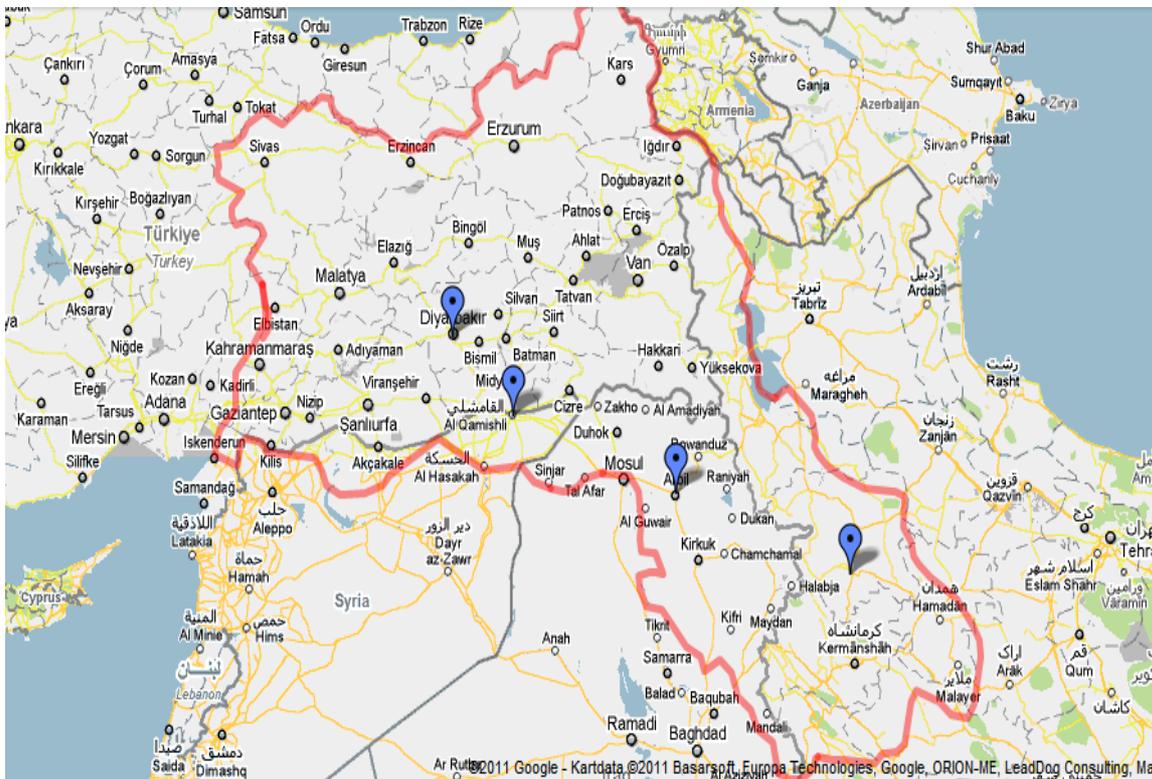




## **Ghassemlou's ideas of Democracy and Iranian-Kurdish relations in contemporary Iran.**



Map of Kurdistan

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**Abdol Rahmān Ghassemlou (I have get this picture from Rezgar Rencero).**

## **Abstract**

This thesis is based on Ghassemlou's ideas about democracy and democratization of Iran as a multi-national and multi-religious country. Because of the lack of democracy, there are many conflicts and injustices in society. Therefore, the democratization of Iran is the best way to transform the various politically, economic and social oppression. Such a solution can be found through Abdol Rahman Ghassemlou's ideas and plans for Iran. Until today, the relationship between the Persians and other nations in Iran has been very unbalanced, Independent of which governance form the country has had. The Kurds in Iran have fought for self-governance right many years. Now they believe they can realize this goal by democratizing Iran, while they believe that all Kurds are one nation.

The problem statement for this task have been: What did democracy mean for Ghassemlou in theory and practice, and how Ghassemlou's ideas about democracy can help us to democratize Iran?

The main finding in this thesis is that Iran is a multi-national and multi-religious country ruled by an Islamic theocratic system, that Persians have great influence over it, and that consequently – in order to democratize Iran, the country first needs to remove this theocratic system, then can create a system that will help people to practice democracy. Such a system should bring up democratic personalities, by training in practising democracy, in which people will form organizations, have freedom of speech, tolerate differences, and grants people a great degree of self-governance through a decentralized political system.

Some key word in this thesis: autonomy, democracy, democratic personality, decentralization, democratic socialism.

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I would hereby like to thank my supervisor Professor Nils Vidar Vambheim for the pleasant conversation and good advice that helped me a lot on the way to realizing this thesis. I would also like to thank Vidar that he corrected the linguistic errors that I had in the task.

I would hereby like to thank Odd Tranås who read through my thesis and corrected some language errors.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

Only a few months after I was born, the revolution against the monarchy in Iran succeeded. When I was a child, I experienced the war in Kurdistan that the post-revolutionary regime (the Islamic Republic of Iran) had begun against the Kurds. The village where I lived was attacked by Iranian forces many times, the same as other Kurdish towns and villages. I saw that people from our village hated the Iranian forces. Elderly advised children to avoid talking with Iranian forces, because the Iranian forces were trying to get information on Kurdish opponents by talking with the children. Children might know Kurdish adults who supported the Kurdish movement. We as children had learned a few slogans from seniors. Some of these slogans contained Ghassemlou's name and presented him as leader of the Kurds. When I started going to school, Iran had captured the area where our village is situated. I had to read, write and speak Persian at school, a language that I did not have knowledge of.

I was 11 years old when Ghassemlou was killed by Iranian assassins under cover as diplomats in Austria. People talked about it everywhere. Many thought that Ghassemlou's death meant the end of Kurdistan's liberation struggle. But when Kurdish guerrilla soldiers started to attack Iranian forces in some places and a new leader had been chosen, people began to regain their moral again.

After some years I went to the town Urmiye to study in a high school, where discrimination against Kurds was very strong. During my third year in high school, in 1996, Iranian forces attacked camps of the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan. It is necessary to say that those camps of PDKI were in South Kurdistan (Iraqi Kurdistan) where the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (Jalal Talabi's Party) ruled the area. I was at summer school to retake exams in some subjects that I had not passed, when I heard the news about this attack. The Iranian regime claimed to have killed and arrested all the guerrilla soldiers. But I knew that it could not be true, because many guerrilla soldiers were already backing Iranian Kurdistan<sup>1</sup> to continue their activities in the summer. Then I planned to leave Iran and contact PDKI to be a Guerrilla Soldier. I went to South Kurdistan with other guerrilla soldiers who were in the north of Iran's Kurdistan. It was in PDKI's camps that I had the opportunity to become better acquainted with Ghassemlou's ideas.

This paper was written after I have experienced discrimination and oppression of the Kurds (I'm

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<sup>1</sup> I mainly use the Kurds own words and expressions of different regions of Kurdistan, but find it sometimes necessary to help the reader, to use names like "Iranian Kurdistan" alternately with "East Kurdistan".

one of them) in Iran, and after I have become better acquainted with Ghassemlou's ideas. In brief, we can understand these ideas by looking at what kind of goals he had: Democracy, self-determination for Kurdistan and socialism. By realizing these goals, we may achieve “positive peace” in Iran for the all nations and groups that live there and believe in democracy.

Iran has a long history. This history goes back to 720 B.C. where “Med” dynasty formed their first empire. Iran has been ruled by various dynasties, and had an unstable geographical territory. Today, Iran is a multi-national country and has not a democratic regime. The largest nations that live in Iran have their own characters that distinguish them from each other and each of them has their own geographical core areas. In addition, there are different religions and classes. Many believe “Iranian” means the same as “Persian”, because, in a period “Persia” was used as a name for Iran, and Persian is used as official language of Iran for a long time. But Persian is not native language for all those living in Iran, so Iran is not nation-state. It is not a state of what is called “Ummah” (followers of Islam) either. The nations that live in Iran are Persians, Kurds, Azeri (Turks), Turkmen, Balouchs, Arab and (illegal) immigrants from many countries. The peoples of Iran have different religions: There are Zoroastrians, Jewish, Catholic, Armenian, Muslim, Sunni, Shiite, and Baha’i, and there are also many atheists among them.

The aim of this thesis are: 1) to show a picture of Iran that is more complex and “real” than the images that govern both Iranian state propaganda and the western discourse on “Iran”.

2. to present Ghassemlou’s ideas for solving three main problems, I) between the nations and national groups that constitute Iran whit special focus on the relation between majority and minority, II) between socio-economic groups, especially between the elite and the people, and III) about government, with a special focus on democracy, and IV about the development of democratic attitudes inside each of us (a *democratic personality*).
3. If these three conflicts are not solved we may avoid civil war after the Islamic regime has lost power.

## **1.2 Background**

The Kurds have been fighting for an independent Kurdistan since 1609. Most movements in different parts of Kurdistan fought to form an independent state of all parts of Kurdistan. Therefore,

those states that have divided Kurdistan between them (Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Syria) teamed up to crush the Kurdish movement. Ghassemlou believed that the Kurds have the right to have an independent state. But because of geopolitical, regional and international conditions it is hard to achieve it. .

When Ghassemlou became Secretary General of Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan in 1971, he wrote a program and Internal Regulations of PDKI. This application was accepted in the Third Conference of PDKI. According to this program “Democracy for Iran and autonomy for Kurdistan” was the strategic goal for PDKI. According to Ghassemlou federation was the best solution for nationalist issues in Iran. The Kurds must try to solve their national problems within the borders of each of the countries that the Kurds live in; however, future generations must have the right to decide for them what they want -independence or autonomy. But, PDKI was a political party which was fighting for the Kurds, and could not decide for other nations in Iran what they should have - autonomy or federation.

According to Ghassemlou, we must change both the construction and infrastructure of the political system in Iran in order to democratize the country:

1. First, people who come to power must be elected by the people (real representatives of people). Therefore we must have polyarchy.
2. Second, Iran must be decentralized.
3. Third, we must have a fair system for sharing collective goods in a just manner and avoid exploitation of people. In summary, this would be a society built on democratic principles of socialism, where “work “is the criterion of income and status for all citizens.

After the Iranian revolution, Khomeini established a theocratic regime, and after his death, the priests tightened their grip on the state power. They started war against the Kurds just some months after their revolution. In 1988 they made contact with Ghassemlou, allegedly to find a solution for the Kurdish conflict in Iran. When Ghassemlou met them for talks, they killed him, his comrade Abdullah Ghaderi-Azar and Fadel Rasoul in Vienna.

### **1.3 Problem and objectives of this study**

In connection with what has been said above, we will focus on the following issues in Iran:

- Iran today has a theocratic regime. In order to democratize Iran, the regime must be made secular.
- False identity: “One country, one nation.” Iran either presents itself as a nation-state by calling the whole population “Iranians” or a part of the Islamic world by calling people a part of the Islamic population “Ummah”. Both of them are wrong: Iran is a multi-national state, *and* there are different religions among the population. If one calls the all nations in Iran “Iranian”, it is necessary that all of them have equal rights and duties.
- Tolerance does not exist. Those parties who have ideas outside of the Islamic Republic’s ideological frames are prohibited.
- Women do not have the same rights as men. The country is governed by Islamic law. According to the Constitution (Introduction, paragraph: women in the Constitution), women’s mission is to nurture and raise children in Islamic ideology.
- The country (Iran) is centralized and nations do not have self-determination
- Sharing of collective resources and benefits is not fairly split between different provinces and the nations that live in Iran.

By looking at the problems above my main objective is to find out how Iran can be democratized and be able to solve the basic political problems in the country and reduce social and economic inequities in order to have the highest possible degree of justice in society. In the long term it may help us to create positive peace in the country, a goal that is impossible to get without democratization.

I will touch all these problems, but will focus most on *political* and (partly) constitutional issues, less on economic and social issues (e.g. workers’ and women’s rights), although the latter were also very central in Ghassemlou’s thinking. This is because space is limited, and focus is needed.

## **1.4 Research question**

I have as my main goal to answer this question: “What did democracy mean for Ghassemlou in theory and practice, and how Ghassemlou’s ideas about democracy can help us to democratize Iran?”

This question has two parts: first, what democracy meant to Ghassemlou in theory and practice, and second, how Ghassemlou’s ideas can help us to democratize Iran. Both questions are interdependent and the answer to each of them has a direct relationship to the other.

The reader can understand the answer to both questions when he / she read the task complete.

## **1.5 Structure of the thesis**

This task will have six chapters.

Chapter one is introduction. Chapter two is methodology. There are qualitative methods that I used in process to collect data for research.

Chapter three is a brief introduction to the history of Iran and Kurdistan's history. It will provide basic information about when and how the Kurdistan has been divided and governed by the various states that Kurdistan has become a part of, and the Kurdish liberation movement through history, Because the Kurds live in different countries today and they are the greatest nation in the Middle East without a nation-state, it was necessary to write briefly about the relationship between the Kurds and Iranians in a historical perspective. This can help readers to understand the subject better.

Chapter four is a brief description of the current political system of Iran. So that the reader should know how the country is governed, how discrimination of people, grading of citizenship and state terrorism is a part of the government policy. Ghassemlou tried to change this system. Without being familiar with the political system of Iran, Can be difficult to understand what it was Ghassemlou fought against.

Chapter five will present Ghassemlou's ideas as they are presented by Ghassemlou, and a highlight on these ideas in the light of approaches to democracy and what he did in practice. This chapter is limited to present only what is relevant to this task. I shall discuss these with to bring in some theories or facts from some philosophers and theorists.

Finally, Summary and conclusion is coming in the last chapter.

## **2 Methodology**

To answer the main question, I gathered information that highlight what Ghassemlou actually said and wrote, as well as date and document his opinions on these matters. I have used three kinds of qualitative methods in this process. The methods are 1) document analysis, 2) analysis of speeches that have been recorded on video and audio recordings, 3) interviews with informants, and 4) my personal observations and experiences from 1996 to 1999 when I was guerrilla soldier in PDKI.

### **2.1 Fieldwork in Southern Kurdistan (Iraqi Kurdistan)**

I travelled to south Kurdistan, on June 1, 2010 to collect data for my project. I was there until July 15, 2010. During this period I was in Hawler (Erbil) and Koysanjagh (Koye). Because of security, I could not travel to Suleymania and Baghdad. During this period I tried to contact some informants to have interviews with them, and some journalists who had some data in their archives.

The PDKI's officer in Hawler helped me to find 5 informants and arrange meetings with them. One of the informants was recommended by a person of high position in PDKI. Three other informants I could not contact, because they had gone abroad and one of them was sick.

My informants are selected from all parts of Kurdistan; they are political activists who have high positions in their parties and academic professors working at universities in south Kurdistan.

I also got some CDs that contain Ghassemlou's speeches. It is almost 15 hours of talking. I also have five books that contain articles written by Ghassemlou, and some of Ghassemlou's speeches were written down as text. These books are compiled by Kawa Bahrami, one member of political bureau of PDKI.

### **2.2 Informant-interview:**

To collect data for this project, the informant-interview is one of the methods which I have used. With informant-interview is meant that interviewed with persons who have much information about the subject.

This method is designed to give a good basis for insight into the informants' experiences, thoughts and feelings. A qualitative interview can be designed in various ways. One extreme is characterized by small structure, and can be considered as a conversation between researcher and informant in which the main themes are determined in advance. This informal approach implies that the

informant may bring up issues during the interview and the researcher can adapt the questions to the topics that the informant brings up.

My interviews were partially structured; according to the principles for a semi-structured interview, this is open enough to ensure the informant's freedom to bring important issue to the 'table', but structured enough to give me a guide in the hand, so I can guide the interview to all the questions I want to highlight during the interview: The researcher must ask about the themes which are essentially determined in advance. But the order of the topics is determined step by step. In this way, the researcher follow the informant's story, but still provide information about the issues that are fixed in the starting. Flexibility is important for linking questions to the individual informants' assumptions. It is also important that the interviewer is open so that the informant may raise issues that the interviewer had not thought of in advance.

This was one of the methods I used. The guide questions that I had, was just for safety's sake. Informants were free to discuss important issues and then I would ask them the points that I wanted them to deepen. When they were finished talking, I would ask them the questions that I believed important, but not covered in the first, freer part of the coversation.

Group interview: Brandt (1996) defines a group interview as a method in which several people discuss a topic with a scientist as chair and moderator. In depth Interview Groups give members more time to reflect on what is being said and to become better acquainted with each other. Group interviews can help us to deepen the topics, because participants can follow up on each other's answers and provide comments during the discussion. On the other hand, group interviews will tend to render the most dominant views presented in group situations, as people with divergent view can be wary, and reluctant to present they views to the group.

Relationship between researcher and informants are important for the interview situation. Both the interviewer and informants may influence each other's opinions. Therefore, it is important to control the information by asking the second informants about the same topics.<sup>1</sup>

I would even use this method to collect data. But I could not do it myself. I shall therefore use the group interviews that were held on "Tishk TV", which are on the internet. These interviews are held for the anniversary of the day Ghassemlou was killed. They discuss Ghassemlou's role and importance options about him.

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<sup>1</sup> Tove Thagaard, systematikk og innlevelse: 2002, p.83-91

Some informants are interviewed via phone.

## 2.3 Document analysis

This method means that researchers must be able to work with and read the meaning out of simple texts. Such methods are relevant to social scientists and historians.

Researchers use some angles of incidence to analysing texts.

1. Text interpretation.
2. Origin / Source (who has written the text).
3. Context or situation analysis (In which situation was the text written?).

It is important to take into account that the text is understood in the historical context and whether words and terms mean the same now as the time it was written, or have another meaning.

When a researcher uses a historical analysis of a text, it is important to explain the texts with their own words, so that the reader can see what the text contains and what the public projection of the researcher is.<sup>2</sup>

Document analysis differs from the data the researcher collected in the field in that the documents may be written with a different purpose than the researchers purpose. The study of documents is also called content analysis.

According to Scott (1990) the term “document” is used for all kinds of written sources available to the researcher’s analysis. There may be fonts of a private character, such as letters or diaries, or public works. Published documents are available to everyone, but sealed documents require special access to other than those they are written for.<sup>3</sup>

In connection with the discussion about interpretation in qualitative methods, the basis for the qualitative research’s legitimacy has been questioned. This means that the credibility, transferability and affirmation are important in qualitative research in order to legitimize the research. Credibility says something about the research carried out in a trustworthy manner. Affirmation is linked to the quality of interpretation, and on the understanding that the interpretation is supported by other research. Transferability relate to the interpretations that are

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2 <http://www.kildenett.no/artikler/2007/kvalitativ.metode>

3 Tove Thagaard, systematikk og innlevelse: 2002, p. 58-60

based on a single study, may also apply in other contexts.<sup>4</sup> These questions will be kept in mind during the research process, and handled when/ to the degree I need to do so.

The texts and documents I use are either written or spoken by the Ghassemlou or from credible sources. The Information and data that is used to write the second chapter is also drawn from credible source.

## **2.4 Observations and experiences**

As I have explained in the introduction, I was a member of PDKI in Kurdistan from summer 1996 to summer 1999. In this period, I could participate in courses, the party's meetings and activities. In the courses that I took part, we could learn a lot from Ghassemlou's ideas about the various themes which I'll discuss in this paper.

It is important to point out that it is very difficult to talk about Ghassemlou's ideas without taking into account PDKI's history, and what the party has done under the leadership of Ghassemlou and after his death, because he was a charismatic leader, someone who could create hope among his followers, could have great influence over who he speak with them, had many friends and party members who could be victims before him, could not risk taking any decisions or take any risk full actions, etc. It is not a task of organization and leadership to write about all these characteristics in Ghassemlou. But it was necessary to point at them here.

## **2.5 Some difficulties in relation to the survey:**

There are some institutions (or organizations) that have important documents that could have been good sources for me in this investigation. But they could not release them to me. One of the important archives are archives of the PDKI. They retain many secret documents, because PDKI is an illegal and opposition political party. I could not be allowed to have more documents than the ones I got.

In February 8, 2011 I sent an e-mail to the "The Norwegian Nobel Institute, "and asked them if I can get some documents from them, because Ghassemlou was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1990. I think that they have important documents that I could have used as a source of writing this thesis. I got a response from them the same day. But unfortunately I could not get any documents, because although special permission may be granted, only at 50 years after the year of

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<sup>4</sup> Tove Thagaard, systematikk og innlevelse: 2002, p. 20-21

nomination. They could not release these documents to me. They had referred to: *“Proposals received for the award of a prize, and investigations and opinions concerning the award of a prize, may not be divulged. A prize-awarding body may, however, after due consideration in each individual case, permit access to material which formed the basis for the evaluation and decision concerning a prize, for purposes of research in intellectual history. Such permission may not, however, be granted until at least 50 years have elapsed after the date on which the decision in question was made.”*<sup>5</sup>

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5 [http://nobelpeaceprize.org/en\\_GB/nomination\\_committee/nomination-2011/](http://nobelpeaceprize.org/en_GB/nomination_committee/nomination-2011/)

### **3. The Kurdish – Iranian relation in historical perspective**

In this chapter I shall present some historical developments in the relation between the Kurds/ Kurdistan and the wider political unit called «Iran». In the course of this presentation I shall dwell upon certain historical events and developments which have been crucial, according to historians, for the Iranian – Kurdish relations which came to be as they are today. I shall concentrate on the recent history, i.e. the period of centralized nation states and nationalism, with a main focus on the period after 1923 (the Lausanne Treaty). After a short introduction, I shall make some comments on the period of nation building, before I concentrate on some events that led up to the present situation for the Kurdish nation.

#### **Origins of Iran**

##### **3.1 Centralized and Powerful government come to power in Iran and Kurdistan is divided.**

Up to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Iran consisted of tribes and ethnic groups of people with their own identity, language and continuous settlement in certain regions of Iran, i.e. groups which were nations in development, but who only later claimed status as nations in the period of nationalism and nation building. In the early 16th century the Safavids came to power in Iran. The first Safavid Shah, Shah Ismail I, built his government on four principles: I) Lordship: the individuals from the mother's or father's side connected to Muhammad's family. II) Creed (a type of religious doctrine), III) Religion: Islam-Shiite, IV) Iranian “identity”.<sup>1</sup>

The Shah's main competitor for power in the region, the Ottoman Empire, was mainly Sunni Islamic. The Ottomans attacked Iran via Kurdistan, and defeated the Iranians in the battle of Chalderan, partly due to the Kurds, who were also Sunni Muslims. This war changed the fate of the Kurds: At the end of the war in 1514, Kurdistan was divided for the first time between Iran and the

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1 نوشيروان مستهفا (صالح محمد امين)، كرد و عجم، ترجمه: عبدالله ابراهيمي، چاپ اول، 2001، ص 12

Noushirwan Mostafa, Kurds and Ajam, Translated kurdish to persian by: Abdullah Ibrahim, first edition: 2001

Ottoman Empire. The two Empires went to war many times, not least over Kurdish territory. Finally, they signed an agreement in 1639, and the division of Kurdistan was a permanent fact.

The Safavid government began to transform Eastern Kurdistan demographics by sending many Kurds out of Khorasan province in eastern Iran and settle Ghezelbash-Turks in their place.<sup>2</sup> Amir Khan, a Kurd from the Urmiye region, tried to free Kurdistan and form a state in 1609. His movement is known as the Dim-Dim movement. In a very difficult war against Amir Khan, Iranian forces with the help of a traitor (Ahmad Letani) could crush Khan's forces.<sup>3</sup>

The policy of the Ottoman Empire was that many minorities had a kind of autonomy. As long as they paid tribute to the Sultan, they might govern themselves in many ways. This was the case also for the Kurds in the part of Kurdistan which was under the Ottoman Empire. The head of the tribe had full power in its own region. In the Iranian part, the Safavid, who dominated until 1722, were centralising power in Teheran and in the hands of Persians.

A new dynasty was formed after Nader Shah in 1749, by the Kurd Karim Khan Zand. Karim Khan was the first king of Iran called "Al raya lawyer", which means the people's lawyer. Ghassemlou claims that the Kurds had twice the chance of having an independent Kurdistan: First when Sallahaddin Ayioubi (as a Kurd) had power. But he preferred to be an Islamic commander instead of a Kurdish king. The second chance came with Karim Khan, but he preferred to be king of the entire Iran instead of just Kurdistan.<sup>4</sup>

The last king of the Ghajar royal variety was Ahmad Shah. When he travelled to Europe in 1925, Reza Khan did not let him to come back. Reza Khan was king in the new and final dynasty in Iran, the Pahlavi. Because the fate of the Kurds in all parts of Kurdistan are creating an independent state, we will have a brief look at what happened in that part of Kurdistan which was under the pressure of the Ottoman Empire.

The Kurdish Emirs had a type of autonomy in its premises in that part of Kurdistan. The "heads of tribes" took care of their own regional governance. However, they were in conflict with each other,

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2 Ibid, p:14

3 Ibid , p: 18-19

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قاسملوو. کوردستان و کورد ، وه‌رگێرانی عبدالله حسنزاده، چاپی 2007، ل 41  
*Ghassemlou: Kurdistan and the Kurds, Translated from arabic to kurdish by Abdullah Hasanzadeh. This can be fined in many language, also english.*

seeking supremacy and hegemony, and they were unable to think about uniting their nation under one flag and form a central government. On the other hand, they had agreements with Sultan and could not form a union with each other. They could never imagine fighting against the Sultan who was as "God's shadow on the earth". As long as the Sultan would not take power from them, "ummah" (a group that has the same religion) was preferred over the nation. At that time, people in Kurdistan were nomads; they had to move from place to place to find pastures for their sheep.<sup>5</sup>

### 3.2 Kurdish national movements for freedom

During the 19th century Kurds rebelled many times against the Ottoman Empire, and sometimes both Ottoman Empire and Iran. The most important of them were Baban (1806-1808) , Soran (1830-1837), Bader Khan (1842-1848), Yazdansher (1853-1864) and Sheikh Obeydolla Shemzini (Nehri) movement in (1880-1882). One of them, *Sheikh Obeydolla Shemzini* tried to collect the entire Kurdistan as a country independent of both Iran and the Ottoman Empire. In other words, it was a real national movement that changed national passion to national consciousness. Sheikh Obeidullah was a religious leader and controlled many villages. He also participated in the war between the Ottoman Empire and Russia in 1877. The Ottoman Empire was defeated, but Sheikh Obeidullah got hold of weapons and ammunition, and gained valuable Kurdish political and military experience in spite of the defeat.<sup>6</sup> Although he was an Islamic Sheikh, Obeidullah respected religious minorities living in Kurdistan. After Sheikh Obeidullah examined the situation in both Iran and the Ottoman Empire, he made the move to start war against Iran on two fronts: One front under Sheikh

Abdul Ghader's leadership, attacked Iranian forces and took over Miandoab (see map). He attacked Banab but was defeated there and pulled back to Mahabad. Sheikh Obeidullah and his son then attacked Urmiye. He sent letters to two Shiite Mulls (who were Azeri) in Urmiye and asked them to give up the town to the Kurdish forces without war. He also told them that the Kurdish forces would be only two days in Urmiye, and then they would attack Tabriz city. The Azarian Mulls did not answer his letter, but prepared the city's defense, so when Sheikh Obeidullah attacked the city Urmiye, he was defeated.<sup>7</sup> According to Ghassemlou, both the Iranian and the Turkish governments

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5 سعید بدل (صادق شرفکندی) تاریخچه جنبشهای ملی کرد، 1360 (1982)، ص 6 و 10  
Sadegh sharafkandi, A brief history of Kurdish national movements from 19. century to the end of world war II

6 نوشیروان مستهفا (صالح محمد امین)، کرد و عجم، ترجمه عبدالله ابراهیمی، چاپ اول، 2001، ص 110  
Noushirwan Mostafa, Kurds and Ajam, Translated from kurdish to persian by: Abdullah Ibrahimi, first adition: 2001

7 Ibid, p: 122-125

knew about the Sheikh's plan, and attacked Sheikh with the forces of both states to crush the Kurdish movement.<sup>8</sup>

When Nasseraddin Shah (the Shah of Iran) received the news of Sheikh's attacks against Iran, he demanded that the Ottoman Empire should punish the Sheikh and his followers. The Ottoman Empire sent their forces to Kurdistan, and when Sheikh Obeidulah saw that the Kurds were attacked from two sides, he gave notice to his forces in Mahabad to retreat. He was summoned to Istanbul and was there a few years, but escaped from Istanbul and returned to Kurdistan in 1882 to plan for a new movement secretly aided by Russia. However, Russia supported Iran this time, and did not help Sheikh. The Ottoman government sent a force to arrest Sheikh, but he slipped away with his family to Mecca, where he died in 1882.<sup>9</sup>

### 3.3 Kurdish movements in the twentieth century and the division of Kurdistan

Sadegh Sharafkandi asserts that "Tribe" as a social system and tribal mentality was the main reason for the defeat of liberation movements in Kurdistan, both in 19 and 20 centuries. Some other reasons:

- 1) The absence of political experience,
- 2) Absence of one general plan and a military strategy,
- 3) Lack of support from other states.<sup>10</sup>

Kurds had hoped to have an independent country after the First World War ended, since Wilson in his Fourteen Points program for peace recommended national self-government for oppressed peoples, a conciliatory attitude to losers in the war, and a league of nations to ensure post-war peace."<sup>11</sup> Three paragraphs (62, 63 and 64) of the Treaty of Sèvres were about Kurds and Kurdistan. According to these articles, an independent Kurdistan was planned, and the Kurds could determine their fate in a referendum. This treaty was never realized for Kurds. All these provisions were buried in 1923, when the Lausanne Treaty was signed and the part of Kurdistan which was under Ottoman Empire control was divided between Turkey, Iraq and Syria. Iraqi forces with

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8 قاسملوو. کوردستان و کورد ، وه‌رگیزانی عبدالله حسنزاده، چاپی 2007، ل 45  
*Ghassemlou: Kurdistan and the Kurds, Translated from arabic to kurdish by Abdullah Hasanzadeh. This can be fined in many language, also engelish.*

9 سعید بدل (صادق شرفکندی) تاریخچه جنبشهای ملی کرد، ص 28 & <http://khakelewe.com/kteb/tarikhcha.pdf>  
Sadegh sharafkandi, A brief history of Kurdish national movements from 19. century to the end of world war II

10 Ibid, p: 10

11 [http://nobelpeaceprize.org/en\\_GB/laureates/laureates-1919/wilson-bio/](http://nobelpeaceprize.org/en_GB/laureates/laureates-1919/wilson-bio/)

support from British forces attacked Sheikh Mahmoud, and he fled to eastern Kurdistan (Marivan) in 1927. Britain attacked Suleimania in 1923. Sheikh Mahmoud Suleimania went to the border between Iran and Iraq. He started war against British forces many times, and British forces attacked Kurdish villages many times. Finally, Sheikh Mahmoud Suleimania fled to Nasyriya, where he died in 1956.<sup>12</sup>

### 3.4 The Republic of Kurdistan

Eastern Kurdistan (Iranian Kurdistan) is comprised of the four provinces in western Iran: Urmiye, Kurdistan, Kermanshah and Ilam Province. The area is 125,000 square kilometers, and Kurds are 17% of the entire Iranian population.

Reza Khan was the king of Iran from 1921. He would use Mustafa Kamal (“Atatürk”) as a model to form a nation-state. Therefore, he began to assimilate nations which were not Persian. They had written at the doors of public offices and schools: "Speak Persian". But the Kurdish national sentiment was high, and therefore Reza Khan was unable to succeed in his policy against Kurdistan.

In 16.08.1942, the Kurds had made a secret organization to fight for an independent Kurdistan. On admission, the members of this organization had to swear absolute loyalty to the organization and to the Kurdish cause. In 1945 they decided to make their activities public. They changed their organization’s name from "Community of Kurd's Life" to Democratic Party of Kurdistan in 16.08.1945 and elected Ghazi Muhammad to be the leader at its first congress.

At that time, Reza Khan was sent to exile and his son, Muhammad Reza Shah, had been the king of Iran.

Mullah Mustafa Barzani who participated in the war against Iraq in Suleimaniya area, went to Mahabad. Kurds attacked the police station in Mahabad 17.12.1945, and on the 22nd of February declared The Kurdistan Republic. The territory of the Republicans was only the Kurdish areas in the north and center of Eastern Kurdistan. The republic of Kurdistan signed a friendship treaty

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سعيد بدل (صادق شرفکندی) تاريخچه جنبشهای ملی کرد، ص 78 - 88 & نوشيروان مستهفا (صالح محمد -امين)، کرد و عجم، ترجمه عبدالله ابراهيمی، چاپ اول، 2001، ص 174-175  
Sadegh sharafkandi, A brief history of Kurdish national movements from 19. century to the end of world war II & Noushirwan Mostafa, Kurds and Ajam, Translated kurdish to persian by: Abdullah Ibrahim, first adition: 2001

with Republic of Azerbaijan which was formed in Iranian Azerbaijan.

Mullah Mustafa Barzani with his Peshmerge (Guerilla soldiers) stopped many times the Iranian forces which they would attack Kurdistan. But the Republic of Kurdistan lasted only 11 months. After World War II was over, and the foreign forces were retreating, Iran attacked first Azerbaijan Republic and then the Republic of Kurdistan. They killed nearly 25 thousand people in Tabriz. To prevent the killing of many more Kurds, Ghazi Muhammad gave up the fight. He and the defense minister of Kurdistan, Seyf Ghazi along with Sadr Ghazi, Mahabad representative in Iran's parliament, were executed in 30.03.1947. Barzani with his peshmerge travelled to Russia. Their travel's history was dramatic. They fought against the Iraqi, Turkish and Iranian forces in order to reach Russia.<sup>13</sup>

Although Kurdistan's President and many other leaders of the Republic of Kurdistan were executed, the activities of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan continued. The national Kurdish flag which Ghazi Mohammed delivered to Barzani to be protected by him, is today raised in South Kurdistan, the free part of Kurdistan.

### **3.5 Abdol Rahman Ghassemlou and the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (PDKI)**

We will now proceed to write a little about Ghassemlou's biography. Abdol Rahman Ghassemlou was born on December, 22, 1930 in a village near the town Ourmiah (in Kurdish: urmîye) a few months after the Kurd's leader Semko (in Kurdish: Simko) was killed when he had been invited by Reza Khan (Reza Shah) to have dialogue together.

He went to school in Ourmiah and Teheran, then to study at university, then to Paris to study further and finally to Prague. He began his political activities by forming an organization for young people in Ourmiah called "Union for Democratic youth of Kurdistan" in 1946 when the Kurds had formed "The Kurdistan Republic" under the leadership of Ghazi Muhammad (in kurdish: Pêpewa Qazî) in Mahabad.

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13 کومیسسیونێ چاڤمه‌نی حیزبێ دیموکرات، سالی 2002، کورته‌میژوووبی حیزبێ دیموکراتی کوردستانی ئێران، 13  
به‌شی دوو، نیو سه‌ده تی‌کۆشان، نوسینی عه‌بدوللا حه‌سه‌ن‌زاده، ل 93-97  
Publications' commission of PDKI, (2002) A brief history of PDKI, written by Abdol Rahman Ghassemlou  
(Forty years struggle) and Abdullah Hassanzadeh (Half-century efforts).

Ghazi Muhammad was the leader of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan (PDK). Name of the PDK was changed to PDKI thereafter. After "The Republic of Kurdistan" was defeated, Gassemlou travelled to Teheran to study.

In winter 1948, Naser Fakhr-Arai, a Persian journalist fired at the Shah at Tehran University, but the Shah survived. After this the regime tightened the screws, and all democratic freedoms were soon gone. Students in Paris protested against this, and Ghassemlou gave a powerful speech against the Shah. Then the Shah's regime pressured the French government to throw Ghassemlou out of the country, and so Ghassemlou moved to Prague. When he was in Paris, he established "The Kurdish students' forum" with some other Kurdish students. He received his bachelor's degree in social and political science in 1952 and then returned to Iran. During this period, PDKI and Toudeh (An Iranian Marxist political party) were united in one organisation.

“Back from Europe in 1952, Abdol Rahman Ghassemlou devoted his energies to clandestine activities for several years. In the next decade, he split his time between Europe and Kurdistan working in double harness: his university career and his repeated missions to Kurdistan. In 1959, the regional context appeared to be more hopeful; in neighbouring Iraq, the monarchy had been overthrown, and Mulla Mustafa Barzani (leader of the Democratic Party of Iraqi Kurdistan) had returned to his country after eleven years of exile in former USSR. The government in Baghdad accepted the principle of autonomy for the Kurdish population of Iraq.” (Source)

Ghassemlou was thrown out of Iraq in 1960 and returned to Prague. In 1962 he took the PhD in Economic Sciences and until 1970 taught economic theories at Prague University. He knew many languages: Kurdish, Persian, Turkish, Arabic, French, English, Russian and Czech.

In 1970, he went back to Iraq and with his comrades reorganized PDKI's organizations. At the third conference of PDKI he was elected as Secretary-General. From 1970 to 1989, he was elected Secretary-General in all the party's congresses. The most famous of his book is "Kurdistan and the Kurds."

In 1978 there was revolution in Iran and the king had to leave the country. Except for the Kurds, all the other nations and groups participated in the referendum and voted for the Islamic Republic. The new regime attacked Kurdistan in the spring of 1978, just a few months after the revolution. Representatives of the Kurds and the new regime in Iran were in dialogue to resolve the Kurdish problem in Iran many times in 1978. But the dialogue did not succeed. Ghassemlou claims that

there were three reasons why Khomeini opposed them.

1) Democracy: “we wanted democracy which he claimed to be a western ideology and thus unacceptable.”

2) Autonomy: “we wanted autonomy but his Islamic philosophy had no room for nationalism.”

3) Religion: “we were Sunni.

Moreover, we were armed and we did not want to submit to central government forces.”<sup>14</sup>

After the Kurds and the Islamic Republic of Iran could not reach agreement, in July 1979, Khomeini openly declared a Jihad- holy war- against the Kurds. It is this war that continues to date.  
<sup>15</sup> However, Iran was soon attacked by Iraq, and after eight years, Iran came out of the war with Iraq exhausted and the Imam at death's door. These facts had to be faced, and Tehran had to find a compromise in Kurdistan. For his part, Abdol Rahman Ghassemlou had been saying for years that the fighting had been imposed on him, that neither side would ever lose or win and that, sooner or later, the Kurdish problem would have to be solved across the negotiating table.

After a few messages back and forth, Tehran issued a concrete proposal for a meeting in Vienna on 28 December 1988 and the PDKI accepted. The talks lasted two days, 28 and 30 December and the results must have been promising because it was agreed to hold another meeting the following January. On 20 January, at the end of the first round of negotiations, the representatives of Tehran were fully acquainted with the Kurdish demands. The principle of autonomy seemed to have been agreed. The details of how it was to be put into effect had yet to be defined.

Six months later, Abdol Rahman Ghassemlou returned to Europe to attend a congress of the Socialist International. Tehran tried to contact him again in order, he was told, to pursue the negotiations that had begun the previous winter. The meeting took place on 12 July 1989 in Vienna. The Tehran delegation was as before, namely Mohammed Jafar Sahraroudi and Hadji Moustafawi, except that this time there was also a third member: Amir Mansur Bozorgian whose function was that of bodyguard. The Kurds also had a three-man delegation: Abdol Rahman Ghassemlou, his aide Abdullah Ghaderi-Azar (member of the PDKI Central Committee) and Fadhil Rassoul, an Iraqi university professor who had acted as a mediator.”<sup>16</sup>

“The next day, 13 July 1989, in the very room where the negotiation took place Abdol Rahman Ghassemlou was killed by three bullets fired at very close range. His assistant Abdullah Ghaderi-

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F3gHgc2Gq7Y> & Ghassemlou (vois, speech)

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

<sup>16</sup><http://pdki.org/articles1-1277-44.htm> & <http://www.kurdistanmedia.com/farsi/rbrn/2/file/1.php>

(The two references are sources for the last two sections of this chapter)

Azar was hit by eleven bullets and Fadhil Rassoul by five. Hadji Moustafawi succeeded in escaping. Mohammad Jafar Sahraroudi received minor injuries and was taken to hospital, questioned and allowed to go. Amir Mansur Bozorgian was released after 24 hours in police custody and took refuge in the Iranian Embassy.”<sup>17</sup>

Finally, Austria sent all the terrorists to Iran without judging them. In some years later was written in many newspapers that Iran’s current president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, was mixed in this criminal act.<sup>18</sup>

Jalal Talabani, current president of Iraq was mediator in the dialogue between Ghassemlou and Iran. This means that he was used unwittingly by the Iranian regime to get in touch with Ghassemlou. There are no public explanations by Talabani himself about his involvement. But cooperation between Talabani and Iran from 1996 and beyond has raised doubts about his role, based on the assumption that Ghassemlou was a competitor to his leadership among the Kurds.

## **Conclusion:**

When Islam came to Iran and Kurdistan, people converted to Islam. Then, instead prioritizing their national, secular interests, they began to fight for Islam. Salahaddin Ayoubi was one of the Islamic heroes who were Kurd. Kurds had a large role in the creation of Iran, and have always been part and parcel of Iranian history. Whenever Iran was attacked, the Kurds and Kurdistan did not remain immune from these attacks. Nevertheless, Kurds have a national identity of their own, and therefore self-government in some form has always been important for the Kurds.

After the central states were established in Iran and the Ottoman Empire, Kurds lost most of their freedom and self-empowerment. Kurdistan was divided between Iran and the Ottoman Empire in 1514. The first Kurdish movement for self-governance began in the 17th century.

But none of them succeeded in establishing a Kurdish national state. Leaders of all of these movements were either religious people or the head of tribes, and both these factors tended to divide Kurds when they most needed unity. Religion was a weapon used against Kurdish secular knowledge, political wisdom and national unity. Therefore the national movements were defeated again and again: After Kurdistan was divided between Iran and the Ottoman Empire, (some) Kurds let themselves be used against other indigenous groups, and for the benefit of the majority nations

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17 Ibid

18 <http://www.austriantimes.at/index.php?id=14092>

of both Empires. Unhealthy competition and treason between the Kurds was another reason for the defeat. After each movement, many Kurds were killed, sent into exile or were moved in groups to other parts of the two empires. Demographics of many regions of Kurdistan were changed by force, and that has continued up to this date. In the 19th and 20th century, there were many liberation movements in Kurdistan. The part that was under the pressure of the Ottoman Empire was divided between Turkey, Iraq and Syria after the First World War. After World War 2, the PDKI was established. It gained so much success under the leadership of Ghassemlou that the Iranian regime decided to kill him. Ghassemlou wanted to solve the Kurdish question through a different route than previous Kurdish leaders. Although he was killed, his ideas can be a great help to solve this problem yet. We will look more closely at these ideas in the next chapters.

However, in order to put the importance of Ghassemlou's ideas in context, we also need to point out some peculiarities of the Iranian political system: This system was produced by people who found his ideas so dangerous that they decided to kill him. Probably they hoped this would also kill his ideas, or at least kill the motivation of people who believed in them.



people knew that the monarchy was not a good system, and people did not know what the Islamic Republic might be; and people were not familiar with this kind of governance model. A vast majority of those who voted, chose "Islamic republic", many / most without knowing what system this was going to be.

It is normal that after a revolution that a Constituent Assembly will create a new constitution. But in Iran after the revolution, all groups discovered that instead of a "Constituent Assembly", they would form the "Assembly of Experts" to do this job. But many may have thought that the name is not that important, the contents are the main thing. But the composition of the "Assembly of Experts" showed that the contents of the new constitution would be something new, also. Abdol Rahman Ghassemlou was the only secular representative who was elected for this meeting. The night before the delegates would gather, Khomeini called Ghassemlou "Murtad" which means apostate. In Islamic theology, and after Khomeini's ideology that means to judge a person to death. Therefore, Ghassemlou in fact was kept from participating in the meeting for the proposition of the Constitution.<sup>1</sup>

When Khomeini still was in Paris, he gave the mission Hassan Habibi for providing the draft constitution. This constitution was provided in the "Revolution's planning council". The six persons who provided the introduction and draft constitution were: Hassan Habibi, Fathollah Banisadr, Ahmad Sadr Haj Seyed Javadi, Abdulkarim Lahiji, Jafari Langroudi and Naser Katouzian. It was reviewed in Tehran by a Commission. This draft had not "the type government Iran will have" or "*Velayat e Faghih principle*".

After the revolution, the constitution was approved by the interim government (Bazagan government) and was sent to the "Assembly of Experts for final treatments. It was treated after change and sent back to the government. This Constitution was revised in 1989.<sup>2</sup>

In the introduction to Iran's post-revolution constitution was written that the fundamental characteristic of this revolution, by comparison with other, earlier movements in Iran, was that the new system is "*Islamic and ideological*" (based on the Twelver School of Shiism, i.e. to special Doctrine within Shia Islam). The basis of the Islamic state, according to the constitution is *Velayat-e Faghih*. Khomeini claimed that this principle is on the same level as the Islamic Initial orders (laws that are on the first, i.e. highest level in the theology of Islam).<sup>3</sup> This means that the "*Vali*

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1 Ghassemlou, (voice, speech)

2 <http://www.irdc.ir/fa/content/10016/print.aspx>

3

*Faghih*" has the highest power, and that he has this power from God. According to the Constitution (introduction: Governance practices in Islam), the Constitution's mission is "The mission of the Constitution is to realize the ideological objectives of the movement and to create conditions conducive to the development of man in accordance with the noble and universal values of Islam."

One paragraph in the introduction of the constitution point out that the "*export of Islamic revolution*" to other parts of the world. The goal is to create what is called a "Single *global Ummah*."

"The Constitution shall provide continued basis for the revolution at home and abroad, and particularly in the development of international relations it shall, together with other Islamic and popular movements, prepare [or clear] the road to a single global Ummah. "

There is a latent contradiction between what has been said above and a later paragraph in the Constitution, which claims that "*the Constitution guarantees that each ideological and social despotism and economic monopoly are unacceptable and aims at entrusting the destinies of the people to the people themselves in order to break completely with the system of oppression.*" This section is so worded to show a democratic visage of the regime. However, it can be disputed whether a state regime which is dependent on one and only one ideology can totally refuse despotism. In the case of Iran we have also seen numerous empirical examples which supports the claim that the constitution secretly allows despotism behind democratic formalities like "elections" and "division of power" among state agencies/ state powers: Even the "checks and balances" are in support of the same ideology, control by adherents to that ideology, and harsh suppression of *free* ideological and political debate concerning the basis and politics of the state.

This becomes clearer when we look at the next paragraph. It shows that each paragraph has a paradox with the section that comes before or after it. In any democratic system, it is the people who decide who shall have power. However, in the section mentioned above, it is argued that "*Legislation setting forth regulations for the administration of society will revolve around the Koran and the Sunnah [traditions].*" Accordingly, *the exercise of meticulous and earnest supervision by just, pious, and committed scholars of Islam is an absolute necessity.*"<sup>4</sup>

Now we will look into the power structure in Iran, which is enshrined in the Constitution. We shall see that in the real flow of history, the Iranian power structure opens many deviations from its formally democratic structure.

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[http://ketaab.iec-md.org/sahifeh\\_noor/sahifeh\\_noor\\_jeld\\_20\\_khomeini\\_08.html](http://ketaab.iec-md.org/sahifeh_noor/sahifeh_noor_jeld_20_khomeini_08.html) p:4

4 [http://faculty.unlv.edu/pwerth/Const-Iran\(abridge\).pdf](http://faculty.unlv.edu/pwerth/Const-Iran(abridge).pdf)

#### 4.1 The Supreme Leader:

The supreme Leader of Iran is the one who has most power, according to the constitution. In the introduction of the Constitution under paragraph "The righteous Supreme Leader said that "Supreme Leader is the guarantor for the several degrees organizations do not have a diversion from their Islamic and genuine duties." This tells us that the law provides plenty of power to the supreme leader and that it is he who should control what all organizations do or have done. This means that there is **one** person who governs the country and that is called despotism.

Ayatollah Khomeini was the first Supreme leader in the Islamic Republic of Iran, without being elected. In the Constitution, articles 5, 107, 109 and 110 describe who may be Supreme Leader, how he should have been chosen and how much authority he has in different areas.

*Article 5: "During the occultation [absence] of the Wali al-Asr (may God hasten his reappearance), the wilayah and leadership of the Ummah devolve upon the just ('adil] and pious [muttaqi] faqih, who is fully aware of the circumstances of his age; courageous, resourceful, and possessed of administrative ability, will assume the responsibilities of this office in accordance with Article 107."*<sup>5</sup>

This article says that only priests (Faghih) are allowed to become Supreme Leader. This means that competition to become supreme leader is limited because only a few can be nominated for this position. Those who stand for election must be Shiite, must belong to the Twelfth Imam School, be a priest (faghih) etc.

*Article 107: "After the demise of the eminent marji' al-taqlid and great leader of the universal Islamic revolution, and founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatullah al-'Uzma Imam Khomeyni - quddisa sirruh al-sharif - who was recognized and accepted as marji' and Leader by a decisive majority of the people, the task of appointing the Leader shall be vested with the experts elected by the people. The experts will review and consult among themselves concerning all the fuqaha' possessing the qualifications specified in Articles 5 and 109. In the event they find one of them better versed in Islamic regulations, the subjects of the fiqh, or in political and social issues, or possessing general popularity or special prominence for any of the qualifications mentioned in Article 109, they shall elect him as the Leader. Otherwise, in the absence of such superiority, they*

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5 <http://www.iranonline.com/iran/iran-info/government/constitution-1.html>

*shall elect and declare one of them as the Leader. The Leader thus elected by the Assembly of Experts shall assume all the powers of the wilayat al-amr and all the responsibilities arising there from. The Leader is equal with the rest of the people of the country in the eyes of law.”<sup>6</sup>*

Khomeini was not chosen by the Assembly of experts. That is, he became supreme leader without elections, and hence not according to the constitution. So the first supreme leader of Iran was given the job without the most important element of democracy. He was chosen by the Assembly of Experts. We will return later to how the later Supreme Leaders have been elected. In the last sentence of Article 107 says: "*The Leader is equal with the rest of the people of the country in the eyes of law.*" However, when the supreme leader has the power to appoint the chairman of the Judiciary, who believes that this lawyer can be impartial when they judge the Supreme leader? A court which is not independent can rarely be justified.

Article 109 deals with "the essential Qualifications and conditions for the Leader." Now we shall go further and discuss the duties and authorities as Supreme leader has. It is enshrined in Article 110. According to this article the Supreme Leader has unlimited power over many key institutions and organizations of power. He is the highest commander of the armed forces, and he can appoint, dismiss, and accept resignation of persons for a number of key positions, determine the general policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran after consultation with the Nation's Exigency Council, dismissal of the President, pardoning or reducing the sentences of convicts, within the framework of Islamic criteria, on a recommendation [to that effect] from the Head of judicial power, etc.

What was mentioned above, are just some of the duties and authorities of the Supreme Leader. We will come back to his position when we discuss the other power institutions.

## **4.2 Guardian Council:**

This is an important institution. Its role shows us that the election system in the framework of the Islamic Republic of Iran in many ways deviate from the basic principles of free formation of opinion and freedom of association, which characterize non-ideological / truly democratic societies. The reality is that the Supreme Leader and some of his closest selected representatives for the various positions can rule the country by controlling the framework of the elections (vetting) and public debate, by forbidding “anti-Islamic utterances” + controlling what is “anti-Islamic” (The latter is in each case defined the Supreme Leader and the Guardian Council, who

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<sup>6</sup> [http://www.iranchamber.com/government/laws/constitution\\_ch08.php](http://www.iranchamber.com/government/laws/constitution_ch08.php)

control one another, and hence compete in who can be *ideologically most* correctly Islamic: This creates a political competition where any opinion is, at the end of the day, measured against the “correct interpretation” of the Koran, the Sunnah and Sharia, not of the people’s needs and wants).

Articles 91-99 describe what the Guardian Council is, which duties it has and how much authority it has. There are 12 persons sitting in the Guardian Council; Six Clerics elected by the Supreme Leader and six jurists elected by the Parliament (Majles) from Among the Muslim jurist Nominated by the Head of the judicial system. They are elected for a period of six years, but after three years, half of the members of each group will be changed by lot and new members will be elected in their place.

They supervise elections to the Assembly of Experts, the presidential elections, elections to the Parliament, and the referendum. All decisions of the parliament must be sent to the Guardian Council to be controlled so that they are not in conflict with Islamic laws and the Constitution. Therefore, according to the constitution, without the Guardian council, parliament has no validity, except to accept "the validity letter" of Representatives and selection of the six members of the Guardian Council.

The Guardian Council decides who is eligible to stand for selection for the various positions. This means that in the last resort the Guardian Council can control both the government and the parliament: They can at least negatively (by vetting) decide the composition of both. This means that they are controlling the government indirectly, and that people's participation in elections has no effect on the most basic issues of democracy mentioned above, such as free formation of opinion, free political association, freedom to run for election without religious or ideological prejudice, and without a state-controlled vetting of the candidates.

### **4.3 Executive branch:**

In the introduction to the constitution under paragraph "executive power" claimed that the system should not be a bureaucratic system. But it is unclear what kind of system it should be. Articles 113-141 describe the role and duties of the president. And article 57, writes about Division power between executive, legislative and judicial powers that are independent of each other. Supreme leader has the responsibility of all of them. Furthermore, Article 60 and 113 claim that all executive power, except those that he control through the President and the ministers, but in reality the president's executive power is limited by the different organizations as guardian Council,

expediency council and Supreme Leader. After the Supreme Leader, the President has the highest public position in the country, and he is responsible for implementing the constitution and of the executive power, except in those cases that the Supreme leader is directly responsible.

The candidates nominated for the presidential election will officially claim to be a candidate. Then, the Guardian Council considers who qualify as candidate. People choose only among candidates whom the Guardian Council has accepted.

According to the Constitution, a man who is Shiite, and belongs to the twelfth school and ideologically believe in the Islamic regime and have a good experience, etc., can become president after winning absolute majority in the election. According to the constitution the president is answerable to the people, the supreme leader and the Islamic parliamentary council (parliament). If we accept that he is responsible towards the supreme leader and parliament, it is not so easy to say that he is responsible in front of the people. The only guarantee of popular control is through the President's election. However, as long as the elections results depend on who is accepted by the supreme leader, people will lose their power to replace the president against the will of the supreme leader.

If there is also fraud in the election the people's possibility to elect their favorite candidate is eliminated even more. Just a deep suspicion of fraud is as devastating for democracy as real fraud. After last elections there was a widespread perception and suspicion of fraud in Iran both among people and the popular opposition. Two of the candidates, Mousavi and Karaoubi, who earlier had high positions in the regime and know the inner power games, claimed the same.<sup>7</sup>

After the president is elected, the supreme leader confirms him as president. He chooses his cabinet ministers and presents them to Parliament for approval. The President must submit his resignation to the Supreme leader when / if he wants to resign (article 130).

#### **4.4 Legislative power**

Legislative power has the same capability as The Parliament in different countries in Europe have. Articles 62-89 describe the various duties and responsibilities of Parliament (Majles) in Iran. After candidates are approved by the Guardian Council, people choose their representatives to

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<sup>7</sup> [http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/iran/2009/06/090613\\_bd\\_ir88\\_mousavi\\_statement.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/iran/2009/06/090613_bd_ir88_mousavi_statement.shtml)

Parliament. They are elected for a period of four years. After the election, meetings of Parliament permitted when two thirds of the delegates have the meeting.

They can not make laws that contradict Islamic law or the Constitution. The parliament ratifies international treaties, and approves the national budget. According to Article 86 claimed the representatives in Parliament have “freedom of speech”. If everyone have freedom of speech, there is no point in mentioning as a special right for elected members of Parliament. Perhaps the makers of the constitution here unwittingly revealed their mentality, and the spirit in which this constitution was made?

## 4.5 Judicial branch

In the introduction of the Constitution under paragraph "Judiciary in the Constitution" was claimed that the judicial branch has the duty to create a judicial system on the basis of Islamic justice. Articles 61 and 156-174 of the Constitution describes the role and responsibilities and the different courts of the judicial branch. Furthermore, they tell about who may have important positions in the judicial branch and how they get these positions.

It is the supreme task of leaders to appoint the highest leader of the judicial branch. This person is an "Adel" priest (Mujtahed - e Adel), who is elected for a five year period. He is tasked to form a necessary organization in the judicial branch to complement their duties. Judicial Affairs has responsibility for all questions in relation to the relationship between the judicial branch with the executive and legislative power. He is elected by the President of the persons nominated by the Leader of the judicial branch.

The judicial branch is divided into some sub-sections, such as Public Courts, "Revolutionary Courts", Clerical Courts, Supreme Courts, Military Courts, Court of Administrative Justice and the National General Inspectorate. The system of Courts renders it possible to judge everybody who oppose the regime. For example, people are free to speak as long as they do not speak or write against the regime. There are some words as "but", “except” and "if" in many laws and regulations in Iran, so they can arrest people on thin suspicions if they want to incriminate them. Article 24 of the Constitution states that” *Publications and the press have freedom of expression, **except** when it is detrimental to the fundamental principles of Islam or the rights of the public. The details of this exception will be specified by law.*”

The Revolutionary Courts are the most dangerous courts for the political opposition in Iran.

Political activists and members of political parties are convicted in these courts. This court was formed after the revolution. From 1981-1988, many political activists were convicted and executed in the Revolutionary Courts. Some of them were executed without fair trials.<sup>8</sup> The supreme leader in his position, which is above the judicial branch can change the decisions of courts, as Khomeini did in 1988.<sup>9</sup>

#### 4.6 Assembly of experts

According to the Constitution, the members of the Assembly of experts are chosen by the people. They have the task of selection and control Supreme leader (Article 107). The paradox here is that under the Constitution, both the Supreme Leader power to dismiss members of the Assembly of experts and the Assembly of experts has the power to dismiss the supreme leader. The question is what should happen when both of them make a decision to dismiss the other simultaneously!? There is little chance that this should happen as long as members of the Assembly of experts are recognized by the Guardian Council before becoming a candidate (nominated) to participate in the election, because, it is the Supreme Leader who choose half of the members of the Guardian Council. This means that a person, with whom the supreme leader is not happy, rarely can be nominated and elected for the Assembly of experts. Consequently the Assembly of experts does not have the power in reality to depose or control the Supreme leader.

#### 4.7 Expediency Council

Expediency Council, established in 1988, has both permanent and non-permanent members. They are elected by the Supreme Leader. Their task is to resolve the disagreements that arise between the parliament (Majles) and the Guardian Council. When the Parliament takes decisions, the Guardian Council believes that it is against the constitution and religious laws, and Parliament will not change their decisions, so the expediency council should take decisions about this case (article 112).

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<sup>8</sup> For mor information see: [http://www.iranrights.org/english/attachments/doc\\_1115.pdf](http://www.iranrights.org/english/attachments/doc_1115.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> The Khomeini's letter for *The Massacre of Political Prisoners in Iran*: [http://www.utoronto.ca/prisonmemoirs/Documents/khomeini\\_decree.pdf](http://www.utoronto.ca/prisonmemoirs/Documents/khomeini_decree.pdf)

## 4.8 The army

The introduction of the Constitution under paragraph "An ideological Army" claimed that the Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps has not only tasked to secure its borders, but Also for fulfilling the ideological mission of jihad in God's way; That is, extending the Sovereignty of God's Law throughout the World.

Therefore the Revolutionary Guard is a department that works with issues in other countries called "God's Guard". According to Abo-al Hassan Banisadr, one witness at the "Mykonos Court" (to condemn the terrorists who had killed Sharafkandi - leader of PDKI and three of his friends in Berlin in 1992), the members of this branch of the Revolutionary Guard participates in terror actions against leaders of oppositions groups in outside of Iran.<sup>10</sup>

## 4.9 Terror Committee

According to Banisadr, the regime had established a secret committee which planned the assassination of people who were against the Islamic regime. The information on this from the mid 90's, but such a committee may (or will probably) still be found in some form or other. Members of the committee, its plans, location of the committee and range of tasks may have been changed , but the idea to implement such a policy right has never been reversed.

According to Banisadr, the first elected president of Iran, who lives in Paris now, this committee, is called *the Supreme Council for Special Operations*. Members of this committee is the Supreme Leader of Iran - Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Rafsanjani, a person called Hejazi who have responsibility in WAWAK (Organization for Information and security of the country) working in Khamenei's office, the active member of this committee is Reyshahri as responsible for Etelaat - e vijeh (Oranisation for special information) and he is leader of the clerical Courts. In reality the latter person controls the WAWAK. They have a force called "Army offensive" and it has a Guard for the Protection Ali Khamenei, and this unit had a staff of about 80 000. This Council determined who were to be killed. After that they send these decisions to the "Firouzeh Palace" (House of Turquoise), which is controlled by the Commander of the Revolutionary Guard (Mohsen Rezai at that time]. If he was not present, then the Police Commander (then Seyfollahi) , is in command.

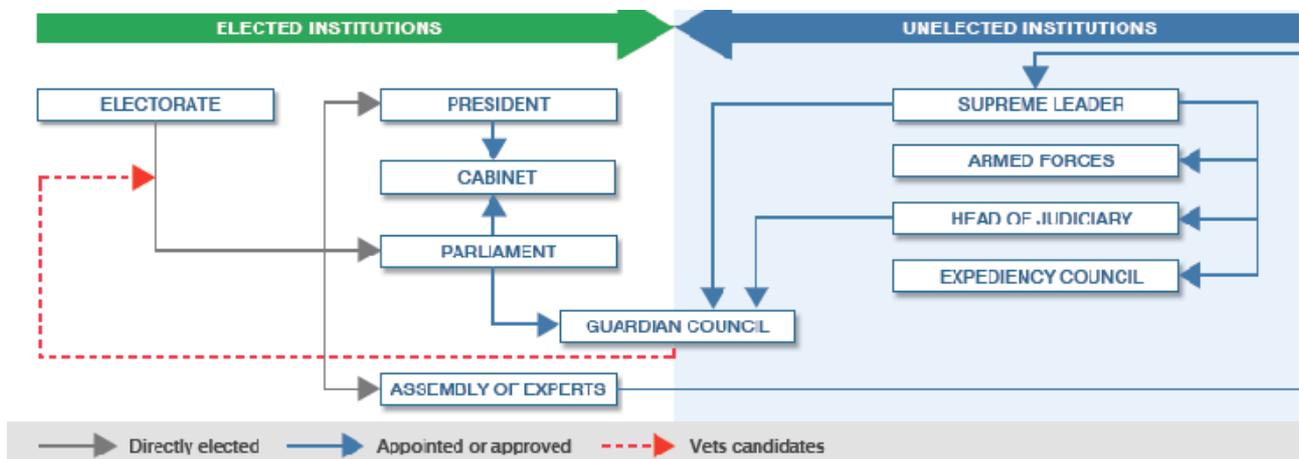
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10 Movie: Holly Crime: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9R5oLZ8TnWs&playnext=1&list=PLA75861BEC2EB8081> & for more information: <http://www.iranhrdc.org/httpdocs/Persian/pdfs/Reports/Mykonos/report.pdf>

The foreign branch of the “Revolutionary Guard” (Sepah Ghods) is located in Ghasr-e Firouzeh. When the committee had planned a terror attack, they sent it to Khamenei, Rafsanjani [president in that time] and Velayati [Foreign Minister in that time]. When both of them have approved the plan, it can implemented. They chose one leader for this plan with a group of terrorists.

There are 16 governmental organizations called "Revolutionary Organization" (Nahad e Enghelab"), and each of them has a specific responsibility in assisting or implementing terror campaigns and assassinations on behalf of the regime.<sup>11</sup>

#### 4.10 Iran's political system looks like



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## Conclusion

The Islamic regime of Iran is a theocratic regime whose goal is to lead the entire Islamic world. According to the constitution, the source of sovereignty in the Islamic regime is God and religion. In such an ideology "Ummah" (community of Muslims) replaces the nation as the main source of political and social identity. In this system, the Supreme Leader has the highest position. He is commander of the armed forces, legislative, executive and judicial branch. He has much power in

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, & <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8sz1898K0Vc> & <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mvENMzW97Hs&feature=related>

<sup>12</sup> [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/8051750.stm#cabinet](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8051750.stm#cabinet)

relation to place people in different positions, dismiss them, etc.

The Guardian Council decides who can stand for election for Parliament, Assembly of experts, President's position. Supreme leader has great influence over the Guardian Council.

Judicial Branch is a tool to judge the people who think differently or in any way is against the regime. They implement Islamic laws and rules that were devised 1400 years ago.

Assembly of experts elected by the people after the Guardian Council has decided who he nominated. Its job is to select Supreme leader and control him. But in reality, members of the Assembly of Experts have some allegiance to the Supreme Leader and the regime. Due top the vetting processes of all elections, they are themselves selected in such a way that they will not or can not take any action against the Supreme Leader. The paradox in relation to this is that the supreme leader has the power to dismiss members of the Assembly of experts, and members of the Assembly of experts may dismiss the supreme leader. In reality they keep one another in place, a fact which helps stabilise the theocratic regime.

The president must belong to the Shiite and the twelfth school and ideologically, he must comply with the regime. Then one can say that people are divided into different bourgeoisie degree. There is a clear argument for discrimination of both the non-Shiite and women.

The Expediency Council is an appointive council and members are elected by the supreme leader. As long as the regime is engaged in terrorism and does not respect international laws and regulations, we can say that the regime is engaged in what is known as "state terror ". This means that terrorism is part of government policy.

## 5. Ghassemlou's ideas

*"You gave your life in the way of the Kurdish nation,  
for freedom and democracy throughout the world."*<sup>1</sup>

(Bernard Kouchner to Ghassemlou)

In this chapter we will discuss Ghassemlou's ideas and actions to see how these ideas and actions customize with democratic theories and principles. We have three areas to discuss those opinions: I) internal party democracy, II) Democracy for an autonomous regional government and III) democracy for a multi-national state. We will also discuss Ghassemlou's justice theory (Democratic Socialism) to show that Ghassemlou's understanding of democracy is a kind of democracy which can be called the maximum level of democracy.

### 5.1 Democracy

Democracy, as a political and philosophical concept in the social sciences, has many different definitions. Therefore, it is not easy to define it generally. Democracy as an idea has its roots in ancient Greece. It is a political form of government in which governing power is derived from the people.

### 5.2 Intra-party Democracy

Ghassemlou had democracy as his highest goals. Many Kurdish, Iranian and European politicians, who knew Ghassemlou closer, claimed that Ghassemlou believed deeply in democracy and peace. Abdullah Hassanzadeh, who he was his comrade in PDKI many years, describes that "*he [Ghassemlou] believed deeply in democracy and tried with all his force to Consolidate Democracy in internal-party and within society, and if sometimes would PDKI lose something because of*

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قاسملوو، رێبەرزکی مۆدێرن و شۆرشگێڕێکی دیموکرات، کۆ کردنه‌وه‌ی کاک کاوه به‌هرامی، هاوینی 1382 (2003)، ل: 301

(Prepare by Kawa Bahrami, 2003: Ghassemlou, one modern leader and a democratic revolutionary)

*development of democracy, he said: it is cost of democracy and if one would have democracy, must he / she pay its cost.*"<sup>2</sup>

Democratic personality was for him important for social life. For a democratic person, political life is the basis for activity between equal individuals. On the one hand he / she will not have hegemony over the others, and on the other hand, he / she avoid abusing power.<sup>3</sup>

Harold D. Lasswell, an American theorist and a member of the Chicago school, had a psychological description of democratic personality in his book "*Power and Personality*" in 1948. He argues that a democratic personality has four features: I) To be open and social. The result will be to have a bank of communication with other people; II) To widen the values which they accept as important for other persons; III) To believe in people who have a good nature by having self-confidence; IV) such that these three characters are in the unconscious ego of the person. Furthermore, he claims that there is a direct and unbroken relationship between democratic societies and democratic personality.<sup>4</sup>

For Ghassemlou, it was proved that the democratic personality is important in order to democratize a country or a political party. Therefore, on one hand, he tried to identify the principles and the characters as a Cadre of PDKI should have, which he called its "*having democratic visage*" (Sima-e Democrat). On the other hand, Ghassemlou wrote a "*Program and Internal-Regulation*" for PDKI. In 1971, it was accepted in PDKI's third conference after maybe a little change. PDKI's "*Program and Internal-Regulation*" show and what kind of structure PDKI has/should have, what kind of goals the party has, and at a certain level, what kind of structure the autonomous regional government in the future Eastern Kurdistan (Iranian Kurdistan) should have, and how the relationship between the central authorities and regional authorities should be formed.

PDKI's structure and "*Democratic visage*" (Sima-e Democrat) are two important sources for us to explain the internal-party Democracy in PDKI.

«*Intra-party democracy describes a wide range of methods, among party members in the intra-*

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2 Ibid, p:231

3 کتیبی دیموکراسی بو هه‌امووان، نووسینی: دوکتۆر حسه‌این به‌اشیرییه، وه‌رگێرانی: حوسین موحه‌اممه‌دزاده،  
ل: 90

(Hussain Bashirieh, *Democracy for all*, translated by Hussain Muhammedzadeh from perisan to kurdish)

4 Ibid

*party deliberations and decisions.»*<sup>5</sup>

The structure and process in an organization show how decisions are made and how much opportunity members or supporters have to participate in making decisions or influence on the decisions taken, and the choice of leaders.

Susan Scarrow (2005: p:7) argues that some of the most important choices that the parties must make when implementing the more common forms of internal democracy falls under three headings: I) selecting party candidates; II) selecting party leaders; III) and defining political positions.<sup>6</sup>

PDKI is a secular organization;<sup>7</sup> there are non-Kurdish members of this party who participates [participated] in the battle with Kurdish guerilla soldiers to fight against Iranian forces.<sup>8</sup>

Ghassemlou claimed that "*PDKI is a modern organization that is not headed by one person*". It is led by a group of managers. This group is called "Central Committee". "*The members of this committee are elected in the party's congress, held once every two years [now every 3 years] by secret elections.* »<sup>9</sup>

An important organizing principle in PDKI is "*democratic centralism*".<sup>10</sup> This means that managers in different levels are selected from the lower level to the highest level. Except than the military officers, all leaders in the various levels get their position through elections. In my personal experience and observation: Members of the open organization of PDKI (those who do not have the secret activities or do not live in Iran) are organized into a division of PDKI either in south Kurdistan or abroad. They hold their conferences every year (or one time in two years) and discuss, criticize their own activities in past; they discuss policy issues and say their opinions about different case and adviser for activities in future; Finally, they can select the leaders of their organ for the next term of the members who he / she self has decided to nominate. In order to get elected, one should win 50% + 1 of the votes. Congress is the highest organ in PDKI which it can be held every three years. Members of PDKI in the various organs would elect their representatives to send

5 Scarrow: 2005, p:3, [http://www.ndi.org/files/1951\\_polpart\\_scarrow\\_110105.pdf](http://www.ndi.org/files/1951_polpart_scarrow_110105.pdf)

6 Ibid p:7

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تأفگه‌ی حه‌فیفه‌ت، به‌رگی 2، ناماده کردنی کاک کاوه به‌هرامی، ره‌شه‌مه‌ی 1384 (2006)، ل: 21

(Publications and presentations av Ghassemlou, colelected by Kawa Bahrami in a series of books under name "The waterfall of truth". This is the book number two of this series, edition 2006)

8 Ibid. P:26

9 Ibid. P:108

10 Ibid, p:267

them to participate in the congress. Congress has all authority to decide for the party. The election of leaders for the "Central Committee" takes place in congress. All of the representatives participating in the congress have equal rights to stand for election. The members of the "political bureau" are selected from those chosen for the "Central Committee" by "central committee". One of the members of the Political Bureau is elected for the secretary-general by "central committee". Both Kawa Bahrami who is a member of political bureau of PDKI and Baba Ali Mehrparwar who was a member of the political bureau of PDKI many years, agree that holding the congress is to practice democracy. Mehrparwar argues that *"to select the Central committee is the same as selecting members of parliament. The election of members of the political bureau is the same as selecting a government."*

Abdullah Hasanzadeh argues that *"it was via cooperation with Ghassemlou which we could see [understand] the real meaning of the organization's work and its principles."*<sup>11</sup> Hasanzadeh is not the first and not the last either saying it. Hassan Rastegar, another Ghassemlou's colleagues, who had much conflict with Ghassemlou and went out of PDKI in 1988, claims that *"in that time Ghassemlou had plan that PDKI would have" Program and Internal-Regulations, organization, newspaper or its own opinion-what is called political independence, we could only understand a little of what he said."*<sup>12</sup>

For implementing the democratic principles in PDKI Ghassemlou had worked hard. Nouri Dehkurdi, an Iranian political activist, argues that *"Ghassemlou taught their party's members lot of stuff. But the most valuable was internal-party democracy and fighting along with long-term and political realism."*<sup>13</sup>

Ghassemlou who he is known as *"the teacher of democracy"* in his party, in a lecture on *"an explanation about management"* tried to explain how the daily work can be done in a democratic way. According Ghassemlou it needs two conditions to make our current duties: 1) political conditions; this means having democratic visage (Sima-e Democrat). We will explain this later. 2) Special condition: this includes some moral principles and some principles that are explained in the "internal-Regulations" book. But there is little talk so far about how the members should do daily

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11 کتیبی: دوکتور قاسملوو، ربه‌ریکی مودیرن و شورش‌گیریکی دیموکرات، ناماده کردنی کاک کاوه به‌هرامی. هاوینی 1382 (2003)، ل: 31

( Prepare by Kawa Bahrami, 2003: Ghassemlou, one modern leader and a democratic revolutionary)

12 Ibid. P:32

13 Ibid, p:248





party was a communist party and supporter of the Soviet Union. In 9 August 1953 was a coup against Musaddegh's government. Musaddegh was prime minister of Iran, and had nationalized oil industry in Iran. The Toudeh party had a very strong organization and Ghassemlou thought Toudeh party would support Musaddegh. But it was not done, and the organization was dissolved. Most leaders of the Toudeh party left the country. Ghassemlou went around Kurdistan and collected members of PDKI to reorganize them once more. In 1955 they held PDKI's first conference. They agreed to separate PDKI from the Thoudeh party.<sup>20</sup> But PDKI could not protect its independence for long. Ahmad Tofigh who had been leader of PDKI, was succeeded by Mullah Mustafa Barzani, and thus PDKI went under the leadership of the Democratic Party of Iraqi Kurdistan. Ahmad Tofigh and his friends who worked for that Ghassemlou was thrown out of Iraq. Ghassemlou went back to Czechoslovakia to study. He lived in Europe from 1960 until 1970. He returned to Iraq in 1971 and contacted PDKI. They held the third conference and then got PDKI political independence again and got out of the leadership of Barzani.<sup>21</sup>

It is always so when Kurds have movements, enemies say that these movements are dependent (working for) of one or other state. The goal of this propaganda is to show that it is not the Kurds who support movement, but the aliens / foreign countries. The truth is rather that the Kurdish movements in each part of Kurdistan, because of the geopolitical situation in the region, have (had) at least contact with one of the states that have captured a part of Kurdistan . They should use conflicts between these states to fight against themselves. But it is a source of these parties that have relationships with one of those states that have Kurdistan was captured, could retain its political independence. For example the Kurdish parties from Iranian Kurdistan have (had) contact with Iraq to be supported in movement against Iran; and the Kurdish parties from Iraqi Kurdistan had contact with Iran to be supported in their movement against Iraq. But the important point is which one of the Kurdish political party from one part of Kurdistan have been used against the Kurds in generally and against Kurds from another parts of Kurdistan.

RR, one of the informants that I had interviewed, claimed that «*Ghassemlou could not keep PDKI's political independence, because they had a relationship with the Iraqi government (Saddam regime)* ». But Masout Tak, the leader of PSK (Socialist Party of Kurdistan) disagrees with him. He claims that "*Ghassemlou should never interfere in other parties' internal affairs and never allow*

دوکتور قاسملوو، رێبەرێکی مۆدێرن و شورشگێڕێکی دیموکرات، ئاماده کردنی کاک کاوه بههرامی. هاوینی 1382 (20) (2003)، ل 20-21

( Prepare by Kawa Bahrami, 2003: Ghassemlou, one modern leader and a democratic revolutionary)

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p: 23-33

*others to interfere into PDKI in internal affairs. Kurdistan parties are obliged to have relations with any State which has captured Kurdistan territory. It is an honour for the PDKI they had a political relationship with Iraq to retain its political independence. This relationship was not on account of the Iraqi Kurds. In this way, PDKI should be a model for other Kurdish parties. "*

Mahmoud Othman, a Kurdish politician, argues that *«this relationship as PDKI had with Iraq was inevitable. But Ghassemlou knew of this relationship may be limited and innocuous for the Iraqi Kurds. »*

In 06.12.2010 was an article published in "Spiegel", a German magazine, which has written about a document from "Wikileaks". Part of this document is important and shows how Ghassemlou criticizes Saddam and his regime. There is following: *«Und es ist nicht so, als wüsste die US-Botschaft in Bagdad davon nichts. Mitte Februar ist der iranische, aber auf Seiten Saddams gegen Iran kämpfende Kurden-Führer Abd al-Rahman Ghassemlu in Bagdad und schaut, nach einem Termin beim Diktator, auch bei den Amerikanern vorbei. Nach Geld oder Waffen, lässt er wissen, frage er nicht. "Natürlich, davon hätte man immer gern noch mehr. Doch wir haben reichlich." Dann schildert er, was sich im Norden gerade abspielt. "Der politische Referent fragte Ghassemlu nach seiner Reaktion auf die irakische Zerstörung kurdischer Dörfer. Ghassemlu gab an, dass die, meisten' Dörfer zerstört seien, schien in diesem Punkt aber leidenschaftslos." Der Kurde sagt den Amerikanern auch ganz genau, wer für die mörderischen Angriffe im Norden verantwortlich ist: "Saddam. Er ist für alles verantwortlich."<sup>22</sup>*

This shows that Ghassemlou criticized what Saddam's regime did against Kurds in Iraq, and he blames Saddam personally for it.

2. *A Democrat is a supporter of pluralism, and has deep faith in people's ability to judge for themselves. In practice and interaction with other political parties and people, always pursue this point.*

Shaho Hossaini argued that "there was a political party which received equipment from PDKI to publish their ideas. But among the articles that were published, some criticized PDKI. Shaho said to Ghassemlou: "Why we should give them the equipment so that they will write against us!?" this means that we must not give them the equipment, because they write against us. Ghassemlou had answered him: "If you think like that, why do you say you believe in pluralism!?" This means if

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22 <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-75477015.html>

one is democrat and believes in pluralism, you must provide opportunities for others to say their opinions.”<sup>23</sup>

What has been said above may be considered normal in a democratic society. But consider that such thoughts were from a political leader in the Middle East, working under the conditions for minorities “granted” by the states of Iran, Iraq and Turkey (and Syria). This matter should be discussed more in sequence of this chapter when I need to explain “Democracy for an autonomous regional government”.

3. *A democratic regime will come to power in Iran on the basis of pluralism, and elections reflecting the multiple nations of Iran.*

According to Robert Dahl, "*Polyarchy can create more participation and more competition among those competing for power. The result will be that not a majority but more minorities will form the government, and in this way, the dictatorship of the majority was prevented. This can lead to genuine democracy.*"<sup>24</sup>

We have discussed in the previous chapter that after the Iranian revolution, when it would be referendum to select the future form of government, there were only two alternatives: Monarchy or the Islamic Republic. Ghassemlou was against it and advised the Kurds against participating in the referendum. His arguments for this were democratic: Kingdom vs. Islamic regimes are not a good reflection of the options: There should be more options than just those two. If the kingdom was a good system, people would not have revolted against it, and concerning “Islamic Republic”, we did not know what it was. Ghassemlou was also against one person - or only one party - to take power in Iran, because it would easily and possibly end in a dictatorship. Now everyone knows that Ghassemlou was right and the Islamic Republic did not become democratic.

I shall discuss this matter deeper later in this chapter under the section ”democracy for a multi-national state."

4. *A democrat is not an insular nationalist. He / she respects the friendship between nations, and respects the rights of all nations.*

Ghassemlou respected all nations, especially those nations who live in Iran. He always tried to

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23 <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-297392543409929216#>

24 حوسه‌ئین به‌ئشیریه: دیموکراسی بۆ هه‌مووان، و. حوسه‌ئین موحه‌ممه‌دزاده، ل 66 (Hussain Bashirieh, *Democracy for all*, translated by Hussain Muhammedzadeh from perisan to kurdish)

protect their rights. What he has said in the last dialogue meeting with Iranian representatives before being killed by them is a clear evidence of this. Ghassemlou claims that the nation's issues in Iran must be resolved equally to all; for the Arabs, Balouches, Turkmen and Kurds. If these questions were not resolved, it would be disaster for our country in the future.

*“Peut-être que demain il y aura une autre partie de l'Iran qui demandera l'autonomie; il faut avoir le courage de régler les problèmes internes iraniens avec des principes, des lois pour tout le monde, pour les Arabes, les Beloutches, les Turcomans, les Kurdes. Si dès aujourd'hui on ne peut pas régler ce problème, cela deviendra une calamité pour notre pays”.*<sup>25</sup>

What has been said above can be supported with many democratic principles: equality and democratic citizenship, democracy for multi-national state and self-determination. *“The equality principle implies that all people are equal and must be treated equally. Democracy is against the political and legal discrimination.”*<sup>26</sup>

Democratic citizenship is a right that citizens should not be having in different degrees. All citizens should have equal rights and duties.<sup>27</sup>

multi-national democracy is democracy where all formal nation-religious-cultural groups would have political power to govern and make political decisions together. Four main features of such a democracy is: I) representatives of the nation participate in the decision-making, II) these nations have a broad internal autonomy, III) they share power according to population and the importance of each group or nation, and IV) minorities have veto rights.<sup>28</sup>

Ghassemlou argues *“that no regime can be popular if they do not resolve the problems of nations which is the country's prime problem. The truth is that the oppressed nations' population is more than half of the entire Iranian population.”* For Ghassemlou, the friendship between the Iranian nations was very important. He believed that without cooperation between these nations, it is very difficult to change the Islamic Republic of Iran into something more democratic.<sup>29</sup>

In another place, Ghassemlou says that *“we (Kurds) can not alone bring a democratic regime to power in Iran. Therefore it is necessary that other nations (Iranian nations) will fight for it with us against the Islamic republic of Iran.”*

25 <http://www.chris-kutschera.com/Ghassemlou.htm>

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حوسه‌این به‌اشیریه: دیموکراسی بۆ هه‌مووان، و. حوسه‌ئین موحه‌ممه‌دزاده، ج 22

(Hussain Bashirieh, *Democracy for all*, translated by Hussain Muhammedzadeh from persian to kurdish)

27 Ibid, p: 28

28 Ibid, p: 175

29 Ghassemlou, sound recording (speech)

We will also discuss this matter deeper later in this chapter under the section "democracy for a multi-national state."

5. *A democrat is a defender and protector of the rights of workers, and is against all exploitation of human beings.*

Ghassemlou had written a little book called (کورتەباسیک له سەر سوڤیالیزم) "A brief discussion of Democratic socialism." In this book he presents his ideas about what he thinks socialism means, and why socialism is important for Kurdistan. The socialism which he talks about is entirely different from the socialism which was in communist countries during the cold war period. Ghassemlou's ideas about democratic socialism show that he was critical against both the eastern and western poles. He believed that both were imperfect systems that were missing something important. The eastern states that were socialist, lacked democracy and freedom of expression, and the western states lacked social justice and they did not share resources and income in a fair way. When he writes about democracy in socialist states, he argues that: "for this discussion to be easier, we will share democracy in some parts. But basically democracy is a whole and is not divided, because all parts have dialectical relationship with each other. The three parts of democracy according to Ghassemlou are: I) social democracy, II) economic democracy and III) political democracy."<sup>30</sup> In this way he tries to show that there are cultural democracy and economic democracy in socialist states, but they lack political democracy. And in the western states, there is political and cultural democracy, but they lack economic democracy. This means that in both systems there is imperfect democracy. He gives priority to political democracy more than the other two democracies that have been mentioned above. This is a critical issue in the history of socialism, and therefore of high importance.

"Democratic Socialism" for PDKI is the highest goal. This can lead to what is called "maximum level of democracy." Because the maximum level of democracy is a representative and participatory democracy, and in addition there are also social justice. *"It entails the characteristics of the representative and participatory types of democracy, but considers the social prerequisites of citizens also essential for fair and meaningful democratic participation. Social Democracy can be best described as a maximalist type of democracy since it comprises all three prepositions of*

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30                      37                      تاڤگه‌ی حه‌قیقه‌ت، به‌رگی 1، چاپی دووه‌م، 2008، ناماده کردنی کاک کاوه به‌هرامی، ل: 37  
(The book: "The waterfall of truth", book number one)

Abraham Lincoln's "Gettysburg Formula": of, by, and for [people]."<sup>31</sup>

In comparison with John Rawls' philosophy are Ghassemlou's ideas also for a democratic society. We will also discuss this matter deeper in sequence of this chapter under the section "democratic socialism."

6. *A democrat is a supporter of the equal rights of women and men in family and society.*

Equality between women and men is one of the key issues in Iran and the Middle East. Ghassemlou was one of those who supported women's rights and would implement the principles of PDKI and Kurdish community, because, the women's rights is one important principles in human rights and in one democratic regime.<sup>32</sup> Ghassemlou argues that "in the movement [freedom movement] women should have a special place in both the political and party activities. Our party believes in equality between women and men. But to accept the rights and implement those that have a substantial gap in the community. This distance must disappear eventually. We think that how much women are active in political and social activities, so much is society modern, and how much women are active and participate in nationalist movements, so much are such movements democratic, and the chances of winning are [also] greater if women participate."<sup>33</sup>

7. *A democrat is a philanthropist and for friendship between people, without considering race and religion, and is against any kind of racism and fascism*

There are many religions in Iran and Kurdistan. The people of Kurdistan have different religions, too. Religion is a very personal matter. Democracy allows for all to practice their religion and all must have the freedom to practice their religion. A religion can not create additional point for someone to feel better than the others. Kurds themselves are victims of Persian chauvinism. Ghassemlou claimed that the "*Persian chauvinism argues that because of me (who is Persian) you (not Persian) do not have to claim your rights. They use this chauvinism under the name of Grey Iranian and Iranian.*"<sup>34</sup>

31 Marc Bühlmann, Wolfgang Merkel, and Bernard Wessels: The Quality of Democracy: 2008: p.5, & [http://www.hertie-school.org/binaries/addon/520\\_hsog\\_wp\\_no.\\_22.pdf](http://www.hertie-school.org/binaries/addon/520_hsog_wp_no._22.pdf)

32 حوسه‌این به‌اشیریه: دیموکراسی بۆ هه‌مووان، و. حوسه‌یین موحه‌ممه‌دزاده، ل 95 (Hussain Bashirieh, *Democracy for all*, translated by Hussain Muhammedzadeh from Persian to Kurdish)

33 Ghassemlou, sound recording (speech)

34 کردستان، رنج و ایستادگی، (جلد چهارم از مجموعه تافگه هه‌قیفه‌ت) 1388 (2010)، توسط کاک کاوه بهرامی

8. *A democrat is against national oppression, and struggles to abolish or neutralize it.*

Iran is a multinational country. To call Iran a democratic regime, all nations must have their own self-determination right. Ghassemlou has spoken and written many times about it. The nations must be free to choose their destiny, including self-determination. Same as Ghassemlou was against Iranian chauvinism; he was also against national oppression. He claims that "the Kurdish goal is not separated from other Iranian nation's liberation goals."<sup>35</sup> This means that the Kurds are equal with other nations who live in Iran and do not want either more or less rights than the others.

#### **5.4 Democracy in an autonomous regional government (Eastern Kurdistan)**

Now we will look at the situation in Eastern Kurdistan (Iranian Kurdistan) after the revolution in 1979 and the plans PDKI have (had) for this part of Kurdistan, and discuss them in terms of democratic theories and principles. From 1979 to 1984 this region was unstable because of the territorial war between Iranian forces and Kurdish parties. It is important to consider that the post-revolutionary regime in Iran started war against the Kurds very early. Implementing democracy in a region during war time is extremely difficult.

#### **5.5 Pluralism**

Pluralism is one of the principles Ghassemlou deeply believed in. Robert A. Dahl (born 1915) found *polyarchy* to be a sign of democracy in the modern, western sense. He submitted a list to show polyarchy's institutions: «1) elected officials, 2) free and fair election, 3) inclusive suffrage, 4) right to run for office, 5) freedom of expression, 6) alternative information, and 7) associational autonomy (right to organize)."<sup>36</sup>

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جمع آوری شدہ، ص 130

( Prepare by Kawa Bahrami, (2010), Kurdistan, Suffering and perseverance, book number 4 of books' series

"The waterfall of truth"

35 Ibid, p: 154

36 Michael Saward, Democracy: 2003, p:49

For Ghassemlou polyarchy was an opportunity to realize democracy in Kurdistan. He claims that «we avoid being the only party in Kurdistan and we avoid any propensity to totalitarianism. Although PDKI is the largest political party in Kurdistan, but the existence of other organizations and political parties in addition to PDKI can help us better to practice democracy, and the opinions and ideas that other organizations have, can be a supervisor of PDKI.» For Ghassemlou it is important that both people and political parties should have the freedom to carry out their activities; Newspapers by taking into account the journalistic moral principles must be kept free from obstacles and limitations, and totalitarianism must be stopped from the beginning.<sup>37</sup>

Mehdi Khanbaba Tehrani, an Iranian political activist, confirmed that "a member of Cherek-e Fada'i [a political party in Iran] had contacted PDKI, in order to get help from PDKI in printing an announcement for them, because they had not equipment to do so. Ghassemlou said to her: «*Why do you say that PDKI is not democratic? Can one be more democratic than that? You have attacked and profaned us in this announcement, and we have printed it for you with our equipment and budgets! You live in a region that is controlled by us and we've got a house for you to use as a garrison, we also provide security for you. Where can you find more democratic?*»<sup>38</sup> John Stuart Mill in his book "On Liberty" argues that "If all mankind minus one were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind" and "the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth, produced by its collision with error."<sup>39</sup>

For Ghassemlou it was also important that different opinions could emerge in Kurdistan. Although PDKI had control of many cities and areas, they had no offensive against the groups who worked against PDKI: PDKI understood democracy so that also the minority within the area where Kurds are in majority should be free to express their views.<sup>40</sup>

When there are different political parties and organizations in a society, it is a sign of democracy. It is better for people be able to choose among the various policy packages offered by political

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37 دوکتور قاسملوو، رښه‌پزېکی مؤدیرن و شورش‌گڼیزېکی دیموکرات، ناماده کردنی کاک کاوه به‌هرامی. سالی 1382 ل 97-96

( Prepare by Kawa Bahrami, 2003: Ghassemlou, one modern leader and a democratic revolutionary)

38 Ibid, p:102

39 John Stuart Mill, (1859) On liberty: p: 18 and 19 & <http://socserv.mcmaster.ca/~econ/ugcm/3ll3/mill/liberty.pdf>

40 کردستان، رنج و ایستادگی، (جلد چهارم از مجموعه تافگه هه‌قیقه‌ت) 1388 (2010)، جمع‌آوری شده توسط کاک کاوه به‌هرامی، ص 127

Book number 4 of books' series "The waterfall of truth"

parties. According to Ghassemlou, "*when there are different political parties in a society, these parties compete to gain people's support. The party that wins most of the people's support can be vanguard. Because it shows that the vanguard party is moving in this direction protects the people's interests.* PDKI try to show in their media that PDKI is just one of those political organizations that have activities in Kurdistan and the Kurdistan does not belong to it. But all parties must provide their packages (of ideas), and people are free to choose which of them to support."<sup>41</sup>

Kak Mustafa Hijri, current Secretary General of the PDKI claims that Ghassemlou showed that a guarantee for the continuity of democracy is to create democratic organizations in each community. In addition, he believed deeply that the different groups and classes will play an important role in society. So he tried to help these classes and groups to form their union and thereby support democracy and to protect their interests.<sup>42</sup>

## **5.6 Pluralism and war between Kurdish political parties**

But in practice it was not so easy to democratize Kurdistan. On the one hand, Iranian forces had begun the war against the Kurds, and on the other hand, the Kurdish parties, PDKI and Komeleh (a communist party) began war against each other in Kurdistan. What was the reason for this war? It is not easy to find out which party (PDKI or Komeleh) was the culprit in starting the war. But some informants that I interviewed, for example Meref Khaznadar, One Kurdish writer and professor from Hewler, believed that this war was a war between nationalism and communism. They would not put the blame on either of the two parties, while they believed that this war was wrong in itself. Masut Tak, Secretary general of Kurdistan's socialist party (PSK) from North Kurdistan thought that now is not a good time to talk about this war, but he had no doubt that PDKI and Ghassemlou believed deeply in democracy and pluralism.

In relation to this war many things are unclear. Komeleh had been part of the "Communist Party of Iran". Komeleh had a theory which favoured war with PDKI under certain circumstances: The

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41 Ibid, p:131-132

42 دوکتور قاسملوو، رێبەرێکی مۆدێرن و شۆرشگێڕێکی دیموکرات، ئاماده کردنی کاک کاوه بههرامی. هاوینی 1382 (2003)، ج 163

( Prepare by Kawa Bahrami, 2003: Ghassemlou, one modern leader and a democratic revolutionary)



## **5.8 Dialogue with the Islamic regime and the "veil of ignorance"**

John Rawls (1921 - 2002) is a liberal political philosopher. His major work is "Theory of Justice" from 1971. Through a reformulation of this work in "Justice As Fairness" (2001), he tries in a contract theoretical way to solve the old problem in political philosophy that deals with finding the limit for when citizens are obliged to follow the laws enacted by a state - a problem that goes back to Hobbes.

He solves this problem by applying a hypothetical model that he calls the original position, where representatives of free and equal citizens choose the most appropriate principle of justice that apply to society's basic structure in a democratic society among many behind what Rawls also called a veil of ignorance<sup>46</sup> That is, the representatives who are in the original position do not know anything about the identity of the other representatives, so that one has abstracted away the information about social position, class belonging and similar characteristics such that one party can be better than one another in a negotiation situation, if he is in possession of this information.

The purpose of this veil is to achieve the most equitable distribution and is to the advantage of the least favored.

For Rawls, the outcome is an agreement on a principle that addresses the fundamental political and social rights of every community member, such as the freedom of speech and religion, and secondly the principle of social and economic equality (equal chance- and the difference principle), which says something about the conditions that apply to economic and social inequality in society in the longer term.<sup>47</sup> Stability is achieved in a modern democratic society<sup>48</sup> if the design of society's basic structure and institutions is made with respect of these principles.

After Khomeini declared Jihad against the Kurdish parties (Kurdistan) in the summer of 1979, came three months of war between Iranian forces and Kurds. In autumn 1979, the war stopped and the Islamic regime (Khomeini) declared "dialogue" to resolve the Kurdish question. A few years ago, a speech of Khomeini released on YouTube show that in the beginning they did not believe in dialogue. Dialogue was a tactic that gave Iranian forces time to organize themselves better to attack

46 John Rawls, Rettferdighet som rimelighet, oversatt til norsk av : Kai Swensen, Pax forlag A/S 2003, P: 68 & 72

47 Ibid, p: 101-115

48 Ibid, del V, p: 275-296

Kurdistan again.<sup>49</sup> There is no sense here to discuss what Khomeini and Iranian forces had as their goal. Here I will discuss how the Kurds and especially PDKI had planned for these dialogues between the Kurds and the Islamic regime in Tehran.

Although PDKI was the largest political party in Iranian Kurdistan at that time, they believed that it was necessary that all political parties that may have influence in Kurdistan to participate in dialogue meetings with the Islamic regime. To be happy in the dialogue was PDKI's plan, after they agreed with other political parties in Kurdistan, that the members of the Kurdish delegation of dialogue should be anonymous, although the identity of some of the members were known for the regime before. The Islamic regime's delegation had said before that they would only meet Kurdish representatives.<sup>50</sup>

The delegation to the regime came to Mahabad to begin the dialogue. Both delegations met to have a dialogue officially. Normally both of them had to present its members in the beginning. Sabbaghian presented members of the Islamic regime's delegation first. When it was the Kurd delegation's turn to be presented, Sheikh Ezaddin Hossaini (Leader of the Kurdish delegation) presented all members with name and party belonging. Sheikh Ezaddin who was a Kurd Ayatullah did not understand how important can a veil of ignorance safety be. Ghassemlou was spokesman for the Kurdish delegation. The delegation of the Islamic regime said that they would not discuss with the representatives of Komeleh and Cherek-Fadaye-Kurdistan section (another communist party in Iran which had a branch in Kurdistan as well), so they broke the negotiations. Ghassemlou tried to persuade the delegation of the regime to continue with dialogue, but did not succeed. They needed to buy time for that the Iranian forces could attack Kurdistan again.<sup>51</sup> This indicates that the Islamic regime did not want to solve the Kurdish question, and Sheikh Ezaddin created the excuse for them

## **5.9 Decentralization of Iran: autonomy or federation.**

Ghassemlou thought that the best management system for Iran is a democratic federal republic.

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49 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MtDU0gSdiV0>

50 کومیسیونى چاپمهنى حیزبى دیموکرات، سالی 2002، کورته میژووپی حیزبى دیموکراتى کوردستانی ئێران، به شی 280-275، دوو، نیو سه ده تیکۆشان، نوسینی عهبدوللا حهسه ن زاده، ل: 280-275

Publications' commission of PDKI, (2002) A brief history of PDKI, written by Abdol Rahman Ghassemlou (Forty years struggle) and Abdullah Hassanzadeh (Half-century efforts).

51 Ibid, p:281

Such a system can work to prevent reinstallation of dictatorship as well as too much centralization of power in Tehran.

For Ghassemlou it is important that Kurds should have the right to self-determination. In connection with the meaning of democracy, it means that the people should govern themselves. So the right for self-governance is the basic principle of democracy.

Ghassemlou argues that there are three types of self-determination: I) Independence, II) Federation and III) Autonomy.<sup>52</sup>

Which of the three types of right to self-determination should the Kurds choose, and which of them is best for Iran?

This question Ghassemlou has answered in an article titled "*Why autonomy? A discussion about our strategic goal*".<sup>53</sup>

In this article he examines the three types of these self-governance methods in a realistic way by explaining them on three levels: 1) The internal issues among Kurds / of Kurdish areas, 2) the wider region of the Middle East and 3) on an international level.

If PDKI in Iran should have independence, they must first know if they want to fight for independence of the whole of Kurdistan or only for Eastern Kurdistan (Iranian Kurdistan). If they restrict themselves to discussing an *independent Eastern Kurdistan*, they must recognize that : I) the economy of Eastern Kurdistan is not so well developed, II) we must have a strong military force to provide security for the borders, III) the geo-political situation is such that the neighbouring countries are our enemies and we do not have sea routes in order to have contact with other countries. This means that it is difficult to choose such a goal.

If the Kurds should struggle to unite the entire Kurdistan in one nation-state, this problem should be discussed *on a regional level* (Middle East). I) Internal problems: the economic and military forces we have, are two of the weak points, II) In the middle east we do not have any friendly states

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52 کردستان، رنج و ایستادگی، (جلد چهارم از مجموعه تاڤگه هه قیفته) 1388 (2010)، جمع‌آوری شده توسط کاک کاوه بهرامی، ص 31

Book number 4 of books' series "The waterfall of truth" 127 ص کاک کاوه بهرامی،

53 تاڤگه‌ی هه قیفته، بهرگی 1، چاپی دووهم، 2008، ناماده کردنی کاک کاوه بهرامی، ل 285-314 (The book: "The waterfall of truth", book number one)

to support us: The Arabic countries would support Iraq and Syria, Turkey is member of the NATO, and Iran has much influence abroad, III) none of the major powers would support us. This means that we can not form a nation-state to collect the entire Kurdistan now; but they have right to have one nation state as all another nation if that is possible and they want to make nation-state.

The best system for Iran is *Federation*, according to Ghassemlou, because there are many oppressed nations in Iran. If we make such a claim, other nations in Iran would also claim their rights. The Kurds [PDKI] are not representative of other nations in Iran, but Kurds have right to say their opinion about how the national issues can be resolved in the best way. In recent years, such demands have been raised by all the nations of Iran (except the Persians). They all want a federal Iran. When Ghassemlou was still alive, the national movements in other parts of Iran were not so strong as now. Therefore he said that he or his party could not decide for other nations in Iran. And in this way federation could not be required at that time. In addition, claims that Ghassemlou PDKI is just a regional party, not a party to the whole Iran. A regional party can only demand autonomy. Then it was just autonomy which the Kurds should be required; although autonomy was best suited to those countries that had only one oppressed nation (a minority).

*Autonomy:* When Ghassemlou talked about autonomy, he marks in which areas the central authorities shall have the authority and in which areas are autonomous authorities, which shall be competent in. The four areas that central authorities should have are: I) Foreign policy and relations, II) military forces (Artesh) to secure borders, III) those long-term financial plans that require much resources and time, and IV) currency and money policy. Border (territory) of the autonomous regions must be determined. The internal security and all the powers (Except of the four points that were written above) in that autonomous region belong to the autonomous authorities. In the autonomous region, a regional parliament should be formed. Members of the Parliament shall be elected through direct, equal and secret elections. This Parliament should be the highest authority in Kurdistan. The autonomous government should be appointed from the members of Parliament to exercise power, ie parliamentarism. As long as Iran has not been effectively democratized, the autonomous authorities must maintain a military force to defend Kurdistan if that central government attack Kurdistan. In addition, the Kurdistan must have a police force to ensure order in Kurdistan. The military force (Artesh) who have a duty to secure borders, should not be located in the cities, but at the border, because, if they are placed in Kurdistan's cities, it is possible that they interfere in internal affairs. The previous police called "Jandarmeri" and

"Shahremani" should be removed. Instead, the Kurds will form their own police force. In relation to economic issues, the Kurdistan and the other backward areas in Iran must have more budgets to grow faster, because some key areas in Iran are more developed than the periphery. This budget shall be divided by the population living in each area.

The autonomous government of Iranian Kurdistan have to permit the Kurds from other countries- Iraq, Turkey and Syria, and shall have right to help the Kurdish movements in these countries.

A very important point that Ghassemlou claims: these decisions we have taken and the requirements we have set, are dynamics. This means that they are subject to change and the next generations can change them. This is consistent with that Gutmann and Thompson in their book (Why deliberative democracy?: 2004:7) in the definition of deliberative democracy argue that decisions should be open to challenge in the future.<sup>54</sup>

## 5.10 Refuse and be against terrorism

For Ghassemlou it was very important to mix morality with politics. All those who join the guerrilla as soldier in PDKI must attend a basic course. One of the subjects that they must learn is the "revolutionary morality". In my own experience: participants in this course learn how they should contact people without doing anything wrong to people, how will they deal with the Iranian soldiers who are captured in war, and they will not use aggressive or derogatory words when they speak or discuss, not against the regime either: They should only criticize. Ghassemlou claims that PDKI was the first political party in Iran who imported morality in politics.<sup>55</sup>

Marc Kravetz, a French journalist, who is familiar with movements in the Middle East, argues that PDKI has never treated the prisoners badly, not used force against people, not taken hostages or hijacked aircrafts, and has never exploded bombs in public places, buses or cities that belong to the enemies (where the people were civilians).<sup>56</sup> Taher Mahmoudi, one of my informants, claim that Ghassemlou thought democracy is the most necessary tool for national and religious conflict transformation in the Middle East.

54 Gutmann and Thompson, Why Deliberative Democracy?: 2004, p:7

55 دوکتور قاسملوو، رێبەریکی مۆدێرن و شۆرشگێڕێکی دیموکرات، ئاماده کردنی کاک کاوه بههرامی. هاوینی

82 J (2003) 1382 ( Prepare by Kawa Bahrami, 2003: Ghassemlou, one modern leader and a democratic revolutionary)

56 Ibid, p:167

Ghassemlou was against terrorism. He believed that terrorism creates a risk of civilian population's life and liberty. According to Ghassemlou terror can be used as propaganda in the short term, but in the long term it is dangerous for the movement and can destroy the movement from the inside. However, he also analyzed terrorism broadly: The western states limit terrorism only to hostage taking and aircraft hijacking, but terrorism is broader than that. When Iran kill civilians in Kurdistan and creates mass murder on political opposition (which they did), terrorism is state policy in Iran. If the explosions of bombs in Turkey are regarded as terrorist, the Turkish bombing of Iraqi Kurdistan, where many civilians were killed, should also be considered as terrorism. Ghassemlou take account of how terrorism should be fought. In order to get rid of it, the first causes of terrorism must be taken away. The causes of terrorism can be non-justice, crisis in a community, national oppression, racial discrimination etc. It requires much time, energy and willingness to remove these causes. If the Middle East is considered the largest source of terrorism, it is because there are more than in other regions, a space for strategic, political, economic, religious and national clashes. As long as there are such conflicts, terrorism will survive. In the international area, we should both fight against terrorist groups and those states that stimulate these groups. To succeed in this, all democratic nations in the world, and especially those nations who live in the developing world, should cooperate.<sup>57</sup>

## 5.11 Plans for Iran in the future

According to Ghassemlou, it is impossible to change the Islamic regime in Iran by election or by writing some articles against the regime in foreign media. A violent movement is needed. The violent way might be firearms uprising in cities, or a mix armed movement in cities with guerrilla's wars in the villages, public strike, or riot in cities. It is difficult to determine which one is best.<sup>58</sup> In the long turn non-violent resistance is best for the goal-democracy- if it is possible.

In order to change the regime there is a need to have an alternative in advance. This option should be a front of the democratic parties. Baba Ali Mehrparwar argues that because of the lack of a

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کردستان، رنج و ایستادگی، (جلد چهارم از مجموعه تافگه هه‌قیقه‌ت) 1388 (2010) ، جمع‌آوری شده توسط کاک کاوه بهرامی،هاوینی 1382 (2003)، ص 299-301

کاک کاوه بهرامی، ص 127 "The waterfall of truth" series' books number 4

58 Ibid, p:285

democratic alternative to Khomeini take over power. Ghassemlou and Sharafkandi (manager of PDKI after Ghassemlou) tried a lot to be able to form such a front. Sharafkandi was killed in Berlin in the 1992 when he would meet some Iranian opposition's leaders to discuss this matter.

According to Ghassemlou, such a front would have four objectives: I) to believe in an independent Iran, II) fight for a republic democratic will come to power in Iran and believe in democracy and democratic freedoms as free speech, etc., III) social justice, and IV ) All the nations of Iran shall have self-determination right, to create a federal Iran. All of the Republican groups which are fighting against the Islamic regime and believe in pluralism and the four goals mentioned above can join this front.<sup>59</sup>

One such front was formed by the oppressed Iranian nations in 2005 called "The congress of nationalities for a federal Iran". No Persian groups are members in this front.

## **5.12 Democratic socialism**

Ghassemlou was a Communist when he was young. He lived in Prague during the Prague Spring. He was against the "Red Force" Intervention in internal affairs in the The eastern communist states. Therefore, he supported Alexander Dubček. The Prague Spring had a great impact on Ghassemlou, and then he approached the "Social Democracy", although he never embraced the western type of social democracy, but rather embraced democratic socialism (see below). In this way one can say that Ghassemlou's lives and change of ideology can be compared with Isaiah Berlin (the liberal philosopher of Latvia, 1909-1997). For Ghassemlou, the individual freedom and democracy were of great importance. He has written these ideas in his work "A little talk about socialism" (Bahs-e koutahi dar bareye sosialism) in 1983. In the cold war period it was not so easy being a socialist on the one hand, and on the other hand criticize the Soviet Union. We will discuss what democratic socialism meant for Ghassemlou and why PDKI (and Ghassemlou) concluded it would be the ultimate goal for them.

Ghassemlou tried to answer three fundamental issues in his work "A little talk about Socialism": 1) Why was it necessary to point out socialism in PDKI's program? 2) What kind of socialism is the socialism that we should implement as the final goal?, and 3) How should the relationship between PDKI and the socialist states, particularly with the Soviet Union be? The last-mentioned issue is

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59 Ibid, p:292

not so important today. But in the period this work was written, it was a very important question.

According to Ghassemlou, a precursor political party [of Kurdistan] must solve both the national and social issues. Autonomy was to solve the national question. For social issues socialism was the best solution. «*Basics of socialism is to take away the human exploitation.*»<sup>60</sup> Because the majority of Kurds are poor workers, they need economic and social rights, and it is only possible to ensure through socialism. Now we fight to solve the national question, and all classes in the Kurdish community are participating in the movement. There is no higher bourgeois class in Kurdistan, only a middle-class bourgeoisie. Therefore, it is not necessary to fight the bourgeois yet. And not all those who are rich, are bourgeois. When we talk about bourgeois, it means that there is a special social relationship. This means that workers sell their work force, because they do not own production equipment.

Ghassemlou also the same as John Rawls, as we said above, has spoken on three principles: The principle of equality, the difference principle and the principle of freedom.

**Equality principle:** In socialism "work" should be the main criterion of income and status in society.<sup>61</sup>

**Difference principle:** When there is talk of "work" should be criterion, it does not mean that one should only consider the quantity of work. For that work should be criterion, it is necessary to take account of three aspects of work: 1) quantity of work, 2) quality of work, and 3) Importance of work for the community. For example, the job like a doctor does is more important than the job as a newspaper seller does. Therefore, those who do an important task for the community must have better pay and opportunities to do their job. Socialism makes it possible that the national income is shared in an equal way. The level of income should not be very high for any individuals. The difference principle of Rawls means : (a) *to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged, consistent with the just savings principle, and (b) attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity.*<sup>62</sup> Ghassemlou's limit of economic difference was: Those who have the most will have no more than ten times the income of those who receive least.<sup>63</sup> He

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60 Ibid, p:31

61 Ibid, p:39

62 John Rawls, *Rettfærdighet som rimelighet*, oversatt til norsk av : Kai Swensen, Pax forlag A/S 2003, P: 101-115 & <http://pages.uoregon.edu/kimball/Rawls.htm> & [http://www.qcc.cuny.edu/SocialSciences/ppecorino/CISESHV\\_TEXT/Chapter-3-Ethics/ch-3-Rawls.html](http://www.qcc.cuny.edu/SocialSciences/ppecorino/CISESHV_TEXT/Chapter-3-Ethics/ch-3-Rawls.html)

63 کردستان، رنج و ایستادگی، (جلد چهارم از مجموعه تافگه هه‌قیفه‌ت)، جمع‌آوری شده توسط کاک کاوه بهرامی،

believed that economic democracy was better developed in the socialist states than in capitalist states, because the national income was better and more equally divided among the citizens. The quantity of revenue is not important, but the way it is divided.

*The principle of freedom:* We have said before that Ghassemlou was against any kind of dictatorship: Socialism provides, he said, the opportunity for education, housing, food, etc. to residents. This, however should not take freedom away from them, but widen it. Therefore, he criticized the Eastern European communist states. To be able to explain it better, he tries to divide democracy in three parts, even though he believed the lack of each of these parts means the absence of democracy as a whole, since all parts have a dialectical relationship with each other. These three parts are: 1) economic democracy, 2) social (cultural) democracy, and 3) political democracy.<sup>64</sup>

He compared the western and eastern states with each other to formulate / support a third model, known as "democratic socialism", as many European political parties had did the same.

In relation to social (cultural) democracy, it is also the case that the socialist states are better developed, according to Ghassemlou. Because they spend a lot of budgets on education, hygiene (health), help for families who have a weak economy, cultural organizations, etc.

But in terms of political freedoms and political democracy, the situation is the opposite. Ghassemlou divides political democracy in two parts: I) the individual freedoms in relation to individuals' personal lives and II) individual freedoms in relation to political standpoint. He believes that individuals do not have much problem or limitation with respect to the first part.

The second part is about political democracy in general. He explains that in the socialist states lack freedom of expression, and individuals do not dare to criticize the government or stand against it. In the Western countries also there are so many freedoms that are legally accepted, but it is difficult to realize them. For example, it is legal to publish a newspaper, but it's not all those who want to do it have the financial ability to do. But everyone is free to form political parties, express their opinion, travel where they want to have contact with political parties in other countries, etc. They will not go to jail or be questioned because of such activities.

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41-40 ص, 2010

Book number 4 of books' series "The waterfall of truth  
64 Ibid p:55

Ghassemlou argues that the socialism that Kurds should have, is a socialism that will suit our country. Kurds should not copy it from another country, because each country has its own cultural, economic and political situation. Moreover, contrary to most socialist and communist parties in this period, he argues that they should prioritize their national interests rather than trusting “friendly” cabinets of Soviet Union or another country. Clash of interest would certainly occur.<sup>65</sup>

According to Ghassemlou, "Democratic Socialism" is different from "social democracy". He argues that social democracy is a reformist doctrine under the name of socialism, trying to protect imperialism, while "democratic socialism" is against imperialism and will remove it. It will create a new socialist society where there is also democracy and freedom.<sup>66</sup>

Now we have approached to the type of democracy which is called "maximum level of democracy." This means, according Lincoln's Gettysburg definition, “government of, by and for the people. Its main aims are best representation, high participation and social justice.”<sup>67</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Ghassemlou was one of the great Kurdish leaders in the twentieth century. He fought more than 40 years for Kurdish self-determination. He believed deeply in democracy, social justice and peace. He tried to implement democracy in the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan, in Iranian Kurdistan and fought a lot to democratize Iran. In order to implement democracy in the PDKI, he tried to formulate a "program and internal-Regulation" first, and then he wrote some principles to be used as a model for a democratic person (democratic visage). According to Ghassemlou political independence was a main principle for PDKI, which it would protect forever. Polyarchy was another principle that Ghassemlou thought necessary both for Iran and Iranian Kurdistan. Ghassemlou respected other political parties and was against one party system. Democratic socialism was one of Ghassemlou's theories to justify society. He believed that socialism provides food, education, etc. must not limit or take the liberty of individuals. Then we can say that it was the highest level of democracy that Ghassemlou believed in, and it was the one which he would implement in Iran and Kurdistan.

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65 Ibid, p:55-59

66 Ibid, p: 64-65

67 Marc Bühlmann, Wolfgang Merkel, and Bernard Wessels: The Quality of Democracy: 2008: p.4,  
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[http://www.hertie-school.org/binaries/addon/520\\_hsog\\_wp\\_no.\\_22.pdf](http://www.hertie-school.org/binaries/addon/520_hsog_wp_no._22.pdf)

## 6. Summary and conclusion

### 6.1 Summary

There are many books written about Ghassemlou of both Kurdish and non-Kurdish writers and researchers. What I have written in this thesis is my unique product; because I am the first who tried to present the key features of Ghassemlou's ideas on democracy.

In the beginning I would just write about Ghassemlou's ideas about democracy, but then it became necessary to write about Kurdistan and Iran's history and current political system of Iran in order to make clear to readers what context Ghassemlou write in.

The methods I used in this study were qualitative methods: text analysis and speeches, interviews and personal observations and experiences.

It distinguishes between the Kurdish movement during Ghassemlou's leadership and the movements before him, is that Ghassemlou tried to take away some of the important errors that Kurdish leaders before him have done. For example, Ghassemlou believed that although the Kurds have the right to form a nation-state, but it's hard to realize it. Therefore it is better to solve the Kurdish national question inside the boundaries of the states that Kurds live in today. Another thing was that the previous Kurdish movements were led by one person. But for Ghassemlou it was important that the movement will be led by many, especially a group of leaders. This way if one of the leaders was killed by enemies the movement would survive.

The political system of Iran is a theocratic regime that is controlled by Islamic clerics of the twelfth imam's school. It is a system which is headed by a person, "Vali faghih."

It is important to point out that none of the nations who live today in Iran are in majority in the country. The population of each of these nations is less than 50% of the total population. All the nations of Iran, except the Persians, are suppressed by the regime politically, economically and culturally. There is electoral system in Iran for local and national governance. But such elections are not fair. There are many obstacles for the genuine representatives of the population to be selected. The Guardian council decides who can stand for election. Those who stand for election must believe in the regime's ideology that has Velayat-e faghih as supreme leader. The Supreme leader has much power to make decisions about any questions and for whatever organ in Iran. Organizational freedom, freedom of speech and personal freedoms do not exist.

Terrorism is a part of policy of the regime in Iran and they implement it both in Iran and abroad. They have killed many opposition activists in Iran and abroad, especially in Europe, through terror. There is a branch of the "revolutionary guard" called "Sepah-e Ghuds" whose mission is to

“engage” in activities abroad. This branch has killed opposition leaders at home and abroad and acts on account of the regime and the Islamic regime is involved planning to kill Iranians who are against the regime.

According to the constitution and doctrine of the Islamic regime, women are less worthy than men, and women's rights being seen limited both in family and society. For such country the ideas of Ghassemlou has great significance.

At the beginning of the study of Ghassemlou's ideas about democracy I should collect data on the principles Ghassemlou had presented them in the "democratic visage" (Sima-e Democrat), Self-determination rights for the Kurds, to decentralize Iran, on democratic socialism, as a theory of justice in community. After I began my fieldwork, I saw that this issue is broader than I had thought at first. I knew that these data belong to four different areas: Internal-party democracy, democracy for an autonomous regional government, democracy for a multi-national state and a justice theory to share public goods and services in an equitable manner.

The internal-party democracy can be divided into different stages: I) to educate people so that also democratic personalities grow, II) to teach people to act in a democratic manner and practice democracy, III) to regulate the democratic special laws and regulations in order to refer to them.

An important theory which I have used to write this paper was about democratic personality which the American theorist Harold D. Lasswell had written it. This theory has four special character: I) to be open and social; The result will be to have a bank of communication with other people; II) to widen the values which they accept as important for other persons; III) to believe in people who have a good nature by having self-confidence; IV) such that these three characters are in the unconscious ego of the person. Furthermore, he claims that there is a direct and unbroken relationship between democratic societies and democratic personality.

This theory fits well with what Ghassemlou had said or done in PDKI to teach members of his party to have a democratic personality. "Having a democratic visage" includes all of the important principles which the Cadres in PDKI would follow. This implies that a Cadre should be independent, believe in pluralism, fight for a democratic regime to take power in Iran, fight for justice in society, believe in equality between women and men, be against racism, have respect for all nations, etc.

One other theory that I used to describe the internal-party democracy and discuss Ghassemlou's ideas and actions, was a theory submitted by Susan Scarrow. Susan Scarrow (2005: p:7) argues that

some of the most important choices that the parties must make when implementing the more common forms of internal democracy falls under three headings: I) selecting party candidates; II) selecting party leaders; III) and defining political positions.

According to this theory, the data I had collected show that under the leadership of Ghassemlou, PDKI was organized and governed in a democratic way. All members of PDKI who were not secret members, could participate directly or indirectly in making decisions; PDKI should be managed by a group of leaders instead of being controlled by one person; Leaders and those who were responsible for the different levels of organization had to be elected to have the position; Decisions are dynamic to the subject of change, and all members have freedom of speech; All matters should be discussed first, after which decisions can be taken.

In the autonomous regional government of Kurdistan (or the federal government of Kurdistan), there is pluralism and people should be free to form organizations and political parties. The highest authority in this area shall be the Regional Parliament. Members of Parliament shall be elected by the people through direct secret elections. Each person has one vote and all the adult has the right to stand for election. Minority rights must be guaranteed and they are entitled to participate in elections, develop their culture and study in their own language, etc. There shall be freedom of speech. It's autonomous government's task to provide security for the population in the autonomous region. Exception of the four tasks that the central authorities: Artesh (military forces to secure the border for the entire Iran), foreign policy, long-term financial plans and money and currency policy, all other tasks and executive power in the autonomous region belonging to the Kurdistan regional government in the autonomous Kurdistan. This means that Iran will be decentralized and it is up to the Kurds to decide for themselves; and the Kurds should have self-determination right. There shall be a contract democracy in Iran because Iran is a multi-national country. Four main features of such a democracy is: I) representatives of the nations participating in the decision-making, II), these nations have a broad internal autonomy, III), they share power after the population and the importance of each group or nation, and IV) minorities have veto rights.

According Ghassemlou there must be pluralism in Iran too. The real representatives of people will come to rule the country. People should choose their representatives for parliament in Iran. Executive power must have a majority in Parliament. Such executive power must be a coalition of many parties. According to Ghassemlou, if Iran does not become decentralized and Iranian nations do not get their self-determination right, after the Islamic regime will take power, it will be civil war in Iran. Therefore it is better that those groups and political parties that believe in democracy will form a front of being an alternative to the Islamic regime in Iran. This front has to accept the

decentralization of Iran. Although to Ghassemlou was the leader of an illegal political party that operated with military operations against the Islamic regime, but to Ghassemlou was against terrorism. He believed that the political parties that supported the people do not need to engage in immoral acts. But everyone has right to protect themselves, and the military actions PDKI doing is to protect themselves against attacks by Iranian forces, because PDKI was prohibited and they had no possibility to have clearly and non-violent activities.

For Abdol Rahman Ghassemlou democracy means more than just resolving nationality questions in Iran, but also economic questions must be resolved. The point is to have the maximum level of democracy. Ghassemlou use experiences from both the Communist and liberal country and formulated "democratic socialism" as an alternative for Kurds and Kurdistan. He divided democracy into three parts, political democracy, social (cultural) democracy and economic democracy. He claims that all parts have a dialectical relationship with each other, and the lack of one of them means that democracy is imperfect. Political democracy is the most important part of democracy, and it is missing in communist states. Economic democracy as a means to share goods and resources in an equitable manner is lacking in the liberal states. Socialism provides food; housing and other living facilities but tended to take the freedom from individuals. In connection with this part of Ghassemlou's ideas, we can compare his ideas with Rawls' understanding of justice as fairness.

There are three principles in order to compare their ideas: the principle of equality, the difference principle and the principle of freedom. The difference between them is in different doctrine of economic freedom. For Rawls this means that political equality does not mean the same as economic equality, but that benefiting the worst-off rather than the best-off (Pareto-optimum). For Ghassemlou there is a limit for both those who earn the most and those who earn the least. This proportion is one to ten, he claimed. This means that if one who gets the least, he/she gets 1000 USD per month, must one, who gets the most, can have get 10,000 USD per month, no more than it.

Ghassemlou also claims that the socialism Kurds/people want is a socialism that will customize their own country and culture, and they will prefer their own national interests to any other friendly state. This was an important point that separated Ghassemlou from other communitarian during the Cold War period.

## 6.2 Conclusion:

According to Ghassemlou it is very important that a political party that fights for democracy must implement democracy and believe deeply in democracy. To realize this goal, members of the party must learn what the democratic personality is and how they can have it. This should help individuals to have tolerance to respect others, and it will help them to practice democracy to become better acquainted with democratic interaction. We must try to convert democracy to a habit in the community that justice can realize. If democracy is not a part of the culture in Iran for all, it is difficult to resolve many key issues in the country, particularly the question of Nations self-governance right. Most of the Persians and Persian political parties (which are the opposition) have a different understanding of democracy and the term "nation". For them democracy means being able to remove the Islamic regime and for that they will seek to power. They look at other nations who live in Iran with the same glasses that other Persians who have power today in Iran. The Persians think that Iran is their own country. However, Iran is a multi-national state and this must be accepted by all those who live today in Iran. When The Persians talk about other nations in Iran, they say that all are Iranians. What does it mean?

This means that all other nations must keep quiet, and respect their national hegemony. This shows that the democratic culture is very weak among the people who live in Iran and that democratic personalities are not fostered. This means that Persians try to assimilate other nations in Iran and represent them. This means that it lacks tolerance. It means that because the country never has been democratized, people have not a chance to practice democracy. Persian political parties that could play an important role in creating the understanding among the Persians of and to foster tolerance and mutual respect, have not done that. The Persian political parties have not helped the Persians to participate in a fair dialogue with other nations to discuss the key issues. When a Persian television or radio is having a conversation with a non-Persian political activist from Iran, one of questions is whether he / she is a separatist or not. They believe that Persians must decide for all other nations in Iran, especially how nations should govern themselves. I would not say that Persians are not entitled to have one such opinion, but if they have the right to be against separatists, the separatists have right to fight for independence also. Both of them have to fight for their goals without killing each other. Finally, each nation must will decide for themselves. For example, if the Kurds will support a separatist political party, they must have right to form their own state. This means for that people must be free from coercion to make decisions also about such matters.

The Persians have a great influence in this regime and they deny that there are many nations in Iran. They call all the Iranian nations "Iranians", which mean that all of them are just one nation,

while the different nations are called “ethnic groups”. The Persians who support the Islamic regime and the Persians who are in opposition and to the Islamic regime are agreeing about the national question in Iran, and both groups are against decentralization of Iran, and against self-determination rights for none-Persian in Iran.

Here I have not talked much about the Islamic regime that governs the country of Iran, because I think that experience has showed for that this regime can not democratize through reforms. Therefore it must be taken away to be able to democratize Iran. According Ghassemlou, it takes violence to remove this regime..

There are many words and terms that must be redefined to adapt to reality and mutual understanding through all nations and groups that live in Iran. Each nation or group has the right to define its identity as they want. Central Government and Persians who have great influence on the authorities in Iran, forces other nations to adapt themselves to the concepts that Persians have created. Earlier they called Iran “Persia”, and today some of the Persians try to deny that the Persians are a nation. Both of them have only one result, which is hegemony over other nations to make more of the common resources, benefits and revenues. We see that Persian cities develop and the cities of other nations are retarded. Discrimination is very high and it is the source of all unjust and violent and non-equal in society in social, economic and political arenas. The Persian language is imposed over other nations and other nations are not free to develop their language and culture.

The Persian forces in Kurdistan, Baluchistan, and Al-Ahwaz and in other places kill non-Persians. The areas where there are national movements are militarized. Mines have been planning in many places and many children and adult are killed every day.

The roots of all these problems go back to the lack of democracy. In order to create positive peace in Iran, Iran has to be democratized, and to democratize Iran, must all accept that Iran is a multi-national state. So Iran must be decentralized, as Ghassemlou claimed.

Self-governance is a right for all nations. When all the nations of Iran claim it, they do not have to beg to get it from the Persians. It is their right to be free and feel free and equal with others in Iran. These nations have fought for their freedom and sacrificed much so that their nation could be free. For that all nations in Iran to live in peace with each other, it is necessary that all of them should have a voluntary contract with each other. They can respect this contract as long as it is in the best interests of all parties. To make such a contract, representatives of all nations and groups participate in writing a new constitution. It is not possible to do so as long as the Islamic regime has the power in the country. Thus it is necessary that the groups and political parties that believe in democracy

and accept that Iran is a multi-national state, form a front. Such a front has now been formed by some political parties known as "The congress of nationalities for a federal Iran." The problem is that no Persian parties or Persian people have taken part in this front. Why do the Persians not participate in this front? The answer is very simple: They believe that by decentralizing Iran, the Persians come out as loser and they can not oppress other nations. Most of them have the same understanding of the national questions as the authorities of the Islamic regime have today. The difference is that the other Iranian nations are fighting for their rights while the Persians are fighting to replace the people who have power today, and place other people instead of them. Because the Persians do not accept self-determination rights for other nations in Iran, and they call such claims as "separatism", other nations should united them and together give an ultimatum to the Persians that: If the Persians do not accept self-determination rights of others but other nations who live in Iran accepts this for the Persians, then the Persians can distinguish itself from other nations and form their own state. In this way the Persians can have their own state and the other Iranian nations can form a new union and form a new federation with each other with mutual respect for each other.

So we can understand why Ghassemlou thought that it must train people to have democratic personality.

Pluralism is another important element in order to democratize Iran. This ensures that people will form their political parties and unions to ensure their common interests. Pluralism is a guarantee of free speech and fair elections. Pluralism must be found both in the autonomous areas (federal regions) and the whole country. So when there is talk about decentralization of Iran, there shall be a bicameral system in the addition of the regional Parliament. This means that each nation should have their seats in Parliament according to its population, and for the second chambered all nations should have the same number of representatives. In the second chamber each nation may have veto right.

We must try to remove all kinds of discrimination. Therefore the nations who have been oppressed and those areas that are retarded should get more budgets to develop and get on the same level as other areas.

Another important aspect of democracy is economic justice. According to Ghassemlou, democratic socialism is a good solution. So only work should be the criterion for all and the income difference should be relatively moderate. In this way the class distance will not be too big.

Economic justice must not reduce individual freedoms. Therefore, individual liberties can be secured through the laws.

In short: In order to democratize Iran, the Islamic regime must be removed and a new democratic and federal republic formed in Iran. All nations must have self-governance rights and mutual respect make a joint contract to live together in peace and freedom. People are the source of power and they will rule the country and the federal governments through their representatives. Pluralism as an essential element of democracy to be realized and people have freedom of speech and freedom of organization. The individual freedoms shall be ensured by the laws and regulations. Work shall be the sole criterion for income. Managers must be replaced through elections and election periods are determined in advance.

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