort „Presse“-Reportern gegenüber freimütig als Kurden aus, baten aber: „Bitte, nicht photographieren, drei Mitglieder der Organisation sind schon tot!“

Eine Mieterin des Hauses, in dem sich das Café „Tritsch-Tratsch“ befindet, erklärte, sie habe am Mittwoch, also am Tag vor der Entdeckung des Verbrechens, zwischen 20 und 21 Uhr drei laute Schreie gehört, deren Herkunft sie aber nicht genau habe lokalisieren können. Theoretisch wäre es also möglich, daß die Tat bereits am Vortag verübt wurde.

Ein wichtiger Zeuge ist ein Arzt, der am Donnerstagabend zufällig bei dem Café vorbeikam und der den Verletzten, der auch ein blutdurchtränktes Tuch um den Hals trug, erstversorgte und ihm einen Druckverband anlegte. Der Mediziner wurde bei Redaktionschluß noch von der Polizei vernommen.

Ebenso einvernom-

Die Linke Bahngasse wurde unmittelbar nach Bekanntwerden des Terroranschlags - die Staatspolizei wurde um 19.42 Uhr verständigt - hermetisch abgeriegelt. Polizisten begannen, nachdem Kriminalisten die Spurensicherung in der Mordwohnung abgeschlossen hatten, alle im Nahbereich des Tatortes abgestellten Autos gewaltsam zu öffnen. Zum einen sollte damit ein eventueller zusätzlicher Bombenanschlag vereitelt werden, zum anderen erhoffte man sich weitere Hinweise auf den oder die Täter.

Der Mordanschlag war offensichtlich von langer Hand geplant. Sicher ist, daß geübte Schützen am Werk gewesen sind. Während die Leichen zweier der „Hingetrichteten“, darunter eine Frau, jeweils nur einen genau gezielten Kopfschuß aufwiesen, wurde das dritte Opfer nicht nur durch Kopfschuß, sondern auch durch mehrere Treffer in den Oberkörper getötet. Bei der oder den Tatwaffen dürfte es sich um solche von mittlerem Kaliber, also etwa 7,65 mm, gehandelt haben.

Dem Blutbad ging offenbar auch ein Kampf voraus. Darauf deuten ein umgestürzter Tisch, eine gekippte Sitzbank und zerbrochene Gläser hin. Am Tatort wurden mehrere Zettel mit Notizen in arabischer Schrift sichergestellt.

Hatte es in ersten Meldungen geheißt, die Ermordeten seien Diplomaten, so stellte sich dies im weiteren Verlauf des Abends als unhaltbar heraus. Vielmehr dürften die Toten mit größter Wahrscheinlichkeit einer Organisation iranischer Kurden angehört haben.

Täter und Opfer scheinen einander gekannt zu haben. An der Tür zur Tatwohnung wurden keine Spuren von Gewaltanwendung gefunden, was darauf schließen läßt, daß die Opfer sich entweder



AL-HAYAT TUESDAY JULY 25, 1989 ISSUE NO 9727

## كيف اغتيل الزعيم الكردي في فيينا؟ النمسا سلمت الى ايران المتهمين باغتيال قاسمelo

□ فيينا - «الحياة»

وشيع رسول يوم الاحد في فيينا في حضور عدد من اصدقائه من السياسيين والكتاب والصحافيين وسط استنكار الجميع، خصوصاً ان لرسول جهوداً واسعة في مجال البحث والتأليف والنشر. وقد اعتبرت مصادر مراقبة انه كان ضحية ابتزاز وخدعة كونه توقف عن العمل السياسي منذ اكثر من عشر سنين، وتفرغ للنشر والتأليف واسس مجلة فكرية شهرية تصدر من بيروت وفيينا باسم «منبر الحوار». وقد شارك في ماتمه الرئيس الجزائري السابق احمد بن بيللا الذيلقى كلمة تابين.

وفي الافتتاحية التي ستصدر في العدد الجديد من «منبر الحوار» كتب بن بيللا: «ان اسرة الحوار في حزن لان رئيس تحريرها اغتيل (...) وكذلك قراء الحوار وكل من عرف فاضل رسول». وأضاف ان رسول «حمل في شخصيته عنوان مجلته وكان رجل حوار». وبعدها اشاد بخصاله الشخصية لاحتظ «ان يد الغدر امتدت اليه في يوم الغفران... في عيد الاضحى المبارك بينما كان يشارك في صنع اتفاق يحل أفاق السلام لآخوته الاكراد. ان اغتيال فاضل يلخص ماساتنا (...) البرابرة أصروا على اغتيال الأشخاص الكبار الذين آمنوا بالفكر، حتى في عواصم بعيدة».

في بغداد (رويترز) أفادت وكالة الانباء العراقية ان جثمان محمود رسول فاضل وصل الى بغداد لدفنه.

■ علمت «الحياة» من مصادر سياسية مطلعة ان السلطات النمساوية سلمت الى طهران المتهمين الايرانيين بقتل الزعيم الكردي عبدالرحمن قاسمelo ورئيس تحرير مجلة «منبر الحوار» الصحافي العراقي فاضل رسول بحجة انها لا تريد توتراً في علاقاتها مع ايران.

وروت المصادر لـ «الحياة» كيف اغتيل الزعيم الكردي، قالت: «ان اتصالات سرية جرت في الاسابيع الاخيرة بين قاسمelo وبعض الجهات الايرانية الرسمية، واتفق على عودة الزعيم الكردي الى ايران واجراء تسوية سياسية للمشكلة الكردية في ايران. وحددت جلسة في بيت سيدة نمساوية لوضع الصيغة النهائية للاتفاق في حضور الصحافي فاضل رسول كشاهد محايد على التسوية. وفي اللحظة المحددة للقاء الذي حضره قاسمelo ورسول وثلاثة ايرانيين بينهم مسؤول امني يدعى رحيمي، شهر الايرانيون مسدسات واطلقوا النار على قاسمelo ورسول واصيب رحيمي عن طريق الخطا فتركه رفيقاه ظناً منهما انه قتل وفرأ، الا ان السلطات النمساوية طاردهما واعتقلتهما ثم عادت وسلمتهما الى طهران بينما نقل رحيمي الى المستشفى وبعدها الى مقر سفارة بلاده في فيينا».



# Süddeutsche Zeitung

MÜNCHNER NEUESTE NACHRICHTEN AUS POLITIK, KULTUR, WIRTSCHAFT UND SPORT

41. Jahrgang - 1000 München 2, Postfach 20 22 20

München, Donnerstag, 14. September 1989

Nummer 211 - 27. Woche

## Die kurdische Frage bleibt aktuell

Wahlen in der Region der Minderheit im Irak haben die Repression nicht beendet

Von Heiko Flottau

Kairo, 12. September - Die irakische Regierung meldet einen Erfolg: Ein historischer Schritt sei getan, in der „autonomen Region“ Kurdistan hätten einheimische Kurden ihr regionales Parlament gewählt, 30 von 50 Sitzen seien von der in Bagdad regierenden Baath-Partei gewonnen worden. Ein Schritt zur Befriedung einer unruhigen Gegend sei getan, könnte man meinen.

Die Wirklichkeit indessen sieht anders aus. Im Golfkrieg haben irakische Kurden den Iran unterstützt - um sich für viele Demütigungen zu rächen, die sie durch das Regime Saddam Husseins erlitten hatten, vor allem aber in der falschen Hoffnung, ein siegreicher Iran werde ihnen, den Kurden, endlich wahre Autonomie bringen. Kaum war indessen am 20. August 1988 der Waffenstillstand im Golfkrieg in Kraft, startete Saddam Hussein eine neue Kampagne: diesmal ging es gegen die Kurden im nordöstlichen Teil des Irak. Viele wurden getötet, viele wurden verschleppt, Häuser und Dörfer wurden zerstört, erntereife Felder abgebrannt.

Schon während des Krieges hatte das Regime Saddam Husseins damit begonnen, Kurden aus ihrer Heimat zu verschleppen, bis in die unwirtlichen, unerträglich heißen Wüstengebiete an der kuwaitischen und saudischen Grenze. Ebenfalls hatte der Irak - damals aus militärischen Gründen wohl zu rechtfertigen - begonnen, im irakischen Teil Kurdistans zur iranischen Grenze hin eine Art Sicherheitszone einzurichten. Noch während des Krieges waren mehr als 4000 Kurden bei einem irakischen Giftgasangriff in Halabja getötet worden. Behauptungen, daß auch in der Kampagne nach dem Waffenstillstand Giftgas gegen die Kurden angewendet worden sei, konnten die Iraker nicht recht widerlegen.

Im ersten Jahr des Waffenstillstandes gingen - unter häufigen Protesten von Menschenrechtsvereinigungen, aber unter weitgehendem Stillschweigen der Regierung - die Zwangsumsiedlungen aus irakisch-Kurdistan weiter. Siedlungen wurden systematisch vernichtet, ein Teil der Einwohner mußte in künstliche, von Armee und Baath-Miliz bewachte Betonwohnblocks in der Nähe der gut zu überwachenden kurdischen Städte Sulei-

manya und Erbil umziehen. Noch schlimmer traf es jene, die in die heißen Regionen des irakischen Südens weit entfernt von ihren angestammten Wohnsitzen deportiert wurden. Insgesamt 250 000 der etwa vier Millionen irakischen Kurden werden derzeit allein innerhalb des Nordirak umgesiedelt - in 22 streng bewachte Internierungszentren.

Das Regime Saddam Husseins will, so scheint es, das sogenannte „kurdische Problem“ ein für allemal lösen, indem es, so muß man die Ereignisse wohl deuten, die kurdische Bevölkerung ihrer Identität beraubt, sie in den dünnbesiedelten Irak disloziert und die in Kurdistan Gebliebenen unter strenge militärische Bewachung stellt.

Neun bis zehn Millionen Kurden leben in der Türkei, wo sie keine autonomen Rechte haben und wo sie in der Gesellschaft nur aufsteigen können, wenn sie ihrer Nationalität entsagen. Vier bis fünf Millionen Kurden leben im Iran, etwa 600 000 in Syrien, 200 000 Kurden zählt die

Sowjetunion. Das über fünf Staaten streute Volk ging leer aus, als dieses ten nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg teil aus der Erbmasse des auseinandergechenen Osmanischen Reiches entstand. In den Friedensvertrag der Alliierten der Türkei von Sevres (1920) sollte armenischer und ein kurdischer Staat genommen werden. Der Vertrag scheiterte an Kemal Atatürk, der gegen Interventionen aus dem Ausland kämpfte, um türkischen Staat mit einem einheitlichen türkischen Staatsvolk zu gründen. In dem Vertrag von Lausanne war 1923 dann nationalen Staaten der Armenier Kurden nicht mehr die Rede.

Manche Staaten des Nahen Ostens koloniale Kunstgebilde. Ein kurdischer Staat hätte sich auf ein Volk mit geschlossenem Siedlungsraum, einer eigenen Sprache und einer eigenen Identität gestützt. Der Staat existiert nicht. Die kurdische Frage ist aktuell der Unterdrückung in der Türkei und der Repressionen Saddam Husseins

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

23./24.9.1989

### 25 Hurt in Baghdad Grenade Attack

CAIRO (Reuters) - Twenty-five persons were injured when three grenades exploded in the garden of an expatriate social club in the Iraqi capital, Baghdad, on Wednesday, a British Embassy spokesman said Friday.

The grenades were thrown over a wall around the British Club on the east bank of the Tigris River and exploded among dozens of people watching a film in the garden, said the spokesman, contacted by telephone from Cairo. No one was killed but a nine-year-old Polish boy was seriously hurt. Canadians, Irish, Yugoslavs and Britons were among the injured.

25.9.1989

### ■ Iraq Attacks Kurd Bases

The Iraqi Army has launched a new offensive against Kurdish guerrillas near the Iranian border, the first major assault in a year, The Associated Press reported from Nicosia, quoting a guerrilla spokesman.

The spokesman of the outlawed Patriotic Union of Kurdistan said Saturday that an army division, supported by artillery and helicopters,





Kurdische  
Peschmerga-Kämpfer  
im Feld

KURDEN

# Die dem Tod ins Auge blicken

Geheime Friedensverhandlungen der Kurden mit dem iranischen Regime endeten in Wien im Kugelhagel.

Um 19.20 Uhr ging die Tür auf, und zwei oder drei Männer betraten den Raum. Wortlos eröffneten sie das Feuer, gab der einzige Überlebende, ein iranischer Diplomat, bei den Ermittlungen an. Die Waffen, zwei Pistolen mit Schallkämpfern und eine Maschinenpistole, fanden sich später unter Autos und in Müllcontainern am Wiener Naschmarkt.

Am Tatort, einer Wohnung in der Linken Bahngasse 5 im dritten Gemeindebezirk, lagen drei Tote zurück: der Generalsekretär der Kurdischen Demokratischen Partei (KDP), Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou, sein Stellvertreter Abdullah Ghaderi, 37, sowie der irakische Kurde Fadil Rasoul, 38. Ein vierter Mann rettete sich, getroffen von einem Schuß in den Mund und den Arm, auf die Straße, wo er auf einen weiteren Mann traf, der auf dem Weg zur Wohnung in der Linken Bahngasse war und sich - als Zeuge von der Polizei einvernommen - als iranischer Kurde ausgab.

In der iranischen Botschaft wußte Mohammed Kharijschi, Leiter der Wiener Ex-Konsole der iranischen Nachrichtenagentur IRNA, bereits Bescheid: „Wir haben zu-



Kurdentführer Ghassemlou  
in den heimatlichen Bergen: Bereit  
zum Frieden mit den Mullahs

ort. Die iranische Botschaft in der Jaurès-... noch von regem Le-

Ghassemlou war nach Wien gekommen, um für die kurdische Minderheit Friedensverhandlungen mit dem iranischen Mullahregime zu führen. Seit Monaten hatte er aus Paris Fäden in Richtung Teheran gesponnen, wie der frühere iranische Staatspräsident Abolhasan Bani Sadr in seinem Pariser Exil gegenüber profil bestätigt: „Man stand kurz vor dem endgültigen Durchbruch. Ghassemlou war zur letzten Etappe nach Wien aufgebrochen.“ Die Schüsse in der Bahngasse setzten den Verhandlungen ein jähes Ende.

Fadil Rasoul mußte als Vermittler des Friedensgespräches ebenfalls sein Leben lassen. Ein iranischer Diplomat hatte ihn Ende Juni in einem Vier-Augen-Gespräch gebeten, Kontakte zur

KDP-Führung in Paris herzustellen. Rasoul willigte ein. Durch sein bewegtes Leben und seine publizistische Tätigkeit war er im ganzen Nahen Osten bekannt. Er wurde in Suleimaniye im irakischen Kurdengebiet geboren, nahm an der kommunistischen Bewegung teil, war dann bewaffneter Kämpfer der „Peschmerga“ („Die dem Tod ins Auge blicken“) gegen die nahöstlichen Regimes und mußte schließlich in den Libanon flüchten.

Dort fand er im Bürgerkrieg Unterschlupf in Palästinenserlagern, studierte später in Bagdad politische Wissenschaften. Seit Ende der siebziger Jahre lebte Rasoul in Österreich und heiratete eine Wienerin. Er stand der Patriotischen Union Kurdistans (PUK) im Irak nahe, wollte aber keiner bestimmten Fraktion angehören. Seit vier Jahren gab er die Zeitschrift „Al Heiwar“ („Der Dialog“) heraus, die in Beirut gedruckt und im ganzen Nahen Osten verbreitet wird.

Fadil Rasoul war freier Mitarbeiter des von Bruno Kreisky gegründeten Österreichischen Instituts für Internationale Politik in Laxenburg. Er schrieb zwei ir-Fachkreisen sehr geschätzte Bücher über den Nahen Osten. Rasoul hielt Vorlesungen an der Universität Kairo und hatte einen Lehrauftrag für Politikwissenschaftler an der Wiener Universität.

Rasouls Institutskollege in Laxenburg John Bunzl, beschreibt dessen Qualitäten als Vermittler: „Er war mein bester Freund, der erste nahöstliche Intellektuelle, mit dem ich wirklich gut konnte. Vielleicht haben wir uns von Minderheit zu Minderheit verstanden, er als Kurde und ich als Jude - und wir beide als Linke.“ Rasoul hatte mit seiner Zeitschrift das Kunststück zuwege gebracht, von den zer-



# LE FIGARO L'AURORE

EDITION  
DE PARIS  
PRIX : 4,50 F

SAMEDI 15 - DIMANCHE 16 JUILLET 1989 (N° 13 960)

## AUTRICHE Un dirigeant kurde assassiné à Vienne

□ Abdel Rhaman Ghassemlou, secrétaire général du parti démocratique du Kurdistan d'Iran (PDKI), opposé au régime de Téhéran et principale figure du mouvement autonomiste kurde iranien, a été abattu jeudi, à Vienne, lors d'une fusillade. Deux autres militants kurdes ont été tués, une autre personne grièvement blessée.

Les trois Kurdes rencontraient un homme porteur d'un passeport diplomatique iranien lorsque les tueurs sont entrés dans l'appartement.

« Ces meurtres ressemblent à des exécutions », selon la police autrichienne qui a ajouté n'avoir aucune preuve que des services secrets étrangers aient été impliqués dans l'affaire. L'aile radicale du PDKI, qui a fait scission il y a un an pour s'associer aux moudjahidin du peuple iraniens, pourrait être à l'origine de l'attentat. « C'est un désastre », a déclaré un représentant du PDKI à Paris, où vivait Ghassemlou.



# LE COURRIER

Fusillade à Vienne

## Trois dirigeants kurdes d'Iran assassinés

Trois dirigeants du Parti démocratique du Kurdistan de l'Iran (PDKI) dont son secrétaire général, Abdel Rahman Ghassemlou (59 ans), ont été tués et un quatrième grièvement blessé jeudi soir lors d'un attentat perpétré dans un appartement à Vienne, a confirmé vendredi le Ministère autrichien de l'intérieur.

Selon un porte-parole de la police, les deux autres morts sont M. Abdulah Ghaderiazar, secrétaire général adjoint du PDKI et M. Fahdil Rasoul. M. Ghaderiazar, 37 ans, voyageait avec un passeport de réfugié établi en France et était venu de Paris pour rencontrer d'autres dirigeants kurdes à Vienne. M. Rasoul, âgé de 38 ans, est un Kurde irakien naturalisé Autrichien en 1985. L'identité de la quatrième victime, un Kurde titulaire d'un passeport diplomatique iranien, grièvement blessée, mais dont la vie ne serait pas en danger, n'est pas révélée par la police.

Cet homme a déclaré au cours d'un premier interrogatoire à l'hôpital que

plusieurs membres de deux organisations kurdes se sont rencontrés dans l'appartement où a eu lieu la fusillade. L'attentat aurait été commis par deux ou trois hommes, selon le témoin qui a été blessé au visage et notamment à la bouche.

### Peu d'indices

Le mystère subsiste sur l'identité des auteurs de l'attentat et leurs motifs très probablement de nature politique, selon la police. Les enquêteurs ont retrouvé hier à proximité du lieu du crime deux pistolets munis de silencieux et différents vêtements ayant vraisemblablement appartenus aux auteurs de l'attentat. Ceux-ci ont pénétré dans l'appartement sans forcer la porte, ce qui donne à penser, selon la police, que les victimes les connaissaient ou que la porte n'était pas fermée. Les enquêteurs ont relevé des traces de lutte dans l'appartement.

La police a été alertée par un Kurde apparemment venu pour participer à

la réunion et qui avait trouvé la tige grièvement blessée dans la rue. Cet homme est connu de la police et sert de témoin.

### Un dirigeant modéré

Abdel Rahman Ghassemlou, qui a vécu pendant des années en exil en France, a été un des dirigeants de l'opposition iranienne. Selon des informations recueillies dans les milieux kurdes à Vienne, le secrétaire général du PDKI faisait partie des «modérés» au sein de l'opposition iranienne.

On n'exclut pas dans ces milieux que l'aile radicale du PDKI, qui a provoqué la scission il y a un an pour s'associer avec les moudjahidin du peuple iranien, soit à l'origine de l'attentat. L'attentat de jeudi soir est le deuxième perpétré contre des dirigeants politiques kurdes à Vienne. En janvier 1979 le président du Parti kurde démocratique d'Iran, Massoud Barzani, avait survécu à un attentat dans lequel deux de ses gardes du corps ont été tués.



## Etranger

# Attentat meurtrier à Vienne

# L'opposition kurde iraniennne décapitée

Trois dirigeants du Parti démocratique du Kurdistan de l'Iran (PDKI), dont son secrétaire général, Abdel Rahman Ghassemlou (59 ans), ont été tués et un quatrième grièvement blessé, jeudi soir, lors d'un attentat perpétré dans un appartement à Vienne.

Selon un porte-parole de la police, les deux autres morts sont M. Abdullah Ghaderiazar, secrétaire général adjoint du PDKI et M. Fahdil Rasoul. M. Ghaderiazar, 37 ans, voyageait avec un passeport de réfugié établi en France et était venu de Paris pour rencontrer d'autres dirigeants kurdes à Vienne. M. Rasoul, âgé de 38 ans, est un Kurde irakien naturalisé Autrichien en 1985. L'identité de la

quatrième victime, un Kurde titulaire d'un passeport diplomatique iranien, grièvement blessé, mais dont la vie ne serait pas en danger, n'est pas révélée par la police.

Cet homme a déclaré, au cours d'un premier interrogatoire, à l'hôpital, que plusieurs membres de deux organisations kurdes se sont rencontrés dans l'appartement où a eu lieu la fusillade. L'attentat aurait été commis par deux ou trois hommes.

### Des traces de lutte dans l'appartement

Le mystère subsiste sur l'identité des auteurs de l'attentat et leurs motifs, très probablement de nature politique, selon la police. Les enquêteurs ont retrouvé, hier, à proximité du lieu du crime, deux

pistolets munis de silencieux et différents vêtements ayant vraisemblablement appartenu aux auteurs de l'attentat. Ceux-ci ont pénétré dans l'appartement sans forcer la porte, ce qui donne à penser, selon la police, que les victimes les connaissaient ou que la porte n'a pas été fermée. Les enquêteurs ont relevé des traces de lutte dans l'appartement.

La police a été alertée par un autre Kurde apparemment venu pour participer à la réunion et qui avait trouvé la victime grièvement blessée dans la rue. Cet homme est connu par la police et sert de témoin.

Abdel Rahman Ghassemlou, qui a vécu pendant des années en exil en France, a été un des dirigeants de l'opposition iraniennne. Selon des informations recueillies

dans les milieux kurdes à Vienne, le secrétaire général du PDKI faisait partie des « modérés » de l'opposition iraniennne.

On n'exclut pas, dans ces lieux, que l'aile radicale du PDKI qui a fait scission il y a un an s'associer aux moudjahidines du peuple iranien, serait à l'origine de l'attentat.

L'attentat de jeudi soir est le deuxième perpétré contre des dirigeants politiques kurdes à Vienne. En janvier 1979, le président du Parti kurde démocratique d'Allemagne, Massoud Barzani, avait subi un attentat dans lequel deux de ses gardes du corps avaient été tués. Les rapports entre les Kurdes de l'Iran et de l'Irak ont tendus, notamment depuis la guerre irano-irakienne.

## VIENNE

# Trois Kurdes assassinés

Le chef du Parti démocratique kurde et deux de ses militants en exil à Vienne ont été tués par balles dans leur appartement, sans doute pour des rivalités partisanses

Trois dirigeants du Parti démocratique du Kurdistan de l'Iran (PDKI), dont son secrétaire général, Abdel Rahman Ghassemlou (59 ans), ont été tués et un quatrième grièvement blessé jeudi soir lors d'un attentat perpétré dans un appartement à Vienne.

blessé, mais dont la vie ne serait pas en danger, n'est pas révélée par la police.

Cet homme a déclaré au cours d'un premier interrogatoire à l'hôpital que plusieurs membres

de deux organisations kurdes se sont rencontrés dans l'appartement où a eu lieu la fusillade. L'attentat aurait été commis par deux ou trois hommes.

La police a été alertée par un autre Kurde apparemment venu pour participer à la réunion et qui avait trouvé la victime grièvement blessée dans la rue. Cet homme est connu par la police et sert de témoin.

Abdel Rahman Ghassemlou, qui a vécu pendant des années en exil en France, a été un des dirigeants de l'opposition iraniennne. Selon des informations recueillies

dans les milieux kurdes à Vienne, le secrétaire général du PDKI faisait partie des « modérés » de l'opposition iraniennne.

On n'exclut pas, dans ces lieux, que l'aile radicale du PDKI qui a fait scission il y a un an s'associer aux moudjahidines du peuple iranien, serait à l'origine de l'attentat.

L'attentat de jeudi soir est le deuxième perpétré contre des dirigeants politiques kurdes à Vienne. En janvier 1979, le président du Parti kurde démocratique d'Allemagne, Massoud Barzani, avait subi un attentat dans lequel deux de ses gardes du corps avaient été tués. Les rapports entre les Kurdes de l'Iran et de l'Irak ont tendus, notamment depuis la guerre irano-irakienne.

SUD OUEST (O)

15 JUL 89



ΞΑΝΘΗ, 17.

**ΤΡΕΙΣ ΚΟΥΡΔΟΙ** τουρκικής υπηκοότητας σκοτώθηκαν χτες στην περιοχή του Εβρου, όταν στην προσπάθειά τους να περάσουν στο ελληνικό έδαφος έπεσαν σε ναρκοπέδιο.

Στις 4.30 χτες το πρωί οι κούρδοι Χασάν Χαουρί Χαουρίν 28 χρόνων, Μασούμ Αντίμ 33 και Αλίς Χαζίμα

# Κομμάτια 3 Κούρδοι σε ναρκοπέδιο

34, πέρασαν το ποτάμι του Εβρου κολυμπώντας. Στο ύψος του χωριού Καστανιές μπήκαν στο ελληνικό έδαφος. Φαίνεται όμως ότι οι Κούρδοι δεν γνώριζαν καθόλου την περιοχή και επειδή ήταν και νύχτα έπεσαν στο ναρκοπέδιο. Έτσι κάποιος από τους τρεις πάτησε πρώτος τη νάρκη ακολούθησαν απανωτές εκρήξεις και σκοτώθηκαν και οι άλλοι δύο. Από τις εκρήξεις αναστατάθηκαν οι κάτοικοι του χωριού Καστανιές και άμεσα ξεκίνησαν για την περιοχή που ακούστηκαν οι εκρήξεις ομάδες στρατιωτών ανάμεσά τους υπάρχουν και ναρκαλιματωτές - και ομάδες αστυνομικών οι οποίοι βρήκαν τα πτώματα.

Υπενθυμίζεται ότι πριν από ένα χρόνο περίπου, στην προσπάθειά τους να περάσουν και αυτά παράνομα στην Ελλάδα σκοτώθηκαν ακριβώς με τον ίδιο τρόπο δύο Ιρανοί.

Επίσης πριν από τρεις περίπου μήνες πνίγηκε ένας Ιρανός όταν προσπαθούσε να περάσει τον Εβρο για να μπει παράνομα στο ελληνικό έδαφος. Ο Ιρανός παρασύρθηκε από το νερό του ποταμού.



## Parti kurde décapité

VIENNE (Reuter) — Le secrétaire général du Parti démocratique du Kurdistan (PDK) pro-irakien, Abdoul Rahman Kassemou, et deux autres militants kurdes ont été assassinés, jeudi soir à Vienne, alors qu'ils rencontraient un quatrième homme porteur d'un passeport diplomatique iranien, a annoncé hier la police autrichienne.

Les tueurs ont fait irruption dans un appartement du centre-ville où les quatre hommes étaient en réunion, tirant à bout portant sur leurs victimes. Blessé à la mâchoire, le quatrième homme a pu sortir de l'immeuble et remettre une enveloppe contenant de l'argent à un Kurde iranien qui arrivait pour participer à la réunion.

### « Désastre »

Les trois victimes sont le secrétaire général du PDK, Abdoul Rahman Kassemou, 59 ans, son adjoint Abdoullah Ghaderi Azar et un Kurde irakien, Mahmoud Rasoul Fadil Mala. « C'est un désastre », a déclaré un représentant du PDK à Paris, où M. Kassemou vivait habituellement.

Le détenteur du passeport diplomatique iranien, qui s'est évanoui dans la rue après avoir remis 9000 dollars au cinquième homme, a été hospitalisé, incapable de parler. Son collègue, qui a reçu l'argent, est interrogé par la police.

Les assassins ont pu s'enfuir mais trois pistolets, qui ont probablement servi à l'attentat, ont été retrouvés dans une poubelle et par terre dans un autre quartier de Vienne.

La police a précisé ne pas avoir de preuves que des services secrets étrangers aient été impliqués dans cette affaire. Un journaliste autrichien qui avait récemment interviewé M. Kassemou a déclaré que ce dernier était favorable à une solution politique, plutôt que militaire, au conflit entre les Kurdes et le gouvernement iranien. Notons que le président du PDK, Massoud Barzani, avait échappé à une tentative d'attentat il y a dix ans à Vienne.



Le secrétaire général du PDK, Abdoul Rahman Kassemou. (Kouristan)

## KASSEMBLU CİNAYETİ

### İki İranlı için tutuklama kararı



İran Kürdistan Demokrat Partisi Genel Sekreteri Abdül Rahman Kassemou ve iki arkadaşının Viyana'da öldürülmesi olayıyla ilgili olarak İran'ın Viyana Büyükelçiliği'nde çalışan iki İranlı için tutuklama emri çıkarıldı.

VIYANA/PARİS (Cumhuriyet) — Viyana'da geçen perşembe günü, İran Kürdistan Demokrat Partisi Genel Sekreteri Abdül Rahman Kassemou ve iki arkadaşının öldürülmesi olayıyla ilgili olarak İran'ın Viyana Büyükelçiliği'nde çalışan iki İranlı için tutuklama emri çıkarıldı bildirildi. Bu arada Kassemou'nun cenazesi dün Paris'e getirildi. Parti siyasi bürosu adına bir basın toplantısı düzenleyen örgütün üst düzey iki yetkilisi, bir kez daha Tahran rejimini, Kassemou'yu tuzağa düşürüp öldürtmekle suçladılar. Tahran radyosu da dün dışişleri yetkililerine dayanarak verdiği haberde İran hükümetinin bütün görüşme çabalarına rağmen Avusturya polislerinin emperyalist propaganda ve devrim karşıtı grupların önerilerine uyarak böyle bir karar aldığını öne sürdü.

AA'nın Viyana çıkışı haberine göre Avusturya polisi perşembe gecesi cinayet yerinde Kürt liderlerle görüşme yapmak üzere gelen bir Kürdün tutuklandığını hatırlattı. İran muhalefet kaynaklarının bu kişinin Tahran ajanı olduğu yolundaki iddialarına rağmen Avusturya polisi söz konusu Kürt ile polis tarafından suikasta karıştığı henüz kesin olarak belirlenemeyen bir başka kişi için tutuklama emri çıkarıldığını belirtti. Alman Haber Ajansı DPA'nın haberine göre Viyana'daki İran Büyükelçiliği'nde gizlendikleri sanılan bu kişilerin adları Amir Mansur Bazargan ve Mus-

tafa Hacıfadi. Sabetay Varol'un haberine göre Paris'te bir basın toplantısı düzenleyen İKDP Siyasi Bürosu'ndan Abdullah Hasanzade, Kassemou'nun siyasi bir çözüm bulmak amacıyla İran rejimi temsilcileriyle müzakere başlattığını, geçen yılın son günlerinde yapılan ilk iki toplantıdan sonra tarafların Viyana'da 12-13 Temmuz tarihlerinde bir araya geldiklerini vurguladı.

İran'ın, cinayeti Halkın Mücahitleri, ya da Irak hükümetine mal etmeye çalıştığını bir soru üzerine dile getiren İKDP'nin yeni Avrupa temsilcisi Hasan Şerefi ise basın toplantısında, "Kendileri ile birçok konuda görüş ayrılığımız var. Bizi hasım olarak görüyorlar. Ters kanıtlanmadıkça biz İran-İslam rejimini cinayetten sorumlu tutuyoruz," dedi.

Basın toplantısında Avusturya polislerinin cinayete ilgili olarak ifadesini almak istediği iki İranlı halen Viyana'daki İran elçiliğine sığındıkları ve gazetelelerin, bunların İstanbul'dan geldiklerini yazdıklarının hatırlatılması üzerine İKDP'nin iki temsilcisi bu bilgiyi doğrulamaktan kaçındılar; "Avusturya polisinde bu bilgilerin tamamı var," dediler.

Öte yandan Kassemou'nun cenazesi bugün Paris'teki Kürt Enstitüsü önünde bir süre beklendikten sonra ünlü Père Lachaise Mezarlığı'nda toprağa verilecek. Birçok önemli kişilerin Kassemou'nun cenaze töreninde hazır bulunacağını ifade edildi.







# EL PAIS

DIARIO INDEPENDIENTE DE LA MAÑANA

15 de julio-89/

## Asesinados tres kurdos del Partido Democrático

**VIENA.**— Tres dirigentes del Partido Democrático del Kurdistan Iraní (PDKI), entre los que se encuentra su secretario general, *Abdel Rahman Gassemlou*, fueron asesinados el jueves por la noche en un atentado perpetrado en un apartamento de Viena, según informó en un comunicado oficial el ministro de Interior austriaco. AFP

16. 07. 1989

## Irán dialogó con los kurdos asesinados

**VIENA.**— La embajada iraní en Viena ha confirmado que los tres dirigentes kurdos asesinados el pasado jueves en la capital austriaca, estaban negociando con el Gobierno de Teherán para encontrar una solución pacífica a sus problemas. La Policía sigue vigilando estrechamente las fronteras con el fin de capturar a los asesinos. EFE



# Cumhuriyet

led by Yunus Nadi, 1924 (87 years)

Saturday 22, July 1989

Published by Cumhuriyet

Özgürlük ve demokrasi düşmanı karanlık güçler tarafından 13 Temmuz 1989'da Viyana'da katledilen



İ.K.D.P. Genel Sekreteri

**Dr. Abdurrahman Kasimli**

İ.K.D.P.M.K. üyesi ve Avrupa Temsilcisi

**Abdullah Kadiri**

Viyana Üniversitesi öğretim üyesi

**Dr. Fazıl Resul'ü**

saygıyla anıyor ve Kürt halkına başsağlığı diliyoruz

Ahmet Abakay, Ziya Acar, Taner Akçam, Çağatay Anadol, Faruk Aral, Nizamettin Anç, Mehmet Ali Arslan, Seydo Aslandağ, Atilla Aşut, Ahmet Atak, Ergin Atasü, İ.Metin Ayçilek, Vedat Aydın, Ergun Aydınoğlu, Mahmut Bakır, Müslim Başaran, Oya Baydar, Gültekin Bekdemir, Mehdi Bektaş, İsmail Beşikçi, Faruk Bildirici, Serpil Bildirici, Çiğdem Bilek, Tayfun Bilgin, Tanıl Bora, Mehmet Emin Bozarslan, Ali Bucak, Yümnü Budak, Kemal Burkan, İrfan Cüre, İlay Demir, Necmi Demir, T.Ziya Eldincel, Şerafettin Elçi, Aydın Engin, Hüseyin Erdem, Muzaffer Erdost, Mehmet Ali Eren, Tuğrul Eryılmaz, Ümit Fırat, Gültekin Gazioğlu, Murat Genç, F.Hasan Gökçe, Fethi Gümüş, Semih Gümüş, Fatoş Güney, Paşa Güven, Talat İnanc, Aktan İnce, Ahmet Kaçmaz, Refik Karakoç, Ahmet Kerdam, Muhittin Karkın, Şerafettin Kaya, Handan Koç, Saim Koç, Ertuğrul Kürkçü, Ömer Laçiner, Roland Mönch, Yaslı Mönch Bucak, Kendal Nezan, Ahmet Zeki Okçuoğlu, Abdullah Onay, Mahmut Ortakaya, Şadi Ozansü, Mustafa Özer, Banu Pakar, Şivan Perver, Celal Polat, Yeyel Sanaozen, Günür Savran, Sungur Savran, Mahir Sayın, Salih Sömer, Erdal Talu, Server Tanilli, İbrahim Tezan, Mete Tunçay, Ahmet Türk, Erbil Tuşalp, Bülent Uluer, Kemal Uzun, Mehmet Uzun, İ.Şerif Vanlı, Mehmet Vural, Hatice Yaşar, Şilan Yaşar, İrfan Yavru, Yücel Yeşügöz, Mehmet Yılmaz, Mustafa Yusufoğlu, Halil Yüksel, Ragıp Zarakolu



THE TIMES sat. july 15 1989

## DR ABDORRAHMAN QASSEMLOU Leader of the Kurds of Iran

Dr Abdorrahman Qassemloou, General-Secretary of the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran, was assassinated in Vienna on July 13, during a European tour. He was 58.

He was one of the most important Kurdish political figures of his generation. A moderate politician demanding only a modest degree of autonomy for the country's three-million-strong Kurdish minority, he was nevertheless rejected by the new revolutionary regime in 1979. When, later, war broke out between Iran and Iraq, his several thousand guerrillas often tied down upwards of 200,000 Iranian troops.

He was born in December 1930 into a landowning family in the Qassemloou Valley near the city of Rezaieh (now again called Urmia) and went to school in the city. While still a schoolboy, he was inspired by the uprising of the Kurds under President Mohammad Qazi, the founder of the KDPI. After the hanging of President Qazi in 1947, he went to Iraq and eventually found himself a left-wing exile in Europe, where he studied economics at Paris and Prague.

He was then engaged in several unsuccessful attempts



at leading Kurdish uprisings in Iran in the 1960s and 1970s while based in Prague and teaching at the university there. In 1973, he was elected the leader of the party and moved to Paris in 1976 to teach Kurdish at the Sorbonne. By then he had become disillusioned by the Soviet Union.

Five months before the Iranian revolution in February, 1979, he returned to Kurdistan where he set up numerous branches of the party. His supporters captured

large amounts of arms from the army and police stations during the revolution and subsequently large areas of western Iran, including many towns. Eventually, however, the Iranian army and Revolutionary Guards were able to break the back of the movement even before the war with Iraq came to an end in July last year. The KDPI now exists mainly in the form of roaming guerrilla bands.

Dr Qassemloou received some material support from Iraq but retained enough independence to antagonize that government by condemning its use of chemical weapons against the Kurds of Iraq. Consequently he remained on friendly terms with most Iraqi Kurdish leaders.

Speaking eight Middle Eastern and European languages, he was by far the most educated leader that the Kurds have ever produced. He was also extremely good company, believing in having a good time whenever possible. During his annual visits to Paris, he could often be seen in the pavement cafes in the centre of the city drinking into the small hours, surrounded by poets and poetesses. He leaves two daughters.



Samedi 15 et dimanche 16 juillet 1989

# TRIBUNE DE GENEVE

**ANTI-IRANIEN NOTOIRE**

## Un chef kurde abattu à Vienne

Le dirigeant du Parti démocratique kurde en Autriche et deux autres membres du parti ont été tués jeudi soir au cours d'une fusillade dans un appartement, a-t-on appris de source policière.

Selon les informateurs, qui ont requis l'anonymat, Abderrahman Ghassem-lou, le chef du Parti kurde anti-iranien et ses deux compagnons ont été tués d'une balle dans la tête, à bout portant. Il s'agit apparemment d'une « exécution punitive », selon les sources.

### « Des fins politiques »

La radio autrichienne a annoncé que la fusillade avait « des fins politiques » et que les agresseurs avaient pu prendre la fuite.

La police, qui a ouvert une enquête, déclare ignorer les motifs de la fusillade, qui a fait en outre un blessé grave, une personne atteinte au front et hospitalisée dans un état grave.

La minorité ethnique kurde repré-

sente quelque 20 millions de personnes vivant en Turquie, Iran, Irak, ainsi que des enclaves de 500.000 habitants chacune en Syrie et en URSS. Les Kurdes irakiens, iraniens et turcs exigent que leurs gouvernements centraux leur accordent l'autonomie.

Le Parti démocratique kurde est leur principale formation politique: une aile du parti combat le gouvernement irakien, et l'autre le gouvernement iranien à Téhéran.

### La guerre des Kurdes

Abderrahman Ghassem-lou, qui avait passé plusieurs années en France, était le leader de l'aile iranienne du parti, hors la loi. Lui et ses compagnons vivaient en Autriche en exil politique.

Il avait déclaré en avril dernier dans une interview à un journal autrichien souhaiter la poursuite de « la guerre des Kurdes contre Téhéran et Bagdad », en dépit du cessez-le-feu intervenu dans le Golfe Persique. (AP)



# Kurdenmorde: Terrorkommando sprengte Wiener Geheimtreffen



Bild: FRANZOSA  
Tot: Kurdenführer  
Abdul Ghassemlou

**Killer stürmten die Wohnung und begannen wortlos zu schießen**

Vom Mordkommando fehlt jede Spur, nur die Waffen wurden gefunden. Der einzige Überlebende des Blutbades ist kaum ansprechbar. (Berichte Seite 18 und 19.)



**D**er schreckliche Terrorüberfall auf das geheime Treffen der kurdischen Exil-Politiker am Donnerstag war nicht der erste Überfall dieser Art in Wien:

1979 wurde auf den Präsidenten der „Demokratischen Partei Kurdistans-Irak“, Massoud Barzani, in Wien-Meidling ein Attentat verübt. Zwei Leibwächter des

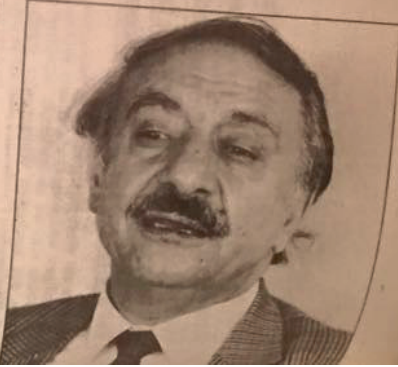
## Nicht das erste Attentat

Mannes, er ist der Sohn des Parteigründers, wurden verletzt. Barzani entging dem Kugelhaud un-

mutete man damals den irakischen Geheimdienst. Auch hier hatte kurz vor dem Überfall ein Geheimtreffen kurdischer Gruppierungen stattgefunden.

Am 12. Juli 1987 wurde der Führer der „Tulfan-Partei“, der in Frankreich lebende Iräner Hamit Reza Chitgar, 38, in einer Wohnung in der Barmherzigengasse 16, Wien-Landstraße, erschossen aufgefunden. Die Tatwaffe: Eine Pistole vom Kaliber 7,65 mm.

Der Feme-Mord an dem Exil-Iräner wurde übrigens erst nach einem Hinweis des KURIER aufgedeckt. Wer hinter der „Hinrichtung“ steckt, konnte von der Polizei bis jetzt nicht geklärt wer-



Samstag, 16. Juli 1987 / Nr. 104/71, 3. Jg.

**Neue Kronen Zeitung**  
UNABHÄNGIG

Wien 19, Muthgasse 2, Telefon 36 01-0

## Iranischer Offizier als Kronzeuge

Bei dem Kronzeugen des Terrorüberfalls in Wien handelt es sich um einen hohen Offizier der iranischen Revolutionsgarden. Er wurde ausgeschiedet, um mit führenden Politikern der Demokratischen Kurdenpartei Persiens (DKP) über eine mögliche Annäherung zu verhandeln. Gerade in dem Moment, als eine Einigung nahe schien, kamen die Killer. Trotz einer Großfahndung der Polizei fehlt von dem Mordkommando jede Spur.

Thema des hochrangigen Geheimtreffens in einer Wohnung in der Linken Bahngasse 5 in Wien-Landstraße am Donnerstagabend war nach Angaben der iranischen Botschaft die Frage, ob Dr. Abdul Ghassemlou (59), der im Irak stationierte Vorsitzende der DKP, freies Geleit für die Einreise nach Persien bekommt. Eigens für dieses Treffen wurde der für Kurdenfragen zuständige iranische Offizier Abdullah Rahimi nach Wien geschickt. Wie berichtet, überlebte Abdullah Rahimi als einziger der in der Wohnung Anwesenden das Attentat. Er wurde am Kiefer schwer verletzt und wird derzeit in der Hals-Nasen-Ohren-Abteilung des Franz Josefs Spitals von Polizisten rund um die Uhr bewacht. Von ihm erhoffen die Kriminalisten weitere Aussagen.



Der ermordete Kurdenführer Dr. Abdul Ghassemlou (59), im Bild links, während einer Besprechung mit befreundeten Politikern in deren Hauptquartier in der iranischen Stadt Mahabad. Foto: Camera Press

Dr. Ghassemlou und ein weiterer Politiker der DKP, Abdullah Ghaderi-Azar (37), sowie der in Wien lebende und am Institut für internationale Politik beschäftigte Mahmoud Fadel Rasoul (38) wurden von dem Terrorkommando durch gezielte Schüsse aus schallgedämpften Pistolen getötet.



L'assassinat d'Abdel Rahman Ghassemlou à Vienne

## Le mouvement autonomiste kurde iranien décapité

Le mouvement autonomiste kurde iranien décapité, la question se pose de savoir qui a commandité l'assassinat de l'animateur principal de ce mouvement, Abdel Rahman Ghassemlou, tué, jeudi soir 13 juillet, de deux balles dans la tête dans un appartement viennois en compagnie de deux autres personnes (le Monde du 15 juillet). Secrétaire général du Parti démocratique du Kurdistan d'Iran (PDKI), la plus importante formation kurde en lutte contre le régime islamique dès l'accession au pouvoir de l'imam Khomeiny, en 1979, Abdel Rahman Ghassemlou ne manquait pas d'ennemis, jusqu'au sein de son parti.

Contesté par certains dirigeants du PDKI - qui ont finalement fait scission - pour la façon autoritaire dont, selon eux, il menait ses *pehmergas* (combattants kurdes), Ghassemlou a toujours affiché publiquement sa préférence pour une solution négociée de la question kurde, y compris au plus fort des combats qui opposaient ses hommes aux gardiens de la révolution islamique ou à l'armée régulière iranienne. Tout au long de ces dix années de lutte pour l'*autonomie dans la démocratie*, et malgré la dureté des affrontements ainsi que la sauvagerie avec laquelle Téhéran a souvent traité les *pehmergas*, le numéro un de la rébellion kurde n'a cessé de tendre la perche au régime islamique. Il y a eu de nombreux contacts entre Téhéran et le PDKI, et ce dès le début de la révolte de 1979. Mais, dans le même temps, le pouvoir central a toujours refusé l'idée d'une autonomie du Kurdistan.

Monde du 15 juin). Il est vrai que, depuis ces dernières années et après avoir un temps remporté des succès qui leur avaient permis de « libérer » une bonne partie du Kurdistan iranien, les *pehmergas* avaient dû abandonner la plupart de leurs positions pour se réfugier en territoire irakien. Cette volonté de garder constamment la porte ouverte aux négociations a déjà valu au PDKI une rupture retentissante avec les Moudjahidines du peuple de M. Massoud Radjavi (lui aussi basé en Irak), qui ont accusé Ghassemlou de « trahison ». Or dès l'annonce de la mort du dirigeant kurde, Radio Téhéran a annoncé qu'au moment de son assassinat il négociait avec un émissaire iranien un sauf-conduit pour rentrer en Iran. La radio iranienne a également fait état d'une dégradation des relations entre le PDKI et Bagdad.

Si la présence d'un émissaire iranien a été confirmée par la police autrichienne, selon laquelle un homme présent dans l'appartement et blessé lors de la fusillade était porteur d'un passeport diplomatique iranien au nom de Mohamed Djafari Sahraroudi, la référence à une demande de sauf-conduit paraît extrêmement douteuse.

M. Radjavi a, quant à lui, rejeté la responsabilité du meurtre de Ghassemlou sur Téhéran, affirmant, sans toutefois préciser sa pensée ni étayer son hypothèse, que le responsable kurde avait été « victime des négociations » engagées avec le régime islamique. « La signification de ce crime pour le peuple, les *pehmergas* et les groupes politiques du Kurdistan d'Iran est qu'aucun compromis n'est possible », déclare M. Radjavi. Des propos qui pourraient passer pour un avertissement.

La diplomatie



# La oscura trama del «crimen de Viena»

## Relaciones cruzadas entre Irán e Irak y la autoría del triple asesinato

EL INDEPENDIENTE / 17

«Sólo los emisarios del iraní estaban al tanto de las conversaciones, para nosotro que ha sido el régimen que se responsabilizará del crimen», el portavoz del PDKI (Partido Democrático del Kurdistán) en París, contactado por EL INDEPENDIENTE, responde así de tajante a la pregunta sobre la identidad de los autores del triple asesinato de Viena. Según este portavoz del PDKI, el diplomático iraní Mehdi Karubi, que resultó herido en el atentado, era un representante del presidente del Kurdistán iraní, Ali Akbar Hafezpour. Yafar Saharabi ha sido arrestado por la policía austriaca pero que debido a las heridas recibidas en la explosión no ha podido aún responder a la profundidad a los interrogantes, parece ser una persona clave a la hora de desvelar los detalles de esta oscura trama. La policía austriaca ha informado de las armas utilizadas en la explosión española. Por otra parte, el jefe de la Brigada Patriótica del Kurdistán de Irak, Jalal Talebani, que fue asesinado junto a Abdul Rahman Ghasemlú, en España hace unos meses, ha acusado en

un comunicado hecho público en Viena, al jefe del estado iraní, Saddam Hussein y a «los círculos que le son próximos» de estar detrás del asesinato de los tres dirigentes kurdos, el pasado jueves en Viena. «Este atentado», dice el comunicado del UPK, «hace fracasar una prometedora iniciativa para llegar a una solución pacífica del problema kurdo en Irán».

Estas diferencias en cuanto a la atribución de los asesinatos de Viena, entre las dos organizaciones kurdas quizás más importantes, PDKI y UPK, son reflejo de la peculiar situación de este pueblo atrapado en los conflictos de intereses de los regímenes de los que dependen y frente a los que luchan. Para el UPK, que representa a la más fuerte organización de los kurdos de Irak, el principal enemigo es el régimen de Bagdad mientras que para el partido al que pertenecían los tres dirigentes asesinados, el combate más duro es frente al régimen islámico de Teherán.

El cuerpo de Abdul Rahman Ghasemlú, será enterrado hoy en el cementerio Pere Lachaise de París tras haber estado expuesto en una capilla ardiente en la sede del Instituto Kurdo de la capital francesa. (AFP/corresponsal)



JOSE CABALLERO

Abdul Rahman Ghasemlú, dirigente kurdo asesinado en Viena



# Herald INTERNATIONAL Tribune.

Published With The New York Times and The Washington Post

PARIS, SATURDAY-SUNDAY, JULY 15-16, 1989

## 3 Kurds Die In Shooting In Vienna

*Compiled by Our Staff From Dispatches*

VIENNA — Gunmen broke into a meeting of Kurdish activists in an apartment here and killed three men, including the leader of an anti-Iranian faction, the Austrian police said Friday.

A fourth person in the apartment, a Kurd bearing an Iranian diplomatic passport, was seriously wounded, said Werner Liebhart, a police chief in Vienna.

The police said the dead included Abdul-Rahman Qassemou, 59, the leader of the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan.

Mr. Qassemou was a critic of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the Islamic leader who died early in June. In a 1986 interview with the French newspaper *Liberation*, he said that Iran had "officially elevated terrorism to the level of a national policy."

According to Mr. Qassemou, the Kurdish party's aims in Iran were "autonomy within a democratic regime, not independence or

secession."

During the Gulf War, a Kurdish force of 10,000 cooperated militarily with Iraq, and the Kurdish party was allied for four years with the leftist Mujahidin Khalq in Iran.

The 20 million Kurds are scattered across parts of Turkey, Iran, and Iraq, with enclaves of 500,000 each in Syria and the Soviet Union.

Mr. Liebhart, the Austrian police officer, said the two others who were killed in the apartment were Abdullah Ghaderi-Azar, 37, a Kurd who the police said had identification papers issued by France, and Fadel Mala Mahmoud Rasoul, 38, who was born in Iraq but has been an Austrian citizen since 1985.

The three victims were living in Austria as political exiles.

Mr. Liebhart said the shooting occurred at 7:20 P.M. Thursday near the city center. Referring to the Kurds' meeting, he said: "It seems that more than four people took part. We have to assume that it was a political discussion."

Mr. Qassemou, who was educated in France, lived there in exile for several years. He said in an Austrian newspaper interview published in April that the war of the Kurds against Iran and Iraq would continue despite the cease-fire between those two countries that took effect in August 1988.

(AP, AFP)



# Mordkommando tötete Kurdenführer in Wien

*Drei Teilnehmer eines Geheimtreffens mit Kopfschüssen ermordet / Verletzter hat iranischen Diplomatenpaß / Kurdenführer Ghassemlou unter den Opfern*

Wien/Berlin (ap/taz) - Drei kurdische Politiker sind am Donnerstagabend bei einem Geheimtreffen in Wien von einem Mordkommando regelrecht hingerichtet worden. Die Opfer, darunter Abdol Rahman Ghassemlou, der Generalsekretär der Kurdisch-Demokratischen Partei (KDP), wurden mit Kopfschüssen getötet, ein vierter Mann, ein Kurde mit einem iranischen Diplomatenpaß, wurde durch einen Schuß in den Mund schwer verletzt. Von den vermutlich zwei oder drei Tätern fehlte nach Angaben der Polizei vom Freitag noch jede Spur.

Der Leiter der für politische Delikte zuständigen Wiener Staatspolizei, Liebhart, teilte mit, daß neben dem 59jährigen Ghassemlou auch der 37jährige Kurde Abdullah Ghaderi-Azar, Europa-Verehrer der KDP, und der 38jährige irakische Kurde Fadel Mala Mahmoud Rasol erschossen wurden. Der Name des schwerverletzten Iraners wurde nicht mitgeteilt.

Nach dem Stand der polizeilichen Ermittlungen von Freitagmittag waren die Führer von mindestens zwei verschiedenen kurdischen Gruppierungen in der Woh-



Abdol Rahman Ghassemlou  
Foto: A. Taheri

nung im dritten Wiener Gemeindebezirk zusammengekommen. Mindestens vier Personen nahmen an dem Gespräch teil, über dessen Inhalt keine Informationen vorliegen. Offen bleibt daher zunächst, ob es sich um ein Geheimtreffen zwischen Kurdenführern und Vertretern der Teheraner Regierung handelte. In iranischen Kreisen in der Bundesrepublik hieß es, bereits Anfang März habe es ein solches Treffen im irakischen Teil Kurdistans gegeben, in einem Gebiet, das von einer mit Iran verbündeten irakischen Kurdenorganisation kontrolliert wird. Ghassemlou hatte sich in der Vergangenheit für eine politische Lösung des Kurdenproblems eingesetzt, ohne jedoch den bewaffneten Kampf gegen die Regierungstruppen einzustellen. Vor einigen Jahren spaltete sich eine radikalere Gruppe von der KDP ab, die mit den oppositionellen iranischen Volksmudschaheddin zusammenarbeitet. Nach Angaben der Polizei waren

## Kein Frieden in Kurdistan

Zum Mord an dem iranischen Kurdenführer Ghassemlou

In den kurdischen Bergen herrscht Trauer. Immer ein...





# Hürriyet

15 TEMMUZ 1989 CUMARTESİ

Kurucusu: Sedat Simavi 1896-1953

## Viyana'da üç Kürt lideri öldürüldü

VIYANA, (DPA)

**A**VUSTURYA'nın başkenti Viyana'da toplantı yapan 4 İranlı Kürt liderden üçü, henüz kimlikleri saptanamayan kişiler tarafından kurşuna dizilerek öldürüldü, biri de ağır şekilde yaralandı. Avusturya İçişleri Bakanlığı, şehirde bir araya gelen İran yönetimine karşı Kürt Demokrasî Partisi'nin (KDP) üyelerinin başlarına kurşun sıkılarak öldürüldüklerini, saldırıyı hangi örgütün dü-

zenlediğinin henüz saptanmadığını açıkladı.

Ölenler arasında KDP Genel Sekreteri **Abdel Rahman Ghassemli**'nin de bulunduğu öne sürüldü. Kürt liderlerinin toplandıkları evin kapısında, kapının zorlanarak açıldığını gösteren izlere rastlanmadığı, suikasti düzenleyenlerin KDP liderleri tarafından tanınan kişiler oldukları ihtimali üzerinde durulduğu belirtildi. Önceki akşam meydana gelen olay ile ilgili geniş bilgi vermekten kaçınan Viyana Emniyet

Müdürlüğü ve Avusturya İçişleri Bakanlığı yetkilileri, olaydan sonra başkentte sıkı önlemler alınarak saldırganların aranmaya başlandığını açıkladılar. Öldürülenler arasında bulunduğu iddia edilen **Abdel Rahman Ghassemli**'nin İran yönetimine karşı çıkanların lideri olduğu ve uzun süreden beri Fransa'da yaşamakta olduğu belirtildi. Avusturya İçişleri Bakanlığı, 3 Kürt liderinin öldüğü ve bir kişinin de ağır şekilde yaralandığı olay ile ilgili soruşturmaları sürdürüyor.



## Vienna: per l'uccisione del leader curdo mandato di cattura contro due iraniani

VIENNA — (r.e.) Intrigo internazionale dietro l'uccisione di Abdul Gassemlou, il capo storico dei curdi dell'Iran «liquidato» insieme ad altri due compagni di lotta nella capitale austriaca il 13 luglio scorso. La polizia ha infatti spiccato un mandato di cattura nei confronti di due iraniani che sarebbero coinvolti nella sparatoria. Ma i due, Hadji Mostafavi e Ami Mansour Bozorgian, si sono resi irreperibili. Il primo ha forse già lasciato l'Austria, il secondo (un diplomatico) si trova — secondo fonti curde — nell'ambasciata iraniana. Gli inquirenti avrebbero voluto interrogarlo ma i rappresentanti di Teheran dopo aver fissato un appuntamento per un colloquio lo hanno disdetto senza motivo.

Gli austriaci mantengono tuttavia un atteggiamento prudente e riservato forse per non voler creare un caso diplomatico con gli irrequieti ayatollah che già hanno protestato per i due mandati di cattura. Questo atteggiamento ha provocato l'immediata reazione dei curdi. Nel corso di una conferenza stampa, il portavoce del Partito democratico del Kurdistan iraniano hanno lanciato pesanti accuse a Teheran: dietro l'attentato — hanno affermato — c'è la mano del regime.

Il presidente dell'Istituto curdo di Parigi, il professor Kendal Nezan ha ricordato che la strage è caduta esattamente 40 giorni dopo la

morte di Khomeini (una ricorrenza religiosa particolarmente sentita) e quindi il delitto può assumere il significato di un «sacrificio post-mortem» in onore dell'imam. Ghassemlou e i suoi guerriglieri hanno dato sempre filo da torcere al regime degli ayatollah e solo di recente il leader aveva lanciato segnali di dialogo.

Questi segnali si erano concretizzati in una serie di incontri svoltisi in luglio a Vienna. Quello del 13 doveva essere un incontro decisivo perché doveva servire alla messa a punto di un protocollo d'intesa tra i peshmerga e il regime iraniano. Al colloquio oltre a Ghassemlou erano presenti un suo collaboratore e un intellettuale curdo iracheno. Teheran era rappresentata da un ufficiale dei pasdaran con copertura diplomatica che è rimasto gravemente ferito nella sparatoria.

Resta da chiarire perché i presunti sicari iraniani abbiano sparato sul loro connazionale. Le ipotesi sono tante: negli ambienti dell'opposizione iraniana non si esclude che la trappola tesa a Ghassemlou possa rientrare in una faida tra le diverse anime che compongono il regime iraniano. Senza contare che Ghassemlou aveva nemici anche all'interno del suo stesso partito e la sua linea di apertura non era stata gradita da alcuni gruppi radicali dell'opposizione iraniana.

## VIENNA - La strage dei curdi provoca una crisi con Teheran

■ VIENNA — Guerra diplomatica tra Iran e Austria. Il capo della diplomazia austriaca Alois Mock ha lasciato intendere di considerare Teheran responsabile dell'uccisione di tre dirigenti curdi. In una intervista Mock ha avuto parole dure per gli iraniani che hanno rifiutato di collaborare con la polizia. Uno dei due khomeinisti ricercati per la strage si è rifugiato infatti nella propria ambasciata a Vienna.





## DR ABDORRAHMAN QASSEMLOU Leader of the Kurds of Iran

Dr Abdorrahman QassemLou, General-Secretary of the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran, was assassinated in Vienna on July 13, during a European tour. He was 58.

He was one of the most important Kurdish political figures of his generation. A moderate politician demanding only a modest degree of autonomy for the country's three-million-strong Kurdish minority, he was nevertheless rejected by the new revolutionary regime in 1979. When, later, war broke out between Iran and Iraq, his several thousand guerrillas often tied down upwards of 200,000 Iranian troops.

He was born in December 1930 into a landowning family in the QassemLou Valley near the city of Rezaieh (now again called Urmia) and went to school in the city. While still a schoolboy, he was inspired by the uprising of the Kurds under President Mohammad Qazi, the founder of the KDPI. After the hanging of President Qazi in 1947, he went to Iraq and eventually found himself a left-wing exile in Europe, where he studied economics at Paris and Prague.

He was then engaged in several unsuccessful attempts



at leading Kurdish uprisings in Iran in the 1960s and 1970s while based in Prague and teaching at the university there. In 1973, he was elected the leader of the party and moved to Paris in 1976 to teach Kurdish at the Sorbonne. By then he had become disillusioned by the Soviet Union.

Five months before the Iranian revolution in February, 1979, he returned to Kurdistan where he set up numerous branches of the party. His supporters captured

large amounts of arms from the army and police stations during the revolution and subsequently large areas of western Iran, including many towns. Eventually, however, the Iranian army and Revolutionary Guards were able to break the back of the movement even before the war with Iraq came to an end in July last year. The KDPI now exists mainly in the form of roaming guerrilla bands.

Dr QassemLou received some material support from Iraq but retained enough independence to antagonize that government by condemning its use of chemical weapons against the Kurds of Iraq. Consequently he remained on friendly terms with most Iraqi Kurdish leaders.

Speaking eight Middle Eastern and European languages, he was by far the most educated leader that the Kurds have ever produced. He was also extremely good company, believing in having a good time whenever possible. During his annual visits to Paris, he could often be seen in the pavement cafes in the centre of the city drinking into the small hours, surrounded by poets and poetesses. He leaves two daughters.





# Upsala Nya Tidning

UPPLANDS STORA MORGONTIDNING

JULI 1989 Nr 161 99:e årg

Redaktör: Göte Lindgren, Stu



Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou

## Wien Kurd- ledare mördad

STOCKHOLM/WIEN (TT)  
Iranska Kurdistans främste ledare, Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou, mördades i Wien sent på torsdagen.

Han hade just nått en preliminär överenskommelse med Iran, säger en väl insatt källa till TT. Efter decennier av krig mellan den iranska regeringen och KDPI, Ghassemlous parti, tycktes fred ligga inom räckhåll.

Två andra kurder sköts ihjäl tillsammans med Ghassemlou, när de skulle träffa en iransk delegation i en våning i Wien. Änkan efter en av dem, Suzanne Rasul, sade på fredagen:

— Vi har två teorier. Antingen var mördarna iranier som ville hindra Rafsanjanis folk från att få ett slut på kriget med kurderna eller också ligger Irak bakom.

### Svår situation

Under kriget mellan Iran och Irak kom de två stora irakiska organisationerna, Baransis KDPI och Talabani PUK, att samarbeta med Iran medan Ghassemlous KDPI tvingades till samarbete med Irak. Krigsläget ställde Ghassemlou inför en mycket svår situation.

Förhandlingarna mellan KDPI och Iran hade förberetts i över ett halvår och de första kontakterna togs med hjälp av Jalal Talabani, som står på god fot med den iranska regeringen men ständigt har hållit kontakt med Ghassemlou.

De andra mördade var Abdullah Qadir, KDPI:s representant i Paris, och Faez Rasul, irakisk kurd och numera österrikisk medborgare.

Ghassemlou och Qadir besökte Stockholm i juni som gäster vid Socialdemokraternas kongress.

För en svensk publik som har sett många påståenden om kurder i Falstermordets spår kan mordet på Ghassemlou tyckas vara en normal händelse i kurdisk miljö. Så mycket mer som KDPI under de senaste åren har drabbats av en svår splittring. Det finns just nu två KDPI.

Men det enda kurdiska parti som låter mördade avhoppade ledare är det turkkurdiska PKK.

### Feodal prägel

Kurdisk politik har en feodal prägel och ledarna spelar en mycket stor roll. De främsta ledarna — Baransi, Talabani, Ghassemlou och Ocalan — löper knappast risk att mördas av kurder, om inte av andra skäl så för att följderna för gällningsmannen och hans släkt skulle bli svåra.

På Abdullah Qadris kontor i Paris uppgav man på fredagsförmiddagen att den österrikiska polisen har gripit en person som misstänkt för mordet. Men den österrikiska nyhetsbyrån APA ville inte bekräfta påståendet.



Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou

## Skulle just byta sida

TEHERAN (TT-Reuter)

Den kurdiska gerillaledare som mördades i Wien i torsdags kväll skulle just byta sida från Irak till Iran, uppgav Teheranradion på fredagen. Ghassemlou hade blivit upprörd över att Irak utplånar kurdiska byar och beslutat att säga upp sina kontakter med den irakiska regimen, hette det.

Den 59-årige Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou skulle träffa en iransk diplomat för att diskutera fri lejd till Teheran, när han mördades.

Det är en helt möjlig version, sade polischefen i Wien, Werner Liebhart, när han hörde om Teheranradions uppgifter.

Mördarna bröt sig in i en våning i centrum av Wien, när tre kurder — Ghassemlou och två av hans medarbetare — hade diskuterat där i två timmar med en iranier, sade Liebhart.

Iranier skadades också men rusade ut på gatan, där han träffade en annan iranier som just kom till platsen. Den sårade iranieren fördes till sjukhus och den femte mannen, den anklagade iranieren, togs också om hand av polisen för förhör.



# HELSINGIN SANOMAT

Lauantaina 15. heinäkuuta 1989

44 sivua

1889-1989

Irtonumero 5 mk (sis.lvv)

N:o 189 (32590)

## Tärkeä kurdijohtaja ammuttiin Wienissä

Wien  
Jyrki Palo

Huomattava kurdijohtaja, Iranin kurdien demokraattisen puolueen puolehen Abdel Rahman Ghassemlou ja kaksi hänen avustajaansa ammuttiin Wienissä torstai-iltana.

Hänkin kanssaan oli samassa suunnossa Iranin hallituksen edustaja, joka haavoittui hengenvaarallisesti ja on sairaalahoitossa.

Arvellaan, että mahdollisena tunnettu Ghassemlou olisi wieniläisten kurdipiirien välityksellä järjestänyt yhteydenoton Iranin hallitukseen. Asunto, jossa murhat tapahtuivat, on vain korttelin päässä Iranin lähetystöstä, ja se oli vuokrattu ikkeliin.

Hävällän viranomaiset tutkinevat

heti rajavalvontaa ja käynnistivät suurensuunnitelmia, mutta ampajia ei ole tavoitettu. Mikään ryhmä ei ole ilmoittautunut teon tekijäksi.

Oletetaan murha-aseet, kaksi äänenvaimentimien varustettua käsiasetta ja konepistooli, löytyivät myöhemmin roskatynnyreistä noin kilometrin päästä murhapaikalta. Ampajat olivat päässeet asuntoon sisään murtautumatta.

Professori Abdel Rahman Ghassemlou, 59, eli suurimmaksi osaksi maanpaossa Euroopassa ja Irakissa. Häntä on 80-luvulla sanottu Iranin kurdien tärkeimmäksi johtajaksi. Hänen uskottiin nyt yrittäneen neuvotella paluustaan Iraniin.

Hänen tavoitteenaan ei ollut itsenäinen kurdivaltio, vaan autonomi kurdialueille. Häntä luonnehdittiin

neuvoteluhahukkaaksi ja kompromisseihin valmiiksi. Toisaalta hän vastusti yksipuoluevaltaa ja luoketui Iranin hallituksen arvostelijoita.

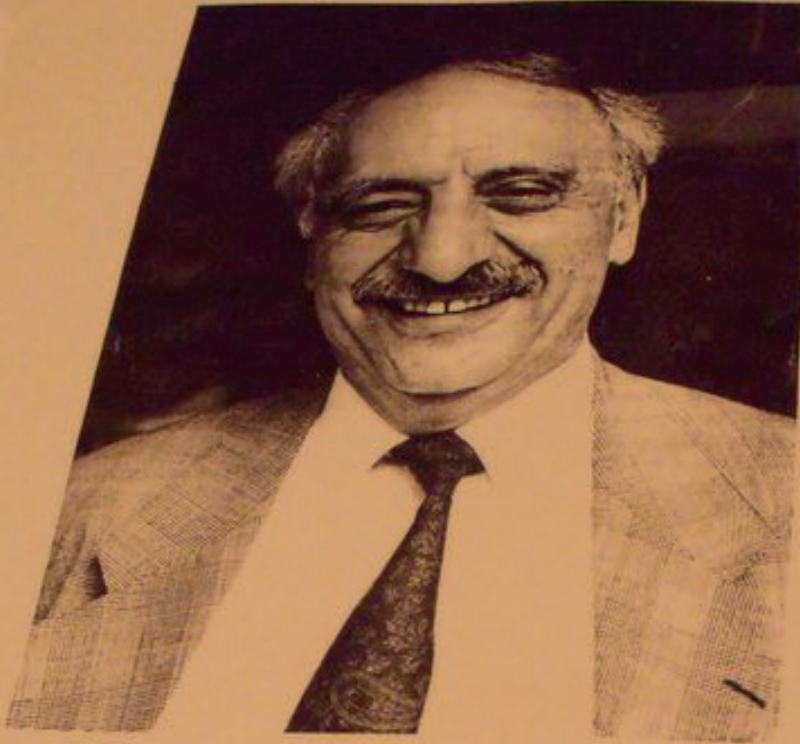
Ghassemloun puoleessa saattui viime vuonna repeämä, kun radikaaleja voimia lähti omille teilleen. Osa kurdeista haluaa luoda itsenäisen Kurdistanin aseellisen taistelun avulla.

Kurdit ovat ilmen omia valtiota oleva kansa, joka elää Irakin, Iranin, Turkin ja Neuvostoliiton alueilla. He joutuvat usein väimöjen kohteiksi.

Ghassemloun lisäksi Wienissä ammuttiin Iranin oppositioon edustaja Parisista Abdullah Ghaderi-Azar sekä Itävallassa rauhanratkaisulais-tokeella työskennellyt kurdi.



Iranin tärkein kurdijohtaja Abdel Ghassemlou ammuttiin torstai-iltana Wienissä.



ABDEL RAHMAN GHASSEMLOU

The greatest leader of the Kurdish people and General-secretary of the Kurdish Democratic Party in Iran, KDPI

TERROR MURDED IN WIEN DURING PEACE NEGOTIATION  
thursday. 13/7-89

WHY IS THE WORLD SILENT??? WE HAVE TO CONDEMN THIS MURDER!!  
GHASSEMLOU WORKED INTERNATIONALLY AND WAS FIGHTING WITH  
THE GUERILLA FOR THIS PEOPLE, A STRUGGLE FOR PEACE, FREEDOM  
AND DEMOCRACY. HE WAS THE LEADING DEMOCRATIC POLITICIAN  
OF 25 MILLION KURDISH PEOPLE, HUMAN BEINGS WICH IN THOUSANDS  
AND THOUSANDS ARE FORCED TO LEAVE THEIR HOME COUNTRIES AND  
LIVE IN EXILE , TO ESCAPE WAR, OPPRESSION AND MASSMURDER.

SUPPORT AND MAKE SOLIDARITY WITH THIS PEOPLE!  
WORK AGAINST RASISM! WE AND THE WORLD MUST REACT!!



**جول كوردستان الثورة**  
 نيوميا بالفتحة من الكردية والعربية  
 وتكون مرموقة وقصيرة طولها ٧٥/٧٥ متر  
 مساحتها ٧٥٠٠ متر  
 صلباتها ١٦٠٥ متر  
 اتوقيت بغداد

# تقنة

أجرت اذاعة لندن مؤخرًا مقابلة مع الأمين  
 عام حزبنا الرفيق سامي عبد الرحمن  
 زده فيها عن اقتراءات السفير العراقي  
 في لندن حول مجلة الهجرة الخيرة  
 التي يشنها النظام الفاشي في كردستان  
 من مقابلته من صفحة ٤٦

## برقية تعزية من حزبنا الى الحزب الديمقراطي الكردستاني - ايران

لكردستان ايران محب بل لعموم  
 كردستان العظيمة الاوصال، ولكل  
 التحريريين في منطقتنا .  
 ان الشهيد الخالد د. فاضل بندي  
 ساحل طيلة اكثر من اربعين  
 عامًا نضالًا شامًا ودورًا من  
 سبل حرية وكرامة كردستان، بان  
 مثال القائد المحل والناضال  
 وسيفي خالد في قلوب واهداس  
 أبناء شعبنا العظيمة في عموم  
 كردستان .

الى المكتب السياسي للحزب  
 الديمقراطي الكردستاني / ايران .  
 تحية تورية .  
 بمناسبة استشهاد الرفيقين  
 المناضلين د. عبدالرحمن فاضل  
 سكرتير الحزب الديمقراطي  
 الكردستاني / ايران، و عبدالله  
 قادري، عضو اللجنة المركزية  
 للحزب، والشخصية الوطنية د. فاضل  
 ملا محمود رسول، شوجه، وفيلسوف



**إنتفقدات  
 القائد المناضل  
 الدكتور فاضل  
 يعتب وخسارة  
 لعموم كردستان  
 ولكل التحريريين**

ان خبر وفاة تذكري هذا  
 الامجد هو مواصلة السير في  
 ذات الطريق والاهداف التي محسوا  
 بحياتهم من اجلها، طريق حرية  
 كردستان .  
 المحمد والخلود لشهيد كردستان .  
 د. فاضل بندي  
 الموت والخزي والعار للأعداء  
 المحتلين .  
 النصر ابدًا للمناضلين من اجل  
 الحرية .

بلونها الحر والاس، بالتفازي  
 اليكم ومن خلالكم الى كافة  
 رفائكم وعوائل الشهداء المناضلين  
 الذين استشهدوا على ايدي اعداء  
 الكرد وكردستان .  
 ان الحجة التي قامت بارتكاب  
 هذا العمل الارهابي الاجرام، انما  
 كانت تلك الحجة، هي جبه معادية  
 للتع الكرد، ومعادية للسلام  
 والحرية والديمقراطية . انما جبه  
 ارهابية، ونحن ندينها بشدة  
 ونفك عنها بكل قوانا .  
 ان فعدان القائد واليهتم  
 المناضل الدكتور فاضل، وفي مثل  
 هذه الظروف المحم والحماسة التي  
 نمر بها كردستان والشرق الاوسط،  
 يعتبر خسارة فادحة ليس بالسياسة

## من حزبنا تهنئة من الاشتراكي في العراق

لعزيز - سامي  
 من - الأمين العام لحزب  
 الديمقراطي الكردستاني .  
 الاعزاء - أعضاء اللجنة

في الذكرى الثامنة لتأسيس  
 المناضل، نتقدم اليكم ومن  
 لي كافة كواذر واعضاء  
 حزبكم سيأملن الشهاسي  
 كان بهذه المناسبة العالمية .  
 اسما الرفاق الاعزاء ندين  
 الامعان الاجرامية التي  
 النظام العراقي ضد أبناء  
 كردي، والتي تحدث بشكل  
 استعمال المواد الكيميائية  
 دولنا، والتي ظالمت  
 من التوج والناضال .  
 خصوصًا في مدينة  
 اضافة الى تدمير آلاف القرى  
 اهلها تحت دراهم  
 ان هذا النظام السدي  
 لدوائر الامبريالية وحيات  
 بلادنا، حددت له ادوارا  
 يودها لخدمة اسبابه  
 السيس والصهيونية العالمية  
 لرؤية في المنطقة .  
 اثم الاعتقال والتعديس  
 والتشريد للقوى الوطنية  
 كافة الى التحالف مع القوى  
 في المنطقة الى الحزب  
 الإيرانية الى مايجري  
 ن تدخل سافر في لبنان  
 القوى الانفصالية بالسلاح  
 تاوضح نار الحرب الاهلية  
 عدة على شعب لبنان  
 صهيونية العالمية، متخذيا  
 سافر القوى الوطنية  
 في وحركة التحرير الوطني  
 عمومًا، التي تهدف بالامان  
 حلة على وحدة لبنان  
 في وقرية .  
 ردا مشتركة قد بدلت من  
 وطنية عراقية

المكتب السياسي  
 لحزب الشعب الديمقراطي الكردستاني  
 ١٩٨٩/٧/٢٨







# Yekîtiya Sosyalîst

RIZGARÎ • DEMOKRASÎ • SOSYALÎZM

Hejmar 19

Tebax/İlon 1989

## "DR. QASIMLO DIJMINÊ ŞER û AŞIQÊ AŞÎTIYÊ BÛ"

- Dr. Qasimlo, Ebdullah Kadirî AZAR û Fazil Rezul, di 13ê Tirmehê de, Li Awusturya û Li bajarê Vîyana yê hatin kuştin. Dr. Qasimlo sekreterê giştî ya PDK-Iran ê bû. Ebdullah Kadirî AZAR endamê Komîta Merkezî Ya PDK-Iranê bû. Dr. Fazil RESUL li Unwersîta Vîyana mamoste bû.
- Gelê Kurdistanê, bi kuştin û şehîdî bûna ev her sê kesên hejra û têkoşer gelek eşya: Ji bo Tevgera Rizgariya Kurdistanê wendayîka gelek mezin e. Ji bo wê ji pêwîste ku em van kesan baş nasbikin. Bi taybetî jî, ji nêzik ve nasîkirina Dr. Qasimlo, ji bo gelê Kurdistanê û Tevgera Rizgariyê gelek girîng e. Ji bo ku Dr. Qasimlo serokê Tevgera Kurdistanê bû. Ji bo nasîkirina Dr. Qasimlo hewil dayîn watinîyeke. Kovara me jî, vê pîrê jî bo xwe wazîfe dîblne û ji bo nasîkirina Dr. Qasimlo hewil dide.
- Piştî kuştina Dr. Qasimlo û hevalên wê, Komîta Navendî Ya Partî Demokratî Kurdîstana Iran, di 14.07.1989 an de, belavokê belav kir. Di vê belavokê de, ji bo Dr. Qasimlo û Ebdullah Kadirî AZAR agahdariyên gelek baş tên dayîn. Loma, em di belavkirina vê belavokê de fêde dibînin.

Yekîtiya Sosyalîst

Xelkî Xebatkari Kurdistan Hevrêyên Qehremanê Partî Demokratî Kurdîstana Iran, Komîta Navendî Ya Partî Demokratî Kurdîstana Iran bi dilekî pîr bi dax û keser radigine ku roja 13 Temmuz 1989 hevrêyên têkoşer û xoşewîstê Gelê Kurd û azadîxwazên rasteqînî yên Iran, Dr. Ebdulrehman Qasimlo sekreterê giştî yê partiya me ku ji bo serdanek (ziyaret) kurt û ji bo hinek kar û barên partiye çûbû Vîyana, paytextê Awusturya. Li gel hevrê xoşewîst

ji aliyê rejîma dijî gel a Komara Îslamî hatiye kirin.

Dr. Ebdulrehman Qasimlo sala 1930 li bajarê Urmîyê hate dinyayê. Xwendina pêşîn û navendî li Urmîyê û paşê li Tahranê temam kir. Sala 1948 bo xwendinê çû Fransê û paşê jî wir jî çû Çekoslowakyê. Dura jî lîsansa zanîstî, komelayetî û siyasî li zanîngeha Prag da wergirt. Sala 1952 an di dema hukumeta niştîmanî Dr. Musedîq û li ceyrana bizotnêwa dijî împeryalîstî û millîkirina sineta neftê vegehiya Iran.



Kak Ebdullah Qadirî endamê Komîta Navendî û nûnerê Partî Li Ewropa ketin ber erîşên bi kiregirawanên kevneperestan û şehîd bûn.

Ev terora jî alî kîjan dijminê azadî û insanî hatiye kirin bi temamî ron nîne. Lê ew mehlumatê ku heta nûha ketiyê destê me, diyar dîke ku ev terora

Li Îranê piştî xebatek penç salan vekirî û dizî disa vegehiya Çekoslowakyayê. Li sala 1962 an da dixoreyê zanîstî û aborî li zanîngeha Pragê mamoste-tiya aborîya sermeyedarî, aborîya sosyalîstî û teoriya aborî kir. Li sala 1976 li Fransê li zanîngeha Sorbon li ser edebîyat û zimanê Kurdî 2 salan kar



# Han visste att han skulle bli mördad



Foto: DON TITELMAN  
Kurdledaren Abdel Rahman Ghassemlou mördades på i en tillfälligt i Wien av tre män som öppnade eld med pistoler försedda med ljuddämpare. Han träffades av två kulor i huvudet och dog omedelbart.

Av ULF NILSSON  
Abdel Rahman Ghassemlou visste alltid att hans liv var i fara.  
— Det händer som det ska hända, sa han ibland när vi träffades för ett par år sen i Paris.  
I går hände det.

Ghassemlou, som sen tidigare är var chef för Kurdistan Demokratiska Partiet (KDP) som i enlighet i Wien Ghassemlou med medarbetarna Abdulla Ghaderi Ajar, Ji, och Fadel Mala Mahmoud Rasool i Paris mer beläsa sig också den svenska diplomaten Mohammad Iyadati Sahrami till Ghassemlou om det skulle vara till Tjebens för ett förhållande med regeringen där — förhandlingar som blev svåra när Iran och Khomeini dog.  
Men Ghassemlou, som flytt sedan kurdiska under hans sitt vuxna liv, hade ofta. Någon som uppenbart var känd i gruppen knäskade på strömmen Ghaderi-Ajar öppnade och tre män rånade in. De öppnade eld med pistoler försedda med ljuddämpare. Ghassemlou, Ghaderi-Ajar och Rasool träffades av vardera två kulor i huvudet och dog omedelbart. Sahrami fick en kula i knäet, men fick inte skadas när på plats. Där överlevande har 9100



Foto: AP  
Männen som mördade Abdel Rahman Ghassemlou och hans medarbetare försvarar efter dådet. Wienpolisen har inga spår efter förövarna. Däramot har man hittat tre ljuddämparförsedda pistoler som tros vara mordvapnen.

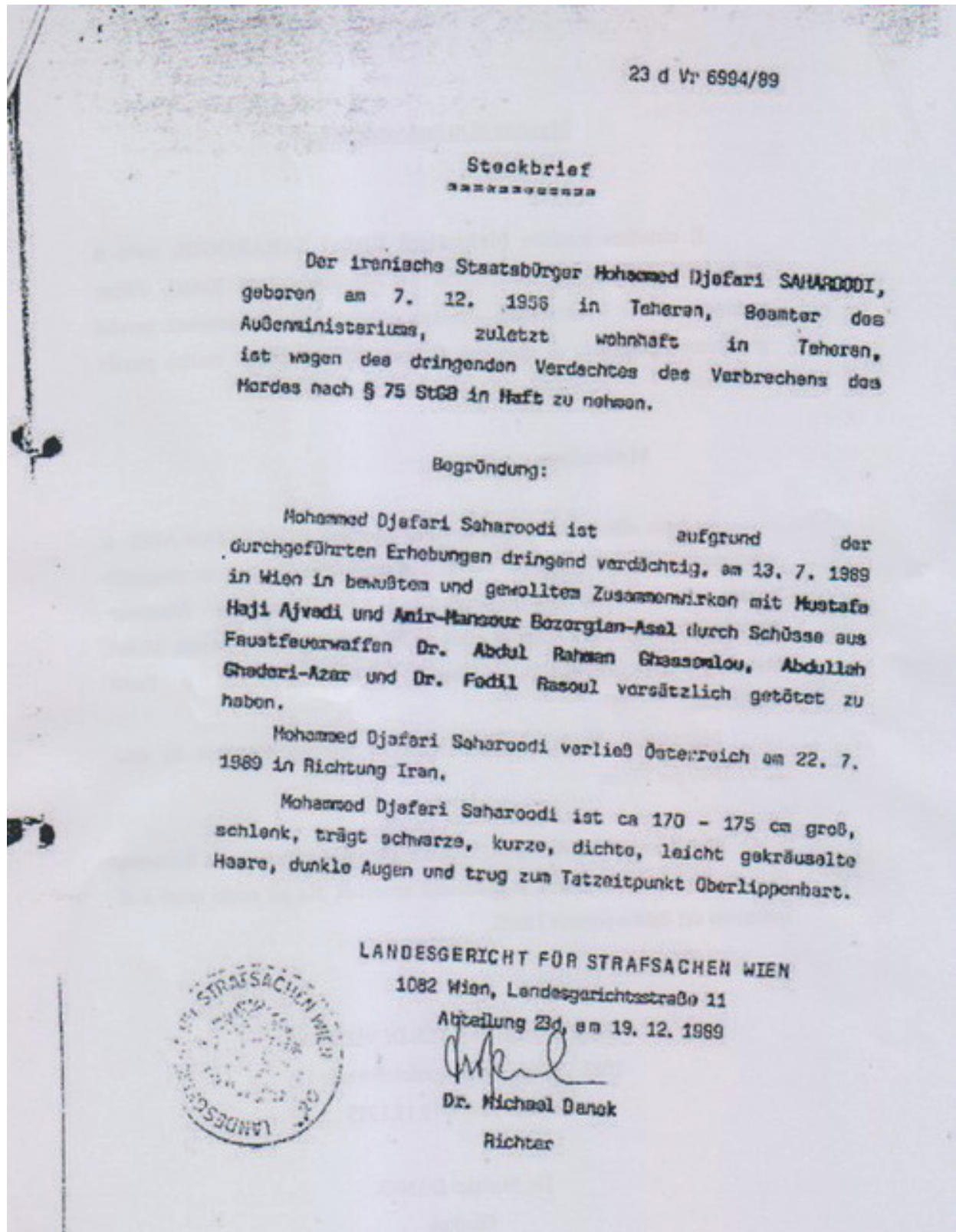
Efter Khomeinis död såg Ghassemlou en chans att förbättra relationerna med ledarna i Teheran. Efter hemliga kontakter bestod man att försöka förhandla fram en kompromiss som skulle ge kurderna åtminstone rätt till självstyre i den del av Kurdistan som ligger i Iran.  
Skotten i Wien krossade försättningsförhandlingarna — men vem var det som sköt?  
De misstänkta är många, men Wienpolisen — och politiska experter världen över — koncentrerar sig på två.  
■ **Iraks president Saddam Hussein**, en av samtidens brutalaste härskare. Saddam måste ha blivit utvisad när en allierad som Ghassemlou försökte smyga över till

av Ebbe Carlsson och Hans Holmér) för mordet på Olof Palme.  
Kurderna är tragiskt drabbade, en av de största grupper som tvingas leva i ett "icke-land", ett bergigt område uppdelat på fem länder. Omkring 25 miljoner kurder bor i Turkiet, Iran och Irak. Betydligt mindre grupper finns i Sovjet och Syrien. I vart och ett av de tre, stora, kurdiska områdena finns upprorscentrer — turkiska kurder mot Turkiet, irakiska mot Irak och iranska mot Iran. Man slåss för att få behålla sitt språk, sin kultur och sina religiösa sedvänjor. I Irak slåss kurderna dessutom för sina liv.  
Just när kriget mot Iran övergått i stillstånd lät Saddam Hussein gas-



# Austrian court

Part of the case of the Austrian court in connection with the assassination of Dr. Ghassemlou





## International

# Ausgereist trotz Mordverdacht

Die rechte Hand des iranischen Parlamentspräsidenten soll in Wien drei Kurden ermordet haben. Diese Woche nahm er in Genf an einer Konferenz teil und reiste unbehelligt wieder aus.

Von Maurice Thiriet  
und Bernhard Odehnal, Wien

Die Konferenz in Genf war gut besucht und hatte für die Gäste aus dem Iran offenbar grosse Bedeutung: Zur Tagung der Interparlamentarischen Union vom 7. bis 9. Oktober reiste sogar der iranische Parlamentspräsident Ali Larjani an. Nach Genf brachte Larjani seinen langjährigen Bürochef Mohammed Jafari Sahraroodi mit. Sahraroodi soll 1989 anlässlich von Geheimverhandlungen mit drei Kurdenführern in Wien an deren Ermordung direkt am Verhandlungstisch beteiligt gewesen sein. Obwohl Sahraroodi verwundet und seine zwei mutmasslichen Mithäter verhaftet werden konnten, durften alle drei in den Iran zurückreisen. Seither wird Sahraroodi wegen des mutmasslichen Dreifachmordes international gesucht. Dennoch konnte er unbehelligt in die Schweiz ein- und wieder ausreisen.

### Schwere Vorwürfe

Nun erhebt der österreichische Parlamentsabgeordnete Peter Pilz von den Grünen schwere Vorwürfe an die Adresse der österreichischen und schweizerischen Politik. «Die Schweizer Behörden haben sich beim österreichischen Innenministerium erkundigt, ob ein aufrichter Haftbefehl gegen Jafari Sahraroodi vorliege. Das Wiener Innenministerium hat bestätigt, dass es diesen Haftbefehl wegen Mordverdachts gibt», sagt Pilz. Dennoch sei nichts passiert, und der Gesuchte sei mit seiner Delegation bereits wieder weitergereist.

Es sei nicht das erste Mal, dass der Haftbefehl der Justiz aus vermutlich politischen Gründen nicht vollstreckt werde.



Der Mann des Anstosses: Mohammed Jafari Sahraroodi (Bildmitte) in Genf. Foto: kanaan

Bereits 2011 hat Sahraroodi an einer IPU-Zusammenkunft in Bern teilgenommen. Für die Gemeinschaft der Exil-Kurden ein Affront. Dass ein mutmasslicher Mörder innert zweier Jahre zweimal unbehelligt in die Schweiz habe reisen können, sei schon «sehr merkwürdig», sagt Hiwa Bahrami, österreichischer Vertreter der Demokratischen Partei Iranisch-Kurdistan (DPKI), deren Vertreter Sahraroodi 1989 umgebracht haben soll.

### Diplomatische Immunität

Folco Galli, Sprecher des Bundesamtes für Justiz (Bj), das für die Vollstreckung internationaler Haftbefehle zuständig ist, bestätigt zwischen den Zeilen, dass

Sahraroodi sich diese Woche in der Schweiz aufgehalten hat, jedoch unbehelligt blieb. «Als offizieller Delegierter des iranischen Staates im Rahmen der IPU genoss der Betroffene Immunität und hätte somit auf Schweizer Territorium ohnehin nicht verhaftet werden können», sagt Galli.

Ob, inwiefern und allenfalls welche Schweizer oder österreichischen Behörden in der Sache in Kontakt standen, wird nicht offiziell kommuniziert. «Internationale Fahndungsersuchen unterstehen dem Amtsgeheimnis und sind grundsätzlich vertraulich zu behandeln», sagt Galli. Daran änderten auch die Vorwürfe Pilz' nichts.

Sahraroodis Flucht und Karriere seit dem Attentat von Wien ist so abenteuerlich wie erfolgreich. Die österreichische Polizei vermutete 1989, dass er die tödlichen Schüsse auf die drei kurdischen Abgeordneten abgefeuert hatte. Sicher ist, dass er beim Attentat von einem Querschläger getroffen und schwer verletzt wurde. Die Attentäter konnten allerdings in die iranische Botschaft flüchten und nach massiver Intervention Teherans das Land verlassen. Die österreichische Justiz begann zwar zu ermitteln, doch Österreichs damalige Regierungsspitze stimmte der Ausreise zu. Der verletzte Sahraroodi wurde sogar mit Polizeikorte zum Flughafen gebracht. Als die mutmasslichen Mörder in Teheran in Sicherheit waren, schickte Österreich einen internationalen Haftbefehl aus. Er ist bis heute gültig.

### General der Revolutionsgarden

Jafari machte danach Karriere in der Islamischen Republik. Er wurde General und Kommandant einer Sondereinheit der Revolutionsgarden Pasdaran, die im Norden des Irak gegen kurdische Politiker operierten. 2007 entkam er knapp der Verhaftung durch US-Truppen im Nordirak. Zu dieser Zeit sei er bereits Mitglied des Nationalen Sicherheitsrats gewesen, schrieb damals das österreichische Magazin «Profil»: Als Stellvertreter von Sicherheitschef Ali Larjani. Als Larjani zum Präsidenten des iranischen Parlaments gewählt wurde, nahm er seinen Vertrauten Jafari als Bürochef mit. Trotz oder vielleicht gerade wegen des internationalen Haftbefehls, der von einem frühen Loyalitätsbeweis dem Regime gegenüber zeugt.

## Schwarz sprach in Berlin mit Grün

Die Regierungsbildung in Deutschland bleibt spannend. Ein erstes Sondierungsgespräch zwischen Union und Grünen ist gestern Abend ohne konkretes Ergebnis zu Ende gegangen. Die Parteien wollen sich nächsten Dienstag erneut treffen. Am Montag werden CDU/CSU zudem mit der SPD über ein mögliches Bündnis sprechen. Ziel aller Parteien scheint es, bis zur Konstituierung des Bundestags am 22. Oktober wenigstens festzulegen, wer mit der Union Koalitionsverhandlungen führen wird.

In Berlin gilt eine Grosse Koalition weiter als sehr viel wahrscheinlicher. Umso bemerkenswerter, dass Kanzlerin Merkel sich die schwarz-grüne Option offenhält. Die Beteiligten hielten sich gestern bedeckt. Es sei eine «offene, sachliche und an Inhalten orientierte» Diskussion gewesen, sagte CDU-Generalsekretär Hermann Gröhe. Auch Grünen-Chef Cem Özdemir lobte die «positive Atmosphäre». Kollegin Claudia Roth betonte aber, viele Themen sei nur «angerrissen» worden. Eine mögliche Koalition aus Union und Grünen gilt als schwierig. Die beiden Parteien haben sich im Wahlkampf teilweise aggressiv angegriffen.

In der SPD dagegen scheint die Bereitschaft gestiegen zu sein, sich auf eine Grosse Koalition einzulassen. Für Diskussionen sorgte jüngst die Forderung des rechten Parteiflügels, das Finanzministerium müsse unbedingt mit einem SPD-Politiker besetzt werden. Es sei das einzige Ressort mit Vetorecht gegenüber der Kanzlerin und «deswegen nicht verhandelbar». Die SPD-Partei führt hält solche Vorstösse zum jetzigen Zeitpunkt für falsch. Sie könnten bei der Basis den Eindruck erwecken, es gehe dem Spitzenpersonal nur um Posten und Ämter. Über einen allfälligen Koalitionsvertrag mit der Union werden am Ende alle 470 000 SPD-Mitglieder abstimmen. (dn)



## Kurdenmorde: Ministerien reichen brisanten Fall weiter

**Österreich/Iran.** Hauptverdächtiger bleibt unbehelligt.

**Wien.** Eine schwarze Gedenktafel kündigt in der Linken Bahngasse in Wien Landstraße von einem der spektakulärsten Politmorde der Zweiten Republik. Vis-à-vis hatte sich der Kurdenführer Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou im Juli 1989 in einer Wohnung zu einem konspirativen Treffen mit Emissären des iranischen Regimes getroffen, um über einen Waffenstillstand zu verhandeln. Ein Mordkommando beendete jäh das Gespräch - und das Leben der drei kurdischen Unterhändler. Die Täter flüchteten in die iranische Botschaft, nach einer Intervention Teherans gewährte ihnen Österreich die Ausreise - einem sogar unter Polizeieskorte.

Gegen ebenjenen Mohammed Jafari Sahraroudi, den Hauptverdächtigen, liegt 24 Jahre später nach wie vor ein Haftbefehl vor. Er erfreut sich seiner Freiheit, auch bei Auslandsreisen. Zuletzt weilte er nach Angaben Hiwa Bahramis, des Vertreters der Demokratischen Partei Kurdistan-Iran (PDKI) in Deutschland und Österreich, als Mitglied einer iranischen Parlamentarier-Delegation bei einer Konferenz in Genf. Er blieb ebenso

unbehelligt wie zuvor in Italien oder später in Kroatien.

Die PDKI ist in der Causa Sahraroudi bei den österreichischen und Schweizer Behörden vorstellig geworden, ist dabei aber abgeblitzt. Das Außenministerium in Wien erklärt sich unzuständig. Es sei ungewiss, so Sprecher Martin Weiss, welcher Art der Haftbefehl sei oder ob er überhaupt noch aufrecht sei. Im Übrigen ressortiere der Fall im Justizministerium, wo sich die Justizbehörden auf EU-Ebene damit beschäftigen würden. Aus dem Palais Trautson, dem Sitz des Justizministeriums, verlautet dagegen kurz und bündig: „Keine Auskunft.“

Es ist ein Paradebeispiel dafür, wie Österreich brisante Fälle handhabt, wie sich die Behörden eine „heiße Kartoffel“ zuspielen. Im Gegensatz zu Deutschland, wo die iranischen Täter der Kurdenmorde 1992 im Mykonos-Prozess zur Rechenschaft gezogen worden sind, harren die Kurdenmorde in Wien weiter der Aufklärung. Grün-Politiker Peter Pilz äußerte gar den Verdacht, der damalige Präsident Mahmoud Ahmadinejad sei der Drahtzieher der Aktion gewesen. (vier)



Traduzione di lavoro  
del 30.06.2004

Mandato di cattura internazionale

Il cittadino iraniano **Mohammed Djafari SAHAROODI**, nato il 07.12.1958 a Teheran, funzionario del Ministero degli Esteri, ultima residenza presso l'Ambasciata iraniana a Vienna, è da arrestare perché gravemente sospettato di omicidio ai sensi dell'art. 75 del codice penale austriaco.

Motivazione:

In base alle indagini svolte, Amir Mansour BOZORGIAN-ASSL è gravemente sospettato di aver ucciso con premeditazione ed in concorso consapevole e voluto con **Mustafa Haji AJVADI** e **Amir Mansour BOZORGIAN-ASSL** a colpi di arma da fuoco le seguenti persone: **Abdul Rahman GHASSEMLOU**, **Abdullah GHADERI-AZAR** e **Fadil RASOUL**.

Mohammed Djafari SAHAROODI ha lasciato l'Austria in data 22.07.1989 per l'Iran.

Mohammed Djafari SAHAROODI è alto circa 170-175 cm. È magro, ha i capelli neri corti e fitti, leggermente arricciati. Ha gli occhi scuri e al momento del delitto portava i baffi.

TRIBUNALE PENALE DI VIENNA  
1082 Vienna, Landesgerichtsstrasse 11  
Sezione 23d, li 19.12.1989

Dr. Michael DANEK  
Giudice



Wiener Kurdenmorde: Hauptverdächtiger unbehellig in Europa unterwegs

# Betretenes Schweigen

Von Hülya Tektas

■ Österreichisches Justizministerium verweigert Auskunft zu dem Fall.

**Wien.** Der Hauptverdächtige der Wiener Kurdenmorde vor 24 Jahre soll sich in Europa aufhalten. Dies vermeldeten Vertreter der Demokratischen Partei Kurdistan-Iran. Mohammad Jafari Sahraroudi, gegen den seit Dezember 1989 ein internationaler Haftbefehl besteht und der heute Bürochef des Iranischen Parlamentspräsidenten ist, sei diese Woche zu einem Treffen der „Interparlamentarischen Union für internationale Schiedsgerichtsbarkeit“ in Genf als Mitglied der iranischen Delegation gereist. Mittlerweile soll er sich in Kroatien aufhalten.

reich ausgeliefert werden sollen“, sagt Bahrami. Obwohl das österreichische Innenministerium gegenüber Schweizer Behörden den aufrechten Haftbefehl bestätigt hätte, hätte Sahraroudi ohne Probleme aus der Schweiz ausreisen können und halte sich derzeit vermutlich gemeinsam mit der Delegation in Zagreb auf.

**Schweiz: Genoss Immunität**

Am 13. Juli 1989 war in einer Wiener Privatwohnung der Chef der Kurdischen Demokratischen Partei-Iran, Abdul Rahman Ghassem-lou, mit seinem Stellvertreter Abdullah Ghaderi-Azar und dem in Österreich eingebürgerten Kurden Fadel Rasoul bei einem Geheimtreffen mit Emissären Führung in Teheran ermordet worden. Die Tatverdächtigen tauchten in der iranischen Botschaft unter und konnten nach Interventionen der iranischen Regierung unbehelligt ausreisen; einer von ihnen wurde sogar unter Polizeischutz zum Schwechater Flughafen geleitet.

„Ich habe sofort das österreichische Innen- und Außenministerien kontaktiert. Sahraroudi, der keine parlamentarische Immunität besitzt, hätte von der Schweizer Regierung nach Öster-

zige „Untätigkeit der Schweizer und österreichischen Behörden“ deute daraufhin, dass diese politisch motiviert sei: „Wenn die österreichische Behörden es wollten, hätten sie die Morde schon längst aufklären können. Warum haben die Schweizer Behörden es verzögert, Sahraroudi festzunehmen?“ Bahrami mutmaßt, dass man die politischen Beziehungen zum Iran nicht gefährden wolle und diese wichtiger seien als die Beziehungen mit den Kurden. „Dabei wäre die Verhaftung Sahraroudis ein klares Zeichen gegen den Kampf des internationalen Terrorismus.“

Das österreichische Justizministerium wollte zu dem Fall keine Auskunft geben, das Außenministerium verwies auf Ersteres. Folco Galli vom Bundesamt für Justiz in der Schweiz sagte zur „Wiener Zeitung“, dass internationale Fahndungsersuchen dem Amtsgeheimnis unterstünden und er daher keine Auskunft geben könne, auch nicht, ob es einen Austausch mit den österreichischen Behörden gegeben hätte. Galli gab aber an, dass Sahraroudi als „offizieller iranischer Delegierter im Rahmen dieser Tagung Immunität genoss und in der Schweiz gar nicht verhaftet hätte werden können.“ ■



Auch die Witwe Ghassem-lous fordert seit Langem Aufklärung. Foto: apa

## Kreditversicherer nach der Krise noch stärker im Geschäft

**Wien.** (ag/wak) Die Weltwirtschaftskrise von 2008 hat auch bei den Kredit- und Investitionsversicherern deutliche Spuren hinterlassen, sagte der Präsident der Berner Union, Johan Schrijver, der anlässlich der Jahresversammlung in Wien war. Die Angst sitzt den Exporteuren aber noch im Nacken: Die gesamte versicherte Summe ist auf zuletzt (2012) 1,33 Billionen Euro gestiegen. 2008 waren es nur 1,1 Billionen Euro, danach kam eine Delle. 2009 war für die Branche einschneidend, die Ansprüche, die ausgezahlt werden mussten, verdoppelten sich aufgrund der vielen Ausfälle - von 1,7 Milliarden Euro auf vier Milliarden Euro.

Die Berner Union ist ein Zusammenschluss von 76 Kredit- und Investitionsversicherern aus 60 Staaten, staatlich und privat, die gemeinsam etwa zehn Prozent der weltweiten Exporte versichern. Sie stellen damit „mehr als die Hälfte“ der weltweiten Exportversicherungen. Schrijver war anlässlich der Jahresversammlung in Wien. Aus Österreich ist die Oesterreichische Kontrollbank (OeKB) dabei in Gestalt von OeKB-Chef Rudolf Scholten. Laut Scholten sind die höchsten Ausfälle nicht in den Hochrisiko-Ländern zu verzeichnen. Dort seien Investoren sehr vorsichtig. Am riskantesten sei es in den Boom-Ländern, wo Investoren in Goldgräberstimmung manchmal die nötige Vorsicht vergessen. ■







# In Tribute to Dr. A. R. Ghassemlou

Compiled by  
Mouloud Swara



ISBN: 978-3-68939-000-6

ISBN: 978-3-68939-001-3 (eBook)

This volume commemorates the 35th anniversary of Dr. A. R. Ghassemlou's assassination, a prominent Kurdish leader and Secretary-General of the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (PDKI). Ghassemlou, educated in Paris and Prague, transformed the PDKI into a mass movement following the 1979 Iranian revolution. He led Kurdish resistance against the Islamic Republic's military occupation until 1989. Despite pursuing negotiations for Kurdish autonomy, Dr. Ghassemlou was assassinated in Vienna in 1989 by Iranian diplomats. Known for his hopeful realism, Dr. Ghassemlou's legacy continues to influence Kurdish politics. This collection of essays by Kurdish and foreign dignitaries aims to introduce an international audience to Ghassemlou's political ideas and enduring impact on the Kurdish struggle for liberation and democracy

**TISHK Book**  
**July 2024**  
**Cologne**

