

One step closer?



Kurdish youths at Wembley Conference Centre, holding Kurdish flag and the photo of PUK leader Mr Jalal Talabani. Photograph: Nemam

Hawnaz Mahmoud

Can anyone remember 17th January 1991? Of course we can. How could we forget? This was the beginning of the first Gulf war which was followed by the death of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis during the uprising against Saddam Hussein.

Fourteen years later the date has come up again, but this time the 17th of January marks a historic date. It is a date that many Iraqis have fought for all their lives, a date that allows all Iraqis to come together whether you are a Shia, a Sunni or a proud Kurd, and unite under one Parliament to create a federal Iraq.

'Safe'

As a young Kurdish student living in London, I was adamant to get involved in the Out-of-Country Iraqi Elections. I was offered the position of an "Observer", a posi-

tion which involved watching over the procedures carried out by staff during the elections and making sure that everything was running smoothly when voters came to vote.

On the first day of voting, we had to be there by 0600 hours so that we had enough time to prepare ourselves for the rush of voters that were to come. Approaching the building, I saw many police vans parked around the building and policemen on foot. I knew straight away that I could feel safe in the conference hall although there had been many threats about the elections on TV. Before entering the building everyone was asked to show their I.D and I showed my I.D to the security officer without hesitation. I then had to walk through a metal detector by the gates. All this made me very happy because I knew that security had been taken seriously and they were not going to let anyone get passed them.

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Why Nemam?

One of the most striking images that emerged during the recent elections in Iraq was the number of Kurdish youth's converging on the polling stations, dancing their way in beautiful Kurdish customs waving an assortment of Kurdish flags of various sizes, and turning the normally mundane civil task into a fully fledged national celebration. These scenes aroused both envy and admiration around the world.

Nemam celebrates the Kurdish youth, not just because of the talents they possess and the potential energies that are still tucked within them, but because they form the bridge between our nation and its future. They are a replenishable resource that enhances the nation's wealth and fortune as they blossom.

If we are to look at the role that we, the Kurdish youth in exile, have played in the process of reconstruction and the development of Kurdistan, even at a glance, we will see some impressive contributions made in various forms, including arts, innovation and even entrepreneurship. Artists like Tara Jaff and Zakaria, painters like Hoshyar Saeed, Poets like Choman Herdi, film makers like Hiner Saleem but to name a few. All have made their marks on the culture of the host societies they have adopted as "second home" as well as enriching the heritage of the Kurdish nation.

But we still need a voice. We need a platform through which

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Bend it like Brwa



Namo Marouf

Full name: **Brwa Nouri**
Age: **17 years**
Occupation: **Student**
Interests: **Football**
Motto: **Never give up**

In 1987 a boy named Brwa Nouri was born in a little village in Kurdistan. Today he lives in the cold, beautiful Stockholm.

Brwa has played football for as long as he can remember. He was only one year old when he touched a football for the first



Brwa Nouri at football training in Sweden.

time. When Brwa was five he got his very first football-shoes and at the age of seven he played in a team called Vasalund in Stockholm. At the time Mr. Nouri didn't know what was awaiting him in the future. It all started when he changed team from Vasalund to A.I.K in 2001. Brwa was already a talent and when he changed to A.I.K he got the chance to play football with older players who were born 1984 to 1986.

This was a big opportunity for him since he loved playing football and also because it made it possible for talent-seeking coaches to discover him. A couple of months later Brwa was discovered. He moved up another level and played in the city team. At this time, when Mr Nouri was playing in the city team, the coach of Sweden's national team was there and noticed Brwa. He became interested in seeing more of Mr Nouri and eventually took him to the A-team. Brwa trained with them and he still plays for them today. The A-team is the highest league in Swedish football, it is in the national team.

Brwa has appeared in Swedish newspapers and homepages a sev-

eral times. For example, the AF-TONBLADET 22. 2. 2004 says: 'Yesterday Brwa nouri, bourn in 1987, had a brake through – on the same day that his school holidays started. It's a wonderful feeling just to participate, says Nouri.'

Brwa Nouri's ledningsmål 20 minuter från slutet var en läckerbit. DN 22 February 2004

'1-0 Made by the young Brwa Nouri was really excellent.'
www.forzagnaget.com

And one day we will see him bend it like Beckham!!



Joanne Soltani

Why?

Why was I born so Very tall?
Why were you born so Very small?

Why have you got Rounder hips?
Why is maths really Pips?

Why is the grass Bright green?
Why are witches So mean?

Why am I writing this Weird poem?
So I can tell my friends That'll show'em

One step closer?

Continued from pag1



Hawnaz voting at the polling station wearing traditional Kurdish clothing.
Photograph: Nemam

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This was the first time that Iraqis had participated in a free election and to my surprise there were many other Kurdish people working there. I started to get to know



Wembley Conference Centre hosted the voting's for the new Iraqi Government.
Photograph: Nemam

them and realised that no matter what age they were they all wanted the same thing, to build an Iraq that will give us a free Kurdistan. **"At this stage, federalism is the slogan of the day and that's what we're struggling for"** says Masoud Barzani, the leader of Kurdistan Democratic Party which is one of the two main Kurdish factions controlling Iraq's northern Kurdish zone.

'Pulsating colours'

Standing on the upper level of the conference hall, I watched the Iraqis walk into the Wembley Conference Hall with their head held high wearing their "Dizdasha" and "Agal". I soon realized they were not the only ones wearing their traditional clothes, I saw Kurdish women walk into the hall with their stunning vibrant Kurdish dresses and their partners wearing "RankuChoxa" and "Clash" (the traditional outfit for Kurdish men, including shoes).

I saw Iraqi's approach the voting desks with a gleam in their eyes as they handed over their proof of

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says Masoud Barzani, the leader of KDP.

identification and registry. You could feel the excitement as they were told to dip their finger in the indelible ink, to prevent multiple voting. After having their right index finger dipped in the ink, they were presented with a large ballot paper, the size of four sheets of A4, with the names of 111 parties and coalitions. Each had their own number and some had their own symbol and people voted for their chosen party or coalition. Once voted, people walked towards the ballot box and were cheered by other Iraqis as the paper was



Two Kurdish brothers holding their voting cards at the polling station wearing traditional Kurdish clothing
Photograph: Nemam

dropped into the ballot box. Then came the flashlights of the cameras taking pictures of this vital step in the Iraqi elections. There were Press from many countries interviewing staff and voters.

While having my break, I met up with the other Observers who where on a lunch break. We went outside and were taken aback by the amount of people queuing outside. There were hundreds of Iraqis, all mixed. There were queues on both sides of the building. Even

though it was raining outside, the people were not bothered by it. They were singing and dancing, talking to the camera crews, waving their flags in the air. Although there were many Shias and Sunnis that turned up and voted, they were outnumbered by the Kurdish voters. The Kurdish voters came out with power. Men and women off all ages brought flags of Kurdistan and would wave the colours green, white, red and yellow in the air and sing "Ai Raqib". The sound of the "Doholu Zurna" would reach



Four Kurdish youths, on the right is a young Kurdish reporter and journalist form the Kurdish Satellite Television "Kurd Sat".
Photograph: Nemam

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the other side of Wembley stadium; the semi circle of dancers formed a chain that was unbreakable. Coaches packed with Kurds came to vote from different cities such as Cardiff and Peterborough. The majority of the voters that came by coach where young men and women who had travelled for hours to make sure the world knew that Kurds were for this free Parliament, the sort of Parliament that has never existed in Iraq before.



Mr Ahmed "I have one finger on one my right hand; I will use it to vote for my nation and for the victims of Halabja & Anfal".

Photograph: Nemam

Kurdistan Today and Tomorrow



Sas Draey

C.O.S

A long time ago, there were two brothers who lived in the same house and for some reasons they did not like each other. They did not like each other's views and ideas about ways of life and about the future. Nor did they like each other's crowds. In fact, they disliked each other so much that they couldn't stand being the same place together. They had many disputes over who should be in charge and who should have the final word. They were Jalal Talabani and Mallah Mustafa Barzani, and their house was Kurdistan. Later, after Mallah Mustafa Barzani's death, his son and successor Masoud Barzani took over and basically followed in his father's footsteps. This dispute lasted many years, many Kurds were killed and many more were haunted by the memories. Today, however, it seems those troubled times are over. The men are working together to build a better Kurdistan, and this has been a long time coming. Kurds are civil with each other. Obviously, there is more reason now than ever: Saddam Hussein has been captured, and south Kurdistan is holding its own administration. The economy is growing, the cities are blooming and every-

where you look and everything you see can only be described with one word, 'new'. 'New' is the new buzz word in Kurdistan, there is no denying it, the taxis are new, the buildings, TV channels, and even the language is being renewed, out with the Arabic, back in with the Kurdish. New earth is dug up, new homes are being built, new companies are set up, new technology is arriving, and everything is new. Kurds are working together to build a brighter future, and that is something worth celebrating.

Wonderful and exciting all this may be, there are still problems with our society and it will take enormous effort and self sacrifice to resolve them.

Kurdish people mainly started to migrate to the west about 20-30 years ago, they set up homes, jobs, friendships, had children and tried to settle into a peaceful life. Now, the Kurdish community in the west is massive, in Sweden alone they are the sole minority group, like the Asian community in England. Kurds are still moving to the west, and the transition is easier now although it may not be in the right direction.

Having to deal with a different culture, language and the new way of life was hard enough but there is still that one thing Kurds will not shake off, or at least haven't yet and this may take some time to quit. We're at the beginning of the apocalyptic age of self destruction; the vibe of the new millennium is teaching us to be better and bigger and have one up on the person standing next to us. And that's exactly what the problem is, aggression in the Kurdish community is rising, and just at the time when Kurds are making an effort to unite and to work together towards a better future for Kurdistan, Kurdish youth seem to forget at times that being free from authority is not an act of rebellion but an act of recklessness. I dread going to certain parties in the fear that a fight might break out, and 8 times out of 10 it is due to a drunken incident. While the great Nasir Rezazi is on stage,

there is someone with too much alcohol in his system not showing the proper respect, forcing our great singer to cut the concert short. Or when two young Kurdish boys, who sport a gangster attitude supposedly, have 'beef' with each other, beat each other to a pulp and then show off about it like it was a victory.

We don't want our people in trouble and in jail anymore, this is not what being Kurdish is about. Zakia Alkan burned for Newroz, Qazi Mohammed was hanged for his people, Leyla Xasm, Sheike Saedi Piran, the list goes on. Leyla Zana, spent years in prison for speaking her own language, her time was not spent in vain. These people knew the importance of being Kurdish, of keeping Kurdistan on the map, and it has certainly paid off. But are we about to ruin that by turning our caps backwards, shaving part of our eyebrows and walking with a limp? Why not walk around with a sign saying, "Come and have a go if you think you're hard enough."

Let this be a message to all Kurdish youths, do not work against each other like many of our people have in the past, do not repeat their mistakes, we are one and we will always be one. The person next to you is your brother, 'keeping your rep on the street' is not an issue. Don't let our modern ideas get confused with the latest fashion to be aggressive, aggression is not cool. Do not use the history of our people as an excuse to fight the man whose great grandfather may or may not have been involved in the division of Kurdistan. The fight is for Kurds not between Kurds.

Kurdish ideals are expanding and generating information now more than ever. These are the times to be proud of being a Kurd. Soon we will resemble the Asian community in England, we will have our own Kurdish/English radio stations, Kurdish/English TV networks, already we have Kurdish fashion designers mixing styles where the Middle East meets the West, the Kurdish music industry has been conquering all areas of sound, and the Cinema industry is soon to follow, with Bahman Ghobadi nominated for an Oscar later this year, anything is possible. Soon, backpackers who have trav-

Why Nemam?

Continued from page 1

We can air our views and thoughts and express our concerns. We need to communicate with each other. We need to be aware of what some of us, individually or as a group, are doing. Whether they need support or have embarked on a worthwhile venture that deserves observing and commenting. We need to communicate with members of the communities we live amongst, the issues that affect us, the problems that we face and how we address them.

Nemam is a medium produced by the Kurdish youth in exile for the Kurdish youth. It has set for itself a simple yet serious mission; of freedom and peace. This mission, however, is a challenging one. We live in a world that is constantly

shrinking in terms of communication technology. This diminishing space should make our task easier, yet still riddled with immigration control, limitations of freedom of movement for many migrant communities as well as ever-receding resources available for youth development, especially in migrant communities.

Nemam is born, thanks to the hard work and dedication of many Kurdish youth. But it wouldn't have seen the light of day, had it not been for the support and the generosity of Community Learning Chest Funds. Nemam is a project that is building on the efforts of certain individuals in the Kurdish community in exile that have enabled many of us to gain the experience and the confidence to start this ambitious project. We hope your continued support enables us to carry on serving you.



elled the four corners of the Earth will want to know where this magical land with the beautiful and spiritual mountains is. Our country is a place of promise, potential and beauty, and it is the people, especially the youth's responsibility to carry that message. Personally, I wouldn't want to let my country and her history down. Let's start this new year with a positive and peaceful notion of community, let's get involved in our own history and work together to move our ideas into the modern age. Kurmanji or Sorani, we are all one family and we always have been, let's keep it that way and let's use this ethic for all the families of the world.

To conclude here are the words of an artist whose people also suffered, "If the truth is told, the youth can grow, learn to survive until you gain control, nobody says you have to be gangsters. Read more, learn more, change the globe."

Bijî Kurdistan.

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CREATIVE WRITING COURSE FOR KURDISH PEOPLE

AHRB Centre for Asian and African Literatures and Exiled Writers Ink!
Funded by the Arts Council

Choman Hardi will be facilitating a creative writing course for Kurdish people in association with the centre. The course will explore writing in English. It is designed to support Kurdish writers and those who aspire to write by showcasing their work in the British literature scene. At the end of the course an anthology of the work of the participants will be produced and launched. The course consists of eight sessions over eight weeks starting on the 7th February.

Time and Place:

Mondays 6.30 - 9pm

Room G3

School of Oriental and African Studies

Thornhaugh Street

Russell Square

London WC1H 0XG

You can apply if you are a Kurd aged 16-60 years, you are fluent in English and are interested in writing. To register for the course, please contact:
Choman Hardi choman@choman.fsnet.co.uk
078 55 80 10 82

Please note that places are limited so if you are interested book your place as soon as possible. Participants will be accepted on the "first come first served" basis.

Kurdish Fashion

Banoo Bakhtiar

When thinking of Kurds and Kurdistan, you will be forgiven if art and fashion do not immediately spring to mind. However, things are about to change due to the efforts of one lady. Delkash Murad, a fashion designer, has taken it upon herself to show the world that Kurdistan need not be covered in the ashes of war and despair, but can finally shine for its hidden beauty.

Delkash Murad was born in Iraq and grew up in Baghdad. She became a teacher in the chemically attacked town of Halabje and then fled to the UK escaping persecu-

tion.

Delkash has always had a deep love and passion for her heritage and identity and she portrayed this through Kurdish clothes. This culminated in putting together two fashion shows which although were on a small scale, proved to be very successful throughout the Kurdish and Arabic communities.

Yet lack of funding meant that she was unable to pursue her true desire to design her own unique style of Kurdish clothes. A plight that many feared futile since the design of Kurdish clothes has remained, on the whole, stagnant with little changes.



Delkash Murad, a fashion designer

However, in 2003 Dekkash won the Medical Foundation Millennium Fund. It is with the aid of this money that she organized her latest fashion show, the likes of which have never been associated with the Kurdish community. The fashion show took place in May 2004. It was a huge event which brought together Kurdish youth in London



This is a new design for Kawa for Sulaimani region, and its called Harzall



This dress is a new design from Dahok region, and its called Bnar



This dress is a new design form Sulaimanie region and its called Tanya

who acted as models for the fashion show. One lady described the models as 'pure angels coming down the church'. The fashion show displayed various styles from all the different regions of Kurdistan, including clothes that dated back to the last century. Most importantly, the show provided a platform in which Delkash Murad could display her own innovative ideas and design.

Traditionally, Kurdish clothes incorporated primarily a layer of undergarments, which were an Aladdin type of trousers and a thin slip on top. This was then topped up by another layer which was the dress and then either a long coat called a kawa, worn in the winter to keep warm, or a thin type of waistcoat called a helak for the summer. Nonetheless, Delkash Murad's designs were very different to the original design although they clearly still were Kurdish clothes. Del-

kash incorporated much thinner material, using extravagant layers in vibrant colours and exposing more of the female form.

The show proved to be an instant sensation and its achievements reverberated around not only the Kurdish community but London as a whole, an achievement that Ken Livingstone honoured by presenting her with an award. Since the show she has appeared on several Kurdish programmes on TV and has also been asked to organise shows in Iraq and Italy.

Delkash Murad, like other artists, is only doing what comes naturally to her and paying homage to her passion. There is no denying that in doing so, she is also paving a path that will allow the world to see that Kurdish artistic spirit cannot be killed by devastation, it is only hidden, waiting for its people to uncover it.



This is a new bridal dress from Mukryain region, and its called Kristal



This dress is a new design from Mukriyan region, and its called Shangeh



This dress is new design for Sulaimanie, Hawler, Sanandaj, and its called Nina



This dress is a new design and its from Hawler and Sulaimanie region, and its called Sarah

Celebrating the richness of our culture



Shae Salar Raouf Faraj

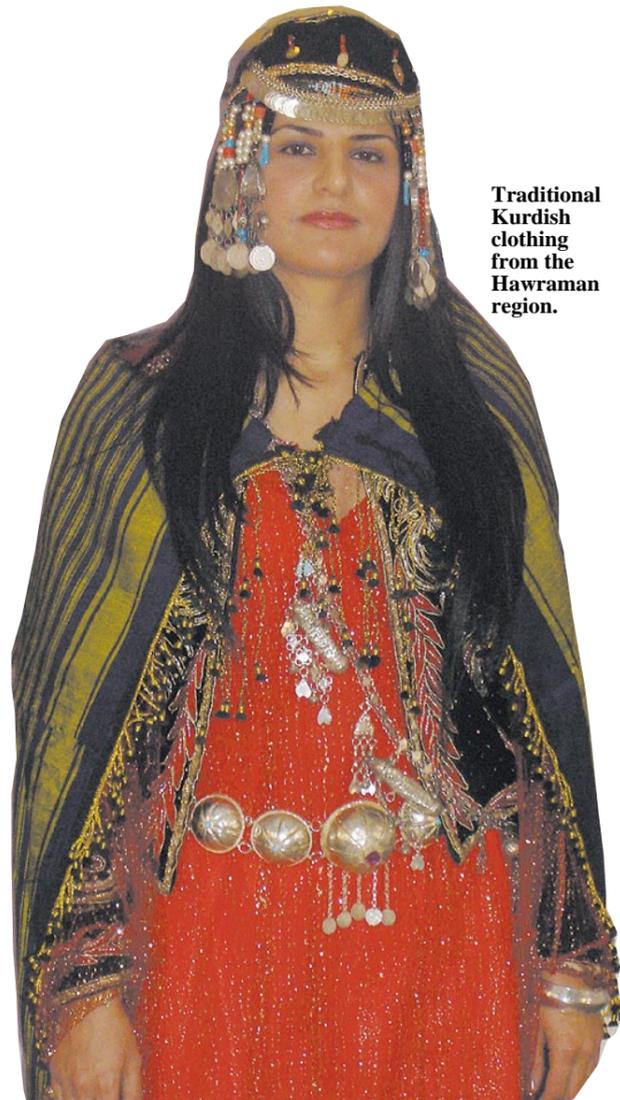
Saturday, 8th of January, made Greenford Town Hall shine with the colours of the Kurdish flag, (Red, White, Yellow and Green) when the Kurdish community took pride in honouring the rich culture of our country. The event was organised by the Kurdish Disability Organisation which is a London based charity. This organisation provides a number of services to Disabled Kurds and the Kurdish Community in general to better the quality of life and assist integration into a country which is radically different from Kurdistan.

The night exceeded the misery, oppression, and the many years of occupation, by celebrating Kurdish art, culture and traditions. It filled the hearts of the Kurdish Community with the vibrant colours of traditional Kurdish costumes and the sweet sound of Folklore music.

I arrived in London at the age of nine and my parents made sure that I heard the words Kurdish and Kurdistan more than anything else. This, as I was to discover later in my life, made me very Kurdish orientated. Since my arrival in the UK, I have always tried to stay

true to Kurdish costumes/traditions by bringing alive my childhood memories of Kurdistan. This devotion to the Kurdish cause and identity provided me with an inner strength and passion to partake in and support any Kurdish Community event in London. Therefore, when Mr Karem Sabir, Chairman of the KDO asked me to present this Kurdish Fashion Show in English, I was delighted.

Although previously other Kurdish Fashion Shows had been organised in London, this one was truly unique. This Fashion Show targeted a large audience in an attempt to raise awareness within the Kurdish Community itself, as well as



Traditional Kurdish clothing from the Hawraman region.

educating others about the Kurdish culture. This audience ranged from Kurdish youth, who seem to feel more at home in London than in Kurdistan, to their parents, who are stuck in a time zone which prevents them from fitting in with our modern, high-tech, westernised society, and the generation of aging grandparents who remain nostalgically reminiscent of both the very good times and very bad times in Kurdistan.

The Fashion show also intended to break the barrier of mere entertainment by educating the Kurdish Community. The show was presented in both Kurdish and English to reach a larger audience. The evening marked a true celebration of the traditional Kurdish costumes, designed by the artisanship and handy work of Kurdish men and women who dedicated time to perfecting the costumes which we casually take for granted. The designers had to mix practicality with fancy, as the costumes needed to reflect the changing seasons, the restrictions of our culture, as well as mirroring the colours of our flowers and the natural beauty of our homeland.

The fashion show was committed to bringing Kurdistan to London for one night. Costumes from all the parts of Kurdistan were on show. Each time when a model walked onto the stage wearing cloths from the region of Sulaimaniyah to Mahabad, or Badinan to Soran, the audience reacted by laughing, clapping, shouting and cheering with joy. The night captured the true essence of a Kurdish celebration as the fashion show presented a mini-play of a traditional Kurdish wed-



Traditional Kurdish cloths from the region of Halabja

ding. The choosing of the bride was shown by a defiant young groom. Afterwards a group of dancers were brought on stage in accordance with Kurdish customs to demonstrate the different dances throughout the region. As one of the dancers I can say, although we were depicting the customs of a traditional Kurdish wedding, with the heightened spirits and the cheers from the audience, it truly felt like dancing in the mountains of Kurdistan.

After the Fashion Show, KDO had organised live music until the evening came to a halt. The band consisted of two singers and the music ranged from melancholy to upbeat dancing music. The mellower singer was presented at first to give the Fashion Show participants a mini break. The second singer was then brought on to revive the party spirit. The second singer was also able to demonstrate what Kurdish Folklore music is about, which gladly helped the guests to display their true abilities for traditional Kurdish dancing.

This night created an opportunity for individuals to sustain their friendships and make new friends. It also provided a friendly environment to educate the younger generations about the origins and the traditions of the Kurdish people.

“I arrived in London at the age of nine and my parents made sure that I heard the words Kurdish and Kurdistan more than anything else.”

Shahen Tlabani, one of the guests said, "I applaud you all for this night, because instead of trying to modernise our traditional cloths which have been a part of our rich heritage for so long, you actually celebrated and displayed the beauty behind its age". I thanked Bahe Jaff, one of the most respected elderly women in London, for allowing us to wear her collection of costumes and for her efforts in helping KDO with the Fashion Show. She shook my hands and said "do not thank me for anything, I thank you for taking part tonight, I thank you for displaying the traditions of our people". Another guest who is widely known and respected in London was Pakshan Mohamed Faraj, she said: "I take pride in looking at all these youngsters. They have all left Kurdistan when they were children, yet it seems that they have not forgotten where they come from. But dearest Shae, I take pride mostly in you, because it is not only your heart that is Kurdish, it's your soul as well".

history of Kurdistan is an understatement. There were no security guards to sustain safety as there was no need for them. It was a peaceful night filled with the lifted spirits of the guests, there was Kurdish food, Kurdish music, Kurdish people and most importantly Kurdistan TV and Kurd Sat. I hope the satellite footage shows to Kurdistan as well as other countries inhabited by Kurds that the Kurdish Community in London is always trying to maintain its traditions and to educate its community about Kurdistan. I also expect that the stereotypical perception of Kurds living outside Kurdistan is challenged, as no matter how far we seem to be from home, we are always carrying Kurdistan with us. I also hope that all the Kurds around the world and in Kurdistan are given the opportunity to see their family members on the satellite channels who may have taken part or been present that night. I hope that the Kurds and the Kurdish politicians are as united and successful as the Kurdish Fashion Show was in London.



Traditional Kurdish clothing from the region of Qaladze

The Children are our Future

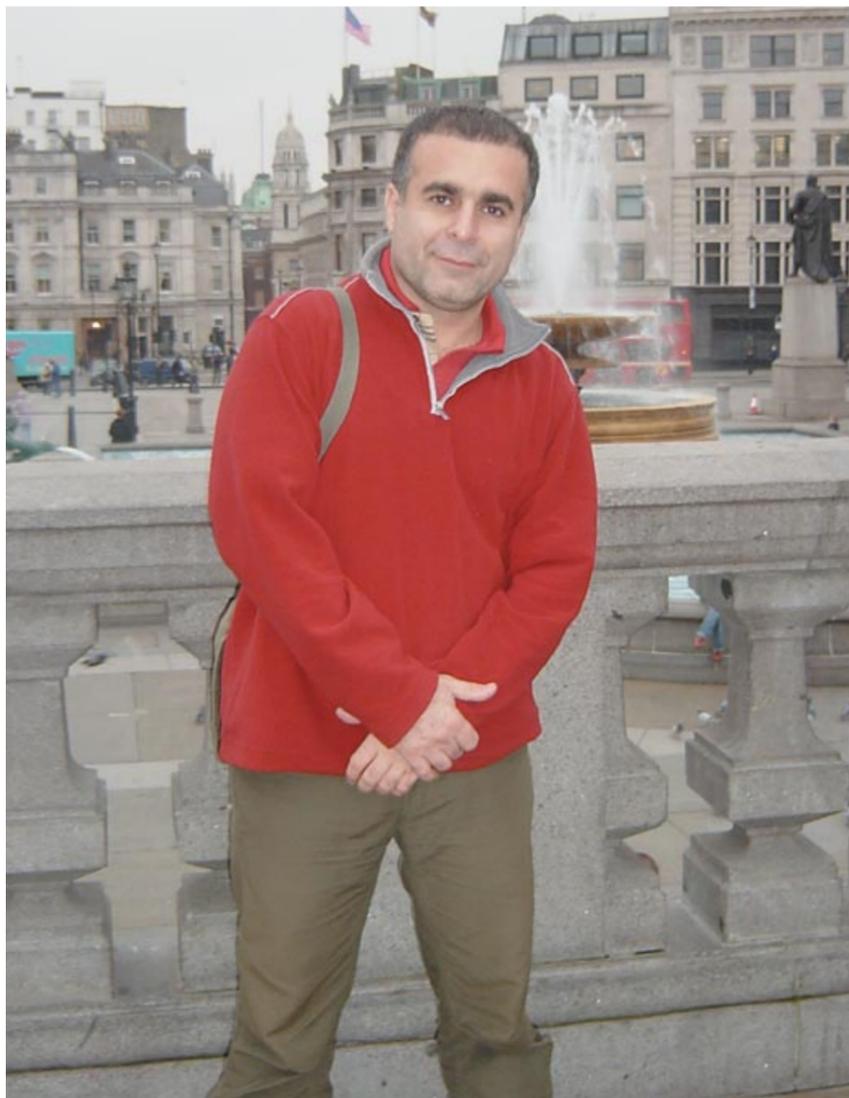
By Saryas Ali

The Kurdish filmmaker, Bahman Ghobadi, set his third feature film, *Turtles can fly*, on the border of Iraq and Turkey where a series of tragic, heroic and truly funny events take place. The film follows the fortunes of a young boy who is nicknamed after the very things he fixes, 'Satellite'. This very charismatic and charming young boy has an ability to control and lead his village through their fears and joys.

This film is essentially about the effects of war, poverty and lack of education on simple villagers. We, as the audience, witness what it is like for children to experience difficulties in life, from love, kindness and respect, to haunted memories, pain and death.

Like all his films, Ghobadi does not depict his young characters as children, in fact, he does the opposite. Here, the children are in control and the events follow them, they make the story happen. The adults in the film appear almost two dimensional, their words are a catalyst to show the true nature of the children, and thus the younger cast shine and the older cast seem like extras. This is actually a very difficult thing to do in film; usually a filmmaker will have children in the frame as props. It takes a very intuitive and observant individual to understand how children really react in serious situations. Ghobadi shows the adult in his children when the villagers ask Satellite to fix their broken things, to give them workers, to bring them news. And when Satellite goes out to buy guns, the men treat him like a businessman.

Ghobadi makes no mistakes in his casting. The young girl, Agrin, is a prime example. Agrin is beautiful and innocent; she is forced to raise an unwanted child. Agrin



Bahman Ghobadin the director of "Turtles can fly". Photograph: Nemam

seems to represent what went wrong in our history, her pains and sorrow are that of women four times her age, and Ghobadi chooses to give these memories and experiences to his young character. By giving her the name 'Agrin', which literally means 'we are fire' but actually means 'passion', he is hinting at her attitude towards her relationship with Satellite. Controversially, but necessarily, he shows the young girl's horrific misfortune in a flashback. It is here that I believe Ghobadi is communicating with the women who were raped, tortured, and

whose children were killed.

Riga, Agrin's unwanted child, like the child in *A Time for Drunken Horses* becomes a burden. The name Riga, which means 'the way', gives an ironic twist to the character as Ghobadi makes the child blind.

Hengov, Agrin's brother, is an armless boy who is able, through no control of his own, to predict the future. This input from Ghobadi is his most interesting to date. He is the patriarch in his family, encouraging his sister to love her

unwanted child, and though he has no arms, he challenges Satellite with all his bravado. We see that Hengov is fearless and has nothing to lose, another insight into the minds of the victims of war.

Satellite's sidekicks compliment him beautifully, in that they are there to do what he wants. They are ready to defend him and they respect him like soldiers their general.

The magnificent script of 'Turtles can fly' can only truly be appreciated in Kurdish. When I saw it in the cinema, the subtitles irritated me. Not only were they inaccurate, but they were short, in some scenes there weren't subtitles at all, this wasn't a problem for me, however for the English couple sitting behind me, it was. If you understand Sorani, you laugh in the right places and you relate to the characters better. The dialogue is very accurate in showing how real people talk in Kurdistan, in

"This is a very realistic representation of Kurdish people, they match the person to their village just as the English match the person by their horoscope."

some scenes the dialogues made me feel sad. This was partly because the language was so familiar, it was strange to hear it from the silver screen in England and it made me feel nostalgic. For the English audience they can only merge the subtitles with the pictures, and this means they only pick up on the content of what's being said rather than what

they're trying to say. It is clear then, that Ghobadi is specifically targeting a Kurdish audience. But is Ghobadi neglecting his English audience or are the simplified subtitles intentional? Is it better to understand the nature of the Kurds or just the nature of what Kurds need?

Having set his film on the border of Iraq and Turkey Ghobadi as auteur expresses certain opinions about Turkey. He presents us with an image of the child Riga standing in the rain, crying by a barbed wired fence, on the actual border, with a dog on the other side barking at him. A Turkish soldier, standing in his high tower and carrying his big gun, remains unaffected. We do not see his face or hear his voice; he is just a dark figure with a gun. This is in contrast with the image of the American soldiers who look advanced, heroic and shown in bright light.

This film was made in the post Saddam Hussein era but is set just before his fall. The political clash is very much present, as identity and background are the basis of most conversations in the Kurdish Culture. Throughout the film we notice that new characters are recognised by either their birthplace or most lived place. We learn that the old man who joins the group on route to Suleymania is from Hewler. Agrin and her brother are from Halabja, and slowly the audience understands that a stranger is no longer a stranger if you know where they come from. This is a very realistic representation of Kurdish people, they match the person to their village just as the English match the person by their horoscope.

Ghobadi's style of filmmaking seem to echo those of the art novella. His fast editing, use of sound and raw colouring is similar to Jean Luc Goddard and Woody Allen's techniques of a no nonsense style of filmmaking.



In 101 years of Iranian Cinema, not one film has been nominated for an Academy Award. Here, a Kurdish film, which neither glorifies nor rejects the war but certainly welcomes the offer of freedom, is nominated under a foreign category, ironically an Iranian category. This is truly just the beginning; having won the main prize at the San Sebastian Film Festival in September, closing the third Kurdish Film Festival in London, (www.kurdishfilmfestival.com)

"Riga, Agrin's unwanted child, like the child in *A Time for Drunken Horses* becomes a burden. The name Riga, which means 'the way', gives an ironic twist to the character as Ghobadi makes the child blind."

and also receiving great critical acclaim at the London Film Festival, Bahman Ghobadi has achieved what most filmmakers dream about: glory and reward. This film will stand the test of time and criticism. And in my opinion the message is plain and simple, 'the children are our future, teach them within, let them lead the way.'

Life for Us

The Kurdish Exile Association with the Kurdish community in London launched Choman Hardi's first collection of poetry in English, *Life for Us*, on the 3rd October 2004. 160 people attended the event in the Irish centre, Hammer-smith to celebrate Choman's poetry and to listen to the talented harpist and singer, Tara Jaff. The event was hosted by Bervian Dosky, herself a poet, a board member of the Kurdish P.E.N. and the director of the Kurdish Housing Association.

The event started with Tara Jaff playing her harp to welcome the crowd and put them in the mood for poetry. Then Choman read some poems from the new book and this was followed by more music and songs from Tara. Bervian Dosky then read a message from the Kurdish P.E.N. congratulating Choman on her new endeavour. The event was closed with book signing where people queued to buy copies of *Life for Us*.

Life for Us is published by Bloodaxe, the UK's best contemporary poetry publisher. The book explores both the struggle of the Kurdish people who are not represented on the world map and the pains of exile.

Choman was born in Iraqi Kurdistan just before her family fled to Iran. She has lived in Iraq, Iran

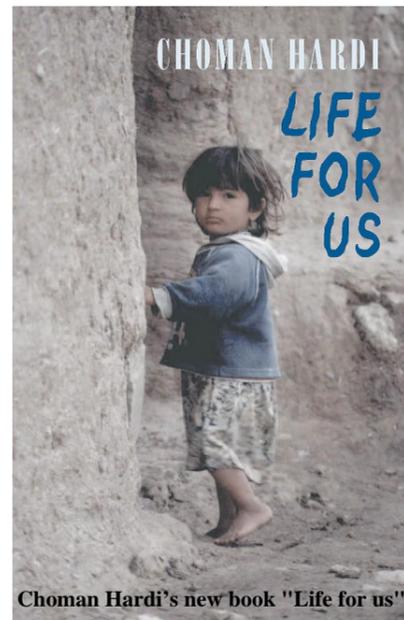


Choman Hardi signing her new book. Photograph: Kardo Basim

and Turkey before coming to the UK in 1993. Her work is informed by her experiences of displacement, war and oppression, but also shows the human spirit triumphing over adversity. She was educated in Oxford, University of London and University of Kent. She has published three collections of poetry in Kurdish and started writing in English four years ago. Choman has been mentored by Moniza Alvi and George Szirtes, both prominent poets in the UK and worldwide.

George Szirtes says: '**Choman Hardi's poems tell of tragedy, war, persecution and dispersal, but are more than simple summing of facts. The grace and**

rhythm of the telling- the singing of it- moves the poems beyond reportage. There is a kind of tranquillity and civilisation in the voice which heals as it



Choman Hardi's new book "Life for us"

weeps: the tears are not those of self pity but those of ageless lamentations, caught freshly here, formed into fresh shapes. Pity there is, but the poetry is not in the pity: the pity is in the poetry' -

Moniza Alvi says: '**This is compelling poetry of international significance.'**

Supported by Westway Development Trust



Choman Hardi Photograph: Kardo Basim



International writers and members of the Kurdish Community attending Hardi's book launch. Photograph: Kardo Basim

Hasan Sahan: 'If young people are interested in cinema they should go for it!'



Peyam Mufty

Between the 22nd October to 4th November 2004 Kurdistan film festival committee arranged the third London Kurdish Film Festival in Rio Cinema.

Nemam arranged an interview with the committee coordinator Mr Hasan Sahan regarding the festival and the young people's contribution to the festival:

Q- What is, in your opinion, the importance of the KFF?

A- The KFF is one of the very few cultural events in London which is pan Kurdish. It provides an opportunity for the Kurdish Community to participate in a high-profile cultural event in London. The festival fosters the development of Kurdish cinema by showcasing Kurdish films in London. KFF also ensures that Kurdish films are universally recognised as Kurdish rather than Turkish, Arabic, or Iranian.

The London Kurdish film Festival has also inspired Kurds in other parts of the world to hold similar festivals in Frankfurt, Berlin, Stockholm, Vienna and other cities.

Q- In the past three years a large variety of films from different genres were shown. Not all the films were in Kurdish, nor were they about Kurdish issues. What are the main criteria for participation?

A-We have two main criteria for

the film selection: A) Films by Kurdish directors, B) Films about Kurdish people.

Q- Film Festivals often give out prizes to the participating films and filmmakers of the various genres. Is there a plan to introduce something similar into the KFF in the future?

A- We are very keen to encourage Kurdish filmmakers and films about Kurds. Currently, our resources are very limited and prize giving requires certain conditions to be met such as having enough new films, etc. Despite these difficulties we hope to be able to give prizes to short films in the next couple of years. This will encourage young filmmakers to make more films both in London and elsewhere.

Q- What is your advice for Kurdish youth who aspire to develop a career in the Film industry?

A-Young people should recognise that filmmaking is becoming more democratic because of new technology and digital equipment. These things are cheaper now and this is encouraging. There are already few Kurdish directors who are internationally acclaimed. Also, living in London has many advantages; there are many film schools and workshops. They can start by attending these. Kurdish people are



Hasan Sahan

not short of stories to tell, so they will not have a shortage of topics. I think if young people are interested in cinema they should go for it!

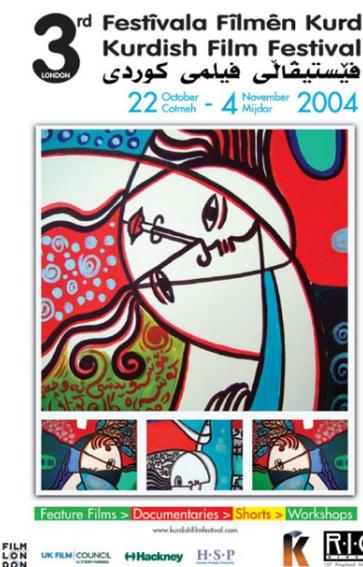
Q- The majority of Kurdish artists, be it directors, actors, photographers and technicians, are from the Kurdish Diaspora. How has this dispersal helped or hindered Kurdish film making? And how can it nourish and support the attempts that are taking place inside Kurdistan?

A-There are advantages and disadvantages of being in exile. My suggestion is to take advantage of being in exile and overcome disadvantages. Providing resources can support the attempts in Kurdistan. We in London have access to more resources and more knowledge. We need to find a way of passing this on to those in Kurdistan. Being in exile will help Kurdish cinema to become more diverse and will help the Kurdish experience on the cinema screen to be reflected more fully.

Q- London hosts many other Film Festivals. How far does location contribute to the success of events? Do you have plans to take the Festival elsewhere?

A-London is culturally a very diverse city and there are many Festivals. Having the festival in London has been good in many ways partly because Kurdish people in the UK are largely concentrated in London. On the other hand, UK cinema is largely dominated by Hollywood so it is more difficult for alternative festivals such as ours.

We plan to take the Festival to other cities in the UK but this will depend on our resources. Currently the festival is organised by a committee who contribute their time voluntarily.



What kind of a person are you?



Shkar Sharif

If your friends and your teachers were asked to describe what kind of a person you are, what would they say about you? Would they say you're a nice person, easy going, friendly and smart? More importantly, are you happy with that? Its okay if you are, but it will be better if your not. I'll tell you why.

Ever since I can remember, and I'm sure you're the same, we have been told that first and foremost we must serve our nation, we must serve our ancestors and we must serve the land our parents fought for. This has often confused me as I didn't know what I could do from this far to help my nation. First of all, growing up in a society so different to our own, it's hard to please both sides. Doing one thing may upset your family and doing another may upset your friends. It feels like an impossible situation. I've seen people get so confused with this dilemma that they totally forget the concepts of right and wrong. You may have seen such cases in Kurdish parties when some young people end up fighting and even stabbing each other. Sometimes the police needs to get involved to stop the problem and control those who argue. I'm sure this really upsets a lot of us because it gives Kurdish people a bad name.

Unfortunately we live in a world where peoples' opinions are largely based on stereotypes. This is awful but a reality nonetheless. As Kurdish youths we should live our lives by example. We should always have principles, dignity and honour. We should show utmost respect to our elders regardless of whom they are, and also respect peoples who younger than us. We should show humility at all times and not lie. We will never be perfect, but that's not the point. It's the constant striving for perfection that makes a person unique and remarkable.

"Ever since I can remember, and I'm sure you're the same, we have been told that first and foremost we must serve our nation, we must serve our ancestors and we must serve the land our parents fought for."

Would you rather not your friends and your teachers say that you're remarkable? Would you rather not be seen as unique? Because more importantly people will say, "Wow he/she is remarkable, the way he/she conducts him/herself is unique." This will cause them to conclude that you must belong to a remarkable nation and when down the line they meet another Kurdish youth with similar conduct as you, they will be adamant that The Kurdish people are outstanding. Then you can be happy that you have done your part in serving your nation.

We are relatively unknown as a people to the outside world and that means that we can, to a certain extent, control the way we are perceived by other nations. Let's try our best to be perceived as remarkable.

HIV and AIDS



Shawain Dilshad

HIV is one of the biggest social, economical and health challenges in the world today. It is a global emergency claiming over 8,000 lives every day. In fact, 5 people die of AIDS every minute.

HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. This is the virus which is known to cause AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). If someone is HIV-positive, they have been infected with the virus.

A person infected with HIV does not have AIDS until the virus seriously damages their immune system, making them vulnerable to a range of infections, some of which can lead to death.

HIV is transmitted through bodily fluids such as blood, semen, vaginal secretions and breast milk. In fact you can only get HIV in four ways:

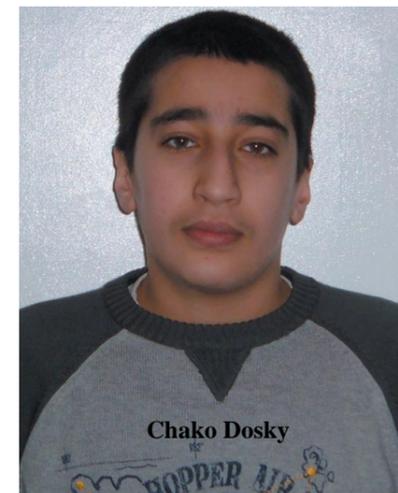
- Unprotected sexual intercourse with an infected partner (the most common).
- Sharing needles or other contaminated injection or skin-piercing equipment.
- Blood transfusions and organ or tissue transplants.
- Transmission from infected mother to child in the womb, at birth, or through breastfeeding.

However, HIV is not transmitted by casual physical contact, coughing, sneezing and kissing, by sharing toilet and washing facilities, by using eating utensils or consuming food and beverages handled by someone who has HIV. It is not spread through mosquito bites or other insects. I hope that this has helped you understand what HIV and AIDS are. I think this is a very important matter that is not talked about very much in our Kurdish community.

The skilled brothers

Nemam - London

Chako and Barzo Dosky are two brothers with different skills and hobbies. They are Kurdish-British citizens of a refugee background who have been living in London since 1990. The brothers, now aged about 16 and 18 respectively, arrived here with their family when they were just 1 and 3 years old. They started school in London and



Chako Dosky

are now doing their A-Levels.

Barzo was born in July 1987 in the City of Dohuk, south Kurdistan (Iraq). He was only two months old when his family left Dohuk to join the Kurdish Freedom Fighters in the mountains, opposing the Iraqi regime. Aged less than a year, Barzo's mother carried him while they fled to Iran. They walked through the mountains of Kurdistan escaping from the chemical bombardment during the ethnic cleansing campaign carried out by the Iraqi regime against the Kurds. After three years of living in terrible conditions on the Iranian border, suffering from the Iranian regimes persecution for being Kurds, his mother carried him and his brother Chako to safety. They arrived in the UK and applied for asylum in 1990.

Barzo started Kung Fu classes at the age of 5 and still continues. He started with Alan Winner Academy and took part in all the national competitions where he won gold

and silver medals in all of them. He also won a bronze medal in Belgium for the European championship last year. He is now training with the national team. So far Barzo has won about 15 cups and 30 medals. He hopes that Kung Fu will become part of the 2008 Olympics so that he can participate and win as a British Kurd. Although

Here in UK Chako is interested in Rap music and has performed in front of big audiences in school and in local parties in London. He has won competitions and has gained recognition as a good performer.

The young brothers are involved in



Barzo Dosky standing beside his collection of medals and trophies.

Barzo is very successful in this sport, he does not ignore his studies. He is studying A Level in economics and hopes to obtain higher qualifications in this field.

Chako was born in the border town of Saqiz in east Kurdistan (Iran) in May 1989. He has different skills from his brother. He is a first year A Level student and is interested in computing. He wants to obtain a university degree in this field.

Chako is interested in learning about their background and tries to know more about what happened to them. He says that he has always felt very sad hearing about what the consecutive Iraqi regimes did to uproot the Kurdish people from their homeland Kurdistan. This is why, he was very happy when Saddam Hussein, the former Iraqi president, who was responsible for killing so many Kurds and destroying Kurdistan was captured to face trial and be punished for the crimes he committed.

their community and are familiar with their ethnic culture as well as the British culture. They have visited Kurdistan a number of times during summer vacations and are closely getting to know the specificity of Kurdistan and its people.

The young men are interested in the stories of the great Peshmergas (Freedom fighters), those who have been national heroes and defended the Kurds against the brutal regimes who have targeted the Kurds and launched genocide campaigns against them.

They also try hard to understand what happened and why they became refugees, why their family was forced to leave everything behind and became refugees in UK. They try to make sense of things through the eyes of their family members. They also try to tell their surrounding about what happened and why they became refugees. This is important so that the wider society understands the plight of refugees, the suffering of Kurds and the people of Kurdistan.