

## Change and the Future of the Kurdish Question in Syria

All despot regimes are deteriorating in the region, and this goes in line with the will of the peoples in the region to get their freedom and their will to appear differently on the arena of history in a way that contradicts the oppression inflicted on them. There is no doubt that this historical movement will reformulate our modern history and that of the peoples of the region. It gives a huge chance to the peoples of the region to set themselves free from this chronic corruption and rusty slavery which prevailed over the lives of those communities for ages. So do we explain this overwhelming change in societies and political systems? What are we to expect for the fate of the pan-Kurd cause politically? What is the possible and influential role that the Kurd can play? In this regard, we have to insist, in our view, on the difference between the reality of Kurdish people and the reality of slavery, persecution and destitution and the shape that the future should take and what we aspire to. The keys issue is the nature of the reconciliation in the future in this geopolitical situation and this is what we can expect from this historical change. In this regard, the modern free state forms the political and legal framework to organize the joint life in this geography. All this can be achieved through free contribution for all in their political self-determination and their quest for their

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the Syrian Arab State are only the one who work for the comprehensive unity of the Arab world). Article (4): (Arabic is the formal language), so all other national languages are ignored and denied in the country. In the following articles (116-96-90-63-7), the president of the republic, the prime minister, minister and their deputies and member of the people's assembly under the constitutional oath work to achieve the goals of the Arab Nation: Unity, Freedom and Socialism. The same is in article (11) which provides for the responsibilities of the armed forces. In economy and economic planning article (13), as in education and culture according to article (21) which provided (the educational system and culture aim at creating socialist pan-Arab generation who thinks scientifically, connected to their history, proud in their heritage and full of the spirit of strife for the purpose of achieving the goals of their nation in achieving unity, freedom and socialism).

Article (23) provides for (the socialist culture is the basis on which the united socialist Arab society is built, and it aims at achieving moral values and supreme examples for the Arab Nation). Even in the judiciary, while verdicts were issued in the name of the Syrian people, they are issued pursuant to article (132) stated in the current constitution (in the name of the Syrian Arab People). What is next after all this Arabian Baathanization of the country

future to identity and nothing but their identity. The future which they have to achieve freely, so on this basis involvement in change should be done with awareness. We cannot not turn a blind eye to the changes happening in our vicinity which changes Syria is the main arena for.

Since the coup of 1963, the Baath party and its pan-ideology monopolized the political life in the country. They forced all society to adopt their fake revolutionary slogans and to go in line with its intents and ideological confiscations. This was reflected on the public life theoretically and practically. They have tailored the current Syrian constitution to fit the Baath Party, and it can be considered like footnotes to the texts of the Baath ideology. It was characterized by the hegemony of pan-Arab racist ideology that stresses the control of one ethnicity over others in addition to connecting citizenship with pan-Arab ideology demands. In the introduction of the constitution which is part and parcel of it, the word "Arab" is used more than 30 times. This track is enhanced by principles 1 and 2. Then articles and clauses follow lead to stress the previous ones. In the first paragraph of article (1), the name of the state is decided as the "Syrian Arab Republic", and in paragraph (2) (the Syrian Arab State is part of the Arab nation). So each citizen who eligible to citizenship should work hard to achieve full unity (so citizens in

Kurdish geography ... etc. This dilemma ends with the regime. Any alternative or potential regime should demonstrate its democratic ability and its national legitimacy by overcoming this dilemma.

The fact that the Kurds did not start the revolution and are the last ones to participate in it makes no significant difference up to now from the political perspective. What is essential and vital for the future of the Kurdish cause is announcing the revolution on the regime's heritage. Based on this principle, change itself (change for the sake of change) is absurd and is a national and humanitarian treason because the ultimate purpose for change is uprooting political despotism- the racist one and its heritage- and replacing it with a pluralistic democratic regime that is based on equality between citizens and protects their differences. The desired equality is not only a future guaranty for the legitimate and just right of Kurds, but should rather be retrogressive in impact by making up for the national injustice and persecution inflicted and accumulated on the Kurds through ages of absurd policies. Hence, the Syrian state, in the future, should fully emerge clean from policies of despotism and racism of the past and uproot the heritage of persecution against the Kurds through a pack of political and legislative measures, even symbolic ones, that qualify the state to be a state for all its citizens. By doing this, it demonstrates

as Baathists have recourse to all techniques of power monopoly from Nazis and followed their lead in ideology and bureaucracy!!! Change is inevitable in Syria like other countries. The course of events in Syria indicates that the inevitable end of the despot regime is change just like other regimes toppled by people's wrath and the public anger. This regime is present only in appearance, and its continuity up to now is not its strength; it is rather an indication of its weakness. It exists because of its weakness, and it is fragile from inside. It is also important to know that its end will not be necessarily cloned like other experiences even if there are some similarities. Therefore, Kurds and their political elite must be cautious, be careful and exercise positive critical interaction. Change is eminent for the Kurdish people more than ever. At the same time, they realized that that they have to overcome their humiliating status quo to reach a situation that fits their human dignity. The will for change was always there for Syrian Kurds, but it preceded the awareness of change and was separated from it. It was just an abstract will rather than a historical one, but now it goes in line and is united with the awareness of change. From now on, the Kurds' dilemma does not lie in the racist regime in Syria because the regime's existence is just a matter of time. However, the real dilemma lies in the political and social heritage of the regime represented by enslaving, distorting and arabizing Kurds and the

It must not Arabized, it must rather be pluralistic. Any potential political regime has to establish its legitimacy on the national, cultural, social and historical diversity. It has to build its foundations on this diversity and reflect it in its general principles. Usually, the constitution regulates these general principles and relations. Therefore, it is totally just that the Syrian constitution, in the future, provides for and states clearly that the Syria is a multi-ethnic country where Arabs and Kurds are the two main ethnicities in addition to recognizing the rights of other ethnicities like Assyrians and Chaldeans and others. Any potential democratic constitution for Syria should state full equality between Arabs and Kurds in role and status and in rights and duties as a just and key introduction to settling the Kurdish cause in Syria. It has to provide that the parliament or any other authority does not have the right to mess up with this principle or limit its comprehensiveness or its application in all social and political aspects of life and that any law that messes up with this principle or its legality impugns its constitutional status. It shall be deemed contradicting to the foundation and the partnership contract and null ultimately. Belonging to Syria is the most just thing among us; this should be announced and stressed. In all respects, there is no one who is Syrian more or less than others; Syria is for all with no inequality or differentiation. The freedom of any group is

that it is clean from all ideological appearances and racism that characterized it. It is worth mentioning, in this regard, that there is no hard evidence or proof that the Syrian Arab opposition is ready to recognize the national rights of the Syrian Kurds or boycotting the racist heritage of the Baath party and its policies of denial to the Kurds and their cause so far. When they talk about the Syrian Kurds situation, they tackle it in a general and vague way that is more close the statements made by Media ministers and spokespersons of the regime that to any other thing. At the same time, they demand that we support their political demands categorically with no regard to our just rights in return.

Now there cannot be a joint alliance of the Syrian opposition, a comprehensive one of Kurds and Arabs, in the absence of a democratic, comprehensive and radical, narrative that provides for and cover all the demands of all segments and stress the just nature of the national cause of the Syrian Kurds. Believing in and recognizing the Kurdish cause as a Syrian cause, by those, must be based on a specific Syrian awareness rather than an abstract Arabian perspective: an awareness of citizenship that is based on differences and recognition of political, historical and cultural plurality. This belief cannot be possible but through constitutional and political recognition that the political identity of Syria is not only Arab.

vicious nonsense. The completion of the political liberation of the Syrian state and the eminence of the state of the comprehensive citizenship and the civil unified laws that intercepts any attempt to inflict political duress and persecution on a group or an individual, and at the same time it indicates the progress and complete nature of civil society which forms a rich diversity and takes difference as its real identity. In the future, the helplessness of the Syrian state in overcoming political and social inequality amongst those ethnic groups that form the Syrian society by its transformation again into a power monopolized by an ethnicity or a religion or a sect is considered a flagrant failure for the state of freedom and equality has to be for all Syrians. This undermines any real possibility for the social contract- a political and civil one that is based on tolerance and difference and coexistence; it is a partnership contract in national life.

The Baathist regime, the peer of the late Baathist regime in Iraq, which is founded on individual and ethnic domination, has objected the historical pluralistic identity of Syria with a pure ethnical component: that is the formal reality of authority in Syria. From this perspective, the regime denied reality politically, socially and historically. The foundation of despotism laid ethnical and denominational grounds for the political system in Syria. On the one hand, the whole society with its

meaningless with no equality with others. Any potential system that calls for change to prove in reality, practically, that Syria is Kurdish as much as Arab and Arab as much as it is going to be Kurdish, or it will not be like that as much as it is not going to be only Arab.

Refusing this political and cultural reality will lead the state and society again to be subject to the despotism of yet another ethnicity, excluding others. The Kurds aspiration to full citizenship and real equality is not to be understood as an ideological or political invention; it is, however, a political and historical condition to the perfection and maturity of the Syrian state, an introduction to its legitimacy and continuity and a manifestation of the united will of all Syrians. This is the real answer to the historical question: will Syria as an entity be viable for Kurds to live in freedom and enjoy full equality without any form of duress, denial, coercion or terrorism exercised on them? How? Here comes the importance of the following of the following conviction: the freedom of Kurds and their equality in Syria is a condition for the freedom of and equality between all Syrians because the freedom of a Syrian particularly and Syrians in generally is deeply connected with the equality between all Syrians regardless of their belonging. If there was no equality between all Syrians, talking about is the freedom of Syrians is merely

each ethnic group have rights and purpose on equal footing with others. Upon this recognition, this ethnic group has the right to participation in political life and political representation. When no ideological ethnicity is the essence of the political authority, there is no contradiction between the ethnic or national belonging of the individual or their belonging to the state or to the political society. In this situation, the private is represented by the public and the public is represented by the private. Political inequality amongst individuals and groups is cancelled through effacing ethnic ideologies from a multi-cultured state. Then citizenship unity is formed and differentiations and forms of discrimination in citizenship are settled. The liberation of the national state from ethnic or racial ideology, in this way, means ultimately the liberation of the citizen from its pre-civil belonging politically. The liberation of the state from the Baath ideology means that it does not recognize any privilege for an ethnicity or race over another, and it stresses itself purely as a state of citizens. A state that has been liberated from ethnic ideologies pays no heed to ethnicity as long as it does not take ethnicity a basis for it. This paves the way for yet another concept of view of citizenship that is based on full equality in rights and duties instead of the dominant ethnic perspective. Real citizenship has been raped and practically excluded from political life in the Baath state. It will always appear vague,

plurality and historical diversity has to fully adopt the political and cultural values. On the other hand, it has to abandon its own values and its identity that is based on equality in order to prove its full harmony with the announced ideological claims. None was able to play their political rule from the angle of their ethnic identity or humanity. All have to adapt to and identify with the political and social ideas to be cleansed completely either through tools or through a party or a full-powered apparatus. Therefore, an individual would have no social identity, human particularity or opinion but to the extent needed for that purpose. The homeland is for all fairly and equally when there is no difference between its components in rights and status and where domination, injustice and ethnic supereminence do not exist. Unlike that, conflict and war result in disintegration. This real partnership, where no hierarchy or inequality exist, is based on accepting ultimate equality amongst all Syrian groups so that it goes in line with their aspirations and will in existence and coexistence pursuant to a new citizenship pact that provides for equal opportunities and stresses the plurality of identity where theoretical and practical conditions that enhanced the bias towards the status of a group over another. When the state is not only represented by an ethnic, racial or denominational identity or any other ideology or is not manifested or stolen by any of which, then

against them and against other marginalized minorities. A Syrian Kurd that has been excluded and marginalized up to now can discover tangibly the logical and moral basis in a new political system, and their political awareness gets increased and enhanced by belonging to the said system. Hence, national work starts on the basis of a practical and public national partnership without denial or exclusion. Future Syria shall never be an inheritance of anybody or for an ethnicity rather than others; it is for all Syrians fairly and equally. No party can monopolize it or acts in way that excludes others from now on. The common interest of all Syrians will guarantee the unity and harmony of the Syrian people rather than the fake vicious slogans of ethnicity and unity. This will be a real historical achievement. The historically marginalized Kurds, the nationally and politically excluded, the deprived of citizenship and its rights, are going to live on this basis in their deeper national framework after they gain back their historical role that was excluded due to the injustice of despotism and the racist ethnic authority.

This is the only to end their political absence that will remove all contradiction between their national will and that of the political center. Kurds demonstrate that their national life does not contradict their national life.

Natural freedom of humans is not the sole

confusing and distorted if it is not manifested in a system that actually represents all. Here, an Arab, a Kurd or an Assyrian enjoys their rights as political individual who is equal to all others. So neither the state nor any political regime can discriminate between citizens by granting certain citizens rights that it denies to others on some ideological pretexts. Then the state should act to guarantee equality in society and treat them fairly regarding their status and privilege. In this situation, a state that has liberated from an ideological domination or a unilateral ethnic movement has to recognize all the peculiarities forming the civil society where each is represented equally with no identification with any of which but it only controls them politically as a state for all citizens. At the same time, citizens are liberated from social and faith belongings without denying any where they are privileged when they declare their belonging to the state. Then they identify themselves as public individuals. Kurds in Syria aspire to a political and constitutional situation that enables them determine their destination freely with not duress. They are seeking compatible conditions of real equality in a more open and diverse country.

An equality that allows coexistence equally and they look forward to see real (constitutional, political and cultural) guarantees that puts an end to all forms of current and inherited discrimination



meaning if it does not recognize faiths, identities and cultural aspirations. Any political system that establishes its legitimacy on the domination of a religious or sectarian majority or on an ethnic ideology undermines democracy and thwarts any attempt towards equality.

In the Syrian situation in particular this might reproduce the ethnic despotism of Baath and strengthen those racial practices that enslaved and excluded large segments of the Syrian society. As many thinkers have indicated, any explicit or implicit exclusion of minorities contradicts the rule of publicity and equality. The demand that majority should control the minority democratically does not necessarily means violating its freedom and beaching the principle of equality because the purpose of that is not to impose the hegemony of the majority over the minority; it is rather a guarantee of the right and the practice thereof by minority. As a means, democracy will undermine and contradict itself this way especially when a specific faction, a sect, an ethnic/racial group confiscates the will of all others by introducing its own ideological or denominational will to then comply the governance with its will so that it does seek public good or common interests.

A democracy of equality is, in this regard, means excluding all differences between groups and cultural identities and creating appropriate

purpose of democracy, and it does not aim at the domination of majority over the culture of a minority in the name of ethnic majority. Democracy lays the conditions to resisting this hegemony in the name of freedom, plurality respect and protection of diversity and sublimely reproducing it. The example of Milošević and his likes like Astaa Burhan proves that as they had represented an overwhelming majority of the ethnic public opinion, of an extremist majority, a majority that refuses the other. They have launched a fierce war against minorities in the name of ethnic purity and racial harmony. No definition of democracy can ever be accepted in such situations. It is the sovereignty of recognizing the other, protecting the other's difference and respecting the other, as Charles Tailor said. Tyranny and despotism of the majority forms a serious threat to equality and freedom and to democracy particularly when there is a monopolized and elected majority that holds dear a religious, ethnic or racial ideology, as Toureen noted. The domination of this majority will reproduce new forms of inequality and other types of legislation and laws that are deny, marginalize and exclude minorities. Democracy has to be established on agreement on recognition of will of the majority on the condition of guaranteeing plurality, protection of minorities and respect the diverse aspirations thereof. Today, it is impossible to see a democracy that is not plural, and it has no



translates political equality between individuals on the basis of citizenship, so it pays no heed to their class, religion or ethnicity. It stresses that all men are free and equal in status, rights and duties.

The essence of democracy; it does not accept any discrimination based on race, religion or class and objects any differentiation in roles and status. The society of citizens that the Syrian state has to represent its political expression in the future has to prove at the very beginning that it does not accept any hierarchy between groups and individuals in citizenship, and that Syrian citizenship is the most fairly distributed thing among citizens irrespective of their religion or ethnicity so that there is no discrimination between or exclusion of groups or individuals. The Syrian society with its current historical diversity and its different ethnicities and cultures must the frame of reference for the new concept of citizenship instead of the racial concept of citizenship that is full of racial identity. This concept of the racial or religious identity of the majority limits the illusion of public national identity to itself; this harmed common life and equality. It has been enhanced on the expense of social and historical realities that has been too much excluded. So real citizenship is desired and needed to achieve its goals as a basis for belonging and a principle for equality among all Syrians and empower Kurds to participate

constitutional and political conditions to create more sublime freedoms for minorities. In this way it sets them free individuals and groups from the chains imposed on them by the hegemony of a majority, and it also makes them able to create their political life and self-determination. As Alan Toureen indicates, without the freedom of choice and self-determination, there is no democracy; without pluralism, openness and free political communication between people who disagree in opinion and have conflicting interests, democracy is a weak ghost. Democracy does not exist in a harmonious society that identifies with itself where policy and life in general are monopolized and represented by an individual, a party, an ethnicity, a class ... etc. Any majority is dangerous as a typical majority seizing authority so much as like any minority is looked upon as suspicious by the majority. The minority is not suspicious because of its reality but because of its different intents, desires of and aspiration to equality or to become a majority or due to its usual prudence and suspicions related to the majority's claim of power through manifesting and representing the public will. Prudence related to this abnormal relation comes from the legitimate fear of seeing democracy deteriorating at the hands of religious or ethnic, or even denominational, majority that would eventually lead Syria again to the abyss of new forms of ethnic or religious despotism. Democracy

unless Kurds and others are able to play their potential and required roles on equal footage. If the desired Syrian citizenship does not guarantee the legitimate national rights of Kurds, freedom and equality will be nothing by a fake means to create a new type of a tyranny of an ethnicity and a new form of political oppression. Political experiences demonstrate that the efficiency of the tyranny or despotism of the majority disappears gradually if the majority abandons its extremist (ethnic or religious) awareness and replaces it with a more comprehensive one which is sharing citizenship. Abandoning extremist ethnic belonging means enjoying citizenship; it is positive abandonment of any belonging outside the political society. It means realistic return to reconciliation with the homeland before any tyrant or before ideological ethnicity robs it ... etc. This is the real solution for any potential defection or conflict between the segments of Syrian society. Ethnic or extremist view of identity will lose its momentum in front of humanitarian openness and equal reasonable dialogue. The history of Syria is the history one ethnicity, religion or denomination. It is the history of all this diversity and cultural and social pluralism.

Real national life will start when each group or faction stops demanding that their identity or faith prevails. It is time for Syrian Arabs to show

with Arabs on equal footage without any abstract and materialistic obstacles that limit their status or role. This participation exceeds normal rights (to election, voting, nomination ... etc.) to the rights to sovereignty and participation equally. No real citizenship exists without sovereignty that represents the public, and sovereignty has no meaning without real citizenship where all citizens are equal. Participation in sovereignty is right that all citizens enjoy.

If there is no one who is deemed a citizen and a master over others, then all people are citizens and free equality. If all citizens are free and enjoy full sovereignty, then no one is enslaved. Past experiences prove this and future experience will demonstrate it as well. Desired political life in post-despotism Syria should not tolerate any extremist-ethnic horizon or inferiority of Kurds as second class citizens. Durres experiences that Kurds went through so far push them to prudence and caution. Will post-despotism Syria denies them the right to full equal citizenship politically or will it exclude them from playing any role because of their ethnicity or identity? This is the reason why Kurds demand that any potential political system should gain their full trust. Freedom and equality that will be announced as principles for any ruling regime are only ideas and slogans that do not reflect the real intent of the said regime

and demonstrate to Syrian Kurds who will their state will be the state of equality. By doing this, the Arab majority demonstrate that they are concerned about the destination of the Kurds, their freedom and their equality. So they pave the way to founding a more sublime and just common public life. The three demands of democracy, pluralism and secularism are the keys bedrocks for the real and desired change in Syria. Without which political modernism in the country can never be realized. Deluded is the one who thinks that cannot be a real democratic system in Syria but a secular one, and more deluded is the one who talks about real equality among Syrians without a secular system. Deceitful or naïve is the one who thinks that Syrian Kurds can be equal to other citizens without a secular political system ruling Syria in the future.



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